

THE RAUCH & LANG FACTORY

A Photo Study of Early Electric Car Construction

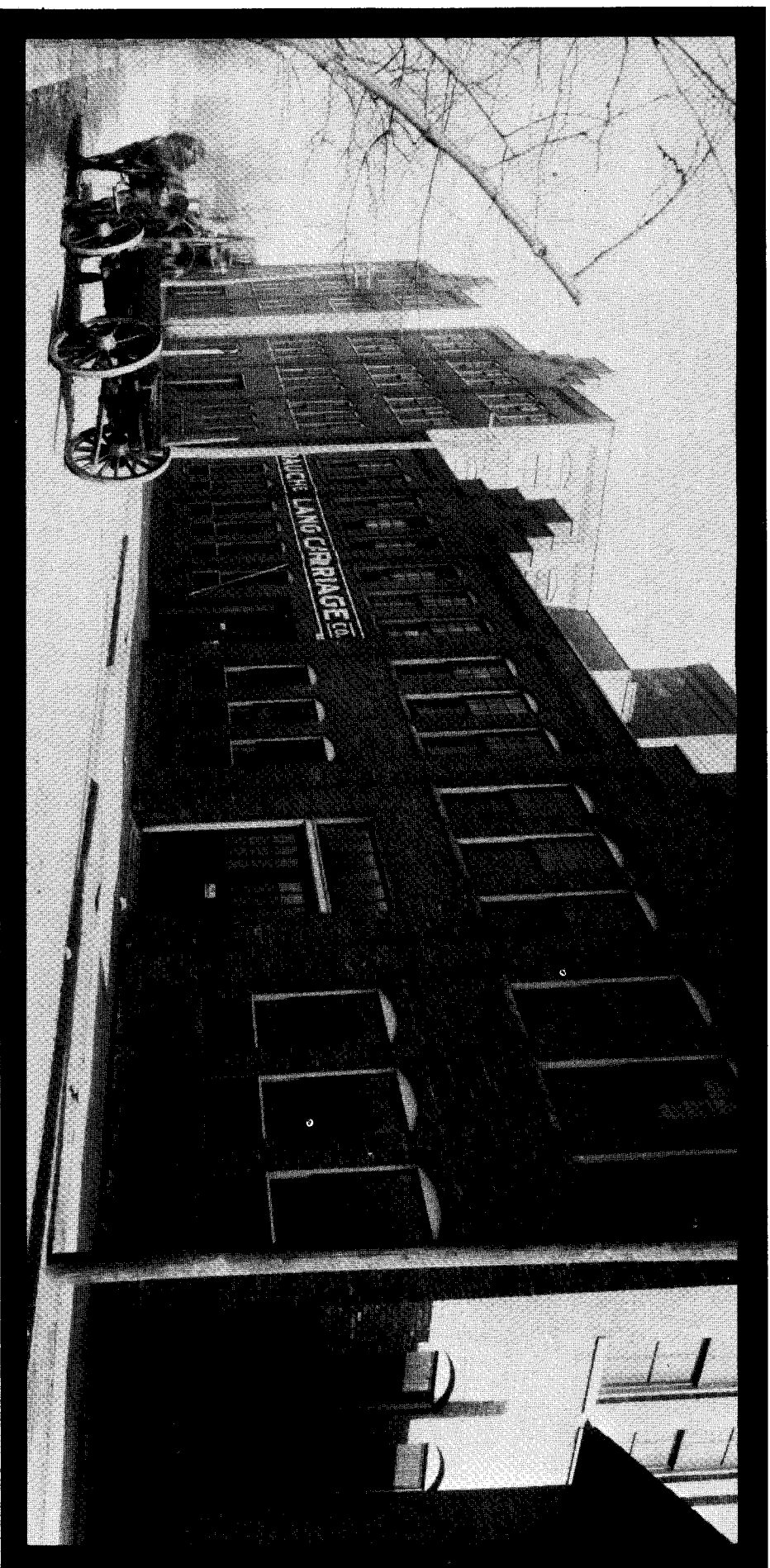
photos courtesy Mr. & Mrs. John G. Johnson

The United States at the turn of the century was still essentially a country of horse-drawn transportation. The automobile was here, but its impact still not too heavily felt by the giant carriage industry of the country.

Carriage makers were able to see the handwriting on the wall though, and many turned to the automobile, either providing bodies for one of the fledgling automobile

companies or adding the technology of gas, steam or electric propulsion to their operations.

One such firm was the Rauch & Lang Carriage Company of Cleveland, Ohio. They had been in business since 1853 and were fine carriage makers. In 1905 they turned to the electric car — one of the easiest transitions for the carriage builder.



Their vehicles remained basically carriages with electric motors added, and wooden coach type bodies were continued. A tour through the Rauch & Lang factory in the 1908-1910 period would make an interesting journey into the past. We can't do that, but are fortunate in that someone did at the time and with a camera.

The photographs in this article were loaned to ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE by Mr. and Mrs. John G. Johnson of Pittsburgh, Pa. Mrs. Johnson's grandfather was a lad of 19 or so when the photographs were taken and a rated "wood body craftsman" of some skill. He is not identified in any of the photos, but is most likely smiling back at us over the span of years.

