

# FAYETTE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

## WELCOME TO LITTLE DETROIT

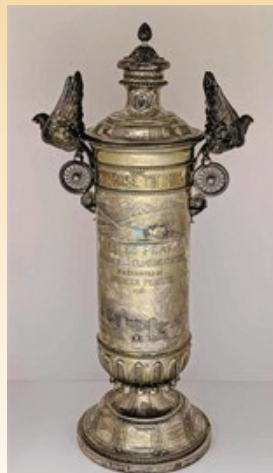
Though far from Detroit, Michigan, a small city in east central Indiana came to be known as "Little Detroit". Connersville, Indiana, earned the nickname because, at one time, virtually any part, excluding tires, needed for the manufacture of an automobile was produced here.

Much credit for the city's development goes to buggy manufacturer J. B. McFarlan. In the early 1890s, he created the nation's first industrial park by enticing the makers of parts used in the production of horse drawn vehicles to locate near his factory. Soon, two major competitors had begun production, and, by 1900, Connersville ranked third in the nation in production of light-duty horse-drawn vehicles, exceeded only by Cincinnati, Ohio, and Flint, Michigan.

The logical transition from horse-drawn to motorized vehicles was led by J. B. McFarlan and his family, most notably his grandson Harry. The next major event in auto manufacturing was the relocation of the Lexington Company from Lexington, Kentucky, to Connersville in 1910. Others, including the Empire automobile company of Indianapolis, Indiana, followed, and the city's connection to the automotive industry continued for many years.

We invite you to visit and learn more about the rich history of Little Detroit, its automobile manufacturers, and related industries. Historic Connersville, Incorporated owns and maintains the museum. Exhibits in the museum include Native American artifacts, pioneer life, and military and manufacturing history.

We are a not for profit organization, staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers and funded through dues and donations. Our other properties are the 1870 1st Ward Hose House, one of the city's first fire stations, and Canal House, built as the headquarters of the Whitewater Canal Company in 1842. Both are open during special events and for tours upon request



Penrose Trophy



Lexington Showroom



## CONNERSVILLE, IN

200 West 5th Street  
Connersville, Indiana 47331  
(765) 825-0946

Hours: Saturday & Sunday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Tours offered at other times upon request  
[www.historicconnersville.org](http://www.historicconnersville.org)

Brochure Courtesy of  Reid Health



## 1924 McFarlan Twin Valve Six Town Car



McFarlan automobiles were made in Connersville from 1909 until 1928. This Twin Valve Six Town Car was the top of the line offered in 1924. The engine is a 572 cubic inch displacement that developed 120 horsepower, the most powerful engine in any American car at that time. The selling price was \$9,000.00. When new, this car could have traveled at 75 miles per hour, but it had rear wheel brakes only, and they were mechanical, not hydraulic.

## 1922 Lexington Series T Touring Car



The Lexington Company was founded in Lexington, KY, in 1908. They moved to Connersville in 1910 because they needed more factory space. They built cars here until 1926. The engine in this car is an overhead valve six cylinder that developed 70 horsepower. Lexington won the Pikes Peak Hill Climb Race in 1920 and 1924, winning the Penrose Trophy which is also on display.

## 1913 Empire Model 31



Empire automobiles were made in Connersville from the fall of 1912 until late in 1915. The steering wheel is located on the right-hand side of the car, as was typical of the time. The price for this car - fully equipped - was only \$900.00. Equipment included acetylene headlights, windshield and folding top. This car is mostly original and has not been restored. The paint was a paint varnish mix applied with a brush and it is original.

## 1937 Cord Beverly Sedan



The Cord Series 810 and 812 were made in Connersville during 1936 and 1937. These cars were designed by a young designer, Gordon Buehrig, and are considered to be one of the most outstanding automobile designs ever. This car has a flat-head V-8 engine. It has many innovations, including hidden headlights, front-wheel-drive, electric self-shifter, no running boards, and more.

## 1935 Auburn Model 653 Phaeton Sedan



The Auburn Automobile Company built cars in Connersville from 1929 until 1936. This Auburn is a 1935 6-cylinder Model 653 Phaeton Sedan or 4-door convertible. It was first purchased by the ambassador to Norway and spent its first 34 years in Europe before returning to North America. The large "N" on the trunk lid was part of the registration in Norway.

## World War II Jeep Bodies



Bodies for the military Jeep were built at the American Central factory in Connersville. They were mounted on chassis built by Willys Overland which was located in Toledo, Ohio, and Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan. Contracts for bodies were awarded to Central, beginning March 10, 1941, and extending into 1948. Nearly half a million Jeep bodies were built here, plus over 200,000 Jeep trailer bodies.