



MMOCC Newsletter – DECEMBER 2025

*Mid Mo Old Car Club
PO Box 1594,
Jefferson City, MO 65102*



In 1852, two brothers opened a blacksmith shop with \$68. By 1900, it was the world's largest wagon manufacturer. They were the only wagon maker to successfully transition to automobiles.

February 16, 1852. Henry and Clement Studebaker stood at the corner of Michigan and Jefferson Streets in South Bend, Indiana, with \$68, two forges, and a dream. Henry was 26. Clement was 21. Neither had much formal education. But they knew how to work metal—their father John had taught them blacksmithing and wagon-making back in Pennsylvania, then in Ohio.

They opened H & C Studebaker, blacksmiths and wagon builders. South Bend was small then—a frontier town in northern Indiana where farmers needed wagons repaired and metal tools forged. The Studebaker brothers worked dawn to dusk, hammering metal, fixing wheels, building a reputation for quality craftsmanship.

For five years, they ran a modest operation. Then came 1857.

The U.S. Army needed 100 wagons. Fast.

Henry and Clement took the contract. They delivered every wagon on time, with quality that impressed military officials. The contract was worth more than money—it was proof that two small-town blacksmiths could compete on a national scale.

But then something unexpected happened. Henry Studebaker was a devout member of the German Baptist Brethren, known as Dunkards. After completing the military contract, his conscience troubled him. His faith opposed violence. His wagons would be used for war. In 1858, Henry made a decision that would have destroyed most partnerships: he left. Retired to a farm. Walked away from the business he'd co-founded.

Most businesses would have collapsed. The Studebakers didn't, because Clement had a secret weapon: family.

Their younger brother John Mohler was in California during the Gold Rush. John wasn't mining gold. He was smarter than that. While everyone else dug holes hoping to strike it rich, John made wheelbarrows and sold them to the miners. Steady income. Guaranteed customers. No gamble.

By 1858, John had saved \$8,000—equivalent to over \$300,000 today. He returned to South Bend, bought out Henry's share, and invested his entire savings into the wagon business. The timing was perfect. Westward expansion was exploding. Hundreds of thousands of Americans were moving west, and every single one needed a wagon. Strong wagons. Reliable wagons. Wagons that wouldn't break down halfway to California.

Studebaker wagons developed a reputation: they lasted. "We might not be the cheapest," became the company's unofficial motto, "but we're the best." By 1863, Peter Studebaker—the fourth brother—joined the company. He opened the first "dealership" in Goshen, Indiana, then moved to South Bend to focus on sales and distribution.

During the Civil War, Studebaker wagons rolled through Union Army camps. After the war, they rolled west with pioneer families. In 1868, the three brothers—John, Clement, and Peter—each invested \$25,000 and officially incorporated as Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company. Jacob, the youngest brother, joined as a sales agent. By 1887, annual sales exceeded \$2 million. By 1900, Studebaker was the world's largest manufacturer of horse-drawn vehicles. Their wagons carried pioneers across prairies, delivered goods in cities, transported families to church on Sundays.

The Studebaker name meant quality. Durability. Craftsmanship.

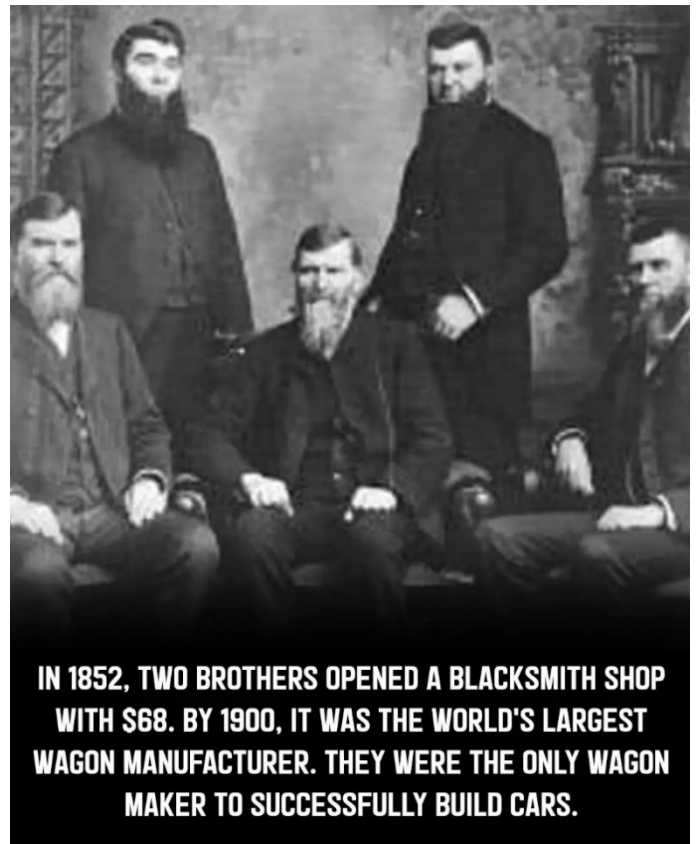
But the world was changing. In the 1890s, a new invention appeared: the automobile. Gasoline-powered. Horseless. Faster than any wagon. Most wagon manufacturers scoffed. "A fad," they said. "Nothing will replace the horse." The Studebaker brothers—particularly John, who lived longest and saw the most change—recognized what others didn't: adapt or die.

In 1902, Studebaker produced its first electric automobile. In 1904, they built their first gasoline-powered car.

And here's what makes their story remarkable: They were the **ONLY** major wagon and carriage manufacturer to successfully transition to automobiles. Every other wagon company either refused to change or failed in the attempt. Studebaker succeeded because they understood something fundamental: they weren't in the wagon business. They were in the transportation business.

When transportation changed, they changed with it.

By 1920, Studebaker had completely stopped making wagons and focused entirely on automobiles. The company that started with \$68 and two blacksmith forges was now producing tens of thousands of cars annually. They pioneered innovations: controlled outdoor proving grounds for testing (1926), distinctive designs that set them apart from Detroit's Big Three, economy cars during the Depression. In the 1950s, at their peak, Studebaker employed 24,000 people in South Bend alone and produced nearly half a million vehicles annually.



But success never lasts forever. The 1950s and 60s brought fierce competition from General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. The Big Three had deeper pockets, larger production capacity, and aggressive pricing.

Studebaker tried to compete. They merged with Packard. They introduced innovative designs like the Avanti sports car. They cut costs and improved quality. But small manufacturers couldn't survive against giants.

On December 20, 1963—111 years and 10 months after Henry and Clement opened that blacksmith shop—Studebaker closed its South Bend plant. Seven thousand workers lost their jobs. A quarter of South Bend's workforce was suddenly unemployed. The city that Studebaker built watched its largest employer disappear. Limited production continued in Canada until March 1966. Then Studebaker left the automobile business entirely.



Badge used in the 1950s and 1960s

But here's the real story: The Studebaker brothers turned \$68 into a global empire that lasted over a century. They survived the transition from blacksmith shop to factory. From wagons to automobiles. From local business to international corporation. They were the ONLY wagon manufacturer who successfully made that transition—not because they were lucky, but because they understood adaptation. Henry had the courage to follow his conscience even when it meant leaving success. John had the vision to invest his life savings in his brothers' dream. Clement had the persistence to keep building quality when cheap competitors surrounded him. Peter had the salesmanship to take their product nationwide. Jacob contributed to growth until his early death at 43.

And those five sisters? The original story mentions them vaguely. They existed—historical records confirm five Studebaker sisters. But unlike their brothers, their names and contributions weren't recorded. They lived in an era when women's work—managing households, raising children, supporting family businesses behind the scenes—was considered unremarkable. Were they important to the brothers' success? Undoubtedly. Every successful man in that era had women supporting them—wives, mothers, sisters, daughters.

But history recorded the brothers' names on patents, contracts, and corporate documents. The sisters' contributions, like those of countless women throughout history, went largely unrecorded. What we do know: the Studebaker brothers started with almost nothing and built something that lasted over a century. They faced economic depressions, technological revolutions, world wars, and crushing competition.

They adapted. They innovated. They persisted.

In the end, even persistence couldn't save them from economic reality. But for 111 years, the name Studebaker meant quality, innovation, and American manufacturing at its finest.

Today, classic Studebakers are collector's items. The Studebaker National Museum in South Bend tells their story. And the lesson remains: Success isn't about being the biggest or the richest. It's about recognizing when the world changes—and having the courage to change with it. The Studebakers did that better than almost anyone.

Route 66 Lunch Stop:

Carpooling from Schultes at 10am to:

Waynesville Square
301 Historic Route 66 E
Waynesville, MO 65583

Sunday, June 21, 2026.

The Great Race will be there from 12:00pm - 3:00pm.



**IT DIDN'T MATTER WHERE YOU
LOOKED YOU COULD ALWAYS
TELL YOUR CAR APART FROM
ANYONE OTHER**



MMOCC SHIRTS:

Shirts available
at future
meetings and
events.

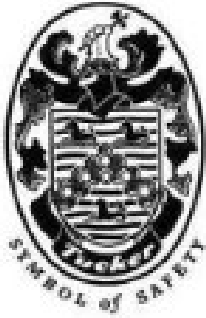
Contact Doug
Stephens at 573-
632-2895



Note the ominous badge number.



Tucker



In 1948 Tucker engine was one of the most unusual and forward-thinking powerplants to appear in an American automobile during the postwar era. When Preston Tucker developed his revolutionary Tucker 48, he needed an engine that matched the car's innovative design and engineering goals. Instead of turning to a traditional automotive V8 or inline six, Tucker sourced a modified aircraft-derived flat-six from Air Cooled Motors, originally intended for use in helicopters. This decision resulted in a powerplant unlike anything found in mainstream cars at the time.

The engine itself was a rear-mounted, horizontally opposed six-cylinder design displacing 334 cubic inches. Known as the **Franklin O-335**, it was re-engineered with water cooling to suit automotive use. Its compact, low-profile configuration helped give the Tucker 48 a flat floor and excellent interior space. Producing around 166 horsepower, the engine delivered strong, smooth torque and contributed to the Tucker's reputation for advanced handling and stability, especially when paired with the car's rear-wheel-drive layout and innovative suspension.

To handle the unique engine configuration, Tucker fitted the car with the **Cord-derived** preselector transmission, adapted to work with the unconventional flat-six. Though the drivetrain required extensive development, it offered a level of sophistication rarely seen in American cars of the late 1940s. The **Franklin-based engine** proved robust and capable, demonstrating that aircraft engineering principles could successfully translate into automotive performance when properly executed.

Today, the 1948 Tucker engine remains a fascinating symbol of Preston Tucker's determination to challenge industry norms. Surviving examples of the engine, and the cars that house them, are celebrated for their engineering creativity and historical significance. The **Franklin flat-six** stands as a reminder that bold ideas—and unconventional solutions—often drive the greatest innovations in automotive history.



Upcoming Events that MMOCC Plans to Attend:

A. December Meeting / Holiday Party.

- Thursday, December 18, 2025. Arrive as early as 5pm. Meal about 6pm.
- American Legion off Tanner Bridge.
- Meal provided by the Club.
- Bring a rob-your-neighbor gift for your gender valued around \$25. Be creative!

B. New Year's Day Garage Tour.

- Monday, January 1, 2026.
- Organized by Dennis Smith 573-680-2505
- Times, locations, and details to be finalized.
 - Lunch at 11:30. Pizza Hut in Holts Summit / 152 Northstar Drive.
 - Garage Tours at Multiple Locations.
 - Ending about 4pm at Brazito-Honey Creek Lions at 3220 Highway E with a carry in meal.

C. January MMOCC Meeting.

- Thursday, January 22.
- HyVee-JC Community Room (upstairs). Room available at 5pm with meeting at 6pm. Grab your meal and eat together!
- Topic to be determined.

D. February MMOCC Meeting.

- Thursday, February 26.
- HyVee-JC Community Room (upstairs). Room available at 5pm with meeting at 6pm. Grab your meal and eat together!
- Topic to be determined.

E. St. Patrick's Parade – Paddy Malones on West Main.

- Saturday, March 14 lining up around 1:30pm with parade starting at 2pm.
- Meeting, starting, and returning at Paddy Malones at 700 West Main Street / JCMO.
- Downtown Jefferson City route (the parade, itself, is small, but it brings a lot of smiles!)

F. March MMOCC Meeting.

- Thursday, March 26.
- HyVee-JC Community Room (upstairs). Room available at 5pm with meeting at 6pm. Grab your meal and eat together!
- Scholarship Auction. Bring items to sell and cash to buy!

G. The Great Race Visits Missouri – MMOCC Road Trip to see The Great Race Cars.

- Sunday, June 21, 2026. Carpool from Schultes about 10am.
- Route 66 Lunch Stop at Waynesville Square. 12:00pm - 3:00pm
- 301 Historic Route 66 E
- Waynesville, MO 65583

H. Lohman Cruise In.

- Sunday, June 28 from 10:30am to 2pm in Lohman on Front Street “by the big tree”.
- Bring a chair and cooler. Come and go as you please. Contact Lyle at 573-291-7159 with questions.
- Lions Club BBQ available at the Community Center from 10:30am until out.
- Fireworks at the Church at 9pm by Dennis and Laura Even.

I. Wheels for Meals Car Show Fundraiser.

- Saturday, September 12 at 8:30am.
- Russellville High School / 13600 Route C.

J. Show Me State Air Show at the Jefferson City Airport.

- MMOCC car display and drive on the runway.
- Saturday, September 12 and Sunday September 13. 7:30am to 2pm.

- Sign ups required in advance.
- More details to follow.
- Contact Lyle with questions at 573-291-7159.

K. MMOCC Old Car Round Up and Show.

- 57th annual.
- Saturday, September 26, 2026.
- In conjunction with JC Oktoberfest.

L. MMOCC Monthly Meetings.

- Fourth Thursday of Each Month at 6pm (except November and December).
- January, February, March, April, May, September, and October at the HyVee-JC Community Room (upstairs).

... and many more as the year progresses.



Officers:

President Nathan Fuller (573-645-7088)
 Vice President Doug Stephens (573-632-2895)
 Secretary/Newsletter Editor Lyle Rosburg (573-291-7159)
 Treasurer Larry Rhea (573-606-9266)
 Historians Mike and Connie Schaefer (573-645-7802)
 2025 Car Show Chair – Nathan Fuller (573-645-7088)

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