

CHAS. LEE HAD FIRST AUTO

BOUGHT IT ON MAY 30, 1900

Tuttle, Cady and Casler Were Other Local Owners

To the late Charles A. Lee, prominent chair manufacturer of his time, goes the honor of having been the first-possessor of a horseless carriage in Canastota and in fact in Madison county, according to a record of 37 years ago. It was on Memorial Day 1900 that Lee purchased the new type of vehicle to succeed old Dobbin as propelling power. It was a locomobile operated by steam power generated by gasoline and capable of making 30 miles an hour.

Next day the late Daniel M. Tuttle purchased a like machine. To Herman Casler the record belongs of having been the first local citizen to place an order for one of the locomobiles. He had ordered one in advance of that 1900 Memorial day but delivery had not been made thus Lee was the first possessor. Casler's machine was similar to Lee's and Tuttle's except that it had an adjustable top, was delivered June 3 making the third automatic carriage owned in Canastota.

Four days after Lee secured his machine he drove it to Camden where the vehicle was the first horseless carriage to appear in that village. From that date the "fever" spread, slowly at first but with added momentum in the next year or two as prominent citizens invested in these horseless carriages with no dream that the carriage style of car would ever grow into the streamlined automobile of today.

C. N. Cady Made His Own Auto

In 1901 the late Charles N. Cady startled the natives when they observed a one-cylinder engine horseless carriage with Cady at the wheel come chugging out of West Center street into the business section. Cady had built the machine in his shop. Lack of financial backing prevented him from producing them on a large scale but he did make four automobiles and five trucks. Cady took Dr. Robert H. Ash to Port Leyden, the doctor's former home in one of the Cady cars.

A Morrisville man was reported to have consumed three days in making a "pleasure trip" to Syracuse via Cazenovia and home by way of Canastota in 1903 in what was then termed a high grade automobile and spending much of the time away from home in making repairs to the machine to the tune of \$35.

Chain drive was the method of making the wheels revolve in those early years. E. G. Walton of Spencer St. recalls as he was riding in the car of a friend the chain broke and stalled the party in the road near Union Corners. As the driver and Walton were endeavoring to repair the chain with fence wire, the late John H. McMahon another early horseless vehicle owner, happened along and gave them a few chain links to make repairs so they could get to Canastota.

Mr. Casler still an active resident here, has the distinction of being the veteran car driver in Canastota. He recalls that he drove the locomobile about a year and then bought a small model Franklin, his car being the second put on the market by the Franklin company of Syracuse. A year or so later Mr. Casler purchased a larger Franklin model and he made his first horseless carriage trip to New York in this vehicle utilizing three days each way to cover the mileage.

In this citizen's mind first came the idea of developing a tire chain. Mr. Casler and other local drivers had resorted to winding a rope around the tires as an aid to getting traction in mud or slippery conditions and set his mind to developing a chain to be attached to the tires. The idea developed into the Weed tire chains, now nationally famous, patented by Maj. Harry Weed, an employee of the old Marvin & Casler firm.