

The Kisselgraph

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c/o Wisconsin Automotive Museum

147 N. Rural Street

Hartford, WI 53027

Telephone: (262) 673-7999

E-mail: info@wisconsinautomuseum.com

Kissel Kar Klub 2009:

The 103rd Anniversary of Kissel Motor Kar Company was observed this past June by approximately 43 people from all over the United States plus Tom Harrington from Paris France and John Lewis from Australia. Quite a few arrived early Friday and we all went over in an executive bus to the Venerable Fire Department. The owner has collected over fifty pieces of fire fighting apparatus including Teletype, Tickertape, Bell System, Fire Box identification all in operating demonstration type mode. We all certainly enjoyed being there. I believe we were there for about two hours. Also on display were hand fire carts and two Steam Fire Engines.

Very interesting collection and everyone enjoyed it!

After our visit to the fire collection Friday night was open for individual options. I am sure that quite a few did get together since most were at the same Motel.

Saturday morning was actually the start of the Show. We had several cars here, Lynn Kissel's 1914 open touring car that he recently purchased, John Quam brought his 1914 semi-racer, and Tom Harrington had his sedan and his speedster on display. Ken McKinnon had a 1926 Speedster and Ron Hausmann had his 1923 Gold Bug Speedster.

The show was pretty well attended, with quite a few people going through the museum, and viewing the extra Kissels that were on display outside.

Saturday night was the Banquet/Meeting of the club. There was not a lot of business since we are not a very formal organization.

We did discuss a few matters, one of which is how often we should be meeting.

Lynn Kissel gave a very interesting talk on the conversion of a Kissel to use a train car for hauling passengers. He accompanied his presentation with a slides and pictures. All in all a very different aspect of the usage of a Kissel vehicle, Lynn should be commended for his research work. In other matters Lynn Kissel wrote an article, which is attached to this newsletter "Kissel Radiator Emblems," I think you will find this interesting reading.

Overall, it seems that the participants were quite happy with the activities that were planned and we look forward to doing another event perhaps in June 2013.

If any one is interested in having the list of attendees to the gathering, I would be more than happy to supply that.

Kissel Transfers to Museum Ownership:

One of the outcomes of the Annual Meeting was our meeting with Dave Lanning and his wife. Dave Lanning had a '26 Kissel Convertible Coupe, a very desirable car. After some discussion we came to an agreement that we would trade one of our other cars, "non Kissel" to Dave even up for this '26. We are very pleased to have it. It is a very stunning car done in Red and Maroon. After running it in this year's Christmas Parade we find that it's extremely reliable. We are very happy to have it!

Unfortunately, Dave has no more Kissels, so we probably won't be seeing him as often. Dave was a board member of this Museum for many years before he moved Florida.

New Display Cars:

We also have a couple of new display cars. Those of you that were here for the Kissel gathering probably recall the Quam Car a semi racer 1914 Kissel. That is now here on display on loan in the museum. Also the McNeely 1917 Kissel Touring car is on display at the Museum.

Kissel Kar Accounting:

Gary LeMaster & Joe Leaf have done wonderful job in updating and modifying the Kissel Kar Klub list. Joe has gone through a lot of research on each individual car based on his personal research with owners and the use of the original list from Gene Husting the former director of the club from '54 until '81. Gary has been involved similarly; we certainly appreciate all the efforts by them in keeping us more up to date. There are a lot of things that has to be accomplished here at the museum and one person just can't do it all.

Museum update:

About two years ago we made an arrangement with a group of Modified Stock Car owners and drivers. Southeastern Wisconsin was a real hot bed of Stock Car racing, and the Museum is home to "The Southeastern Wisconsin Hall of Fame". This has been quite a benefit to the museum it self. They are allowed a portion of the museum space and they maintain it. They move in and out Modified Stock Cars that have been restored. In addition to their display area in the museum, the Modified Stock Car Club always has a show during the summer, which attracts people and old time drivers from all over the countryside. We appreciate having them here and they certainly added to our over all attendance.

In other matters in reference to the museum, we're finally able to activate the Grant which we received for \$280,000 to do some more work on the museum. One of the items that need to be done is the replacement of eighty-year-old sewer and water lines, I don't know which one leaks into which, but they're old and definitely need to be replaced. Inside the museum the stairway that goes upstairs is sort of hidden and

we're taking steps to remove some walls, so that the stairway becomes much more evident and easier for people to find. This has been a problem for many years. The exterior and interior of the Steam locomotive area will be fixed up, painted, some new doors, other additions to that area will make it more eye appealing. Last but not least our east wall of the building is really quite flat and non-descript, we will be installing blank windows on the east side of the building. Also some signage is going to be added to point out that the museum is there and the performing arts is also around the corner.

We had applied for another Grant under phase 3, which is upgrading a lot of the wiring upstairs. This Grant was not approved on the first go-around, we will be resubmitting. Other than that business has been doing fairly well, we have not noticed a significant drop in attendance because of the economy, people are still coming, perhaps not as far, but their still coming to the museum. Which keeps all of us happy.

Cars and Parts for Sale:

Be sure you check with us if you are looking for a Kissel that maybe for sale. I try to keep a list of them in case someone is looking for one to purchase. Also there are lots of parts that are available. Jim Schuetz, who was an owner of two Kissels, passed away, and his widow is trying to dispose of parts for '28 Sedan. I don't know exactly what all parts are available. Let me know if you want to contact his brother Mike, who's handling the sale of these items for the widow.

Best of the Season:

I want to pass along season's greetings to all of the Kissel Kar Klub Members. We certainly hope that you continue to be pleased with the ownership of your Kissel and the restoration thereof and are proud to drive it in whatever event you can.

I would also like to point out that the museum and Kisser Kar Club are both nonprofit corporations. We operate with various sources of income, one of them is from donations and we sincerely appreciate any donations you wish to pass along to us. To help maintain the operations.

Kissel Radiator Emblems

Lynn Kissel
Livermore, California

One of the more colorful aspects of automobiles of any era is the nameplates and emblems that they sport. These symbols are an important part of the image and mystique that the manufacturer tries to create with the consumer.

The radiator emblems of the Kissel Motor Car Company grew in sophistication and elegance over the life of the company. This short note sketches their progression over the 1906-1930 life of the company.

In a nutshell, the following is my observation of the progression of Kissel radiator emblems.

1. 1906-1907 – *no emblem*
2. 1908-1910 – *KisselKar plate*
3. c1910-c1912 – *plain KisselKar emblem*
4. c1910-c1912 – *winged KisselKar emblem*
5. c1912-1918 – *KisselKar emblem (with slogan)*
6. 1918-1928 – *Mercury emblem*
7. 1928-1929 – *National-Kissel emblem*
8. 1929-1931 – *White Eagle*

I am particularly uncertain about the precise sequence of radiator emblems for 1910-1912. It also seems possible to me that there could be overlap in the use of emblems during this period. I've used the notation "c1910" (read as "circa 1910") to indicate a fuzzy, uncertain or overlapping transition boundary that occurs in approximately 1910.

Initial Cars – 1906-1907

I suspect that the earliest Kissels had no radiator emblems. No radiator emblem is evident on a photo of the 1906 prototype or in an early 1907 advertisement [Quandt, Motor Age].

KisselKar Plate – 1908-1910 – Photo 1

A rectangular molded brass plate with the letters "KisselKar" is evident by 1908 [Quandt]. As examples, this badge appears on Phil Renuart's 1908 D Touring and Frank Bristing's 1910 D-10 Toy Tonneau.



Photo 1. *KisselKar plate* (1908-1910) as seen on a 1909 Kissel 6-60 G-9 Semi Racer at the 2006 Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance. (Photo from www.conceptcarz.com.)

Plain KisselKar Emblem – c1910-c1912 – Photo 2

Kissel introduced a Mercedes-style radiator in 1910 with a 3" cloisonné disk (metal disk with hard enamel inlay) mounted in the upper left quadrant of the radiator [Georgano]. I have heard of, but haven't personally seen, a 32-page advertising pamphlet entitled "Kissel Season 1910" that shows illustrations of a radiator emblem with the letters "KISSELKAR" on a plain background with no other characters.

This (or a similar) emblem is visible on a photo of the KisselKar that drove President Theodore Roosevelt to dedicate the Roosevelt Dam near Phoenix, AZ, on March 17, 1911 [Duerksen, Kendrick]. I don't know if the car is a 1910 or 1911 model.



Photo 2. *Plain KisselKar emblem* (c1910-c1912), as seen on Vic Groah's 1912 Kissel 4-50 Semi Tourina. (Photo by Vic Groah)

Kissel Radiator Emblems

This emblem appears on William (Bob) Ullrich's 1910 D-10 Toy Tonneau, Steve Mergele's 1911 LD-11 Semi-Racer, Drandall Blohm's 1911 LD-11 Touring and Vic Groah's 1912 4-50 Semi Touring. Steve believes his emblem is a reproduction since it did not ever have a mounting screw soldered to the back when he received the "project car" in boxes.

Winged KisselKar Emblem – c1910-c1912 – Photo 3

The emblem depicts the front clip of a car with a prominent "winged" Motometer on the radiator. "KISSELKAR" appears in a central white circle and the logo "EVERY INCH A CAR" stretches along the bottom of the disk.

A Milwaukee Alhambra Theater program (seen on ebay) shows a radiator emblem on the illustration of an ad for Kissel 1910 models. In the low-resolution image that I have, I imagine that the emblem appears to be the "winged" version of the emblem, but I'm not positive.

This emblem is seen in photos of Steve Dana's 1911 LD-11 Semi-Racer, Don Bosco's 1911 LD-11 Touring, Bruce Barnett's 1912 4-40 Semi-Racer and Robert Woodburn's 1912 6-60 Semi Touring.

KisselKar Emblem (with slogan) – c1912-1918 – Photo 4

The company now uses an emblem with the plain KisselKar design and the addition of the slogan "EVERY INCH A CAR" in an arc following the bottom edge of the emblem.

This emblem is seen on multiple 1912 cars in Quandt's book and on Robert Feind's 1912 4-50 Touring on display in the Wisconsin Automotive Museum. Feind's vehicle is thought to be an original, unmolested car.

Dale Anderson tells me of a variant of this emblem. A *Hughson Special* emblem is owned by Mike Schuetz that he inherited from his brother Jim (see Photo 5). Neither Mike nor Dale know much about it's origin. Dale points out the differences in font compared with the *KisselKar emblem* (note the serifs and the tail of the "R"). Also this emblem is edged in silver while the original is brass [Anderson].



Photo 4. *KisselKar emblem* (c1912-1918) with company slogan. (Photo from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/>)

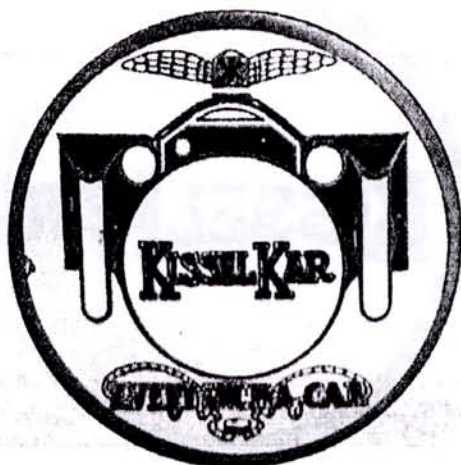


Photo 3. *Winged KisselKar emblem* (c1910-c1912) as seen on Don Bosco's 1911 Kissel LD-11 Touring. (Photo by Don Bosco)



Photo 5. *Hughson Special emblem*. (Photo by Dale Anderson)

Kissel Radiator Emblems

I suspect that this emblem was created for William (Billy) L. Hughson, head of the Pacific KisselKar Branch. Billy Hughson was a significant individual in automotive industry in the Western US and is recognized as the first Ford dealer [Hughson]. With showrooms in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco, he helped plan Anita King's 1915 transcontinental trip in a KisselKar 6-42, arranged a reception for Anita in San Francisco with at least a half-dozen KisselKars, and escorted her a short distance on her journey east [Drew].

Mercury Emblem – 1918-1928 – Photo 6

The mood of the American public had grown decidedly anti-Germanic following the Great War (1914-1918) so the company shortened their trade name to "Kissel". In the Summer of 1918 they adopted the Roman deity Mercury (the fleet-footed god of trade, profit and commerce) as their logo [Quandt]. The new radiator emblems were a stamped, silver-plated metal disk and are quite elegant.

A larger version of this emblem was used on a special 1916 KisselKar 20-passenger tram used on the Mount Tamalpais scenic railway. This was likely a KisselKar 6-60 truck chassis that sat on railway trucks (wheels). With elegant "Pullman" coachwork, this vehicle took small parties to the inn at the top of Mount Tamalpais and sightseers to Muir Woods in Marin County, California, through the late 1920s [Runner].



Photo 6. **Mercury emblem** (1918-1928). (Photo from 2009 ebay auction listing)

National-Kissel – 1928-1929 – Photo 7

For two years, Kissel built hearse/ambulances that were sold through the National Casket Company, Boston. Called National-Kissel, these professional cars had a unique radiator emblem that was centered on the front of the radiator top tank [Coachbuilt].

White Eagle – 1929-1931 – Photo 8

Starting with the 1929-model-year Kissel White Eagles, the round radiator emblems were replaced with a large, spread-wing eagle mounted across the top of the radiator.

After producing a small number of 1931-model-year vehicles, Kissel automobile manufacturing ended on September 19, 1930.

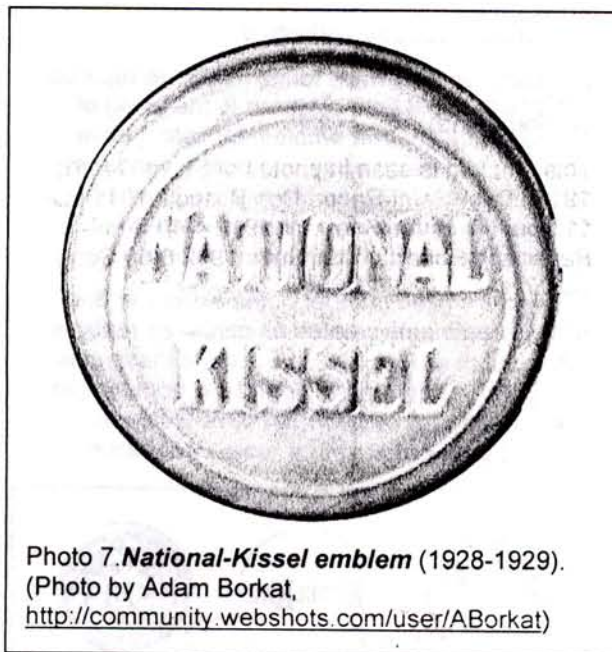


Photo 7. **National-Kissel emblem** (1928-1929). (Photo by Adam Borkat, <http://community.webshots.com/user/ABorkat>)

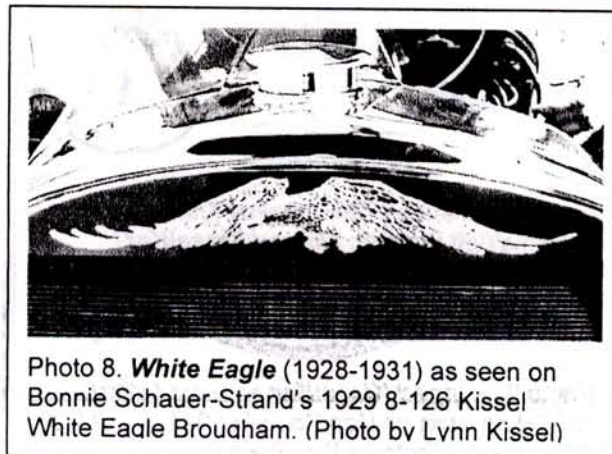


Photo 8. **White Eagle** (1928-1931) as seen on Bonnie Schauer-Strand's 1929 8-126 Kissel White Eagle Brougham. (Photo by Lynn Kissel)

Kissel Radiator Emblems

Reproductions

Some reproductions of Kissel radiator emblems are known to have been produced. Harry Pulfer had reproductions made of many antique automobile emblems and badges including Kissel radiator emblems. I've been told that these reproductions are of high quality and they may have been sold as originals on eBay.

Several years ago I purchased reproductions of the *Mercury emblem* from a vendor by the name of *Cartotem*. These emblems were cast in stainless steel (unlike the stamped originals) and, while they were of relatively high quality, they were not as finely detailed as the originals. The word "Cartotem" is stamped on the back side of my emblems. This vendor is not currently producing new emblems.

Miniature Replicas – Photo 9

For some years, I have found miniature replicas (~3/4" with a pin post soldered to the back) of the *winged KisselKar emblem* for sale. I have acquired copies on eBay and from a vendor at the annual AACA Swap Meet at Hershey in October. Unfortunately I have never seen miniature replicas of the other emblems.

I've had a limited number of the *KisselKar* and *Mercury* emblems created as miniature replicas. While supplies last, you can acquire these pins along with a small information card from the gift shop at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum. Contact Dale Anderson for more information.

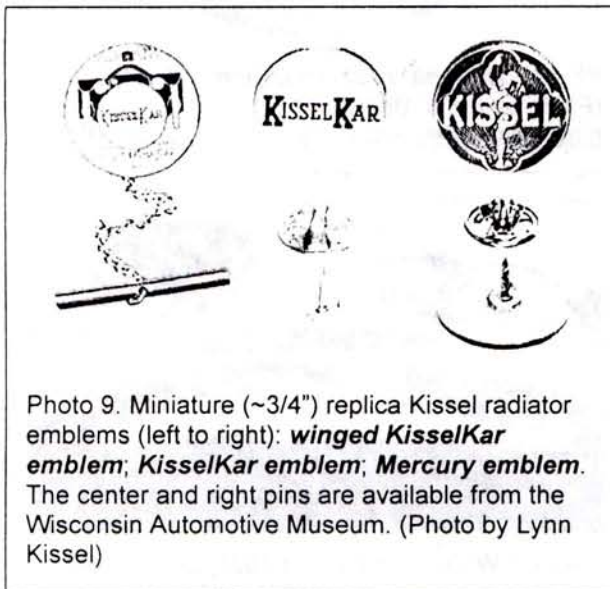


Photo 9. Miniature (~3/4") replica Kissel radiator emblems (left to right): *winged KisselKar emblem*; *KisselKar emblem*; *Mercury emblem*. The center and right pins are available from the Wisconsin Automotive Museum. (Photo by Lynn Kissel)

Do You Have Other Information?

I would be grateful to hear if you have additional information to help refine this history of Kissel radiator emblems. You can contact me via email at emblems@starship.org, by telephone at 925-667-7087 or by mail at 912 Loyola Way, Livermore, CA 94550-7286.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for many comments and suggestions on this note that have been received, especially those from Joe Leaf, Vic Groah, Drandall Blohm, Dale Anderson, Robert Woodburn, Steve Mergele, Ken MacKinnon, Jr., Chris Bamford and John Lewis.

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