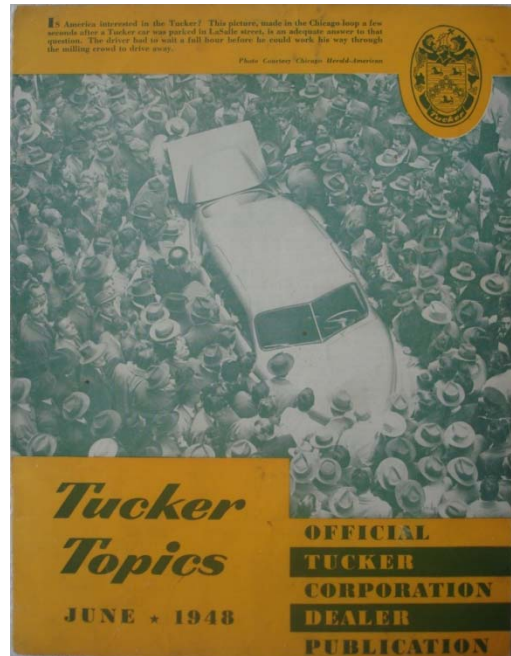




THE ALOHA REGION'S NEWSLETTER

# THE SCORED JOURNAL



*Tucker Topics*: The Official Tucker Corporation Dealer Publication, May and June 1948  
(Victor Weisberger Collection)

Perhaps no other automobile has created more public excitement and lasting controversy than the short-lived *Tucker '48*. Born in the car-starved post-war years, it fascinated the nation with the prospect of a radically new car design, but the dream ended quickly with a fraud trial for its creator, Preston Tucker. Although the total production was a mere 51 cars (47 survive), thanks to the 1988 movie, *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*, the fascination with the Tucker automobile has not faded.

*Tucker Topics* dealer magazines promoted the Tucker products and optimism. These *Tucker Topics* (above) provide an interesting glimpse into the Tucker promotional program, with short articles and many photographs on variety of topics, including: a U.S. Army war-hero General touring the factory, new dealer stories, design and manufacturing highlights, and some of the Tucker accessories available for sale. This issue of *The Scored Journal* will feature the history of the Tucker Car Corporation and the Tucker '48 car, highlighted with images and stories from these two issues of *Tucker Topics*.

### 2014 Aloha Region Officers

- President & Editor: Fred Weisberger ..... 254-0392
- Vice President: Bob DeBone ..... 261-7518
- Treasurer: Glen Houlton ..... 676-7266
- Webmaster: Gary Wild (new) ..... 261-0110

# ALOHA REGION NEWS

## RECENT CLUB MEETINGS

**January Meeting** was hosted by Chris and Jade DeBone at their home in Aiea. About twenty-five members and guests and eight antique cars attended. Chris' excellent three car garage and driveway worked well for the gathering. The weather was perfect! Chris shared his restoration progress on his Ford Model A truck and Ford Model T car. Lunch was provided and the location had a wonderful view of Pearl Harbor. Sad News: active newer member Bill Fortier announced that he and his family are moving to the Seattle area in the near future. They will miss the Hawaii weather, but he will certainly enjoy the very active Pacific Northwest antique car community.

**March Meeting** was at the *2014 First Hawaiian Auto Show*. For the sixth year in a row the club was invited to share our antique cars at this new car show. This year the club had 50% more space and displayed 16 antique cars. The club displayed cars celebrating 50 years of the Mustang and GTO, and 60 years of the Kaiser Darrin. Two newly restored British cars were displayed: 1932 MG J2 and 1961 Austin-Healey Sprite. The club's display was very popular! Joe Showwalter, the event organizer from *Motor Trend Auto Shows* said, "Your club display was by far one of the most talked about all show long." The owners with cars on display were:

- Howard Andrus ..... 1910 Ford Model T Depot Express
- Ross Battaglia ..... 1929 Ford Model A Depot Hack
- Masako Bellinger ..... 1966 Mustang Fastback
- Bob Bosley ..... 1931 Packard 840 D/C Phaeton
- Chuck Brock ..... 1982 Avanti
- Patrick Casey ..... 1961 Austin-Healey Sprite
- Bob DeWits ..... 1933 MG J2
- Richard Johnson ..... 1954 Kaiser Darrin
- Rickard Lloyd ..... 1949 Studebaker Convertible
- Wes Teixeira ..... 1930 Ford Model A Truck
- Rick Shankles ..... 1931 Ford Model A Fordor
- Robert Steinke ..... 1966 Pontiac GTO
- Fred Weisberger..... 1930 Ford Model A, 1930 Cadillac
- Gary Wild ..... 1956 Thunderbird
- Willie Williams ..... 1955 MG TF

### **2014 First Hawaiian Auto Show**



**1931 Packard D/C Phaeton**

**1930 Cadillac 353 Town Sedan**



2014 The Aloha Region at the *First Hawaiian Auto Show*



1954 Kaiser Darrin



1949 Studebaker



1956 Thunderbird



1910 Ford Model T



1933 MG J2



1966 Mustang



1982 Avanti



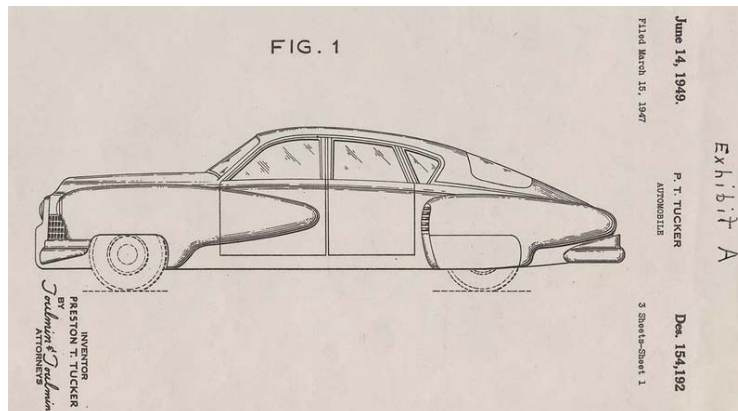
1931 Ford Model A





Mahalo to everyone who participated!

## FEATURE STORY: THE TUCKER '48 - "THE CAR OF THE FUTURE"



The original 1947 Design Patent for the Tucker '48

It is difficult for people today to fully appreciate the overwhelming excitement generated by any new car in the immediate post-war years. After the *Great Depression* of the 1930s, four years of World War II, and no new car production since early 1942, the American public was starved for new cars. The “Big Three” (Ford, GM, Chrysler) and the big “Independents” (Packard, Hudson, Nash, Studebaker) offered slightly modified 1941/2 cars and called them “new” 1946 cars. The demand was so great for any new car that customers usually had get on waiting list, pay a large deposit, agreed to pay the full price and a “premium” to the dealer for just the *opportunity* to buy a new car. Into this high-demand environment, Preston Tucker offered a radically new car at an advertised reasonable price.

Preston Tucker (1903-1956) was raised by his teacher mother (father died when he was 2) in a Detroit suburb. The young Tucker was always fascinated by mechanical things and by age 16 he was buying late model cars, repairing them and selling them for a profit. He quite high school and landed a job at Cadillac as an office boy. After a brief stint as a policeman, where he could drive cars fast and legally, he ran a gas station, worked on the Ford assembly line, sold Studebaker, Stutz, Chrysler, Pierce-Arrow and Dodge cars at different dealerships in several different states.

The lure of racing cars attracted Preston Tucker to Indianapolis. There Tucker met and eventually formed a partnership with famed racecar builder, Henry Miller—the two men formed the *Miller-Tucker Inc.* in 1935. Tucker’s association with Miller, and Tucker’s outgoing personality, made him well known and respected by in the racing community by 1939. As early as 1937 Preston Tucker realized that war was on the horizon, so he began to design a high-speed armored vehicle for military use. Although nothing came of this vehicle, his powered *Tucker Turret* gun mount was a major success and was used on a variety of military vehicles, including: PT boats, landing craft, B-17 and B-29 bombers.

In 1940 Tucker started his own aviation company, *The Tucker Aviation Company*. He was bought out by *Higgins Industries* in 1942, forming the *Higgins-Tucker Aviation Company*. After fallout between the two men, Tucker returned to Michigan in 1943 to start designing the Tucker car and form the Tucker Corporation. Preston Tucker’s first design appeared in the December 1946 issue of *Science Illustrated*. The article featured a futuristic drawing by George Lawson and a 1/8<sup>th</sup> scale model presented as a full-size car. The story captured the public’s imagination. Within a few weeks, Tucker had quickly hired designer Alex Tremulis, previously from Auburn, Cord, Duisenberg, to create a more realistic design. By March 1947, Preston Tucker ran advertisements for the Tucker car in several

national newspapers, titled, "How 15 years of testing produced the car of the year." More designers and engineers were hired, and against all odds, the Tucker dream appeared to becoming a possible reality.

Tucker and his associates were able to negotiate a lease for the Chicago Dodge Aircraft Engine Plant from the U.S. Government's War Assets Administration. This plant was one of the largest factory buildings in the world. Unfortunately, Tucker was not able to move into the building until September 1947, due to the need to secure financing and litigation with another company over the facility.



**"IT'S TUCKERTIME ON THE HIGHWAY"**

When Preston Tucker unveiled his radically new Tucker '48 the American public and the automotive industry seriously took notice. After the war anything seemed possible, including a completely new car company with a radically new car. Preston Tucker quickly raised \$17 million in a stock IPO and sold dealerships around the country. And the *Tucker Accessory Program* generated an additional \$2 million even before the first car was built.

But a troubled "World Premier" of the Tucker '48 on June 19, 1947 was an ominous occasion—the prototype sounded bad and barely made it onto the stage. Nevertheless, the public was excited about the new car's radical features, such as: radical new styling (doors cut into the roof and only 60 inches high), rear-engine, all-wheel independent suspension, Cyclopes Eye moving center light, safety dash and "Safety Chamber" crash compartment, high performance and high gas mileage, all offered at the reasonable price of \$2,450. Tucker reportedly received 322,000 orders for the new Tucker.

The specifications for the Tucker were both unusual and impressive for the time. The Tucker had an all-alloy, water-cooled, 335 cubic inch, flat 6 cylinder motor, rated at 166 hp and 372 lbs torque—the motor was derived from a Franklin air-cooled helicopter motor. The remote control transmission was at first from old 1936-7 Cord 810/12 cars found in junkyards--before Tucker could make their own transmissions. Its aerodynamic styling led to an estimated drag coefficient of 0.30—good even for today. The car was said to be capable of 0-60mph in 10 seconds and had a top speed of 120 mph. Factory testing show 20 mph at a steady 50-55 mph. Even when the actual projected price appeared to be near \$4000 (Cadillac territory), the Tucker would likely have sold well.



The monumental process of bringing a new car to market cannot be rushed and that is apparently what happened to the Tucker. Basic design and prototype manufacturing problems led to suspension components breaking, motor and transmissions problems... but more dramatic outside events prevented the car from being fully developed. After the troubled premier there were a few critical press accusations. More devastating were the comments and investigations by some of Michigan's Congressional representatives, which culminated in a Federal Government investigation; and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charges of fraud. The government's case was poor (at best) therefore the defense felt it was unnecessary to put on any witnesses, and Preston Tucker and all of the others were acquitted in 1950 (Victor Weisberger's mother-in-law was on the jury). Unfortunately, due to the bad press, the Tucker Corporation was liquidated for \$156,000 or 18 cents on the dollar. Preston Tucker was still optimistic after the trial, but he died six years later never realizing his dream.

Was there a Tucker "conspiracy" by the Big Three auto manufacturers to shut down Tucker? There is little evidence of a coordinated conspiracy against Tucker, but there is overwhelming evidence that powerful men, with close connections to the auto industry, worked hard to undermine the newcomer—whatever it was, their efforts were successful. Sadly a lot of people lost a lot of money.

The Tucker Corporation was gone, but there were still a quite few Tucker cars around. In an October 1958 *Motor Trend* magazine article, "Whatever happened to... the TUCKER?" it was revealed that Nick Jenin, of Ft. Lauderdale, was collecting/hording Tuckers. Jenin had acquired 9 Tuckers by this time. Jenin reported, "My Tuckers run almost like new automobiles. In fact, I've had less mechanical trouble with them than with my up-to-date high-priced car."

The Tucker dream was becoming a faded memory until director, Francis Ford Coppola's 1988 movie, *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*, exposed a new generation to the Tucker story. Today every Tucker car is a treasure (with recent auction prices up to \$2.9 million), and the many Tucker Accessories and ephremra are very collectable.

The *AACA Museum* is fortunate to have been gifted the David Cammack Tucker collection--the largest collection of Tucker automobiles (3) and artifacts in the world. This collection includes Tucker cars: prototype chassis #1001, chassis #1022, and chassis #1026—the only Tucker with an automatic transmission. Also test chassis #2, several prototype engines, thousands of engineering drawings, documents, and original Tucker parts. The AACA Museum is currently fundraising for a permanent display of this unique collection; if you interested in more Tucker information or donating, go to the *AACA Museum* website: [aacamuseum.org](http://aacamuseum.org)



Tucker desktop ashtray



Tucker Accessory Packages

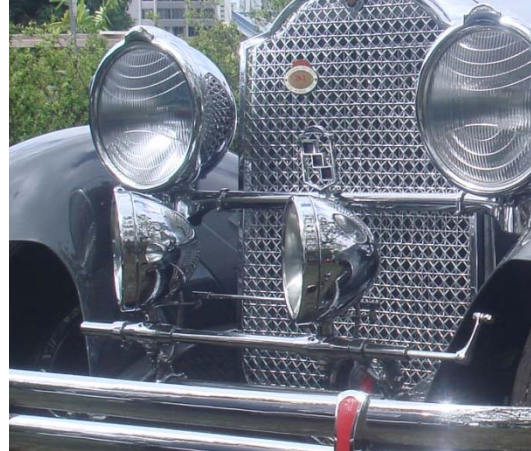


Tucker '48 on tour

## PERIOD ACCESSORIES: THE INNOVATIVE PILOT-RAY DRIVING LIGHTS



Pilot Ray lights on Fred Weisberger's 1930 Cadillac

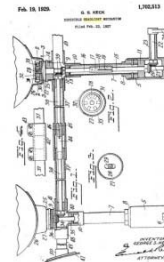
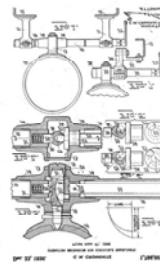
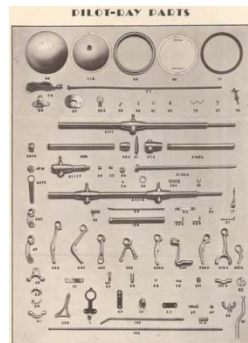
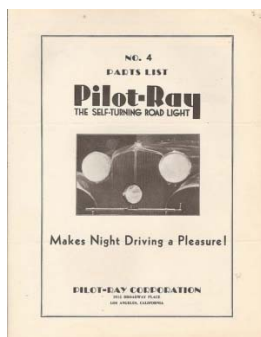


Pilot Ray on Bob Bosley's 1931 Packard

Accessory driving lights have been popular from the earliest days of the automobile. One of the more innovative and expensive early 1930s accessories were the Pilot-Ray driving lights, also known as "The Self-Turning Road Light". As Pilot-Ray claimed in their advertisements, (Pilot-Ray) "Makes Night Driving a Pleasure". Pilot-Ray lights were unique because the lights are linked to the steering and physically turn in the direction of the front wheels, thus they light the way when the car is making a turn. A good idea!

Pilot-Ray lights are occasionally found on early 1930s Classic Cars. Both Cadillac and Packard listed Pilot-Ray lights as a factory option and these Pilot-Ray lights often included the car company name along with Pilot-Ray stamped on the top of each light. Pilot-Ray lights were also available for other cars. In 1931 the Franklin Automobile Company (1902-1934), the makers of fine air-cooled luxury automobiles; listed Pilot-Ray lights for \$35 for a single light and \$60 for the dual lights. By 1932 Packard was charging \$44.50 for the dual lights.

Sometime in the early 1930s Pilot-Ray Co. stopped producing the distinctive turning driving lights. Pilot-Ray lights were manufactured by the Pilot-Ray Corporation. The company was located at 2912 Broadway Place, Los Angeles, California. The building was built in 1924 and it still exists. Sadly, there is not a lot of published information on the Pilot-Ray corporate history, but a good idea is always a good idea. The Tucker 48 center light also turned with the steering and in recent years several luxury European car manufacturers have had similar turning driving lights. So if you see a fine "Classic Car" with one or two moving headlights, you are looking at a set of Pilot-Ray lights, and if they don't turn, you are likely looking at one of the lesser brands such as Trippe, Lorraine or something else.



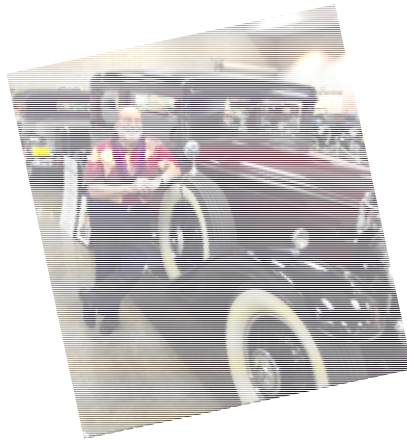


**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The 2014 *First Hawaiian Auto Show* was a great success! I would like to formally thank all of the members who took the time to display their cars at the show and those members who came by the show to watch/share the cars. Howard Andrus was voted "*Big Man of the Show*" for working hard every hour of the show "selling" his 1910 Model T—mahalo! Period dress costumes are becoming more popular—and Bob Bosley showed everyone how it is done with a vintage Zoot Suit. We signed up five new enthusiastic members. Apparently the public greatly enjoyed our display. Dave Rolf, the Director of the Hawaii Automobile Dealers Association, was most impressed with our display. He guided many people over to our display with pride, including the Governor, a former Checker car daily driver, who especially enjoyed our antique cars. Our 2014 club display was the largest and most impressive to date. We will have to work hard to do better for 2015, so get your cars ready...



Bob Bosley in period style



Gov. Neil Abercrombie and Cadillac

**\*\*\*\*\*FUTURE CLUB MEETINGS\*\*\*\*\***

(IMPORTANT - No April or June Meetings.)

**May Meeting: Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>** The DeVries family are hosting this meeting at their home in Kailua. **Address: 1460 Kiukee Place, Kailua. Time: 10:00AM – 2:00PM.** There will be: a car display on their large lawn, a car rally/tour drive around Kailua, and plenty of car talk—drinks and a hot dog lunch will be provided (please bring a small side dish). Plan to attend and bring an antique car. Any questions: Fred at 254-0392 or Hugo at 261-2179

**IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE IT--PLEASE RENEW YOUR 2014 ALOHA REGION MEMBERSHIP**

-----Cut & Mail-----

**2014 ALOHA REGION, AACA MEMBERSHIP**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Car(s) you own: \_\_\_\_\_

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