



The Runabout

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Orleans County historian

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The horseless carriage pictured here was purchased in 1903 by E.W. Wilcox of Albion.

The bill of sale which was found with the picture indicates the following: "Rochester Automobile Company 150 to 170 South Ave. Rochester, NY. Joseph V. Mandery, Proprietor" Typed on this bill we find:

1 Oldsmobile	
No. 8928	\$650.00
Top	\$50.00
	\$700.00
Less 10 %	\$70.00
	\$630.00

I think this is when he ordered the auto — March 9, 1903. On an accompanying bill of sale dated May 1, 1903 we find this information:

April 1, 5 hrs	\$2.50
Expenses	\$1.05
April 2, 12 hrs	\$6.00
R.R. fare	95 cents
Carefare	10 cents
Bus	10 cents
Dinner	40 cents
Total	\$11.10

Mr. Wilcox paid this dated June 1, 1903. It would appear to me that perhaps someone, say a mechanic from the Rochester Automobile Co., came out to Albion to work on the car, hence the railroad fare of 95 cents and a dinner for 40 cents.

At any rate, we can deduce auto mechanics were getting 50 cents an hour. Perhaps some of the hours were spent in assembling the top. Who knows? Back at this time there were no service stations. In fact, gasoline was sold at hardware stores. E. W. Wilcox is listed in the 1903 Orleans County Directory for hardware stores, plumbing, tinning and sewing machines. The hardware store continues today on Main St. in Albion as the Family Hardware. We know that in fact gasoline was dispensed from the curb in front of

Bethinking of Olde Orleans

the store during the early 20th century before service stations became prevalent.

E.W. Wilcox would certainly have been among the first in Albion and Orleans County to have purchased an automobile.

On the reserve side of our picture we find the following printed information:

"They Go Wherever You See Them

Regular Oldsmobile Runabout

This is our famous runabout which is known from San Francisco to Sackett's Harbor, Maine. It is better and stronger than ever, and embodies several changes which will appeal to previous owners as well as prospective purchasers of this machine.

For reliability and all-around serviceability, the following records of achievements this past season demonstrate that in its class the Oldsmobile runabout stands without a peer:

CLIMBING GRADES — In the spring, it accomplished the feat of mounting the Capitol steps at Lansing, the grade of which is 44 per cent, an ascent unequaled by any other car. To the Oldsmobile also belongs the honor of being the only gasoline runabout to ever climb Mt. Washington.

RACING — This season we have accumulated a whole vault full of silverware in the shape of cups and trophies won on the track, and up to the present time we hold the track record from one to ten miles for machines in our class in this country.

TRANSCONTINENTALISM — The only runabout to ever cross the American continent.

"You See Them Wherever You Go"