

# Model 'E' Runabout

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In last week's history column No. 6, I ran a story about a horseless carriage purchased by E.W. Wilcox in Albion in 1903. In May 1905, he purchased the Model "E" Runabout shown here. This is surely an upgrade from the horseless carriage to an early auto.

Unlike the 1903 model, this came with a top as standard equipment. It also has a steering wheel rather than a tiller as was seen in the earlier model.

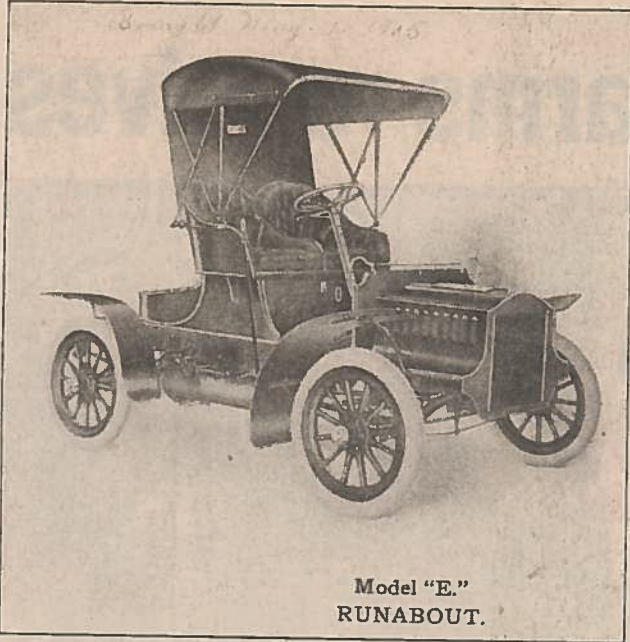
However, there is still no windshield nor are there any head lamps shown on the auto.

No information accompanies the picture as to cost and options. I believe however this Oldsmobile was constructed with a wood body.

It is interesting to note that although E.W. Wilcox was a hardware merchant one of the first people to purchase horseless carriages were physicians. Dr. Frank G. Sherwood of Albion owned one as early as 1898 and Dr. Arnold E. Wage had one by 1902.

Back at that time doctors made house calls and they determined they could go to the patient and see more patients in a horseless carriage rather than a horse-drawn carriage.

One drawback with these early vehicles is that they did not have a reverse gear on them. You could only drive forward. Hence



Model "E."  
RUNABOUT.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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## Bethinking of Olde Orleans

Dr. Wage put a turn table in his "auto house" so he could drive in and then crank his auto around headed out. That way he was ready to go in a hurry in case of an emergency call.

In the mid-1940s the Martillotta brothers purchased that property and tore out the turn table when transforming the building into Marti's Super Club.

Also, in the early 20th century when the Burt Olney Canning Co. owned a residence on East Ave. an

"auto house" was built there with doors on the west as well as the east sides. That way the horseless carriage could be driven in, parked, and then driven out the other side. That "auto house" remains intact today near the intersection of Butts Road and Route 31.

The term "auto house" was often used in the early 20th century rather than the term garage as we would today. Back then the word garage was used to describe a commercial establishment where autos were taken for service and repair.

*C. W. Lattin is the Orleans County historian. His column appears every Thursday in The Journal-Register and The Albion-Advertiser.*