
NEWS

Butler County Historical Society

Preserving and Interpreting Butler County's Rich Heritage

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THE LONG-LOST PACKARD AUTOMOBILE AGAIN TRAVELS BUTLER COUNTY ROADS

Alan Hounshell, docent for the American Packard Museum, brings automotive history and an actual Packard to a program for the Butler County Historical Society at Miami Hamilton Downtown

(Hamilton, OH) – Taking a walk along any Main Street in 1930, one was likely to overhear news about the disastrous economic recession. Bad news was as frequent as a Ford Model T, which at that time was the most common car on American roads. Then around the corner turned a new sleek-looking auto. As the driver moved along the crowded street, passers-by peered through a sea of Fords to catch a glimpse of this beautiful car – a literal sight for sore eyes. But the mighty 12-cylinder engine of this new Packard quickly moved the car and driver down the street and out of sight.

At a time when Henry Ford was producing cars that sold for \$440, the Packard Motor Car Company was successfully selling its premier automobiles starting at \$2,600. Disappointed by the quality of a car they purchased in the late 1890s, founders and brothers James Ward Packard and William Dowd Packard built an automobile that they, and soon many others, believed was the best that money could buy. New Packard cars were introduced to the nation's roads for more than half a century. The Packard company survived the Great Depression and produced engines for the P-51 Mustang fighter-plane during World War II. During the post-war years Packard struggled and eventually succumbed to the might of the "big three" automakers – Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler.

At 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 22nd, Alan Hounshell will speak about this most beloved of American automobiles. Alan is a docent for the American Packard Museum, located in Dayton, Ohio. His family owned an automotive business where he worked after school and eventually became its president, serving until it was sold in 2000. His family members were devoted Packard owners. The program will be held at Miami Hamilton Downtown and will feature an actual Packard for viewing and demonstrations.

This program is sponsored by the Butler County Historical Society as part of its summer series, "Planes, Trains and Automobiles." It is a prelude to the Antique Car Parade to take place the following Saturday. June's program featured Tom Hogan, a member of the family that once owned the Butler County Regional Airport and Hogan Airfield. A later program will discuss the influence of railroads on Butler County. Please look for information regarding future programs at the BCHS website: www.bchistoricalociety.com.

Simply put...

WHAT: The Packard Motor Car Company
WHO: Alan Hounshell, docent for the American Packard Museum
WHEN: Thursday, July 22nd at 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Miami Hamilton Downtown
221 High St.
Hamilton, OH 45011
NOTE: Free and open to the public.

In 2009, the Butler County Historical Society (BCHS) celebrated 75 years of dedication to the preservation and interpretation of Butler County's rich heritage. The BCHS, a non-profit organization, operates the historic Benninghofen House – a showcase of Victorian Era lifestyle that includes all the furnishings and décor appropriate for a late 19th century home. Additionally, the BCHS manages an archive that consists of many original and secondary materials relating to regional history. To help us prepare for your visit (tour or research), please call ahead (513) 896-9930. The BCHS is also affiliated with Heritage Hall, a space for the display of rotating exhibits and the permanent location of the Robert McCloskey Collection. To learn more about Heritage Hall, please call (513) 737-5958.