



# COLE MOTOR CAR REGISTRY BULLETIN



Volume 1 Number 2

March 2019



I would like to welcome all Cole Motor company owners and enthusiasts to the second edition of the Cole Motor Car Registry Bulletin. Since the launch of the Cole Motor Car Registry, it has been a whirlwind of activity and a very fulfilling endeavor. My son and I have met many great people who are both Cole owners and enthusiasts and the amount of knowledge that has been shared about Coles in that amount of time is starting to add up.

One big step and exciting piece of news that happened in February was that the Cole Motor Car Registry was accepted and recognized as an HCCA affiliated registry. The HCCA reviewed our mission, the website, and what we are doing and the board voted to approve us as an official registry. This means that the Cole registry will appear in their list of registries in their periodic Gazette and will also be linked on their website.



## COLE <sup>110<sup>th</sup></sup> Anniversary 1909-2019

As you probably saw in other updates about the event I sent out, the Cole meetup to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Cole Motor Car Company is coming together very well. As of right now we have 10 confirmed Cole cars that are attending and another handful that are maybes. This is an amazing amount of Coles that will be in one place at one time and I do not believe this many have been together since the late 20's. Half of the cars that will be there are a 1909 Cole high wheeler, a 1911 Cole 30 Flyer, a 1915 Cole roadster with Coles first V8, a 1919 Cole Limo with air suspension, and the 1925 Cole Brouette with body by Willoughby.

This gathering of Coles will take place at the Gilmore pre 1942 Showcase event which will have hundreds of pre war cars to see and enjoy as well. The Coles will be given a place of prominence and will be incorporated into many of the activities that take place throughout the show. The best thing will be that we can start our cars up and drive them around the beautiful Gilmore Museum campus.

**When:** May 17th and 18th, 2019

**Where:** [Gilmore Car Museum](http://www.gilmorecar.com), 6865 W Hickory Rd, Hickory Corners, MI

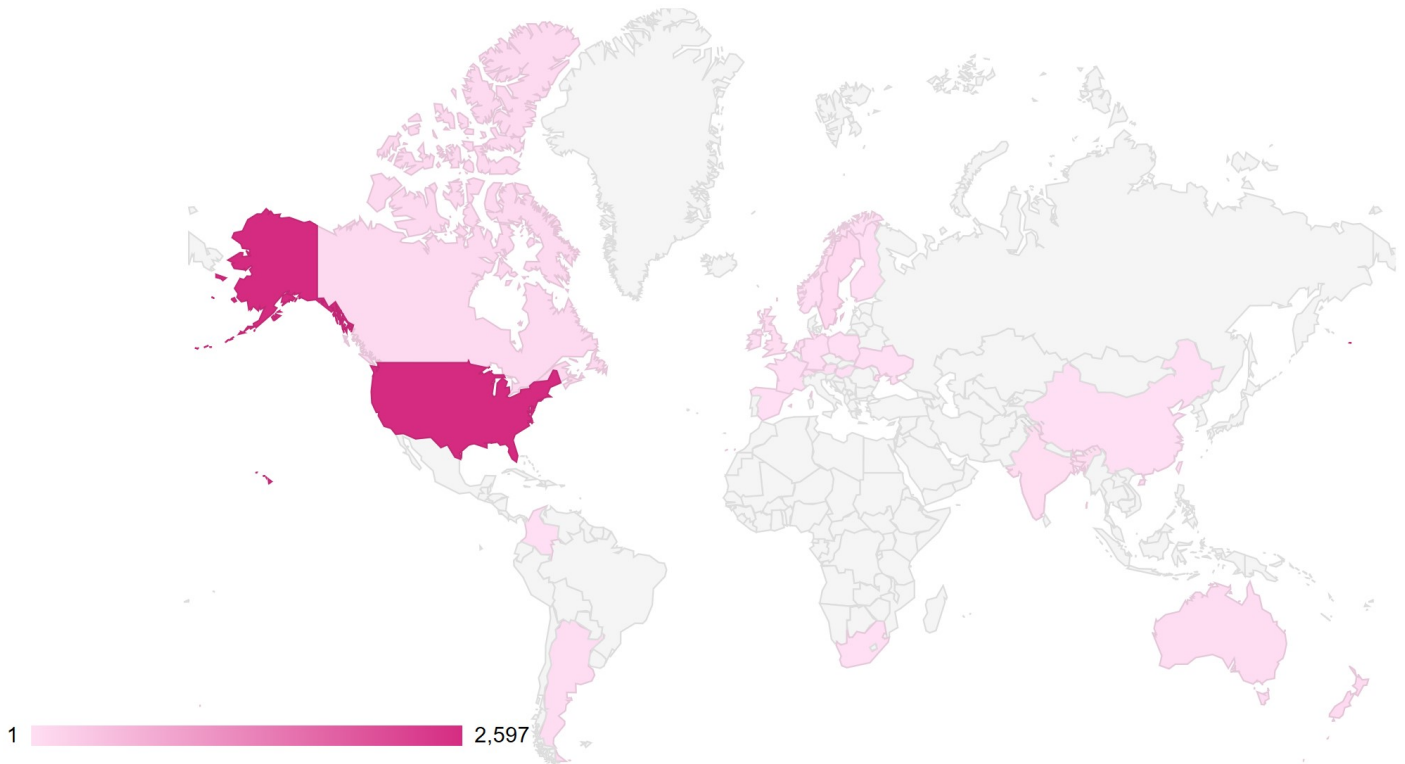
**Questions:** Contact Kevin Fleck at [kfleck@outlook.com](mailto:kfleck@outlook.com) or call at 269-830-6174



This will be a rare opportunity to see other Cole cars and to compare and learn from them!

### The Registry Update

It has been a whirlwind of activity over the last several months here at the registry. The website, [colemotorcarregistry.com](http://colemotorcarregistry.com), is starting to get more and more hits from people doing searches on Google, Bing, and other avenues. We now have links to our site from the HCCA, Hemmings, the Cole Wikipedia page, and other major automotive sites. Our site has now been visited by people from many parts of the world who are seeking information on either the Cole automobile or other related automotive history. Here is a chart that shows the total number of unique people that have visited the registry and where they are from. The darker the shading, the more visits from that country.



Through the website, community connections, and a greater awareness on social media groups and related car clubs, we have been able to track down some more Cole cars and owners that were lost from the old registry. There were no 'new' known Cole cars found over the last period and the registry stands at 77 known Cole automobiles today. The cars that we were able to identify and track down the current owners for are as follows:

1. 1910 Cole Palace touring is in New York and is being put back together with a fresh restoration after it was taken apart and put in storage over ten years ago.
2. A 1916 Cole Touring, a 1919 Cole dual window Sport Touring, and a 1921 Cole Sedan are located together in Michigan.
3. A 1913 Big 6 Cylinder Roadster is located in Florida at the Palmetto Collection (<https://collectiononpalmetto.com/>)
4. A 1915 6-50 7p Touring car is in New York. The car is unrestored and in original condition
5. A 1911 30-4Q Touring car is in Vermont.

There are still 37 cars from the old registry in 2009 that have not been relocated. As you are out and about, if you run across someone with a Cole, please send them my way to try and locate these cars or any additional surviving cars that we do not know about.

## Cole Motor Car Registry Bulletin (Continued)

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We are starting to receive emails and contacts from people around the world who are doing research on something related to the Cole Motor Car company and they find the website in a search engine such as Google. Here is a round of emails that we received over the last couple of months.

1. A gentleman from the US reached out as he purchased a 1911 Stanley steamer recently and it had a pair of 1910/11 Cole script Brass Solar headlights on it. He is selling the nice set of lights, so if anyone is interested, please let me know and I will put you in contact.
  2. A gentleman from New Zealand reached out and he is looking to put a 1916 Cole together. He has almost all body panels and many other parts, however he is missing a frame. If anyone knows of a mid teens frame out there, let me know and I can pass it on.
  3. A gentleman reached out from Montana and he has a Cole 1923-24 body piece that includes the front cowl, the windshield, the door frames and the doors.
  4. I have been in communication with the website [americanautoemblems.com](http://americanautoemblems.com) and I will be working with them to add a section to their site for the Cole Motor Car Company badges and emblems.
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I am going to use this resource section of the Cole Bulletin to share any useful information that Cole owners may appreciate for their cars and to start sharing any parts or cars wanted as well as parts or cars for sale. I don't want this to be a general market place, though I do want to help make the connection for people who need something or have something to offer.

First of all, a few shout outs for awareness: (If you know of any one or a resource that would be good for other Cole owners to know about, please let me know)

1. Olson's Gaskets were able to supply a new Cole V8 head gasket in just a few days. I suggest you take a look at them if you have gasket needs. <https://www.olsonsgaskets.com/>
2. If you are out east or close to New York, you should check out Keyser Automobile Works. Jeff specializes in brass and classic era restoration and service work and does a great job. Jeff also personally owns a 1915 Cole Roadster, so he is very familiar with Coles. <http://keysorautomobileworks.com/>

Cole Cars for Sale:

I know of a few owners that are looking for the right new care taker for their beloved Cole to go to. None of these cars are advertised anywhere, but if you are interested or know someone who might be as well, please let me know and I can make the connection.

1. A 1914 Series Nine Touring car 4 cylinder—restored 10 years ago or so
2. A 1920 Cole Aero 8 7p Touring car—restored 10 years ago or so
3. A 1919 Cole Aero 8 5p Sportster—restored 10 years ago or so
4. A 1912 Cole 30/40 Chassis with two engines—Intent was to recreate a Cole racer, but it never came together

If there is anyone who needs any specific Cole parts or if you have any Cole parts for sale, please let me know and I can get it out to the owners.

## Cole Motor Car Registry Bulletin (Continued)

THERE'S A TOUCH OF TOMORROW IN ALL COLE DOES TODAY

*History through our Cars*

\*\*The above was a slogan at the Cole Motor Car Company and this new section of the Bulletin will feature a car and the history behind it.\*\*



Our first car in our History "Through our Cars" section is the 1923 Cole 2 Person Coupe owned by Benjamin Burnham-Fleck. Ben is 18 years old and helped to start the registry and other Cole related research and activities. The 1923 Coupe is an experimental or test car that was built in 1922 by the company founder, JJ Cole, for his son JJ Cole Jr.. At the time JJ Cole Jr., was finishing his college at Harvard and was getting heavily involved in the family company. Also at the time, Harvey Firestone was working on the new Balloon tires. Balloon tires are high volume low pressure tires that were very different from the thin high pressure tires that were being used by auto companies at the time. The new tires had several benefits like a softer and smoother ride, greater braking, low air loss, less skidding, and a new look. Essentially, Balloon tires are the genesis of the modern tire that we use today.

Engineers quickly learned that you could not just put a balloon tire on a standard car of the time as it did not perform right and was actually dangerous to drive in. As with other firsts over the year and sticking to his company slogan, JJ Cole wanted to be a pioneer with balloon tires. Besides being a sporty luxury car for his son, JJ Cole wanted a car that was engineered for balloon tires. This car has other new Cole components such as a different chassis configuration, four wheel brakes, a multi disc clutch, special Disteel disc wheels, and some other tweaks so that Cole could test and prove that the new Firestone balloon tires were the way to go and the 'standard' of the future. This car also has a dual spare tire on the back and that was specially built so that they had multiple spares on hand during testing and so that they could show off the balloon tires at the industry Auto Shows.



November 22, 1923

MOTOR AGE

# COLE

*The Car That Introduced  
Balloon Tires to America*

IN THE very near future—when Balloon Tires are standard and optional equipment on all fine cars—remember that it was Cole who introduced them

—just as it was Cole who introduced Demountable Rims, Four-Doors, One-Man Tops, and a host of other engineered refinements which are now taken for granted.

Throughout engine, body and chassis, the Cole embodies a number of forward-looking improvements which are not obtainable on ordinary cars.

Cole engineers are always a step ahead of the procession.

COLE MOTOR CAR COMPANY  
INDIANAPOLIS, U. S. A.

THERE'S A TOUCH OF TOMORROW IN ALL COLE DOES TODAY

Cole was gaining some engineering notoriety and a buzz in the industry about the balloon tires. Here is a note from Harvey Firestone sent to Henry Ford that was found in the Ford Archives. *"Your interest in balloon tires started me actively testing and developing them and they are giving service far beyond my expectations. At this time several large automobile manufacturers are active in their experiments on this tire and I believe will adopt it as optional equipment. Cole Motor Car Company has already adopted it. I was in New York this week and went to the closed car show and the Cole exhibit with balloon tires was the most popular exhibit there. I do not know, of course, how popular this tire is going to be but I want you to know the conditions for it is going to be adopted and is a practical tire --- I think it is and we are going to put it on the market in a limited way. I would like to see the Lincoln be among the first to offer it to the trade as optional equipment. I enclose letter from Mr. Meadowcroft and a Cole booklet with a notation made by Mr. Edison. You will see that he is strongly sold on the balloon tire."*

The way that this turned out was that Cole was the first to adopt balloon tires as standard on a production vehicle in 1923 on one of their models, the Aero Volante. Besides the balloon tires, the other tech in this car also was adopted as standard. This Cole Coupe experimental car was an important part of making this achievable for both Cole and the auto industry. In May of 1924 partnering with the Indy Motor Speedway, Cole also became the first to have balloon tires on the pace car for the Indianapolis 500 race.

# Cole Motor Car Registry Bulletin (Continued)

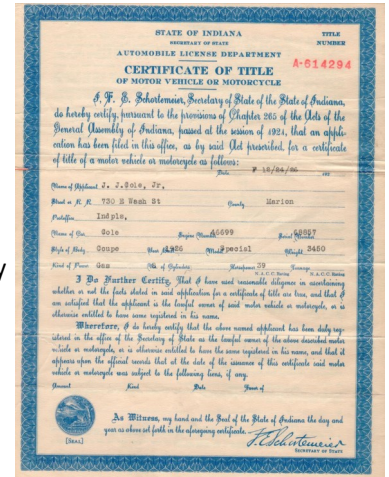
THERE'S A TOUCH OF TOMORROW IN ALL COLE DOES TODAY

*History through our Cars (cont.)*

After done with testing the balloon tires and participating in auto shows, JJ Cole Jr. used the car and took formal titled ownership in 1926 after the Cole Motor Car Company liquidated in 1925. Ben is fortunate to have the preserved original title for the car with JJ Cole Jr. listed as the owner . The car was then used somewhat sparingly and then was put in the



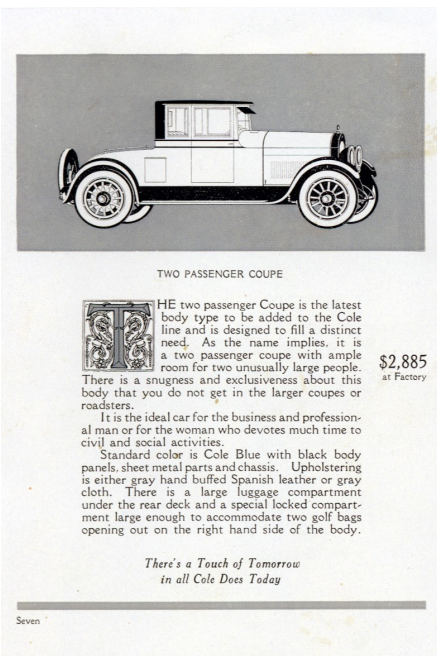
basement of the old Cole Motor Car company factory for most of its life. The cars in the basement of the factory were maintained by the family and used for occasional events. When JJ Cole Jr. died in the early 1950's, his son, Joe Cole, became the caretaker of this and other cars. There are a few pictures and newspaper articles about the Cole legacy and the cars in the basement of the factory such as this one from the Indianapolis Star on December 1st, of 1960. While they had the date wrong of 1924 in the article, it shows this Coupe on the left in the picture with Joe Cole at the center.



Joe Cole retained ownership of the car until he sold it to Leroy Cole, former leader of the Cole Motor Car Club of America, in about 1990. Unfortunately, the car had suffered water damage during a flood of the river behind the factory that affected some of the cars in the basement. Due to the condition of the car when Leroy acquired it, it had to be restored. Leroy set out to do a meticulous and accurate restoration that was completed in 2008. He chose some lighter and sportier colors for the car which are Tuxedo Grey with black trim, which was a color that Cole was using on it's cars at the time.



Leroy used the car over the years at occasional events and tours and then loaned it to the Gilmore Car Museum in 2017. After we started the registry and got to know Leroy, Ben acquired the car from Leroy and became the next care taker for this special car. The car is still currently on loan to the Gilmore and Ben does plan on using it for events and tours. Ben will be showing the 1923 Coupe at the Concourse of America at the Inn at St. John's in July of 2019 as the car was invited to participate. Ben will also have it at the CCCA Grand Classic and CCCA Museum experience Concours in Michigan during June. Ben is excited to be the owner of this special Cole car and one that helped to make an impact on the auto industry.



One last note on this car is to address a question that comes up, and that is the question of since this was an experimental car, were there any other cars of this model produced in production? We do know that this car was built as a one off in 1922, however Cole was planning to have a production two person coupe version in the 1923 line up. Cole definitely had coupe's over the years but they were always the 3 or 4 person coupes that others had as well. Leroy Cole did find this ad copy in a 1923 booklet, however other 1923 dealer booklets do not have this model listed. If you look at the ad picture for the car, you will see that it does not match up exactly to Ben's 1923 but it is close. Also, books such as Bev Kim's auto encyclopedia do not list this model from Cole. Essentially, we do not know if any other 2 person Coupes were produced and sold and we have not run across any other pictures of one in the wild, except one factory photo of the car that you see in the ad with the artillery wheels. We are also trying to determine who the coach builder was for this car. The other big 2 person coupe at the time was the Lincoln Model L. Ben's car as optioned would have been closer to \$3300 as a price.

This article is reprinted from the Cole Motor Car Club of America Bulletin dated 2006 and was the 1st issue of that year. Thanks to Leroy Cole!

## **HISTORICAL J. J. COLE NEWSCLIPS**

Found in The Indianapolis Star: Friday, May 30, 1919

### ***J. J. Cole and Wife Met Wagner Near to Death***

An interesting sidelight on the 500-mile race which involves some local persons and which dates back to the earlier days of automobile racing in this country, developed when the team of foreign drivers who will pilot the famous Ballot cars in the Speedway Classic this year arrived in Indianapolis to put their cars through the preliminary paces. The principals in the episode were J. J. Cole, president of the Cole Motor Car Company; Mrs. Cole and Louis Wagner of the Ballot team.

It seems that in 1911, when Mr. Cole was watching the destinies of his famous Cole "30" racing cars, which made such a remarkable record during the two years they were entered in speed events throughout the country, he, together with Mrs. Cole, went to Savannah, Ga., to see the races there in which "Wild" Bill Endicott, his late brother Harry, and others who were associated with the Cole as pilots of Cole entries, were entered.

During the course of the race an accident happened, and when the smoke cleared away it was found that Louis Wagner had been severely injured, while his mechanic, who was thrown into a friendly tree top along the track, escaped unscratched.

Because of the crowded condition of the track and the continual onrush of cars it was impossible to get medical attention to the injured pilot from the first aid station situated in the center of the track.

Mr. and Mrs. Cole had been viewing the race from their automobile and when the prostrate form of the injured driver was carried by they placed their car at the disposal of those who were attending the injured man, and urged them to rush Wagner to a hospital. The top was lowered, and an improvised stretcher was laid across the back of the seats. On this Wagner was laid. An examination of his injuries caused grave doubt as to the possibility of his

recovery and knowing that he was a Frenchman, Mrs. Cole held up a crucifix before his eyes. Wagner had not lost consciousness despite his crushing injuries, and when he saw the crucifix, he simply smiled and shook his head. Neither Mr. or Mrs. Cole had seen Wagner since that day.

While seated in the Claypool Hotel, where they make their home, the other evening at dinner, Mr. Cole chanced to glance up as a man entered. It was Wagner. To the surprise of Mr. and Mrs. Cole, the famous pilot walked straight to their table and in very broken English expressed his gratitude to them. He had remembered them.

### ***Cole Says Auto Racing Never Will Die Out***

As a veteran follower of automobile racing and the owner of cars which, in their day, established some records that still stand, J. J. Cole, president of the Cole Motor Car Company of this city, is still as enthusiastic a fan as he was when his own Cole "30s" were coursing the various Speedways of the country.

"Interest in automobile racing will never die out," said Mr. Cole. "It was predicted some years ago that it would, but the lure of the track among followers of the automobile is as keen today as it was in the beginning. And the attendance at the races here this year, I'm sure, will bear me out in my contention.

"To be sure, it is not the privilege of many to sit in their cars along the track and watch cars of the same make as their own hurtling away in front of them. But, whatever their nameplates, they're automobiles just the same, and achievements which they represent to make possible their almost unbelievable performance on the track. Indianapolis is known the world over as the pioneer in Speedway racing, having had the first track of its kind, I believe, that was ever built. And the cars built in

Indianapolis have made remarkable records on the tracks of the world, also.

"The race this year has given our company a chance to bring all of its dealers together for a rousing and friendly meeting. It has been staged at an ideal time, and on the day prior to the race we are holding open house at our plant."

The following 4 photos were in a 1914-1915 Ohio Photo Album. The caption could very well read. "POP's COLE"



"USED by the BOYS!"

