

Ace Collins

GEARED-UP FAITH

FOR CLASSIC CAR BUFFS

REFLECT • RECHARGE • RESTORE



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— FOR —

**CLASSIC CAR
BUFFS**



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Geared-Up Faith for Classic Car Buffs: Devotions to Help You Reflect, Recharge, and Restore

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Introduction

LEGENDARY CARS INSPIRE legendary stories, whether they're generated by the manufacturers or individual owners. Separating fact from fiction in the automotive world is often difficult—if not impossible.

A clear example is the myriad of stories claiming to fully identify why a Jeep is called a Jeep. The truth is this: The answer has never been satisfactorily defined.

Even within the well-documented history of the Ford Motor Company, there are still debates about whether it was Henry or Edsel who came up with certain ideas and put them into motion.

And when it comes to actual sales figures of car models, the totals are often called into question due to differing accounting policies at various companies.

No one would argue that within a decade of the horseless carriage's debut, the car was the most recognized symbol of the industrial and mechanical age. The automotive industry

was also one of the primary forces in the advancement of technology and offered that technology to everyone. Cars and trucks spurred American growth by hauling people and products everywhere, and soon the United States became a power player on the world stage.

The men behind the cars possessed creative genius and deeply rooted determination, but they were also flawed. And just like all of us, they were sometimes shortsighted and misguided. Yet through their work they united countless people from different backgrounds and cultures. For that, we owe them dearly.

Thanks to a crack team of fact-checkers coupled with scores of interviews, we have attempted to separate reality from myth and present history as it unfolded. The photos I've included have either been taken recently or gleaned from historical archives, all of them chosen so you could fully visualize the cars that have enthralled collectors for decades.

I've enjoyed every aspect of this project, but to me the most important part of this book is the Spiritual Tune-Up at the end of each chapter. My hope is each one will steer you toward service, growth, and spiritual knowledge. Enjoy the stories, admire the cars, and share them with others.

Special thanks to the car clubs, museums, historians, and private owners who helped me put this work into motion. Without them, the project could not have been completed.

And on a personal note, I want to remember my grandfather, Tom Shell, who planted in me a fascination with the automotive world. Thanks, Grandpa!

If you don't see your favorite make or model in the book, perhaps there will be another collection of stories down the road. God bless, and happy motoring!

Ace Collins



CHAPTER 1

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company

More People Ride on Goodyear Tires than on Any Other Kind

The King will say to those on his right, . . . “Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me.” . . . Then these righteous ones will reply, “Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will say, . . . “When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!”

MATTHEW 25:34-40

DRIVING THE STORY

Charles Goodyear, a man who never imagined, much less built, a horseless carriage, is as important to the success of the automobile as were Henry Ford, Louis Chevrolet, and Walter Chrysler. Some would even argue that without this inventor, the car as we know it might have never gotten on the road. Yet Charles Goodyear's life was filled with sadness, despair, and rejection, not triumph and acclaim.

Goodyear was born in 1800 in New Haven, Connecticut. His father, Amasa, was a blacksmith and button maker who started an agricultural-hardware retail business. After returning from business school, Charles became the sales manager. The family did well for a number of years, even expanding into other states. But their system of extending credit to farmers, coupled with money being tied up in real estate investments and inventions, eventually doomed the business. Customers weren't paying their bills, and creditors came collecting. Awash in debt, Charles turned all his attention to inventions, hoping to recoup funds and appease the creditors. But in the early 1830s, Goodyear was sent to debtor's prison for a time.

When he was released, Goodyear became interested in the potential of something most people thought was little more than a nuisance—India rubber. Raw rubber was hard to work with, and those who were able to utilize it in some form, such as Scotsman Charles Macintosh did with his waterproof garments, were the exceptions. But Goodyear was convinced rubber was the key to his family's future and set up shop in the kitchen. He

procured an investor to underwrite the experiments. One day, Goodyear inadvertently discovered that incorporating nitric acid made rubber smoother and less sticky, a process he patented. Encouraged by the progress, in 1837 Goodyear took on a partner with funds: William F. Ely. They rented space at the Roxbury India Rubber Company in Massachusetts, which was also trying to unlock the mystery of making rubber a viable material to use in manufacturing.

A man named Nathaniel Hayward was attempting the same thing and getting closer to the solution—curing rubber with sulfur. Hayward had worked for the Eagle India Rubber Company and bought it out in 1837. Two former Roxbury stockholders were aware of Hayward's rubber products and compelled Goodyear to try and strike a deal. Hayward refused to sell his company, but he did send a sheet of untreated rubber to Goodyear, keeping his chemical secret secure.

The quality was poor. Since Hayward wanted the sale—and also to keep his reputation intact—he sent a second sheet that smelled of brimstone. Goodyear detected what Hayward was doing and again offered to buy Eagle. This time Hayward relented, and the two went into business together, with Goodyear submitting a patent for the acid-gas/sulfur method to the US patent office under his name. To prove the rubber product's value, Goodyear contracted to make mailbags for the United States Post Office. Sample bags were produced, but when Goodyear returned from a business trip two weeks later, they had started to decompose. There was still more work to do, so the contract was canceled.

In 1839, William Ely absentmindedly threw a patch of sulfur-saturated rubber onto a hot stove. Within two hours, the patch had been transformed into a leatherlike substance. When Ely showed Goodyear, he was unsure what had happened or what it meant. But Goodyear realized that heat was the stabilizing force for the rubber mixture. Even as he continued to explore the exact temperature needed, he submitted a final—and intentionally general—patent application for the process of making “metallic gum elastic composition.” It was granted in 1844, and soon orders poured in.

For a time, the Goodyears enjoyed financial stability; but as debts climbed higher than profits, the inventor had to resort to licensing the process, called vulcanization, to other manufacturers. Unfortunately, he also became mired in litigation as he defended his patent. While he fought to keep his head above water, Goodyear’s new rubber products did stir the imagination of some of the world’s most successful businessmen. They took vulcanization back to their factories and made rubber buggy tires, insulation for wiring, and belts to drive machinery. While his process generated millions of dollars in sales, Goodyear sank even deeper into debt. When he died in 1860, he owed more than \$200,000.

Nearly four decades later, in 1898, Ohio businessman Frank Seiberling saw the chance to cash in on the country’s latest transportation fad—bicycling. Borrowing \$3,500, he established his own rubber company on the banks of the Little Cuyahoga River outside of Akron, Ohio. Rather than name the company after

himself, he chose to honor the man who'd invented the process that made rubber a viable product.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company's thirteen employees initially produced bicycle and carriage tires, horseshoe pads, and poker chips. Within a year, Seiberling saw the potential in manufacturing hard rubber tires for early developers of horseless carriages. In 1902, Goodyear's product made news across the country when Henry Ford put the company's tires on his race car, the 999. The Akron company's relationship with Ford expanded into providing tires for the Model T, and by 1916 Goodyear was the world's largest rubber company.

Today Goodyear makes products for countless industries in the world. But more than its contributions to aerospace, the medical field, and the aircraft industry, the billion-dollar company owes its success to making automobiles safer, faster, and smoother. Without the genius and stubborn determination of Charles Goodyear, a man who never escaped poverty and was deeply in debt when he died, the auto industry might have never gotten out of first gear.



SHIFTING GEARS

- On June 3, 1925, the very first Goodyear blimp—Pilgrim—lifted off, filled with hydrogen. On July 17, the airship was relaunched with helium, a safer gas that became the standard. In 2014, Goodyear introduced the first of three Zeppelin NT airships to replace its fleet of blimps. The model is semirigid, larger, faster, and more maneuverable than its predecessors.
- Almost from the beginning, the Goodyear Company was involved in the aircraft industry. In 1911, Goodyear proved their tires' strength and durability after the Wright EX *Vin Fiz* airplane made sixty-three landings during the nation's first transcontinental flight from Long Beach, California, to Long Beach, New York.
- In 1930, Ford and Chevrolet were fighting to claim the top spot in US auto sales. The millions of vehicles the two rival companies made had one thing in common—they all left the factory on Goodyear tires.

+SPIRITUAL TUNE-UP

Not long before his death, so steeped in debt he could barely feed his family, Charles Goodyear observed others making millions off his process of vulcanization. It would have been natural for him to be bitter, but instead he wrote, “[I am] not disposed to repine, and say that [I] have planted, and others have gathered

the fruits. Man has just cause for regret when he sows and no one reaps.”¹

It has been said that some people are so heavenly minded they’re no earthly good. They know God, they read the Bible, and they pray, but rather than doing the Lord’s work on earth, their focus is on heavenly rewards. Thus they never see the need to address the pain and suffering others around them are experiencing, both nearby and around the world.

One of the chief tire companies competing with Goodyear was Firestone. That company’s most famous advertisement suggested their tires’ quality was proven when “the rubber meets the road.” The quality of a Christian’s faith can be measured in much the same way. By taking to heart the message of Matthew 25:34-40, we will become more like Christ.



Torrington

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Public Res...

REGULAR

FRONTIER
GAS

LOITE



Owner LeeAnn Aubree's 1957 Thunderbird