

1917 MITCHELL TOURING

1917 Mitchell Touring Sedan, Model D-40 Junior, 5-passenger

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$1,275.00

Number made: 10,938 in 1917

Engine, etc.: 6 cyl, 3-speed; 25 hp; 120 in. wheelbase

Mitchell Motor Car Company, Racine, Wisc.: 1903 – 1923

Henry Mitchell was born in Scotland in 1810 and came to America in 1834. He and his wife, Margaret settled in Racine, Wisconsin in 1855. By 1877 Mitchell & Lewis Co. was one of the largest and best-equipped wagon makers in the country. It had 7,200 employees and made more than 8,000 wagons a year. They were exported all over the world.

Henry Mitchell died in 1893 and his son-in-law, William T. Lewis, took over the company.

The Mitchell Company was initially known as the Wisconsin Wheel Works and manufactured bicycles.

It produced a 1.75 hp motorcycle in 1901 that was so seriously underpowered that it was often slower than a bicycle.

It started production of automobiles in 1903 and changed its name to Mitchell Motor Car Company in 1904. Early cars were air cooled and used a two-stroke engine before the company settled on a four-cylinder, shaft-driving water-cooled design in 1907.

By 1910 Mitchell was making both four and six cylinder cars, all with cylinders cast in pairs. Sales reached 5,000 units that year. The wagon and car company merged in 1910 under the name Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company.

It offered a V8 model in 1916 but it lasted one year only.

The cars were advertised as "Silent as the foot of time".

Mitchell took pride in the fact that almost all components in its cars were made in Racine. It saw strong sales in 1917 and 1919 with over 10,000 vehicles sold. In 1920 a sloping radiator design was introduced but ridiculed as the "drunken Mitchell". Sales slumped to 3,183 in 1920.

The company never recovered from this error of design and entered bankruptcy in 1923.

Source: Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805 -1942. Beverly Rae Kimes, et al. 3rd ed. Krause Publications, 1996.

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z17575/Mitchell-Model-D-40-Junior.aspx>

<http://mitchellcarcollection.com/>