

1923 VELIE TOURING

1923 Velie Touring, Model 58

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$1,275.00 (\$18,599.00 in 2018 dollars)

Number made: 4,151 in 1923 (230 known to still exist in 2010)

Engine, etc.: 6 cyl.; 45 hp; 3-speed; 115" wheelbase (Notice tire tread: spells "NO SKID")

Velie Motors Corporation, Moline, Illinois; 1909 – 1928 (Velie – pronounced "Vee-lee")

"This car was purchased from the original owner in Bumpass, VA by Bill Pettit of Louisa, VA. Bill had the car in his museum for over 40 years. The museum was sold out in 1998 and the Velie went to Dave Helms of Milford, PA. Bernie Taulborg purchased the car in August 1998. The engine has been replaced in this car with a later model Velie-6. The original engine was number VS-1328."

–John Nikodym, Velie Registry

According to the Official Velie Register, world-wide 230 Velies are known to exist as of 2010.

Willard Lamb Velie wanted to start building automobiles in 1901 when he saw his first automobile. But he knew Moline residents weren't ready to buy one. He started a horse-drawn carriage business instead, with financing from his mother, the former Emma Deere. Her father, John, had made a fortune from a plow he invented.

The Velie Motor Company was incorporated in 1908 and produced cars put together as sturdily as a John Deere plow. They advertised that they produced "every important part" in contrast to simply assembling cars with parts from other manufacturers.

The car was an immediate success. Velie production averaged about 5,000 cars per year, peaking at 9,000 in 1920. The company began installing Westinghouse electric ignitions in their cars in 1924. Four-wheel hydraulic brakes and balloon tires, both still novel, were added in 1925. The Royal Sedan body was one of the first cars designed with a "raked" A pillar which gave the windshield a significant angle from the top to the base.

Slogans used in advertising included "The name insures the quality", "Some day you will drive a Velie" and "Every time we sell a car we make a friend".

In 1927 the company bought out a general aviation company and began producing aircraft, moving production to Iowa as Mono Aircraft Inc. They produced the "Velie Monocoupe" airplane which proved "an instant success."

The company enjoyed continued success through most years until 1928 when Willard Lamb Velie died unexpectedly. His son, Willard, Jr., vice-president of the company, was unable to keep both the Velie automobile and Mono airplane companies afloat. Production of the car ceased in January 1929. Willard, Jr. also died unexpectedly in March 1929, five months after his father.

The Velie business was no more.

The car plant was purchased by John Deere and the Mono plane company was bought by a St. Louis businessman who was an early backer of Charles Lindbergh.

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

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velie>

<http://p10.hostingprod.com/@veliepartsboard.com/veliereg/velieregister.html>
(Velie Register)

<http://p10.hostingprod.com/@veliepartsboard.com/mtvelie/Mtvelie2.html> (History of Velie)

Information about Mr. Taulborg from e-mail, John Nikodym to Diana Keith,
3/27/13; copy on file.