

1920 WARD ELECTRIC DELIVERY

1920 Ward Electric Delivery Truck

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: Unknown

Number made: Unknown

Engine, etc.: Unknown; top speed: 29 mph

Early electric vehicles originated from various sources including an American who invented the first DC electrical motor in 1834. Rechargeable batteries for vehicles didn't come into being until 1856. France and Great Britain had the first widespread development of electric vehicles. English inventor Thomas Parker is credited with having perfected the first working electric car in 1884. The first four-wheeled electric car was built by German engineer Andreas Flocken in 1888. In 1891 William Morrison of Des Moines, Iowa developed an electric six-passenger wagon capable of reaching a speed of 14 mph.

Charles A. Ward received an engineering degree from Cornell in 1902 and returned to Pittsburgh to his family's baking business. He started to produce small electric vans for local delivery of Ward bread in 1905 and in 1910, after the family moved to New York, he reorganized it as the Ward Motor Vehicle Company. Most of the vehicles built were used to deliver Ward's "Tip-Top" bread.

By 1912 many homes were wired for electricity and the popularity of electric cars increased. At the turn of the century, 40% of American cars were powered by steam, 38% by electricity, and 22% by gasoline.

Ward electric cars were first offered in 1913 and could go 100 miles between charges. The cars were made from 1914 – 1916 and had two doors and seated four.

Electric cars proved popular for women drivers because they did not require the manual effort of using a hand crank to start them as gasoline powered vehicles did. Changing gears on gasoline cars was the most difficult part of driving but electric vehicles did not require gear changes. Many were sold to wealthy city-dwellers where the limited range of the battery was less of a problem. The cars had fancy interiors of expensive materials and cost an average of \$3,000 by 1910 (\$84,000 today). Basic electric cars cost under \$1,000 (roughly \$28,000 today). Sales of electric cars peaked in 1912.

From 1917 forward, Ward built only commercial trucks and delivery vans, ceasing in 1937.

The Ward Motor Vehicle Company remained in the truck-body-building business until 1965.

Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward_\(electric_automobile_company\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward_(electric_automobile_company)) (Advertisement for Ward electric trucks)

<https://www.chuckstoyland.com/category/automotive/early-electric-cars/ward/> (Advertisements for Ward vehicles)

<http://www.econogics.com/ev/evhistw.htm>

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