AUTOMOBILES
Aviation

Virginian-Pilot
AND
THE NORFOLK LANDMARK

RADIO FEATURES
and Programs

SECTION FIVE | NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1928 | TWELVE PAGES

World Honors Fathers of the First Airplane

Aviation's Birthplace, Kitty Hawk, Mecca of Hundreds Tomorrow

Great Monument To Be Erected On Kill Devil Hills To Genius of Wrights

MEN OF MANY NATIONS TO ATTEND CEREMONIES

By RALPH POOL

Kill Devil Hills, twin, towering dunes on the North Carolina coast, 60 miles south of Norfolk, will be the scene of colorful ceremonies tomorrow, when notable airmen of this and many foreign lands, several hundred strong, gather there to pay reverent homage to the birth of aviation, 25 years ago.

Heading the visitors as honor guest will be Orville Wright, whose brain and hands helped to contrive that flimsy box kite, powered by a tiny gasoline motor, which ushered in a new era of human transportation—an era whose possibilities can be measured only vaguely today.

It will be Orville Wright's first visit to Kill Devil Hills, and to the little coast community of Kitty Hawk, since he and his brother, the late Wilbur Wright, ended their momentous experiments there.

The day's ceremonies will include the dedication of a national memorial to aviation atop the taller of the two Kill Devil Hills—a mighty dune 92 feet high, which for generations has served as a landmark for mariners, alike skirting the Atlantic's perilous shore, and following the calmer courses of Currituck, Albemarle and Roanoke sounds, to the landward.

This national monument will be anchored to the hill by great steel caissons driven into its vitals. Government engineers have spent weeks at Kitty Hawk recently, making surveys and soil tests and gathering other data to the end that a monument to endure for centuries may be erected.

Will Unveil Tablet

Included in tomorrow's events will be the unveiling of a boulder bearing a bronze tablet on the actual scene of the first flight. This is on the level sand at the foot of the dunes; and these latter ceremonies will be conducted by a delegation representing the National Aeronautical Association.

It was in keeping, perhaps, with the bumps and spills that accompanied the conquest of the air, that a like mishap should have attended the carrying of the memorial boulder to Kitty Hawk two weeks ago. It was taken by motor truck by way of the Currituck Peninsula; and on a detour necessitated by road paving, the great rock was spilled off. Only after much hard work was it replaced on the truck, and the journey resumed.

Highway construction engineers on the Currituck job give assurance that motorists attending the celebration tomorrow need fear no serious difficulties. The new road is to be opened as far as Maple, and along the rest of the way where construction is in progress, motorists will be allowed to drive alongside the paving. From Norfolk to Point Harbor, at the end of the Currituck Peninsula, is not quite 65 miles. From Point Harbor, a 30-minute ferry ride carries one to Kitty Hawk.

Official guests at the celebration will comprise some 300 delegates to the International Conference on Civil Aeronautics held in Washington last week. Having journeyed from the national capital to Langley Field, the visitors will spend today in inspecting the aeronautical laboratories and equipment there, including the largest wind tunnel in the world.

Leaving Langley early tomorrow, the visitors will travel from Norfolk to Kitty Hawk in large busses, returning late in the day, after the ceremonies.

Anchored by Sodding

The fact that prevailing winds on the North Carolina coast tend to keep Kill Devil Hills and the other dunes moving steadily in a southerly direction is proving no barrier to erection of the monument. Government engineers who have conducted preliminary surveys at Kitty Hawk in recent weeks declare that the hill can be kept forever in place by sodding it, and planting hardy grasses on its slopes. In that way, they will counteract the force of the winds.

Though Orville Wright will be the honor guest at the ceremonies, it is expected that he will share the limelight with Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, whose solo flight across the Atlantic summer before last placed him in the forefront among the world's aviators. Mr. Wright and Colonel Lindbergh have been named as America's representatives at the International Conference on Civil Aeronautics.

At Kitty Hawk, the party will be welcomed by representatives of the Kill Devil Hills Memorial Association, including Governor McLean, Frank Page, chairman of the North Carolina Highway Commission; the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Darst, D. D., of Wilmington, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, and W. O. Saunders, widely known North Carolina editor, who is president of the association.

A Distinctive Spread

A spread that is distinctively North Carolinian will await the official party at Kill Devil Hills. There will be barbecue of Carolina nut-fed pig, roast Currituck turkey with Roanoke Island oyster dressing, Virginia Dare ham, Kitty Hawk yams of the Hayman variety, first grown in North Carolina in the vicinity of Kill Devil Hills, and other accessories, including Chickamacomico salad, hot coffee and dessert.

In the serving of the luncheon, the culinary staffs of the Cavalier Hotel, at Virginia Beach, and of the Pender Restaurant, in Norfolk, will collaborate. This phase of the celebration, in itself, is no indifferent task when it is recalled that tons of foodstuffs, dishes, cutlery and other equipment must be transported to the isolated beach community, and that extensive preparations must be made on the ground to feed the 300 honor guests.

Since the last Congress, when an appropriation of $20,000 was made for preliminary work on the aviation memorial at Kitty Hawk, the original concept for the monument has been vastly expanded. At first it was intended only to erect a shaft or beacon tower there; but now the plans of sponsors of the memorial embrace not only a great monument, but also a large reservation, to include a flying field to enable devotees of the new sport of flying to visit Kitty Hawk in their planes.

These latter plans have been furthered by a gift of 100 acres on and about Kill Devil Hills by Frank Stick, Allen R. Hueth and Elmer H. Geran, all of Asbury Park, N. J., who are interested in a large scale resort development in that vicinity. This was followed recently by a second gift to the Government of an adjoining 100 acres by Charles M. Baker and associates, also of Asbury Park.

Even more recently, Messrs. Stick, Hueth and Geran have volunteered to acquire and deed to the Government free of charge an additional 300 acres, to make an aggregate tract of 500 acres—nearly a square mile—for establishment of an airport, with hangars, machine shops and other facilities for aviators.

Has Utilitarian Value

Besides its sentimental value in connection with the first flight, such an airport, it is explained, would have important utilitarian worth in providing a stopping-off place for planes bound north or south along the seaboard, enabling them to take on supplies and have any needed repairs made.

The Government memorial at Kill Devil Hills is to be of a type selected in a nation-wide contest, in which architects and designers generally will be invited to take part. Preliminary suggestions have embodied the idea of a great beacon tower, shedding its rays for many miles to landward and seaward, and up into the sky for the benefit of fliers, but the monument finally decided upon may follow quite a different line, depending upon the designs submitted.

Final selection of a design for the monument has been left by Congress in the hands of a special committee composed of the Secretaries of War, Commerce and the Navy. From the fact that no particular type has been selected yet, only the foundations will be laid for the present.

As one feature of the memorial, the Kill Devil Hills Coast Guard Station, some two miles to the east and south of the hills, is to be replaced by a modern and handsome granite structure embodying the latest improvements in this type of structure.

Old Isolation Passing

The isolation that was one of the desirable features of the Kitty Hawk community for Orville and Wilbur Wright when they carried on their experiments there, since they greatly preferred for the world to know little of what they were about, is soon to be utterly a thing of the past. Kitty Hawk is on the route of a recently adopted State highway running from Manteo, on Roanoke Island, across a bridge and causeway crossing Roanoke Sound to the beach, and thence to the terminus of a bridge soon to be built across Lower Currituck Sound, linking beach and mainland.

At this writing, bids are being requested by the Currituck and Dare Bridge Corporation, of Currituck and Elizabeth City, for construction of a bridge three miles long, to extend from Point Harbor, at the southern tip of the Currituck Peninsula, to the beach land near Kitty Hawk. It is expected that contract for the bridge will have been let by the latter part of December, with a prospect that the new structure may be in use by the autumn of 1929.

Meanwhile, the State Highway Commission has surfaced the highway from Manteo to the ocean shore, using a gravel preparation; and from the other direction, a concrete highway is under construction from Currituck Court House, present northeastermost end of the State's paved highways, southwardly to a point within a few miles of Point Harbor. From Currituck comes word, too, that there are strong indications that before the work is finished, the contract will be continued to include the remainder of the road to Point Harbor.

Coupled with construction of the Currituck Sound bridge and other affiliated work, this would mean that a motorist in Norfolk, Charlotte or Asheville, for instance, could go by automobile from his home city to the great aviation memorial without ever leaving a standard hard-surfaced road.

The first plane flight on that raw, murky day that was December 17, 1903, was no lucky accident. Rather, it was the culmination of many years' study and experimentation on the part of Wilbur and Orville Wright, the beginning of which was described by them in a brief account of their flying machine in the Century Magazine of September, 1908:

Early Interest Awakened

"Late in the autumn of 1878 our father came into the house one evening with some object concealed in his hands, and before we could see what it was, tossed it into the air. Instead of falling to the floor, as we expected, it flew across the room and struck the ceiling, where it fluttered a while and finally sank to the floor. It was a little toy known to scientists as a helicopter, but which we, with sublime disregard for science, dubbed a "bat" . . . It lasted only a short time, but its memory was abiding."

Wilbur then was 11 years old, and Orville was 7. They were sons of a scholarly man who was a bishop in the United Brethren Church, and it was through constant access to the many books in his library in their home in Dayton, Ohio, which early stimulated their interest in scientific subjects. Their mother died in their early boyhood. As they grew up they were not greatly different from other boys in Dayton, taking the same interest in hunting, fishing, athletic sports and the like. They did not go to college, but supplied that lack by intensive reading.

Though the incident of the helicopter made a lasting impression on them, it was not until 1896, when they read of the death of Otto Lilienthal, who was killed in a fall from one of his gliders, that they first gave intensive study to the subject of flying.

"It made us wonder," explains Wilbur Wright, years later, "what the difficulties were that could not be overcome."

Meanwhile, the brothers had become the proprietors of a bicycle shop in Dayton, and it was there that they began their experimentation. In 1900, wishing to carry on glider experiments under more advantageous conditions than they could obtain at or near Dayton, they wrote the United States Weather Bureau for information as to where the prevailing winds were strongest and steadiest.

Kitty Hawk Selected

They were informed that that spot was at Kitty Hawk, on the North Carolina coast, some 50 miles south of Norfolk, and promptly set about making arrangements to go there. Their first step was to write to the postmistress at Kitty Hawk to inquire about board and lodging.

She, it happened, was the wife of Capt. W. J. Tate, who now is keeper of the Government lighthouse depot at Coinjock, where the Inland Waterway crosses the Currituck peninsula. Mrs. Tate wrote the brothers that she would be glad to board them in her home.

Wilbur Wright was the first to go. Journeying to Elizabeth City by rail in August, 1900, he encountered a series of circumstances that came perilously near to ending his experiments in aviation before they had fairly begun. In Elizabeth City, casting about for a means of travel to Kitty Hawk, he met one Israel Perry, who owned a little flat-bottomed sloop of such age and decrepitude that it has been described as hardly safe to cross a creek in.

With such faith as he had in his ship buttressed by the promise of a substantial fee, Perry agreed to take the stranger to Kitty Hawk. They set forth, unwittingly enough, on the eve of an August storm that proved the worst in the recollection of the oldest residents of the North Carolina Banks country. Buffeted and tossed about, and on the verge of foundering many times, it was 36 hours later that they reached their destination—ordinarily a trip of 12 hours or less, in the type of craft they had.

A Weary Experimenter

When he knocked at the door of the Tates' cottage at Kitty Hawk, Wilbur Wright appeared anything but a heroic figure. He was utterly exhausted, having had nothing to eat in 24 hours. Four days later, the freight boat plying between Elizabeth City and Kitty Hawk brought his baggage and materials, and after preliminary work, he began construction of his first glider on September 17, with the assistance of Captain and Mrs. Tate.

This event is commemorated by a monument set up by the people of Kitty Hawk in the yard of the Tates' home, and unveiled with appropriate ceremonies on May 2, last. It happened, tragically enough, that the home itself, in which many of the early experiments were made, was accidentally destroyed by fire a few weeks before the unveiling. Thus passed a noteworthy landmark in the annals of man's conquest of the air.

Returning each summer to continue their work, the Wrights finally produced a machine that, according to their best calculations, should fly. This was early in December, 1903. Though the season was by no means the best for such an experiment, the brothers decided to try it out, without waiting for spring. They named December 14 as the day.

They tossed a coin to decide which should make the initial attempt, and Wilbur won. The start was bad, however, and before the machine rose from the ground, damage occurred which required several days to repair.

A Memorable Morn

On the morning of December 17, 1903, the machine was ready for another start. The event is best described by Orville Wright in an article in the American Legion Monthly of September, 1926, which in part is as follows:

"There was a strong, cold wind from

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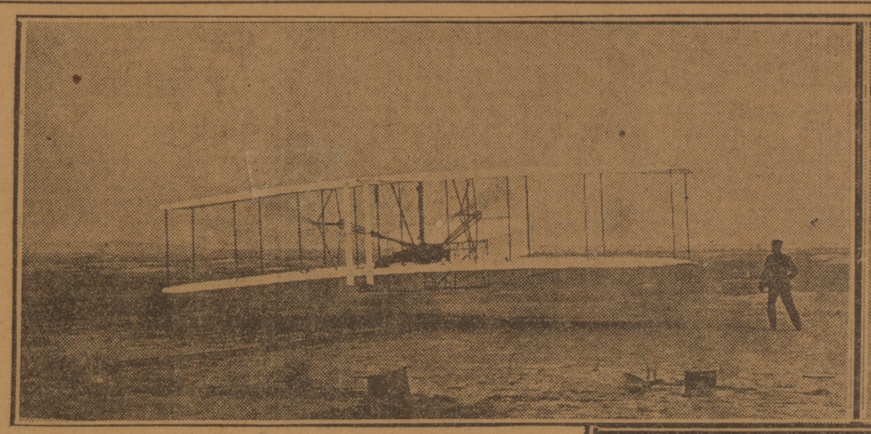
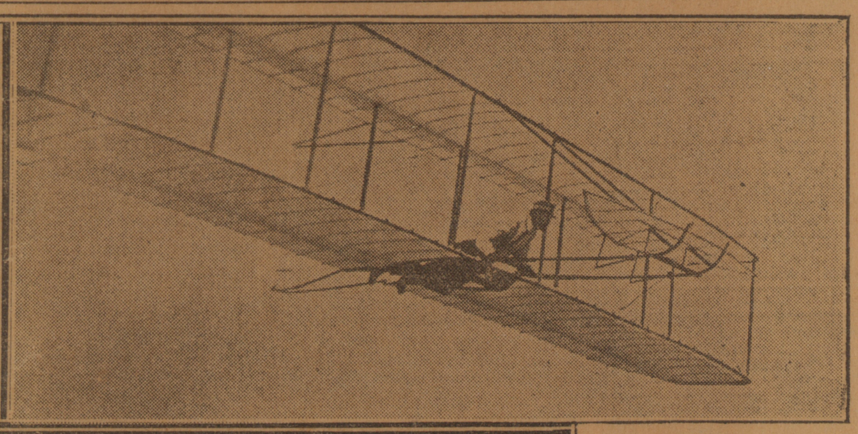
Picture of First Airplane Flight and Experiments





At the left is the picture the camera caught of the first flight of man in an airplane, motor-driven and heavier-than-air. This scene at Kitty Hawk shows the plane just after it had left its monorail track and soared into the air. Orville Wright is in the plane, prone on the lower wing, and Wilbur Wright is the figure seen on the ground. He balanced the plane as it sped down the track and had just let go when the picture was snapped. (Official photograph, U. S. Army Air Corps.) At the right is a Wright glider, which played an important part in the experiments, in flight. (Official photograph, U. S. Army Air Corps.) Below is seen Orville Wright (left) and Alexander Ogilive tuning up a glider at Kitty Hawk in 1911.

Marks Scene of Flight

Boulder and bronze plate which will be unveiled tomorrow in honor of Wilbur and Orville Wright at Kill Devil Hills by the National Aeronautic Association of the United States. The boulder is shown above mounted on a flat car. The inscription reads:

"The first successful flight of an airplane was made from this spot by Orville Wright, December 17, 1903, in a machine designed and built by Wilbur and Orville Wright. This tablet was erected by the National Aeronautic Association of the U. S. A., December 17, 1928, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this event."

Fans Are Told How To Curb Blanketing Of Distant Stations

Number of Suggestions Made By Inspector To Improve Conditions

Washington, Dec. 15.—(AP)—Blanketing by nearby broadcasting stations of the reception of distant programs has been one of the major complaints of listeners under the reallocation.

To aid radio fans who are having difficulty with receivers that tune broadly, inspectors of the radio division of the Department of Commerce have offered suggestions designed to eliminate, at small cost, some of the interference.

One suggestion is the insertion of a small fixed condenser in series with the antenna lead-in and receiver. Its capacity is .00005 or larger. This reduces volume to some extent, but it sharpens the tuning of the antenna circuit.

Where a receiver is located near the local station, it may be found necessary to change the direction of the antenna to a position at right angles to the antenna of the broadcaster. If the direction of the station antenna is north and south, the receiving antenna for the least interference should run east and west.

The series condenser can be cut out of the antenna lead on stations where the local broadcaster does not interfere by short circuiting with a small knife switch. A wavetrap can sometimes be used to advantage.

Receivers having two antenna binding posts, one markeed "long" and the other "short," should be tried with the antenna lead alternately on each to determine which is the more satisfactory for receiving distance.

Choir Patroness

Mrs. H. E. Talbot, patroness and backer of the Dayton Westminster Choir, which will broadcast in the General Motors Family Party tomorrow night.

BETWEEN the WAVELENGTHS

By C. E. BUTTERFIELD
(Associated Press Radio Editor)

Man "perfects" something, and continually thereafter tries to make it better. Radio is no exception, for today's sets are radically different from those of a few years ago, while the dawn of tomorrow may make our present receivers seem somewhat antique.

There was much glee over the appearance a year ago of a receiver which did not rquire batteries and could be plugged into the house lighting circuit. The tubes were lighted through stepdown transformers. Some of them, particularly the detector, would quit work after a few weeks. Others stayed longer, eight months or more.

The AC tube had been "perfected," but it had not been made better. The laboratory men plugged on. Due to the fluctuation of the AC feed lines, it was necessary to have a tube that would respond to a wider voltage range. Today the AC detector will operate successfully from 2 to 2.75 volts, without a burnout, compared with the normal rating of 2.5 volts. The best range is between 2.25 and 2.6 volts. The detector is a heater type tube, and it was made better by improvments in the ceramic insulataing materials. Elimination of impurities in the insulation made possible the use of higher temperatures.

Another tube, the rectifier, formerly was limited to 300 volts per anode, or plate. This has been raised to 350. The raw AC or direct filament heating tube, used in radio and audio amplification, has given little trouble. Its voltage range has been sufficient to meet most requirements.

Despite advances in tube design, the laboratories continue their work, striving to do just a little more. Minor improvements continually are being made, but basically the tube today may not be far behind the ultimate.

Air Station Talk

(By The Associated Press)

Nate Caldwell, announcer, has returned to WBBM, Chicago, from KOIL, Council Bluffs.

A second series of concerts by the Reproducers is going out over a coast to coast chain today with WEAF as the key station.

Listeners within range of KPO, San Francisco, recently heard RFM, Russia, a short wave station. Signals were picked up on 70 meters and rebroadcast.

Richard F. Cleveland, only son of Grover Cleveland, former President, will make a 15-minute talk over WBAL, Baltimore, Thursday afternoon.

"A Night With the Air Mail," depicting a dramatic incident in the history of night flying with mail, is to be presented over WOR and chain Wednesday evening, December 19.

The DX club of WMAQ, Chicago, now includes many members outside of Chicago. Among the States represented are Washington, New Mexico, Alabama, Tennessee and West Virginia.

The Ohio Department of Education will go on the air in January with a daily program to be known as the "Ohio School of the Air." It will be broadcast in the afternoons by WLW, Cincinnati, and possibly WEAO, Columbus.

Making Automobiles Fit Owners Still Is Problem of Design

Public May Think Maximum of Comfort Now Exists, But Engineers Look Forward

VARIATIONS IN BODY DIMENSIONS CITED

By WILLIAM ULLMAN

Anyone who wants to keep the illusion that automobile body design is just about perfect from the standpoint of comfort and convenience would do well to stay out of earshot of the designing engineer. Otherwise, the illusion is likely to be shot full of great big, gaping holes.

Engineers are matter-of-fact persons. Their literal minds have no sympathy with illusions, even their own.

An illustration of this is provided by one of the current features of design which has to do with making the motorist comfortable when seated in his car. The layman may accept the term form-fitting at its face value, but the engineer, always an unbeliever, immediately raises the question: "Whose form in particular does it fit?"

Engineers are like that. Fortunately, however, they throw their stones through their own windows. When they ask the question of an unbeliever, they have to answer themselves. Of course, when they find the answer, the public gets a better automobile. No one can rightfully object when the engineer throws a destructive fact right through the middle of one's favorite fancy.

Not so long ago, at an engineers' meeting, one of the most facile minds of the profession made a speech. Although it amounted to a massacre of their illusions, all of his hearers enjoyed it immensely.

He did not say that bodies were not better than they used to be. But he did say, in effect, that they are not nearly as good as they are going to be when the designing engineer gets through with them—if he ever reaches the place where he can see no opportunity for improvement.

A difference of dimensions that is fairly amazing is what makes the engineer quizzical of this perfection idea. How, he wants to know, can one reconcile the fact that one front seat is 36 inches wide and another 45¼ inches with the fact that both are comfortable for everyone? Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney might go for a ride in the latter front seat while they talked over a return bout, but scarcely in the former. Two featherweights, undoubtedly, would find the 36-inch seat more clubby.

There are many other comparative dimensions, among the 43 American automobile makes, which are just as far apart, and even further when reduced to percentages. One that is more than 100 per cent is that which illustrates the difference in steering wheel locations with reference to the garnish rail on the front door of the sedan. This distance, at its smallest, is 2¼ inches. In other cars it is 5½ inches. Dropping the arm down between wheel and door to reach an emergency brake located on the left would be easy for some drivers in the smallest car. For others, it would be an impossibility.

A difference of dimension that is regarded as affecting the safety of car operation, as well as having a decided bearing upon comfort, is that between the brake and clutch pedals and the back of the front seat. The variation is from 40¾ to 46½ inches. Adjustable front seats help some, but none is adjustable to the extent of six inches. Obviously, therefore, the woman driver or the short man who has trouble reaching the pedals 40¾ inches away is going to need an extra cushion at the back in the car that has the longer distance between these two points.

And, it is not a matter of wheelbase. Some of the smaller cars are among those with the greater "leg room," even if the "leg room" happens to be excessive.

In some cars the distance between the bottom of the steering wheel and the front seat cushion is slightly under six inches. In others, it is nearly ten. Sliding into the car is plainly going to be easier in the case of the latter.

Now the man with the 4-inch chest expansion and the one with one-half inch expansion, and a lot less chest in the first place can find cars that fit their respective measurements. But if they both wanted the same car, it would be unfortunate in some cases, as the engineer views it. He bases his assumption on the fact that the variation in the distance from the back of the front seat to the rim of the steering wheel is from 12½ inches to 16½. The former would be tight for the big man, the latter would have the smaller man reaching, if not for the rim of the steering wheel, perhaps, for the choke button or some other essential control on the dash.

There is one dimension that is fairly well standardized on the newer models. That concerns head room. It runs fairly average at 33¾ inches from the top of the seat cushion to the top of the car. The only man who could wear a silk topper in such a car would be the vaudeville dwarf. Of course, the engineer concedes that very few motorists, proportionately, want to wear top hats. But, some of them do.

The point might be made that it is impossible to design an automobile body whose dimensions will fit everyone. The engineer grants that. He counters, vigorously, too, with the conviction that the designer can come a lot closer to fitting the average man than he has done.

There is no need for the wide variation in dimensions that exists today. Either the smaller one is closer to correctness or the larger one. Or, perhaps, both are wrong. The engineer maintains that it is his job to find out. No one is likely to dispute his statement there.

On the whole, comfort is the second large selling point in cars today. That the engineer refuses to rest on what he has done, and that he is not happy with the results he has achieved in the creation of comfort should give the car-buyer something to look forward to. The automobile may be a "hand-me-down," but its tailor is determined to make it fit.

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Something Distinctly New In Colors Looked For With 1929 Models

Several Nameplates Expected To Make Initial Bow At New York National Show

BY THE OBSERVER

With the automobile shows just a few weeks away, the public is being warned to be on the lookout for something new in the matter of automobile colors. So far as the average man is concerned, he is willing to give a prize to anyone who can think of something that has not already been done in the matters of tints, tones, hues, shades, or whatever one wants to call them. And yet, if anyone thinks he can produce a color innovation, he certainly can command the attention—or skepticism—of the masses.

How will you have your fender well shares held at the top, by a metal or a leather strap? Some use one, some another, and some use none at all. As this observer sees it, all three ways have their advantages. Marmon uses the metal effectively, to mention but one. Packard's limousine gets along with neither metal nor leather. Some sport models take leather better than others.

Who is going to produce these new cars that are destined to make their debut at the New York national automobile show? They are making a great secret of it all, but one thing that can be said is that the sponsors of new cars—some of them under brand new nameplates—will be firms of established and well-known reputation. There is one newcomer, though, who is new only in the sense that it has been absent for three or four years.

Peerless' treatment of the upper structure of the closed car—finishing it in black—proves that the once favorite over-all color for automobiles is quite as effective used in combination with another shade as when it is employed alone. Incidentally, doing the body moulding on some of the sport models in this somber hue is another pleasant treatment.

Cadillac may have started it, but this business of scattering the instruments instead of keeping them on a panel has been adopted by several others in the General Motors family. Oakland is the most recent. There seems to be a division of sentiment on the subject though, for Buick, Oldsmobile and Chevrolet stick to the panel arrangement.

It takes a lot of spark plugs for all the new and old cars in the world these days. One indication of the fact is that the Champion company's output of this essential commodity is 200,000 units a day. How is that for a figure when speaking of quantity production? Incidentally, where one type of plug usually sufficed for a large part of the total field, considerable variety is essential today.

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On Air Tuesday

Cornelia Otis Skinner, who will be heard Tuesday night from WEAF and other NBC stations, starting at 8 o'clock in a full-length program of her famous character sketches.