

Gremlins That Cause Balking and Wheezing Bedevil Antique Autos at Armory Show

Mischief-making gremlins were exorcised from a cranky old car as an added attraction at the Antique Auto Show, which opened yesterday in the Seventy-first Regiment Armory, Park Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street. The vehicle had shown signs of stubbornness for several hours and creaked protests on being disturbed. When an attempt was made to shift base, the car shivered and settled in its tracks.

As the seizure took place in the middle of an aisle, several mechanics tried frantically, but in vain, to locate the trouble. The more they tinkered, the less hope there appeared for a successful conclusion. Confronted by a deadlock, the perspiring artificers called on M. J. Duryea, show manager, to diagnose the case.

"Gremlins," he said after a cursory examination. Then with a deft twist of his fingers he set the car in motion.

Later Mr. Duryea explained that the gremlins had cast their spell on the crank-starting 1903 Ford by causing the spark control lever to sag to the extent that the car was paralyzed.

Five thousand visitors inspected the ninety-six old vehicles and the many 1948 models displayed. During the evening hours several of the ancient vehicles wheezed about the aisles, which served as an improvised track. They were driven by their owners attired in the dusters, goggles and peaked caps reminiscent of early motoring.

Glen Ethridge watched the antics of the antiques from the enclosure where reposed the 1906 Locomobile racer, winner of the 1908 Vanderbilt Cup. He rubbed his hands and chuckled as a state-ly electric brougham, built at the beginning of the century, glided by.

"I was with George Robertson as mechanic in this car when we

lifted the Vanderbilt trophy," he said, pointing to the Locomobile.

"In my opinion it is a better built car than any of the moderns. Why, we hit 102 miles an hour on the Jericho Turnpike out on Long Island and believe me that was really a rough dirt road in those days. One of these flossy up-to-date autos would have bumped to pieces the first hundred of that 250-mile course."

Throughout the day the well-worn 1907 Thomas Flyer that won the New York-to-Paris race sponsored by THE NEW YORK TIMES and Le Matin in 1908, was the central attraction for hundreds of sightseers. The route could be traced on a globe mounted in front of the booth, and attendants were kept busy telling just how the venturesome motorists made the 170-day trip.

Alfred Reeves, advisory vice president, Automobile Manufacturers Association, who won fame by directing many national car shows in this city, praised the efforts of the Veteran Motor Car Club of America, sponsoring the exhibitions at the armory.

"This is one of the most representative antique car shows ever held," he said, "and it is appropriate that the exhibition should be in New York where the first national automobile show was held in the old Madison Square Garden in 1900. The cars on display here are like rare museum pieces, growing more valuable each year."

Program girls were on hand, dressed in the motoring costumes of 1902 and directed by Mrs. John Paul Stack of Manhattan, the show's only woman exhibitor; Mrs. Alexander Ullman, Riverside, Conn., and Mrs. M. J. Duryea, Long Meadow, Mass.

The 1948 models on display were not neglected by the visitors as they compared the smart new cars with the old crop. The show will continue today.