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Studebaker Museum traces path from blacksmith to auto giant

South Bend, Indiana—

Think of South Bend today and you think of Notre Dame. Think of South Bend 50 years ago and you think of Studebaker.

From the Studebaker brothers' first carriage to the last Avanti sports coupe, the Studebaker National Museum's collection of more than 100 carriages, wagons, cars and trucks tell the story of America's Industrial Age.

The history of the museum is both new and old; new because the

Studebaker National Museum has been an entity for just five years and old because there has been some form of the Studebaker National Museum since the turn of the century.

The Studebaker Corporation operated its own museum for many years. By 1920, its collection included the carriage that Abraham Lincoln rode to Ford's Theatre that fateful night in 1865, the first automobile built in South Bend and a large collection of World War I military vehicles built by Studebaker for the Allies.

The collection continued to grow and at the end of automobile production in South Bend (1963) and in Hamilton, Ontario, (1966) the last cars off the assembly line were put into the museum. Since Studebaker was leaving automobile production and South Bend had been its home from the beginning, the corporation decided to donate its collection to the city in late 1966.

The City of South Bend began displaying the vehicles in temporary locations and in 1977, Discovery Hall Museum was opened in the new Century Center convention complex. In 1983, the city leased a former downtown Studebaker dealership building and put the majority of the collection on display there.

These two locations still serve the museum, which is now non-profit organization separate from the city. The Studebaker National Museum retains the corporate rights, records, artifacts, vehicle and wagon collection of the former Studebaker Corporation.

Exhibits in the Century Center location are set up in a timeline format, tracing the growth of Studebaker and its industrial neighbors in South Bend from 1852 to the present. Here, visitors can view the recreation of the Studebaker brothers' 1852 blacksmith shop containing their first carriage, the fabulous '50s aerodynamic Studebakers designed by Raymond Loewy and a 1964 Lark Daytona, the last South Bend-built Studebaker.

Displayed at the renovated and refurbished former dealership at the corner of Main and South streets are a



VILLAGE SMITHS— Visitors to the Studebaker Museum can view a recreation of the Studebaker brothers' 1852 blacksmith shop containing the first carriage made by Clem and Henry.

wide range of horsedrawn and horseless vehicles, including four Presidential carriages, a 1932 Rockne '65" honoring the fabled Notre Dame coach, and Commander, Sky Hawk, and Golden Hawk models from the '50s.

The museum periodically hosts science and technology exhibits and antique car shows. The sixth annual Studebaker Festival featuring Packards from 1899 to 1958 is set for May 4-5.

Museum hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, noon to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$3.50 for adults, \$2.50 for senior citizens, \$1.50 for children age 12 and under.

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by Fred Carmichael

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Other hotel guests are "heard" from, including Pauline, a lady of the evening, and the man upstairs who is one of her not too differential clients. Loud radio broadcasts talk of city news, including muggings, suicides, drug raids, and other happy events, while the girl next door cries as her beau has not yet arrived. The old men try to figure out what's really going on and what to do about it without having a heart attack.

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VEHICULAR HISTORY PRESERVED— The Studebaker National Museum features Studebaker wagons, carriages, cars, trucks and carriages of four U.S. presidents. Illustrating more than 130 years of Studebaker history, the museum is located in the building which once housed the company's largest dealership.