



Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region Caddie Chronicle



HISTORY OF WASHINGTON, D.C. CADILLAC DEALERSHIPS **STORY BY RICHARD SILLS AND VINCE TALIANO** **CONTRIBUTIONS BY JIM CHURCHILL AND TOM HALL**

Cadillac dealers have made great contributions to the ongoing success of the marque. No matter how well a product is designed, engineered and built, its survival depends on the representatives who market it to the end users. In the case of an automobile, that representative is the automobile dealer, who serves as the point of contact between the consumer and the manufacturer, and whose actions can create a loyal base of repeat customers.

The number of auto dealerships that have survived under the ownership of one family for 80 years must be small, but Capitol Cadillac achieved that milestone in 2014. They started in Washington, D.C. in 1934 and continued there thru 1979 when they moved its operation to Greenbelt, Maryland. This article traces Capitol Cadillac's history in Washington, D.C., along with the history of the Cadillac dealerships that preceded them dating back to 1903.

In a list of Cadillac Automobile Cadillac Agencies up to January 1, 1903, **American Cycle Manufacturing Company** was listed as the Washington, D.C. agency (see below).

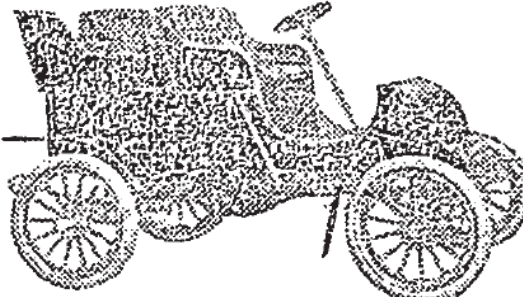
LIST OF CADILLAC AUTOMOBILE AGENCIES Up to January 1st, 1903.

NEW YORK CITY.	The Cadillac Company of New York.
CHICAGO, ILL.	The Cadillac Company of Illinois.
PHILADELPHIA, PA.	John Wanamaker.
BOSTON, MASS.	American Cycle Manufacturing Company.
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.	Conrad Mueller Company.
CLEVELAND, OHIO.	Cleveland Automobile and Supply Co.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.	The Pence Automobile Company.
WASHINGTON, D. C.	American Cycle Manufacturing Company.
BUFFALO, N. Y.	Centaur Motor Vehicle Company.
CINCINNATI, OHIO.	The Hanover Automobile Company.
DETROIT, MICH.	William E. Metzger.
NEWARK, N. J.	New Jersey Automobile Company.
PROVIDENCE, R. I.	American Cycle Manufacturing Company.
COLUMBUS, OHIO.	Oscar Lear.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.	Michigan Automobile Company.
PORTLAND, ME.	F. O. Bailey Carriage Company.
DENVER, COLO.	A. T. Wilson.
JERSEY CITY, N. J.	Crescent Automobile Company.
SAVANNAH, GA.	R. V. Connerat.

On March 16, 1903, the first Cadillac ad appeared in **The Washington Post** introducing its readers to the new vehicle, hailing it as the sensation of the year (pictured right). The Runabout version was available for \$750 while the four-seater Tonneau cost an extra \$100. The very next day, March 17th, **The Evening Star** also ran an ad introducing the new make (pictured far right).

POPE BUILDING
Finest Showrooms for Automobiles and Bicycles
in the city.

IMPROVEMENTS IN AUTOMOBILES.




THE CADILLAC,
The TONNEAU style of Automobile, seating four persons, is the favorite model for 1903.
The new "CADILLAC" is the sensation of the year.

RUNABOUT, \$750.
TONNEAU (seats 4), \$850.
OUR NEW MODELS ARRIVE THIS WEEK.

COLUMBIA BICYCLE STORES,
817-819 14th Street.
W. J. FOSS, Agent.

A Choice of Four of the World-Famous MOTOR CARS



We shall introduce the wonderful new "CADILLAC" Gasoline Automobile here this season—the sensation of the year. We also exhibit the ELMORE, the new TOLEDO Touring Car and the favorite WAVERLY Electric, in new 1903 models. Here are the price details:

Cadillac Gasoline, 7-H. P., \$750—\$850.
Elmore Gasoline, 7-H. P., \$800—\$1,400.
Toledo Touring Cars, \$2,000 to \$4,000
Waverly Electric, \$850 to \$1,400

Bicycle Headquarters.
We have the agency for the leading bicycle make in this country. The new models for 1903 are ready to be examined, and will delight the eye.
Please come to all your letters, and see them:

Columbia, Crescent,
Cleveland, Westfield,
Tribune, Hartford,
Rambler, Velette,
Crawford.

Prices, \$20 to \$90.
The new Touring Cadillac Columbia is the most important improvement of the year.

Columbia
Automobile & Bicycle Sales Rooms,
817-819 Fourteenth St.
W. J. FOSS, AGENT



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Col. Albert A. Pope was apparently the owner of American Cycle Manufacturing Company, the first Washington, D.C. Cadillac agency. In 1899, 42 bicycle manufacturers, including Pope, merged to form American Bicycle Company, with Pope as one of the directors. Soon afterwards American Bicycle also acquired auto makers Lozier and Waverly. Pope was trying to create a bicycle monopoly and was reentering the car business. He became overextended. Possibly hoping to foil its creditors, on December 21, 1901 American Bicycle transferred its assets to its subsidiaries, of which American Cycle Manufacturing Company was one.

American Cycle was then operating Columbia Bicycle Stores to retail some of the eight remaining brands of American Bicycle, including the Columbia. American Cycle itself became insolvent in August 1902 and a court appointed Col. Pope one of three receivers in September to restructure. (This was not so different from today's Chapter 11 reorganization.)

W. J. Foss, whose name appears in the Columbia Bicycle Stores ad, was the first Cadillac Sales Agent. Winfred J. Foss had been Manager of the Columbia Bicycle Stores shop in D.C. since 1897. Cadillac Sales Manager William Metzger also had experience managing a bicycle shop. At the New York Automobile Show in January 1903, Metzger was launching Cadillac in Detroit and Pope was introducing the Robinson, Hartford, Toledo and Waverly.



**Col. Albert A. Pope
1843 – 1909**

It is not difficult to imagine people from the Pope booth walking over to the Cadillac booth to ask Mr. Metzger for the Cadillac line for their retail stores. The apparent strength of Pope may have helped American Cycle to get the Cadillac agency in D.C. Research indicates that two to three months after the auto show, American Cycle Manufacturing Company received its first Cadillacs, numbers 22 and 29.

At the time of those deliveries, Pope was restructuring his bicycle and automobile businesses under the name of Pope Manufacturing Company. The D.C. Cadillac Agency's marketing did not call the public's attention to American Cycle Manufacturing Company, which was being liquidated in the reorganization. In July 1903, a court enjoined American from continuing the bicycle and automobile businesses, but it was permitted to resume them at the end of August. In October 1903, American Cycle transferred all remaining assets to its creditor, the rubber trust known as Rubber Goods Manufacturing Company, and went out of business. (The Cadillac agency contract probably could not be transferred to the rubber trust.)

THE EVENING STAR, THURSDAY, JULY 16, 1903-16 PAGES



Our Last Carload of "CADILLAC" Automobiles.

OUR last carload of the popular "Cadillac" Automobiles are shown above as they were photographed in front of our store on 14th street. We are gratified to say that these cars are all sold. However, we expect another carload next week, and of the lot there will be two un sold. We advise intending purchasers to place their order at once, as it is very difficult to get enough of these machines to fill orders.

The Cadillac is without doubt the most popular machine of the season, because it so nearly approaches in carrying capacity, power and practical adaptability the expensive cars which cost from \$2,000 upward.

The Price of the Cadillac is \$750, or \$850 With Tonneau.

We sell 12 different models in Electric and Gasoline Machines, including the TOLEDO Gasoline Touring Car and the WAVERLY Electric Machines. Prices range from \$750 to \$4,500.

Columbia Bicycle Sales Rooms,
817-19 Fourteenth Street.



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The Cadillacs, along with three other makes of cars, could be purchased at the Pope Manufacturing Company's Columbia Bicycle Sales Rooms at 817-819 14th Street, N.W. In the early years of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for automobiles to be sold at bicycle stores, blacksmith shops, or any other establishment that was associated with transportation.

The reorganized Pope Manufacturing Company and Mr. Metzger agreed that Pope would represent Cadillac in D.C. for 1904, and a 1904 Cadillac catalogue lists Pope Manufacturing Company as the agent. It was not to be a long relationship. **The Motor Age** for March 24, 1904 reported that the "Pope Manufacturing Company branch" in D.C. was showing the full Pope line, including the Toledo, Tribune, Hartford, Waverly, plus the Rambler motorcycle and the Cadillac. Mr. Metzger may have felt Cadillac was not getting enough attention. He found other representation for D.C. for 1905, **The Cook & Stoddard Company**.

D.C.'s first Cadillac salesperson, Mr. Foss, was Pope's agent or employee, but it is suspected he was the Cadillac Agent only for advertising purposes. Foss moved to Rhode Island by mid-1904 to help manage Pope operations there, and soon afterwards transferred to the Pope factory in Boston. He resigned from Pope Manufacturing Company in 1905. In 1905, he became one of the owners of the Foss-Hughes Company, which established successful dealerships in several makes, not only in Washington, but also in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Providence and Newport. He must have made a good impression on William Metzger as Mssrs. Foss and Hughes obtained the Cadillac line for themselves in Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware for 1906. They ultimately added Baker Electric and Pierce-Arrow. Because of his notable success in marketing Pierce-Arrows, he was selected in 1915 by the Pierce-Arrow Company of Buffalo, New York, to serve as Executive Officer and assistant to Colonel Charles Clifton, the company treasurer. At that time, Mr. Foss severed his ties with the Foss-Hughes Company, although Foss-Hughes continued as the Pierce-Arrow dealer in Washington, and operated dealerships in other cities as well.

In March 1905, an ad for Cadillac automobiles on display at the Washington automobile show appeared in **The Evening Star**, featuring The Cook & Stoddard Company as the city's Cadillac dealership (pictured right), located at 1026-28 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. By now Cadillac was producing eight models (see list below).

Model No.	Body type	Seating	Price	Weight
Model B	Touring	4	\$900	659 kg
Model B	Surrey	4	\$900	659 kg
Model C	Runabout	2	\$750	605 kg
Model C	Touring	4	\$850	659 kg
Model D	2-door Touring	5	\$2800	1182 kg
Model E	Runabout	2	\$750	500 kg
Model F	2-door Touring	4	\$950	614 kg
Model F	Delivery	2	\$950	636 kg

Cadillac Automobiles.
See Our Exhibit at the Show.

No automobile is more generally or more favorably known than the Cadillac. No other maker has been able to successfully compete with it in power, price and popularity. The Cadillac motor has acquired a record which is not equaled by any other type of horizontal engine, double or single, of any make.

Satisfaction is the one word that fully explains the sudden rise of the Cadillac automobile from obscurity to the foremost place in the front rank of automobile names. No cheap or unworthy material finds its way into Cadillac cars or Cadillac motors, and we know there is no automobile the equal of the Cadillac at the price of a Cadillac.

Agencies:
Cadillac, Locomobile, Winton, Champion Trucks, White Steam, Baker Electric, Stevens Duryea.

The Cook & Stoddard Co.,
1026-28 Conn. Ave.
Phone Main 850-381.

Source: www.motorera.com

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www.clcpotomacregion.org



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The Cook & Stoddard Company was organized in 1904, and its President was Vermont native Joseph M. Stoddard. The company expanded quickly. The **Cycle & Automobile Trade Journal** reported in October 1905 that the company has secured the old riding academy building at 22nd and P Streets, and is "fixing it up as a garage". It was a sign of the times that a building dedicated to riding horses was being re-purposed as an automobile showroom. The article noted that the company was also "retaining its present garage and salesrooms at 1024-28 Connecticut Avenue, N.W."

In the 1906-1907 issue of the **Cycle & Automobile Trade Journal**, The Cook & Stoddard Company was described as the dealer for Locomobile, Franklin, White, Baker and Cadillac automobiles in Washington, D.C. Later that year, the **Journal** noted two other developments: the company acquired the franchise for Darracq automobiles, and Mr. R. W. Cook disposed of his interest in the company to Mr. Stoddard. The name of the company continued unchanged, despite Mr. Cook's withdrawal.

In the 1908-1909 year book of the **International Motor Cyclopaedia**, The Cook & Stoddard Company was said to be operating at 22nd and P Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., selling six automotive marques: Pierce-Arrow (which apparently replaced Locomobile), Franklin, White, Baker, Cadillac and Darracq. The Franklin was air-cooled, and the Baker was an electric car, so the dealership was apparently hedging its bets. The company's capitalization was \$15,000, and its activities were described as "garage, 175 cars, repairing and supplies". It was also noted that the dealership sold "second-hand cars".

In those days, the sale of a new Cadillac automobile was considered newsworthy. **The Washington Times** for Saturday January 24, 1914, carried the following article under the headline of "Two Cadillac Sales":

A Cadillac deluxe landaulet, finished in Calumet Green and upholstered in gray whipcord, with silk trimming, was delivered this week to Mrs. S. C. Neale by The Cook and Stoddard Company. A four-passenger Cadillac phaeton was also delivered to S. L. Larrabee.



Early in the morning on January 1, 1919, Joseph M. Stoddard passed away at his home at 1912 R Street, after a short illness. He was only 43 years old. **The Automobile Trade Journal** published an eloquent tribute under the headline "Prominent Washington Automobile Man Dies." Mr. Stoddard was described as having been "a leader in the automobile trade since its earliest days". The article went on to say,

"For seventeen years, Mr. Stoddard had been identified with the automobile trade and at the time of his death was President of the Washington Automobile Dealers' Association, of which he was one of the founders. Of Mr. Stoddard his associates and competitors speak only in the highest terms. To other dealers he was known as a man's man, a square competitor, generous and always an honorable opponent. The trade in Washington will miss his advice and his wise counsel, which has always helped to smooth over the hard spots in the growth of the business in the past."

Visit us on the web!

www.clcpotomacregion.org



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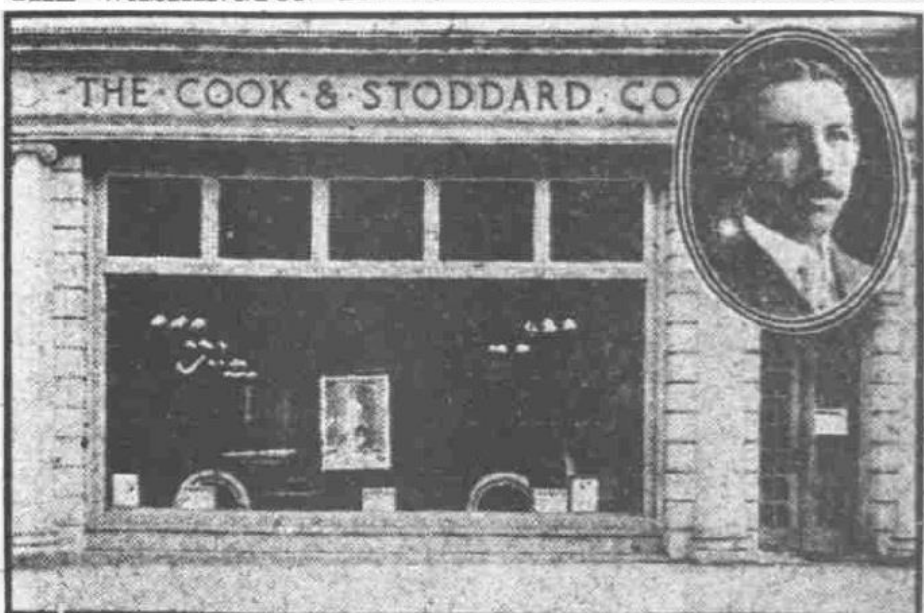
The **Washington Evening Star** obituary described Mr. Stoddard as "active in local affairs, and one of the best known automobile men in the south."

The Cook & Stoddard Company continued with General Manager Rudolph Jose at the helm. By 1919, the Cadillac showroom had moved back to Connecticut Avenue, N.W., this time at 1138-1140, a block up from its 1905 location (pictured right). There was also an accessories department and service station at 1135-1139 Eighteenth Street, N.W. (possibly the rear of the Connecticut Avenue showroom building).

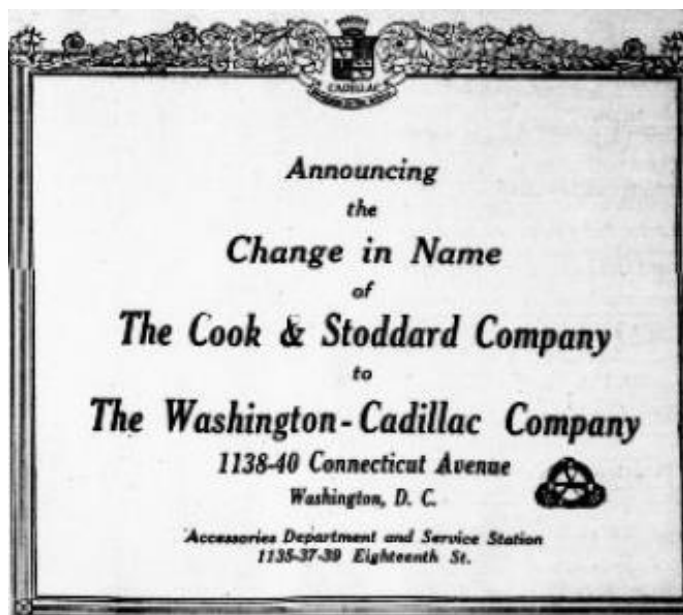
In the November 22, 1919 issue of **The Washington Times** (pictured right), it was announced that The Cook & Stoddard Company was changing its name to **The Washington-Cadillac Company**. Rudolph Jose was now the President of the company. Mr. Jose was a native Washingtonian who lived at 3206 18th Street. He was prominent in the community and in his industry, serving (among other positions) as the President of the Washington Automotive Trade Association for two terms, as Vice-President of the National Automobile Dealers' Association, a member of the Board of Trade and a director of the Chamber of Commerce.

The newly named Cadillac dealership thrived during the "Roaring Twenties" with the growing popularity of Cadillac and its new companion car, the LaSalle, which was introduced in 1927. Washington-Cadillac also hosted periodic "salons" that showcased custom-bodied Cadillacs produced by coachbuilders such as Willoughby and LeBaron.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES, SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1919.



Cadillac Car. The Cook & Stoddard Co., 1138 Conn. Ave
N. W. Host, Rudolph Jose.





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The Washington-Cadillac Co. name has become well known in recent years because prints depicting its showroom circa 1927 became available for sale on the Internet (pictured above). You can even buy t-shirts on the Internet with the same showroom photo (pictured right).

On the left in the showroom picture is a tree, maybe a Christmas tree with the Cadillac logo with the Standard of the World slogan below it. On the right is LaSalle script and block letters. There are two posters in the photo. The one on the left says "Prof. Langley's day 35 mph". On the right, it says "Col. Lindbergh's day (1927) 105 mph". Langley was no doubt Professor Samuel Pierpont Langley, once Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Observatory. He performed experiments with flight of models and machines at the end of the 19th century, coincident with the Wright Brothers' work. Much of that work was done in Washington, when he was Secretary of the Smithsonian.





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Of course, Lindbergh refers to Col. Charles Lindbergh who completed his solo flight from Roosevelt Field, Garden City Long Island to Le Bourget Field in Paris May 20-21, 1927! The beautiful Cadillac and LaSalles represented speeds in between.

The Washington-Cadillac Company was astute at marketing, going beyond the basics of new car sales. In **The**

Washington Post on February 5, 1924, a classified ad (pictured

right) invited prospective used car buyers to contact Mr. Jose, even if they lacked sufficient cash to buy a used car.

WE HELP FINANCE YOU in the purchase of a used car. Any one bearing a good reputation and whose references are satisfactory may buy one of our used cars on terms that should prove most attractive. We feel that frequently a moral rating is more acceptable than a financial one.

THE WASHINGTON CADILLAC COMPANY.

Rudolph JOSE, President,
1138-1140 Connecticut Ave.
Frank. 3900, 3901, 3902.

The company was interested in selling services, as well as cars. **The Washington Post** on May 13, 1928 included an article that quoted the dealership on its techniques for restoring and detailing automobiles. Read below.

OLD CARS NOW READILY MADE TO LOOK LIKE NEW GREAT PROGRESS REPORTED IN FIELD OF REFINISHING AND RENOVATION. FINE LACQUER OFFERED

That many motorists who can not see their way clear to acquiring a new car at the moment put up with automobiles that are old and shabby in appearance is due in many cases to their lack of understanding of the remarkable progress that has been recorded in the field of renovation and refinishing. This point is made by Morris Weeks, foreman of the paint and body division of the Washington Cadillac Co.'s maintenance department, who declares that the claim that old cars can be made to "look like new" is a literal truth.

"The well equipped and expertly staffed paint and body shop today can do just as good lacquer work as can be done anywhere," says Weeks. "Many motorists are not aware of this fact. As a result they continue to drive cars that look far from their best."

"It is not always refinishing that a car requires to restore it to its original lustrous beauty," Weeks says. Sometimes, the special process of renovation that has been developed since lacquer finishes came into universal use is all that is required to make a car look its best. Explaining this point, he declares that the car that often looks as if its finish were totally destroyed is affected by nothing more than a "traffic film" which is easily and inexpensively removed.

In addition to restoring the finish on the body, the renovation process includes treating fenders, chassis and wheels to several coats of lacquer which brings them up to the appearance of the rest of the car.

"While lacquer finishes have been in almost universal use for more than three years there are many motorists who still do not recognize that the field as well as the factory is capable of applying them," says Weeks. "That it is provides one of the most interesting features of this type of finish. The same equipment and the same high character of workmanship is available to the local refinishing establishment as well as to the motor car factory. It puts the local shop in a position to do exactly the same fine work on the car that has become shabby through use that the factory can do to the new car."



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"This service should be a boon to the car owner who can not see his financial way clear to acquiring a new car but who, nevertheless, would like to restore the beauty of the machine he now owns. Needless to say, it requires far less time and is by no means as costly to have a car refinished by the modern method. It provides the most efficient solution for the problem of having a fine looking car at all times."

Automobile Firm Sued for \$13,566
The Washington Post (1923-1954); Jan 16, 1931;
Pg. 4

Automobile Firm Sued for \$13,566

Finance Corporation Seeks Money From Bankrupt Company.

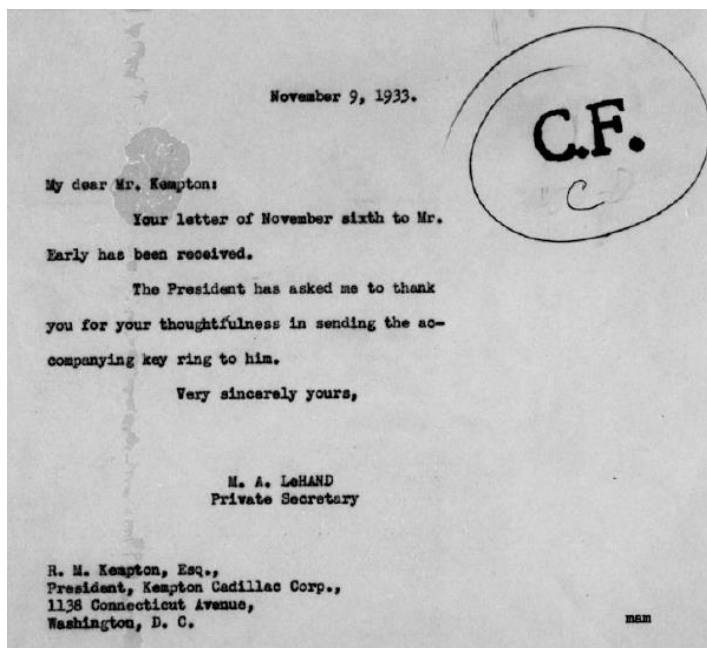
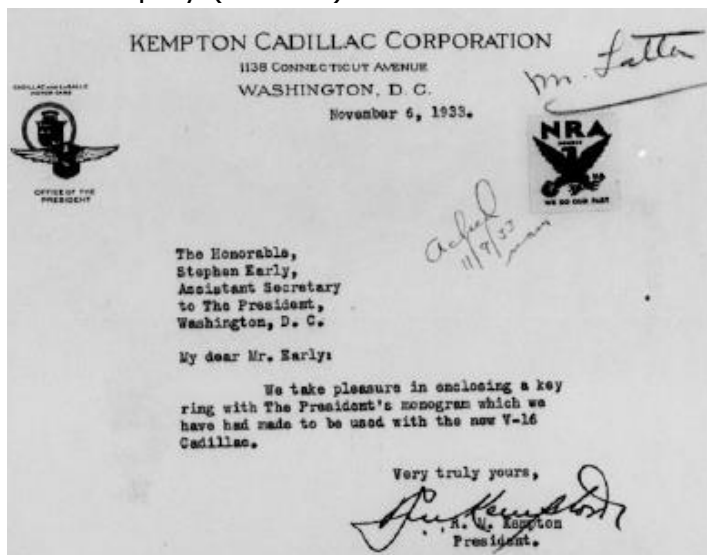
Seeking to recover \$13,566 the International Finance Corporation, with offices in the Investment Building, filed suit yesterday against the Washington Cadillac Co. and the General Motors Acceptance Corporation. The Washington Cadillac Co. filed a petition in bankruptcy recently.

The plaintiff alleges it advanced money on several automobiles on representation that they were free from liens. Despite this, the plaintiff states the acceptance corporation on December 10, last, took possession of the cars on which advances had been made. It also is contended that at the time the Washington Cadillac Co. purchased the automobiles from the Cadillac Motor Car Co. of Detroit, Mich., no conditional bill of sale, if any, was recorded in the office of the recorder of deeds.

Attorneys Douglas, Ober & Douglas, E. D. Campbell and L. A. Ward appear for the plaintiff.

Despite its success in the 1920's, The Washington-Cadillac Company suffered from the effects of the Great Depression. On January 16, 1931, **The Washington Post** reported that the dealership was being sued for \$13,566 by the International Finance Corporation, and that it had recently filed a petition in bankruptcy (see left).

By July 1931, **Kempton Cadillac Corporation**, the next Washington, D.C. Cadillac dealership, appeared in **The Post's** Auto Dealers' Select List. Its address was the same as Washington-Cadillac Company's showroom address.



In November 1933, Robert Morris Kempton, the dealership's president, sent a key ring with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's monogram to the White House for use with the new V-16 Cadillac that they delivered. The gift was acknowledged in a return letter from Missy LeHand, FDR's Private Secretary (see letters right).



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In 2013, the Kempton Cadillac Corporation name received new publicity in connection with a certain 1932 Cadillac V-16 All-Weather Phaeton by Fisher sold new by the dealership. The car, engine no. 1400208 – body no. 6 – style no. 27, is one of 13 Fisher-bodied all-weather phaetons built in 1932, and one of three that survive. RM Auctions offered the car for sale at its auction in Arizona in January 2013.

According to RM, the original delivery document indicated that the car was delivered new to Kempton Cadillac Corporation. It was tagged for delivery to a Mr. or Mrs. Schoellkopf, in all likelihood a member of the prominent New York family that brought hydroelectric power to Niagara Falls. Specified in the order were dual side-mounted spares with metal covers and mirrors, the iconic "Goddess" radiator mascot, and a front seat center armrest.



The style shows off the formal but sporty dual personality of the Fisher all-weather body, which can be driven with the top down as a gracious summer tourer or with the top raised as a luxurious limousine. Alas, the grand Classics were considered obsolete in the years following World War II, and this rare

vehicle once served as a push car at drag-races before being purchased for \$550 in the early 1950s by a man from Pottstown, Pennsylvania. But this story had a happy ending: the car was saved and eventually received an exquisite restoration. It was sold at the RM Auction for \$291,500.



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On January 11, 1934, Kempton Cadillac ran a large ad in **The Washington Post** introducing the new 1934 Cadillac and LaSalle with their distinctive bi-plane bumpers. Ironically the ad's title stated that **Progress Means Change!...*, and change was soon to occur. On April 15, 1934,

The Post reported some news: **"Akers to Open Cadillac Agency."**

Akers to Open Cadillac Agency
The Washington Post (1923-1934): Apr 15, 1934;
pg. R16

**Akers to Open
Cadillac Agency**

**New Company Takes Sales
and Service Building on
Twenty-second Street.**

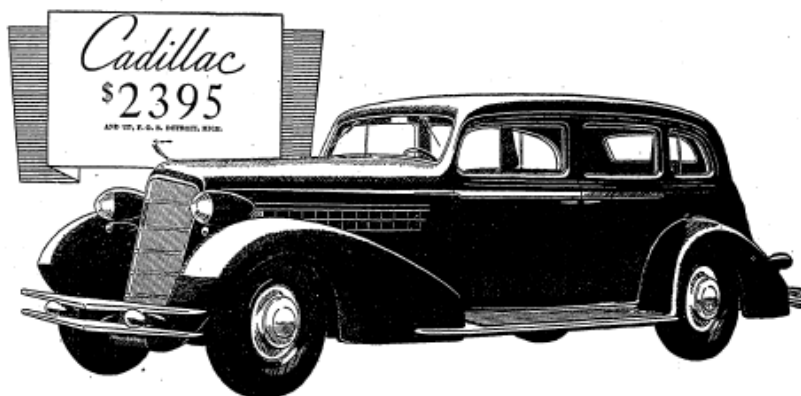
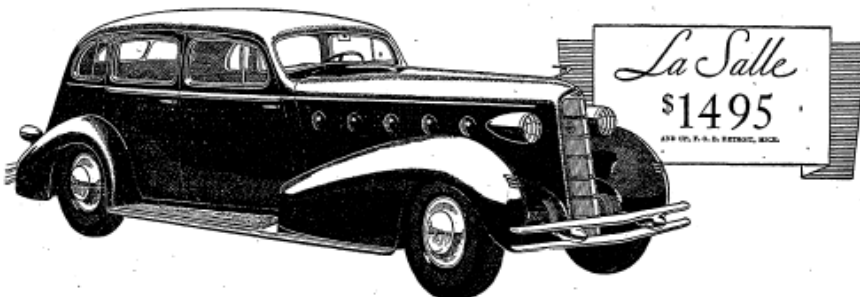
We can only speculate as to why Kempton Cadillac ceased to exist, but an educated guess can be made, based on other reported facts. The Chairman of the Board of Kempton Cadillac was Mr. Kempton's father-in-law, Henry B. Tremaine. Apparently, Mr. Tremaine also owned a large share of the stock of the company. Mr. Tremaine, a resident of New York, was also the Chairman of the Board of the Aeolian Weber Piano and Pianola Company in New York, which had been founded by his father in 1887.



HENRY B. TREMAINE

Mr. Tremaine died suddenly on May 13, 1932, at age 66, while visiting his daughter and son-in-law in Washington. An article in the May 27, 1932 issue of **The Pelham Sun** reported that the bulk of his estate passed to a trust for the benefit of his surviving widow. After Mrs. Tremaine's death, the trust was to be divided into three equal shares, of which one went to Mrs. Kempton, one went to her sister, and one went to the children of Mrs. Kempton's brother.

***PROGRESS MEANS CHANGE!...**
Announcing... **THREE MAGNIFICENT NEW CADILLACS
AND A SENSATIONAL NEW LA SALLE !**



Everywhere in America, "the old order changeth, giving place to new." Progress, and that alone, is the keynote of this new age in which we live. . . . Cadillac, out of its quarter century of progress, brings you this spirit of change in three magnificent new Cadillacs and a sensational new La Salle! . . . In designing these cars, the precedents of the past were completely ignored. For progress means change! . . . Of foremost importance is the revolutionary new system of front-end construction - "Knee-Action" wheels - giving, by far, the finest ride ever known in

any automobile. Even in the rear many passengers can now ride at high speeds over rough roads, in complete relaxation. The car actually seems to glide. . . . All control mechanisms have been greatly improved. The motors have been endowed with new smoothness and acceleration. The bodies are far finer and more beautiful, both inside and outside - with all enclosed models embodying the latest Fisher No Draft Ventilation. In fact, the whole of every car has been so radically improved that only after a thorough demonstration and inspection can you appreciate

the full advancement that has been made. . . . And even in the face of today's rising market, prices have been drastically reduced. . . . The new Cadillacs are now on display at our showrooms. The La Salle - a completely new car, entirely re-designed in all its phases - and equipped exclusively with bodies by Fleetwood - will be available within a few weeks. The V-16, as usual, is custom built to order. . . . We sincerely believe that this is the greatest announcement Cadillac has ever made. See these cars with that thought in mind. You can't be disappointed.

KEMPTON CADILLAC CORPORATION

R. M. KEMPTON, President

1138 Connecticut Avenue. District 3430

CADILLAC SYMPHONY CONCERTS - EVERY SUNDAY EVENING AT 8 O'CLOCK E.S.T.; BLUE NETWORK N.B.C. - WORLD-FAMOUS CONDUCTORS AND ARTISTS

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The article also reported that Mr. Tremaine's Will gave Mr. Kempton a "one-year option" to purchase his father-in-law's stock in Kempton Cadillac, for a price that the executors determined to be suitable.

When his father-in-law died unexpectedly, Mr. Kempton was in his early 40s, married, with two young children. He had just begun his second year of operating the dealership, and was now faced with an unexpected decision about buying out his father-in-law's share. The decision was forced on him during the darkest days of the Depression, when Cadillac and LaSalle sales plummeted in 1932-33. While the details are lost to history, it seems likely that when Mr. Kempton considered the size of the new obligation he would have to undertake if he bought the stock, and the general economic conditions then prevailing, he decided this would be a good time to consider an outside offer to acquire the company.

Regardless of how the transition occurred, Floyd DeSoto Akers took over the representation of Cadillac and LaSalle automobiles in 1934 under the name of **Capitol Cadillac Company**. Mr. Akers, a World War I veteran, was a native of Wabash County, Indiana. But **The Washington Post** reported that he is "no stranger to Washington", having been Cadillac Zone Manager here for three years before he left in 1928 to assume direction of the Boston zone. A sales and service building at 1222 22nd Street, NW, containing over 40,000 square feet of space in a four-story building became the headquarters of the new dealership. It provided space for offices, service department, parts department, and a shop, paint and trim department.

In addition, the building provided a large display room to showcase more than a dozen new Cadillacs and LaSalles, and a "dead storage department so that owners who desire, on leaving the city for an extended time, arrange to leave their cars in the care of the company." In the shop, the new dealership installed "all of the newest labor saving equipment, designed especially for service work on these cars".



Capitol Cadillac Showroom circa 1948
Photo by John Williams



Cadillac & LaSalle Club Potomac Region Caddie Chronicle



Capitol Cadillac added the Oldsmobile franchise in 1947, and was then known as Capitol Cadillac-Oldsmobile. Adding the Oldsmobile marque gave the dealership access to a new category of buyers. Some of them ended up as Cadillac customers.

In his book ***Right From the Beginning***, Washington D. C. native and political commentator Patrick J. Buchanan relates the story of his father's visit to Capitol Cadillac-Oldsmobile in 1947, when the author was nine years old. Mr. Buchanan's father, a successful accountant, had gotten through the war years driving an "old red Dodge". When peacetime came, he was ready to buy a new Oldsmobile to carry his large family through the hills of Western Pennsylvania to visit the grandparents in Charleroi, PA. Mr. Buchanan recalls:

When he went to Capitol Cadillac-Oldsmobile, a client and friend, the manager Ken Moore, counseled my father not to buy the six-cylinder Olds, but the new eight-cylinder job; with all his luggage and kids, Pop would need the extra power. How much, Pop asked, for the eight-cylinder Olds? Twenty-four hundred, came the reply. And how much is that Cadillac over there? Twenty-eight hundred.

The new, blue, four-door Cadillac sedan my father wheeled home that night was the sensation of the neighborhood. No one else on Chestnut Street had ever owned one. One neighbor came up to the door to ask, "Say, Bill, isn't that a Cadillac?"

We had arrived. Even though we had a garage off Chestnut Street, every night we left that magnificent machine in front of the house.

With its mighty V-eight engine and "hydromatic drive," the Cadillac was the sleekest, fastest, most powerful car on the road. When we roared up the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Charleroi, even with five or six kids in the car, we swept past trucks, cars, everything on the road – with us looking out the window, waving at the poor folks my father sped past at eighty miles per hour.

In the General Motors hierarchy of sales outlets, Capitol was considered as a "distributor", which was higher up on the food-chain than a typical dealer. As such, it opened two suburban dealerships, Akers Oldsmobile-Cadillac in Alexandria and Suburban Cadillac-Oldsmobile in Bethesda. Both of these stores were later sold – the Virginia dealership is now Lindsay Cadillac, and the Bethesda dealership is Coleman Cadillac.

"CADILLAC SERVICE IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD"
THE CADILLAC SERVICEMAN
FEBRUARY 1941: PAGE 8

RALPH W. EMERSON
1521 North Greenbrier St., at 16th St., North
(LARCHMONT) ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA
Telephone: Walnut 7390
January 14, 1941

CADILLAC MOTOR CAR DIVISION
General Motors Sales Corporation
Detroit, Michigan
Attention: Mr. Nicholas Dreystadt,
General Manager

Gentlemen: –

In recognition of the invariable courtesy and conscientious service which I have received from Cadillac service agents in both the United States and Canada during the past two years, I am writing to express my personal appreciation of this uniformly splendid helpfulness.

The Capitol Cadillac Company in Washington from whom I purchased my LaSalle car has given me a quality of service which I have never found equaled with other makes of cars. From my own experience, I am convinced that the upkeep of your cars, when sold and serviced by your own authorized agencies is extremely economical.

Your agencies in other cities where I have stopped for contract lubrication service on my car have not only honored the coupons with promptness and efficiency but have frequently gone out of their way to show me courtesies. For example, driving me to my hotel in Montreal, and helping at the expense of considerable time to find hotel accommodations for me in an emergency in Toronto.

A friend in a Michigan city who has owned approximately forty automobiles of various makes in his experience, in reply to my commendation of your service, remarked:

"Cadillac service is the best in the world."

It is of high credit to your organization that the continued and sustained attention of your agencies to your cars after they have been sold has earned such an exceptional rating.

Cordially yours,
ELIZABETH DODGE EMERSON



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**L to R: Major General William H. Abendroth,
President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Floyd D. Akers
at the White House**

October 7, 1958

**Photo by the National Park Service and
the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library**

In the March 1958 issue of **Popular Science** magazine, an article describes how Capitol Cadillac serviced and repaired the White House Cadillacs used to transport President Eisenhower, the First Lady and other dignitaries. In the article titled, "*The World's Most Pampered Vehicles*", author William McGaffin described the following:

Included in the collection are two Secret Service Cadillacs with very special numbers, and the President's Cadillac, a black 1955 Series 75 limousine model with white sidewall tubeless tires. (The tires, standard heavy duty models, are changed every 10,000 to 12,000 miles as a safety measure). The top has been replaced to take a sliding roof panel (giving the President plenty of room to stand up while riding in parades). It has blue upholstery and is air-conditioned.

The Cadillacs are taken to Capitol Cadillac Co., at 1222 Twenty-second St., N.W., where Floyd Akers, the company president, supervises repairs.

Mr. Akers remained at the helm until he retired in 1970. Aside from his automotive career, he was a civic leader, serving as Chairman of the D.C. Armory Board and as a trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He was also a part-owner of the Washington Senators baseball team.

In addition to his other contributions to Washington, Mr. Akers had a major role in launching a well-known local success story – the Blackie's chain of restaurants. Ulysses George Auger, known as "Blackie", was a Pennsylvania native and a second-generation Greek-American. According to Mr. Auger's obituary in **The Washington Post** in 2004, he served in the military during World War II, and shortly thereafter he came to Washington. He and his wife, Lulu, started a cafe at 22nd and M Streets N.W.



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In her book ***Lulu: One Woman's Journey from Poverty and the Occult to Enduring Faith and True Riches***, Lulu describes how Floyd Akers helped them along the way:

About six months later, in September 1949, we lost the lease on our cafe. We had been working day and night for three years, yet it seemed we could lose it all with just one registered letter announcing that our property was up for sale.

Although we were dejected, I remained hopeful that God would provide an opening for us to continue our business. And He did, through Mr. Floyd D. Akers of the nearby Capitol Cadillac Company, who would often come into our cafe. He endorsed a note for \$10,000 at the bank, and we were able to lease a bigger premises across the street. We called it the Minute Grille, with the extra "e" in Grille for effect.

The Minute Grille (pictured right) catered mostly to auto mechanics working at the nearby Capitol Cadillac dealership. The restaurant eventually became Blackie's House of Beef in 1953, when it began offering roast beef and prime rib to a full house of customers. Eventually, the Augers owned a chain of restaurants, as well as hotels, banks, real estate and other investments. Mr. Auger, always one to remember his friends, customarily bought two new Cadillacs every year from Mr. Akers.



Mr. Akers' successor in 1970 as President of the company was his son-in-law, Howard L. Jobe (pictured left). Mr. Jobe was a native of New York City but had lived in the Washington area since 1941. He served in the Navy during World War II, and was a graduate of Georgetown University. During the 1950s, he worked in the automotive classified advertising department of ***The Washington Post***. In the late 1950s, he became a manager at Capitol Cadillac-Oldsmobile. For a short time, he also worked for an affiliated company, Capitol Parisian Motors, which responded to the increasing demand for imports by offering French-made cars for sale.

During the 1970s, the Cadillac Division of General Motors was encouraging its metropolitan dealers to leave the cities and establish themselves in the growing suburbs, where space was available to expand sales and service facilities. As a result, Mr. Jobe successfully planned and executed Capitol's move to Greenbelt, Maryland in 1979. Mr. Akers did not live to see the dealership's departure from Washington; he died in 1978, at the age of 83. Mr. Jobe continued his tenure at the helm of Capitol Cadillac-Oldsmobile until his death in 1990.



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M.G. (Marion Guy) Brown was one of a few employees who worked for Washington-Cadillac, Kempton Cadillac and Capitol Cadillac. Brown, along with Louis Delavigne and John Abell, Sr., worked at Capitol well into the 1960s-70s. Mr. Abell, Sr. was the father of Potomac Region member John "Buddy" Abell, Jr., who worked at Capitol from the 1940s until 1993, and passed away in 2006.

After Capitol Cadillac moved to Maryland, no other Cadillac dealership has been located in Washington, D.C. In fact, at the present time, there are no new car dealers located in Washington, D.C.

In summary, there were **five Washington, D.C. Cadillac dealerships from 1903-1979**. Note, however, that the transition from The Cook & Stoddard Company to the Washington-Cadillac Company was described as a "change in name". If the entity remained the same and only the name changed, then one may argue that there were **four**. Either way, it is an interesting 76-year journey.



**Capitol Cadillac
1260 22nd Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
Dealer Code 426519
Illustration by John E. Boehm**

Epilogue:



While this article focuses on Cadillac dealerships in Washington, D.C., the story of Cadillac sales in the national capital area does not end with 1979. Capitol Cadillac remains a successful dealership in Greenbelt, Maryland, in a prominent location visible from the Capital Beltway that surrounds Washington, D.C. It also sells Buicks and GMCs. Since the death of Howard L. Jobe in 1990, the dealership has been headed by Mr. Jobe's son (and Mr. Akers' grandson), Daniel Jobe (pictured left, receiving CLC's Cadillac Herald Award in 2009). In addition to serving as President of the dealership, Daniel is a CLC member, and an antique car collector with a fine collection of vintage Cadillacs and an Oldsmobile "woodie". He recently completed the "Great Race" in a 1946 Cadillac convertible, and his dealership sponsors two shows each year for the Potomac Region CLC. And so, the Standard of the World retains a strong and vital presence in Washington, D.C.