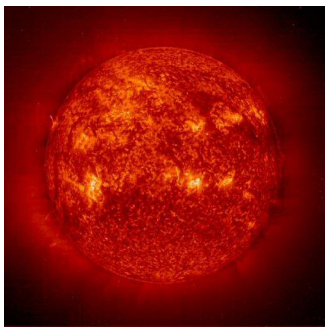
Air Car Hall of Fame

by Scott Robertson

Chapter 3:

Roy Jerome Meyers

1879 - 1958



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Roy Jerome Meyers
1879 - 1958

"Lack of faith is the breeding ground of suckers."
—J. J. Sanders, parole clerk, Arizona State Prison, Florence, Arizona, June 8, 1914

"We do too much for our prisoners, but not the right thing."
—Kate Barnard, Oklahoma Dept. of Corrections prison reformer

INTRODUCTION
Roy Jerome Meyers was the most well-publicized air car inventor of 1931 and 1932, and that was a pivotal time for the air car movement. Industrial powerhouse William Lawrence Saunders, founder of *Compressed Air Magazine* and founding chairman of Ingersoll Rand Corporation, died in 1931 and after that, compressed air was no longer going to be taught via textbooks. From then on the facts about air as an energy medium were conservatively doled out to graduate engineers on the job, on a need-to-know basis, and nothing of interest was said about air in textbooks again. It wouldn't be long before the whole field of undiscovered pneumatical exotica was practically forgotten, just dropped from the classroom curriculum and finally no longer spoken of in technical circles. Not without words like "nutjobs" thrown in to identify the speaker as a sophisticated member of the intelligentsia. Around the time of the two world wars, engineering came under the influence of big brother energy and changed from hands-on science to a glorified price fixing club custom-designed to vault the Engineer into the upper echelons of society and keep him there, weeding out the sort of naïve cretins who might try to ruin things for everybody by charging a reasonable fee. In 1912, socially inept but technically savantoid Roy Meyers was called an "electrical engineer" because he knew how to do stuff. By 1950 if he'd tried calling himself an engineer without a degree and a license, he could face stiff penalties. He knew about stiff penalties and was happy to be known as a capable and hard-working machinist, and part-time inventor.

As for the socially unacceptable undercurrent of "let's keep it simple and keep the gasoline out of these air engines", Roy J Meyers' invention was the icing on the cake. The 1920s had seen so much activity in the field of exotica fluidica that there was even a daily comic strip about an air car inventor in 1926 and 1927. The inventors, without exception, were secretive to a fault. That's pretty much what the cartoon strip *Gas Buggies* was about: air car inventors cutting off their nose to spite their face. The cartoonist Frank Beck has his own chapter in this book, as an honorary air car inventor. He gave us more information about inventors than inventors themselves generally do, and pinpointed several of the reasons that inventors usually remain wanna-be's. If Roy Meyers had any secrets, he no doubt took them to his grave like all the others. But maybe he had no secrets. One way to find out would be to build the machine that his patents describe. His designs are straightforward, as far as I know.

For the most part, this book is about people who said their air powered energy machine could do the work of cheaply getting its own air—thus the air's solar energy content—into the thermodynamic system that is responsible for making the machine go. Cheaply vs. the cost of running a conventional compressor. Back in the 1920s people knew intuitively that air contained

its own energy. They did not live in refrigerators and they knew with their bodies that ordinary air had heat in it. This sort of thing must now be explained to engineers, who live in refrigerators, drive in refrigerators, and work in refrigerators. Have you ever tried to explain something to someone who has letters after his name? The term "self-fueling air car" was coined by me but I now like "self-filling air tank" better since the energy in air is not a fuel that turns into heat by being destroyed, it's just ordinary room temperature heat and nothing has to be destroyed or besmirched in order for it to be used. Ambient heat. Because of compressed air textbooks and journal articles by hands-on engineers like William Lawrence Saunders, it was well known that you could double the energy content of a given batch of compressed air seven or eight times more cheaply by directly heating it, than you could by compressing more air from atmosphere to get the same end result. Roy Meyers took advantage of this principle and others—such as "electric resistance heating is 100% efficient", and "a car is under power only about 40% of the time it is moving"—to build a car that started with a full tank, not thousands of psi but just normal everyday pressures, and tapping into the car's momentum to generate electricity, the air was heated in the tank. The result was that most of the air just stayed in the tank, circulating around from chamber to chamber till it was needed. This is not perpetual motion if it works. There is no perpetual motion. Meyers' car was able to go at least 100 miles on a tank of air but of course most of the details of the test are unclear; we have to rely on newspaper accounts and the tests were done with witnesses but in secret, whatever that means. He claimed that 500 to 1000 miles would be possible if his system was perfected. That's self-fueling enough for me, but the results of his final analysis of the invention's performance are not available.

EARLY LIFE: ROY JEROME SMITH

I don't know why Roy Jerome Smith changed his name to Meyers. Even his marriage records are in the Meyers name. Like most inventors, he was atypical. On his World War II draft registration he printed and signed his name "Roy Jrome Meyers". He was probably named after the same ancestor as his mother's relative Sgt. Jerome Darling, an orphan who lived with his mother's family when they were children, and died in a civil war battle at Champion's Hill, Mississippi. Uncle Jerome was probably a nephew of Roy Meyers' great-grandmother, Almira Darling Minkler. Roy's grandfather was John R Minkler, a blacksmith and farmer, and a corporal in the Civil War. Roy also had an uncle named Jerome Darling Minkler, so somewhere back in time there must have been an ancestor named Jerome Darling who Roy and a lot of other people were named after.

Many air car inventors were from Ohio and Pennsylvania, where they grew up around railroads and heard the hissing of air brakes all day. Roy J Smith was born in Edgewood, Iowa, which is part in one county and part in another. His parents were both from Florence, Erie County, Ohio, a few miles from Lake Erie. In those days if you didn't know a brakeman who worked on the railroad, you were not living in Ohio or Pennsylvania. Today, on the other hand, if you don't know a real estate agent, an attorney, an accountant, an insurance salesperson and a mortgage peddler, you must have been conceived in a hay loft and born in a barn. Did you know that these occupations—mortgage peddler, etc.—are now called "industries"???!!! Whatever happened to working for a living? I mean *making* something, vs. skimming off those who do?

Roy's father was Charles Morton Smith, and his mother was Alzoa Amy Minkler.

Roy's grandfather was John Yarrington Smith, youngest son of Enoch Smith and Beulah Yarrington. John Y Smith was born and raised in Florence, Ohio, like his son. When he was 22

he married Lydia Allen, the widow of his oldest brother, and raised his three nephews and one niece as his own family, although he was only eight years older than his oldest stepson. His wife was a lot older than him, and they had only one child of their own, Charles Morton Smith, Roy Meyers' father. Charles M Smith was a master mechanic on the B & M Railroad and his half-brothers worked as blacksmiths and farmers. Charles also worked as a carpenter, stage coach driver, and farm hand. He was a civil war veteran.

Charles married Alzoa A Minkler and they soon left for Steele City, Nebraska with their two children: baby Roy Jerome Smith and Stella, Roy's older sister. There were plenty of Minklers in that part of Nebraska. In those days, people moved to where family IS. These days, people move to where family AIN'T. It's about being in a hurry and not having time to enjoy life. Relatives are just a hassle to people who are in a hurry all the time. Although Roy and his father were both short on siblings, Roy honored the value of family and the public record shows it.

Roy's parents and other relatives including Roy's grandfather John Ransom Minkler relocated to Fresno, California after 1885, and Roy attended school as long as possible in Fresno. But his father died of consumption, then his sister was sick for a year and she died at the age of 15. At the age of 10, Roy J Smith had to quit school and go to work to support himself and his mother. He had already been doing odd jobs after school, such as weaving carpets, but with his father gone, Roy became the man of the house.

ROY'S TROUBLES BEGIN

Eleven-year-old Roy Smith labored in a lumber yard, janitored at the school he wished he could attend, operated farm machinery in the summer and worked in machine shops in the winter. One of his supervisors was Frank Scott, ex-sheriff of Fresno County, who remembered him later and wrote him a nice reference letter.

At the age of 13, Roy was driving a lumber wagon with a team of horses when the wagon suffered a breakdown. To get out of the scrape he was in, he sold a harness to a passerby for enough money to solve his immediate problem, but was later accused of stealing the harness since it wasn't his. He ended up serving 90 days for petty larceny.

One of Roy Smith's seasonal occupations was making raisin crates at packing houses. When asked for a reference later, one of his bosses at a packing house wrote that Roy was so impressionable and easy to manipulate that he might do anything he was told to do, no matter how ridiculous. It was suggested by that particular reference writer (but not by any other) that Roy might belong in a mental institution. I don't hide such things by leaving them out of this book, because I want to make the point that most inventors and particularly wanna-be inventors are not like other people. They don't think like other people and as a result live in a twilight zone between social marginality and downright excommunication from the human race. The wanna-be inventor who is up against this kind of daily confrontation, *and* has no money, generally remains an unknown, unsuccessful, in-debt, wanna-be. People ask, "If these inventors were right about compressed air, why did all of them fail to bring something to market?" My response: "Just show me one inventor who *is capable* of bringing *anything* to market." Like Van Gogh's genius, real talent in some specialized area does not translate directly into a fat bank account. A Van Gogh painting now sells for millions of dollars, but he never sold a painting during his life and was supported by his brother. It's not about the value or relative value of the art in question, it's about the personality of the artist and his role in society.

All the other references spoke kindly of Roy, except one employer who obviously didn't like him. Roy had come highly recommended to him as a good all-round mechanic, and in the ten days Roy worked for him running a header, Mr J F Rowell did not find him to be such a good mechanic. He thought Roy was a little careless and tended to act boastful, as if he had illusions about his abilities and what he planned to do with his life. Rowell mentioned for some reason that Roy was a little deaf and said he wasn't very intelligent. Sounds like a typical emotionally immature and inexperienced 20-year old to me, but see below regarding "asperger syndrome".

Roy was a soft-spoken and non-violent person but when his mother married John A Bomgardner in 1898, he became a drifter for a time, meaning well and always looking for work, but getting into a few scrapes because of the company he ended up keeping. He was extremely naïve, and what his boss from the packing house said about him was true: he really would do what people told him. That made him shark bait for desperados who were more street-wise than he.

In Fresno he had been taking on small shingling contracts but Los Angeles sounded more interesting to him when his mother got married and didn't need his money anymore. He did well as a laborer at the electric company in Los Angeles, and was quickly promoted to lineman and then troubleshooter. He was something of a savant at electrical and mechanical gadgetry but his social intelligence was retarded and he wasn't motivated to make the extra effort to overcome this until it had caused him quite a bit of suffering. Getting married might have ultimately saved his life, but that wasn't until later.

With the money had had saved Roy went to Stockton, California to open his own blacksmith shop, but at the real estate office, someone talked him into buying a bankrupt restaurant instead. He was just being used on account of the fact that he had no more business savvy than a pie plate and was gullible enough to make an easy mark. After two months the partner he'd inherited with the restaurant had run up some bills that the income wouldn't cover, and Roy went back to Fresno to collect the last $30 of his savings to take care of it. When he got back to Stockton the restaurant had already been closed by creditors. He was on the street with nothing. Except a "friend" named Albert Furman who he had known in Fresno and happened upon in Stockton.

Don't get me wrong, I don't want to get too carried away making excuses for him, and for all I know he might have even invented Albert Furman to give him an excuse, but the story as he told it is that he and his friend spent three weeks in Sacramento looking for work. Then one day Furman pulled a check out of his pocket and talked Roy into cashing it, and they would split the money. It was a small amount, and the check ended up being a forgery. Roy was caught, Furman escaped. Roy served more than four years of a 6-year sentence in Folsom Prison.

At the time of his arrest he was using the name C M Meyers, based on his father's initials C M, and I still don't know where he got the Meyers from. He was a model prisoner, his crime had been non-violent and non-confrontive, nothing like armed robbery or burglary. The way he tells it he was a patsy for the real criminal and hadn't even known it was a bad check. The possibility exists that he was lying, as it wasn't the last time he got hungry, desperate, and in trouble. The second offense ten years later was a carbon copy of the first. So maybe Furman was one of his inventions. I will not try to assert that he didn't live in a fantasy world and if he was knowingly guilty he could have still believed in his own innocence. I know, it's still a lousy excuse. But his

1900 prison record states that he did not smoke, drink, or use opiates. Later he became a smoker.

Minor scrapes with the law will come up throughout this book so I will say it now and repeat it later: many wanna-be inventors are more-or-less social misfits. Misfits experience friction with human society every day. Friction gets people into trouble. But the worst thing that a person does in life is not the thing that his whole contribution to the world should be judged by. Not because it "isn't fair" to judge people by the worst thing they ever did, but because to do so would be stupid. Shallow people who don't tend to regularly screw up socially will automatically disagree, because they lack empathy with those who don't understand the unwritten rules which dictate correct social interactions: body language, voice tone, facial expressions, etc. People who've never been hungry and without a paycheck will not sympathize.

Roy's mother, Alzoa Bomgardner, made it her business to convince the prison authorities that her son was a good egg and deserved an early exit from the penitentiary. This is where we get a collection of reference letters going back through Roy's extensive work history; remember he became the family's primary breadwinner at age 10. Alzoa went to her son's previous employers and asked each of them to mail a reference letter to the prison for their consideration. So Roy was released from prison early in 1905. His grandfather in Fresno had promised to employ him as a carpenter, and the prison didn't want him anymore.

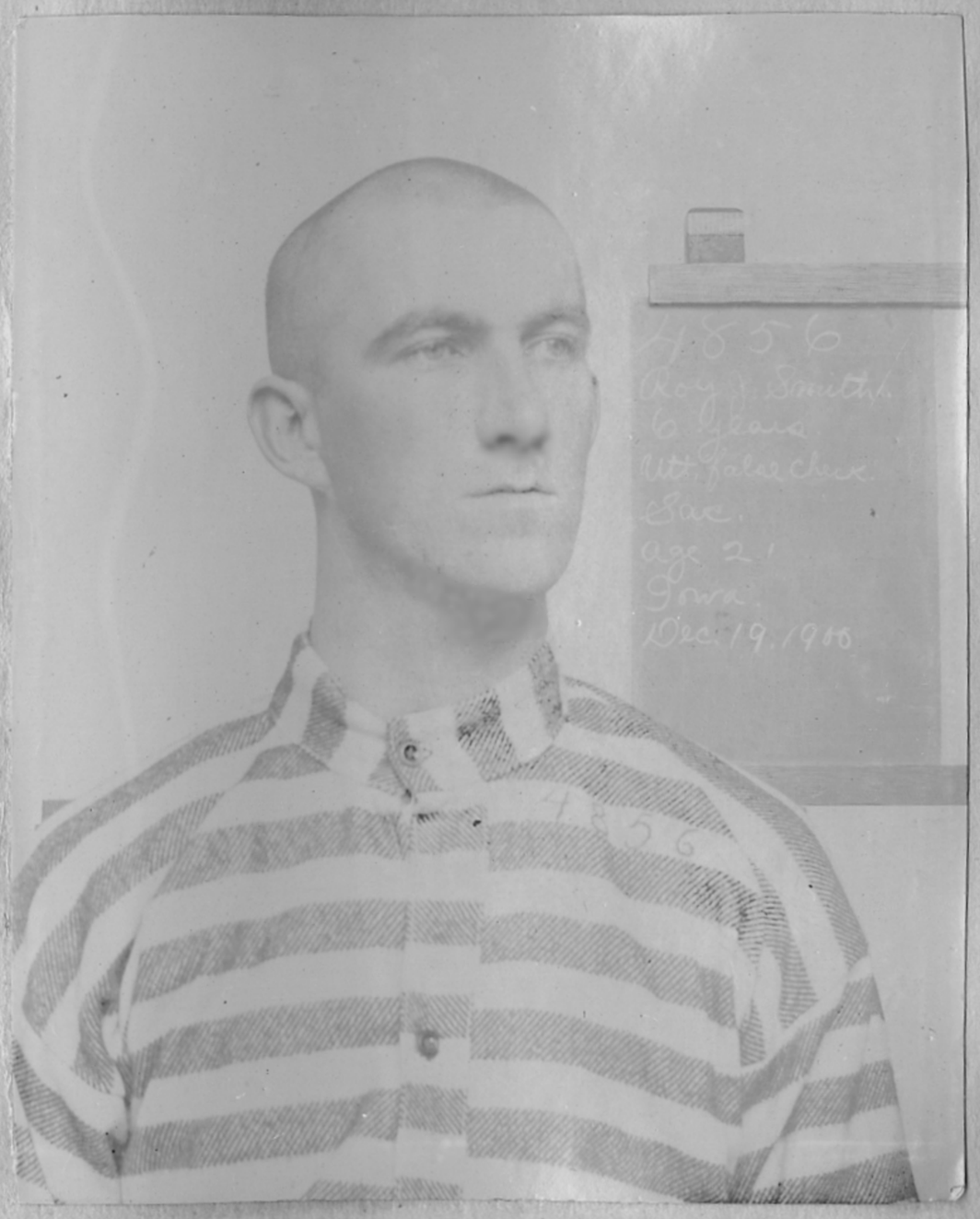
Once a drifter, always a rambler, Roy J Meyers was on the move from the time he was 6 months old till he was well past middle age. He didn't stay long in Fresno after his release from prison. He was assistant superintendent for a year at Humboldt Smelting Co. in Humboldt, Yavapai County, Arizona. With his earnings he bought a limousine and for a year and a half he was a chauffer in Los Angeles. He owned a garage for six months in L. A. then sold it. Roy saw the United States in 1908, landing in New Orleans for a while in February, where he earned $45 a week as a chauffer for J W Thompson, contractor and builder. He passed through Chicago and worked for a C C Moorehouse in New York City. Soon he was back on the west coast, in Seattle, and used his earnings from back east to buy a car which he rented out.

For a short time he tried mining alone in Alaska but hated being alone in the wilderness and went back to Seattle to rekindle his auto livery business. After a short time he went back to Yavapai County, Arizona, where he met a worthless skunk named Davidson, and they sought carpentry work together but when the pressure was on to buy groceries and the work assignments weren't coming, this Davidson pulled a check out of his pocket, asked Roy to identify him at the bank, they split the $50 and went their separate ways. Roy said later that he thought it was a good check.

PRISON AGAIN: WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY!

By January of 1909 Roy was back in New Orleans where he married Caroline T Weller in May. Carrie was the daughter of Francis F Weller and Aubin Markham Hutchins. She had six sisters and two brothers. Her father had grown up next door to the Vicks family of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Carrie didn't abandon Roy through the ordeal that was coming up, although it had a bad effect on her health.





Above: age 21 in California

Below: age 31 in Arizona



Roy Jerome Meyers

Inventor



In New Orleans, Roy was a chauffer for Lawrence Farbacher for seven months, and by 1910 he had his own garage where his skills as a mechanic came in handy but his naiveté devastated him and he went broke giving his customers credit. From September till December he worked as chief electrician at Roseville Sugar Refining Company in Abbeville, Vermilion County, Louisiana.

On December 14, 1910, after a year and a half of marriage to a nice girl from a good southern family—a year and a half which included two jobs and a bankrupted business attempt—some men from Arizona showed up with paperwork giving them authority to take him to Arizona to stand trial for the phony check that he had helped Davidson cash two years earlier. Having been somewhat stabilized by getting married, this was a bad blow. Carrie sunk into a depression in his absence and was having health problems when he finally got out three years later; Roy was so upset by his past catching up with him that a brief visit to a mental institution was necessary to get him calm enough to deal with prison life in the territorial prison in Florence, Arizona Territory, near Phoenix. Arizona was not yet a state, and the territorial prison was not a nice place to be. First he spent five months in the Yavapai County Jail awaiting trial. Davidson was never caught.

Then Roy Jerome Meyers—which was his official name by then—became one of the luckiest wanna-be inventors who was ever born when Arizona was made the 48th State of the United States, and its first governor, George Wylie Pearle Hunt, turned out to be a liberal reformer who was especially interested in prison reform. Out went the striped pajamas, prisoners were given paying jobs outside the prison walls, and Roy became an interesting episode in the annals of prison reform. What follows is from a 179-page file of correspondence from the Governor Hunt archives in Arizona regarding the famous liberation of Roy J Meyers, the convict inventor, and his incredible energy machine. His air car was still 20 years in the future!

When prison authorities learned that Roy was a mechanic and electrician, and because of his mild-mannered and obedient nature, he was put in charge of the prison's electrical plant. He now had a workshop, a part-time job, no boss or employees or customers to distract him, and he slipped naturally into his true calling. Upon arriving at the territorial prison he had experienced a lot of depression and loneliness, and this wasn't a reformed prison when he first arrived. Arizona wasn't even a state yet. He wasn't very sociable and spent a lot of time thinking, and one day he was inspired by a lightning storm to start thinking about a way to extract free electricity from the atmosphere. He got hooked on the idea and couldn't stop thinking about it. It only took him five weeks to theorize, design, and build a working model of such a device, in secret, in his workshop. During this time he couldn't sleep from the excitement and lost 34 pounds.

Roy J Meyers was about 5 feet, 8-3/4 inches tall. He had a somewhat dark complexion and light hair, and bluish gray eyes. A prominent nose and jaw. His eyesight wasn't very good; in some of his photos he is shown wearing eyeglasses. They say he was partly deaf but it's possible the problem was not his hearing but his ability to process and separate sounds from each other. Many people who have a non-functional social center in their brain also have problems comprehending facial expressions, body language, and information processing problems such as not being able to separate the human voice from any background noise that might be present. People like this tend to speak in a monotone, or speak too loud or too soft; they are emotionally immature, they don't know how to act around people and can't seem to learn social behavior. They are obsessive and have special interests that possess them night

and day; they are able to focus on some activity or idea to the point where other people would have superficially grazed and nibbled, then gone off to something new. People like Roy are caught up in rigid routines and can't tell when someone is trying to make friends with them. They can't do two things at once. They are clumsy. The pattern is called "asperger syndrome" these days, and in the past it was sometimes mistakenly called "schizoid affective disorder". It's now considered a form of autism, not mental illness. The ability to have a casual conversation is nearly nonexistent; the aspergers person either relies on canned lines to get him through each exhausting day of encounters with human beings, or retreats into his special interests which he finds soothing and nurturing. People tend to assume he is aloof and preoccupied on purpose, so reject any attempt on his part to join their clique as laughable or creepy. Several of the inventors in this book qualify for this syndrome, which is not a mental illness but a brain development issue. One description of aspergers from someone who "has it" is that the mind never slows or shuts down, as if the brain is always galvanized with meaningless electrochemical discharge which the person has to try to make sense of by developing endless descriptions of the world, categorizing and listing everything, and theorizing about things that other people take for granted. They feel that they are under attack from their own brain. Some asperger people are savants, with inexplicable mental or artistic or mechanical abilities, but can't deal with small talk and don't understand why anyone would want to. The stereotype of the Little Professor who lectures on his favorite topic to the infinite boredom of his companions fits the syndrome. It's the perfect brain configuration for an inventor who wants to develop a revolutionary energy machine that no one will believe in.

On the day that Roy was ready to conduct his first test of the secret energy absorber, a prison trustee who had been spying on him decided the time was right to turn him in for conducting secret research in the prison's electrical plant. This was a stroke of luck for Roy that changed his life forever. The trustee couldn't have reported him to a nicer, more helpful bunch of people!

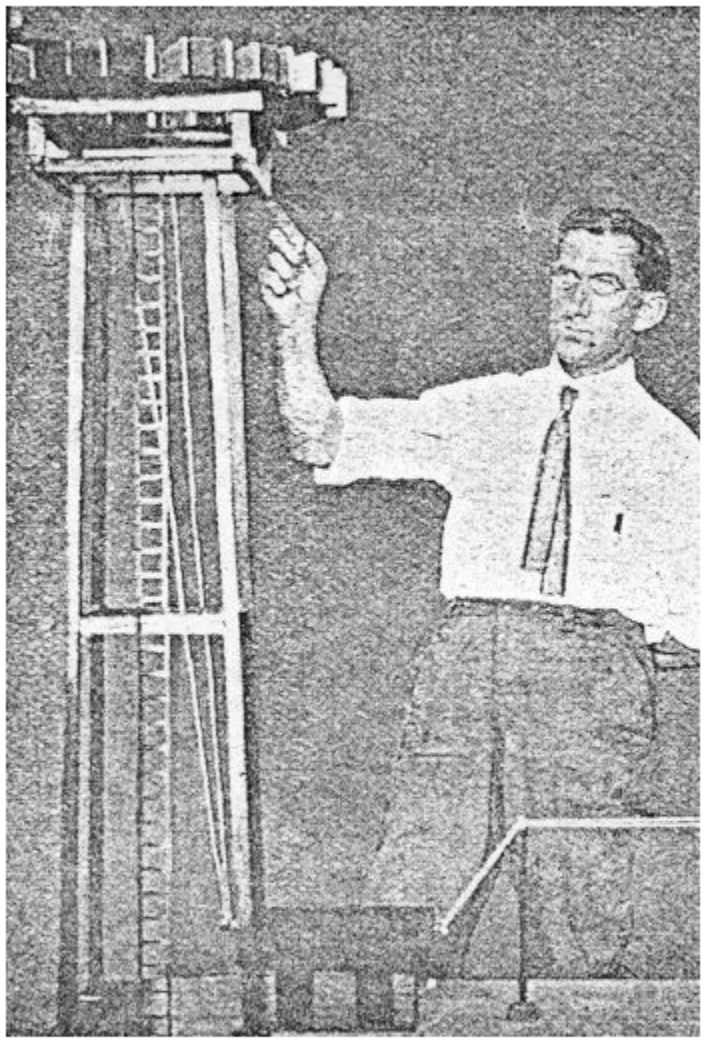
He was all set to try his machine. It was set up to provide the spark for the gas engines that ran the pumps. Before he could start the test, the prison warden and his dinner guests barged in and told him to go ahead, they wanted to see the test. The machine worked! This is why I call him a savant. No inventor except a savant like Tesla can go from imagination to machine in the space of five weeks, not with a completely theoretical, experimental, unknown process. But it worked, the pumps ran because Roy's absorber provided the spark with electricity pulled out of the atmosphere by some purposefully arranged metal plates on a small tower, and no moving parts.

Dramatis Personae:

- J J Sanders, the prison's parole clerk. An idealistic prison reform advocate hand-picked by Governor Hunt, J J was an intelligent man with an open mind, a visionary liberal but tempered by a streak of pragmatism. I have part of a letter to the editor he wrote in 1910 when the imminent approach of Halley's comet was creating general consternation. In a carefully worded warning, J J suggests that anyone reading his letter might consider taking shelter during the event, just in case there were any earthquakes.
- R. B. Sims, the prison warden. A successful and popular Phoenix businessman hand picked by Gov. Hunt. A very tall man, nicknamed "Big Bob".
- Governor Hunt, first governor of the state of Arizona, was elected seven times. His first term began February 14, 1912. Besides prison reform, he supported reforms such as women's suffrage, organized labor, and compulsory education. He was 5 feet, 9 inches tall and weighed almost 300 pounds. He was called "Old Walrus" because of his



Above: prison reformer Kate Barnard

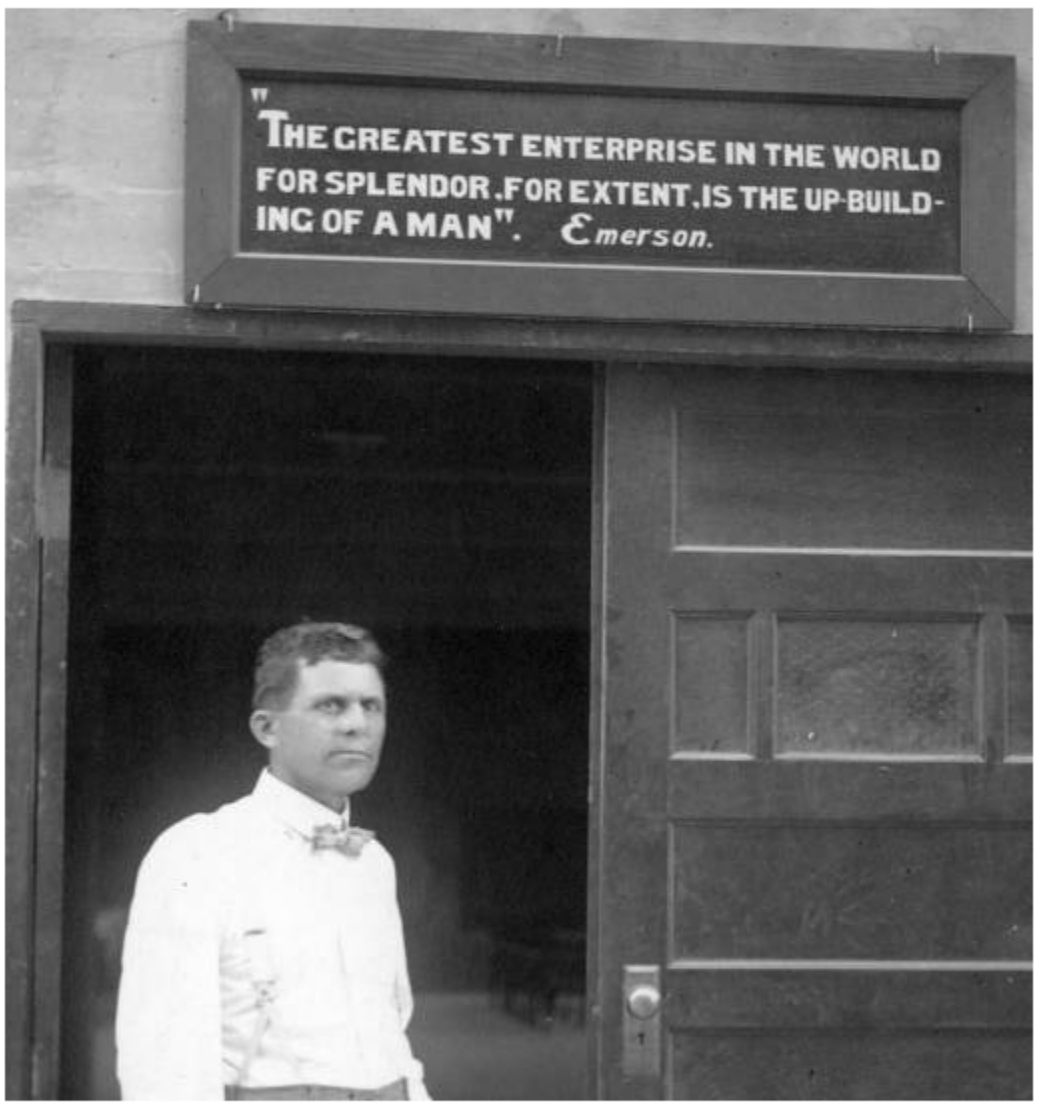


Above: inventor Roy J. Meyers and his absorber

Below: Gov. Hunt (left) Warden R. B. Sims (right)



Below: parole clerk J. J. Sanders



handlebar moustache. He was born in Huntsville, Missouri which had been named for his grandfather, but the family fortune had been lost because of the Civil War.
- Miss Kate Barnard was an outspoken prison reform advocate employed by the State of Oklahoma and invited to help the new state of Arizona develop its programs. She was an energetic, charismatic person.
- Delvaille H Theard, 211 Camp St., Roy's New Orleans patent attorney.
- William Edgar Chenot, oily wheeler and dealer from Twin Falls, Idaho who followed Roy to New Orleans and eventually died there.

Kate Barnard was a dinner guest of J J Sanders that fateful night. When she met Roy and witnessed the dramatic and successful test of his free electricity machine, she went into overdrive on Roy's behalf. During her visit to Arizona she spent hours with Roy, validating his obsessive talent and giving him advice both good and bad. The bad advice was to protect the machine's secret by dismantling it and destroying all his drawings and descriptions! The ever-impressionable Roy was very impressed with Miss Barnard and did as she suggested.

Then she went before the state legislature and gave a long speech about Roy and his machine, imploring the lawmakers to give him a month off on his own recognizance to go to Washington, DC to apply for a patent on his device. She pulled a $50 dollar bill out of her pocket, put it in a hat, and passed the hat. The state legislature not only gave Roy Meyers, convict, permission to go to Washington unsupervised, but they paid for his jaunt out of their own pockets!

Roy felt like he had died and gone to heaven. From convict to celebrity, just like that. He left for Washington on April 30, 1912 without a working model since he had dismantled it. The patent office refused to believe his incredible claims so he scrounged the parts and made another working model in his hotel room. Although he couldn't finish it since it lacked a certain magnetized plate, he was allowed to file his patent application. As far as I can find, the US Patent Office does not record a patent for his device so they must have refused to grant it since they believed it was a perpetual motion machine, however the British patent office gave him a patent on it. He does have some US Patents on other, less controversial devices, for example car brakes that run in oil and seldom have to be replaced, and an internal combustion engine, as well as two patents on his air car.

With the patent application filed in Washington there was nothing to do but wait for a response, so Roy headed toward Arizona by way of New Orleans where he paid a visit to his wife, finally arriving back at the prison two days before the deadline.

When Governor Hunt had begun his first term as the first governor of the brand new State of Arizona, Roy had already been in the Florence penitentiary for 9 months. Hunt had been in office only two months when he allowed Roy Meyers to go on his field trip to Washington. This was a huge risk to take at this critical point in his career, so naturally he was happy and relieved when the inventor returned from a trouble-free trip.

Governor Hunt was so pleased that he gave Roy a job as the chauffer of the state automobile. This assignment ended two months later when Governor Hunt found Roy a job as an electrician at the Inspiration Copper Mine in Globe, Gila County, Arizona. In order to accept the position, Roy was allowed to move to Globe and live in his own apartment. So in essence, the $50 that Kate Barnard had put in that hat ended Roy's time behind bars. He and the governor wrote letters back and forth, and the governor received and answered many letters from people all

over the world who had read about the convict inventor and wanted to know if the machine was for real. Gov. Hunt told all the inquirers that, as far as he knew, the machine was for real and suggested they contact the inventor directly for more information. Roy didn't care for all the attention from reporters and curiosity seekers, as it took time away from what he wanted to do. Kate Barnard had helped to instill a sense of paranoia in him that people would try to steal the idea.

Globe, Arizona was the governor's own permanent home; the governor wasn't sending Roy off to some remote frontier outpost to get lost. Governor Hunt had been a searcher too, as a young man. He had run away from his family as a young man, and for the next three years they feared he had been killed by Indians. One day he wandered into Globe with two burros, looking for work. He took on every kind of work and became a successful businessman, then a politician in the Territory, and finally the first governor of the State. By sending Roy to Globe, the governor was not just giving him a job, he was welcoming him into his world. But Roy was Roy and he didn't stay long.

Roy was eager to leave the area and go back east to sell his invention, and asked permission to do so, but Warden R. B. Sims said he needed to keep his job at least long enough to pay his debt to the patent attorney in Washington DC. It wasn't long before that was accomplished. A traveling salesman from a wealthy family of Twin Falls, Idaho, William Edgar Chenot, had written the governor a squeaky-sweet letter, praising the convict-inventor to the skies and insisting that his technology had to be developed to save the world from energy monopolies. Roy and Chenot connected, and Roy was given permission to go to Baltimore, where they lived in rooms at the Hotel Altamont, joined by Carrie Meyers who took care of Roy, tried to get him to sleep, gradually recovered from her illness, and didn't like Chenot who was meddlesome, suspicious, and bossy. Roy had just rejoined his wife after three years apart and their idea of a good time was to talk about that Southern California bungalow they dreamed of owning someday. Chenot was not interested in their future together, as we shall see.

Although he had presented himself as a philanthropist in the beginning, and even wrote an article about Roy's life based on interviews with the inventor and his wife, Chenot turned out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. He had started out by purchasing Roy's German rights to the invention for $4000, but then suffered from a lack of belief in the invention and wrote the governor a paranoid letter demanding to know whether or not he had been hoodwinked. The governor wrote him back and told him to calm down and give Roy time to finish his working model. Soon the model was tested on the roof of the Home Bank Building in Baltimore, with patent attorneys present, and was even more successful than prior tests.

Now that Chenot was impressed with the machine, he began trying to muscle Roy out and take over control of everything. Roy was chafed by this, as Chenot had only paid for the German rights plus his time and trouble of living in Baltimore where his presence was not wanted anyway, since he could do nothing but complain and make trouble. Roy experienced a fit of paranoia and was at the end of his rope, then the machine was vandalized. Chenot accused Roy of sabotaging the operation and was extremely irate when Roy kept refusing to give him exact building instructions and complete theoretical information for the machine. The whole relationship fell apart with a big squawk. Roy and Carrie ended up going back to New Orleans to get away from Chenot. Chenot followed him and ended up living in New Orleans permanently.

Two months after Roy took his operation to New Orleans, saying he'd be better off in a place where he knew people instead of a strange city, Governor Hunt officially commuted his sentence. Gov. Hunt was receiving hostile letters from Chenot threatening legal action. Letters between the governor and parole officer J J Sanders show that both of the Arizona men felt that Chenot was an obnoxious nuisance. J J Sanders said that investors like Chenot, who buy into a promised miracle hoping to somehow gain control of the whole shebang for a small initial investment, are at fault for the rotten results, even if the inventor turns out to be crooked and/or deluded. The Arizona men still had no doubt that Roy's machine was for real, and kept sending their best regards in reply to Roy's letters, but J J Sanders in particular told Roy he was making a mistake to try and use publicity to attract financial assistance. He told Roy to stand on his own resources and get the machine completely finished before accepting any investors. Not following this advice got Roy in trouble several times before he finally learned his lesson.

Chenot went out of his way to try and destroy Roy's ability to carry on with his project, and once again Roy was arrested, this time I don't have the details except for what Chenot claimed that Roy's patent attorney had said about it. I don't think anything but bad publicity and maybe the end of the project came of the arrest, and there were at least two other big investors. One was in England and wrote the Governor that he trusted Roy Meyers completely and sent money without even seeing the device. The other was a wealthy American, Martin Van Heuvel of Mobile, Alabama, who had heard about the arrest in New Orleans and rushed that direction to try and recover his investment. Because of the New Orleans arrest, whether or not Roy was convicted of anything, the press voted against the convict inventor and until he invented his air car in the late 1920s the press lost interest in him.

Governor Hunt must have washed his hands of it when it got messy, since the correspondence file stops abruptly, shortly after Roy's patent attorney in New Orleans bailed out because of rumors of fraud which he got from the morning paper. The attorney didn't speak to Roy first, he just wired Chenot that he wanted to open his files for the police, the governor, or anyone, and would have nothing more to do with Meyers. I don't think much of an attorney who offers to open confidential client files without a court order. Chenot passed the attorney's purported words on to the governor in a telegram. The governor informed Chenot that Roy had been given his freedom and his affairs were no longer a concern of the State of Arizona. Governor Hunt throughout had shown a strong ability to say the right thing at the right time and always stay positive and diplomatic and professionally uninvolved, but even he could not hide his disdain for Chenot. The last letter on file from Gov. Hunt to Roy Meyers was still warm and friendly. He expressed the hope that Meyers wasn't in as much trouble as news accounts made it sound. I am still in search of these news accounts.

The problem in New Orleans was the worst thing that ever happened to Roy's reputation, and might have caused him to drop the whole invention as more trouble than it was worth, or the court might have even granted ownership of the invention to his investors. But I don't think they could have gotten Roy's design secrets out of him without torturing him.

The reason his patent attorney threw in the towel and probably the reason Governor Hunt stopped keeping a file of correspondence with Roy is that apparently, at least according to the only news report I've been able to find, and as hinted at by a telegram send by Chenot to the governor in which he is supposedly quoting the patent attorney, Roy did something very stupid. I haven't completed researching this event so I don't know Roy's side of the story, but Chenot told the governor that the patent attorney had said that he read in the morning paper that Roy

had been caught staging a fake robbery to try and collect on an insurance policy in order to finance the development of his invention. Chenot knew the machine worked, he'd seen the process of procuring parts and assembling them, and he was there when it was tested. That's why he was so interested in becoming the owner of it. He also claimed that the German rights Roy had sold him didn't exist; that the patent had been filed but had not actually been granted.

While it is probable that Roy Meyers was not an easy person to squeeze secrets out of, I take the position that Chenot was a shark who literally hoped Roy was such a naive amateur that he would give Chenot an excuse to steal the invention for the $4000 he had invested in it. The reason I say this is the degree of gleeful cackling his letters display as he purposefully set out to wrest control of the device's ownership from its creator. It was the letters that Chenot himself wrote to the governor that made Gov. Hunt dislike him.

The file I have from the Governor Hunt archives should be required reading for all new energy inventors, but I don't want to get started quoting from it, as it's too good and I wouldn't know where to stop. It keeps getting better and better and the climax is comprised of some rousing missives from parole clerk Sanders, which were too good to leave out of this book (see the images at the end of the chapter).

ROY J MEYERS, INVENTOR
I have no idea what became of the absorber project; whether Roy sold it, lost it in court, gave it up, or tinkered with it the rest of his life, quietly. Despite his arrest record, I don't believe that Roy fits the profile of a con man. Swindlers are conscienceless individuals who lack real human emotion and collect victims like normal people collect friends and associates. Swindlers are sociopaths who have a shiny charisma, a seductive allure that leaves wounded people in its wake. Roy didn't like to smile, it hurt his face. I don't think he had a lot of charisma, and he was not forceful but passive. He lived in an internal world of thought and invention, and didn't care about making an impression on people to get any particular result. He often showed bad judgment but he was not evil.

In 1914, Roy was granted UK Patent 1098, "Improvements in and relating to Apparatus for Producing Electricity" for his mysterious absorber which is still ahead of its time. Discussions about its means of function are online, starting with Rex Research.

The next year, Roy and Carrie had a daughter, Dorothy S Meyers. I don't know anything about her and I don't know if there were any more children. A woman her age, named Dorothy S Meyers, died in New Orleans in 2007. If that was her, and if she had no siblings, then Roy Meyers probably has no living descendants. I'd like to learn otherwise, but it's likely that if a box of files, photos, and notes exists somewhere, it's in an attic somewhere and nobody remembers what it is. More likely, such a box doesn't actually exist.

Roy's stepfather John A Bomgardner had been a farmer and stock rancher and then spent time in the hospital for disabled soldiers in 1895 in Fresno. A few years later he and Alzoa Smith got married. He was too old to start over in farming so he worked as a postal clerk and janitor. His son was a printer who moved to Los Angeles where he became a successful building contractor. At some point his son changed his name to Robert Stafford Gardner.

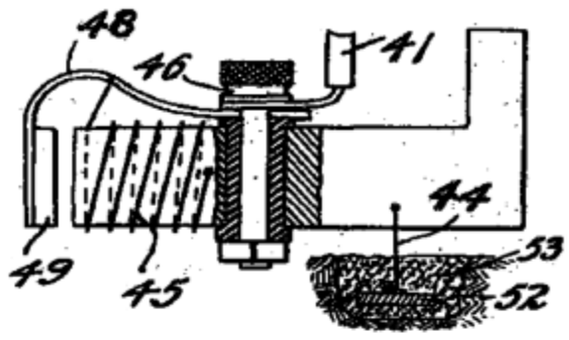
In 1908 John A Bomgardner died of an intestinal obstruction at the home for disabled soldiers in Sawtelle, California near Malibu. Alzoa lived in Malibu to help care for him, then took his body

British Patent

N° 1098

A.D. 1913

Date of Application, 14th Jan., 1913—Accepted, 14th Jan., 1914



COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

Improvements in and relating to Apparatus for Producing Electricity.

I, Roy Jerome Meyers, of Hotel Altamont, Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, United States of America, Electrician, do hereby declare the nature of this invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, to be particularly described and ascertained in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to improvements in apparatus for the production of electrical currents, and the primary object in view is the production of a commercially serviceable electrical current without the employment of mechanical or chemical action. To this end the invention comprises means for producing what I believe to be dynamic electricity from the earth and its ambient elements.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

FLUID-PRESSURE GENERATOR.

1,608,802 **Nov. 30, 1926.**

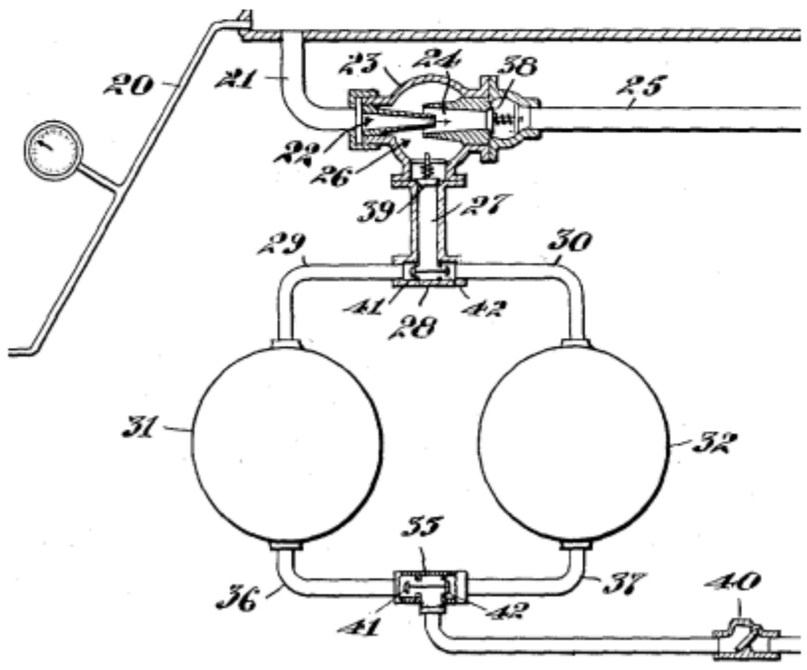
ROY J. MEYERS, OF SHERMAN, AND FRITZ G. HIEBERT, OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

This invention relates to an apparatus for generating fluid pressure for use in operating fluid pressure actuated mechanisms, and particularly pertains to a device for developing air pressure.

An object of the invention is to provide an apparatus in which compressed air may be subjected to the action of heat in a heating chamber to effect expansion thereof and thereby increase its pressure, and to provide a means for automatically feeding the compressed air to the heating chamber to displace air drawn from the chamber so as to maintain a supply of compressed air in the heating chamber.

Another object is to provide an automatic mechanism for varying the heating effect of a series of electrical heating elements in a combined heating and expansion chamber operable by variations of pressure in the chamber.

A further object is to provide a means whereby air under pressure in a reservoir may be inducted into a heating and expansion chamber containing air at a pressure exceeding that of the compressed air and operable by effecting reduction of pressure in the heating and expansion chamber.

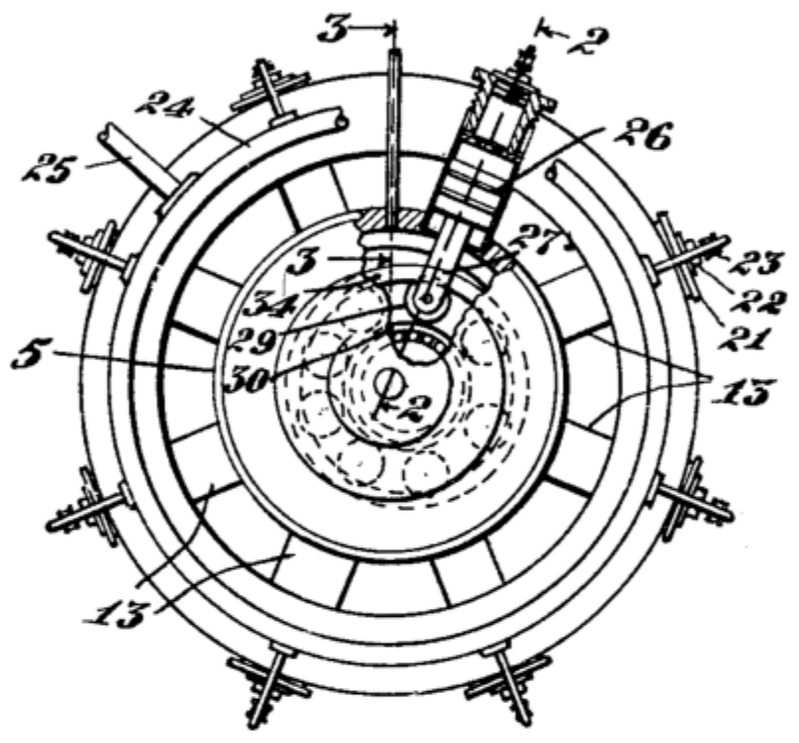


Inventors:
Roy J. Meyers
and Fritz G. Hiebert.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

1,654,893 COMPRESSOR. Jan. 3, 1928.

ROY J. MEYERS AND FRITZ G. HIEBERT,
OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



This invention relates to a compressor and particularly pertains to improvements in the type of compressors especially adapted for use in compressing air and other gases and of the character embodying a plurality of radially disposed cylinders with reciprocal pistons therein actuated by an eccentric.

1,477,710 Dec. 18, 1923.

MEANS AND METHOD FOR OPERATING COMBUSTION ENGINES FROM GAS DERIVED FROM CALCIUM CARBIDE.

ROY J. MEYERS, OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA,

ASSIGNOR TO INTERNATIONAL GAS, POWER AND APPLIANCE COMPANY,
OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, A CORPORATION OF ARIZONA.

1,550,833 VEHICLE BRAKE. Aug. 25, 1925.

ROY J. MEYERS, OF HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

2,835,491 MERRY-GO-ROUND May 20, 1958

Roy J. Meyers, North Sacramento, Calif.

I have combined in a single piece of equipment the features of a merry-go-round and of a teeter-totter

INVENTOR
ROY J. MEYERS

back to Fresno for burial. She was proud that her father, both her husbands, and two uncles had been civil war veterans, and was a card carrying member of the G.A.R. The Grand Army of the Republic was a fraternal organization for veterans of the Union Army who had served in the Civil War. She applied to the federal government for a pension because of Bomgardner's war service, and worked as a nurse until at least the age 65. When she reached retirement age she moved in with Roy who was living near the northern California coast with his wife and daughter in Fortuna, Humboldt County, California. Alzoa was living in Humboldt County when she died at the age of 91. Roy was working as a garage mechanic there in 1920 when his mother lived with him and his family, but within a few years he returned to Southern California where he and his family lived for many years. Even then he kept moving from house to house. He must have been a very restless person. He registered to vote every two years, usually as a Republican. Carrie always registered Democrat.

In 1923 Roy was living in Long Beach when he obtained US Patent 1,477,710, "Means & Method for Operating Combustion Engines from Gas derived from Calcium Carbide".

In 1925 he was living in Hollywood when he obtained US Patent 1,550,833, "Vehicle Brake". This was for an oil-cooled brake that did not have to be frequently replaced.

In 1926 he was living at 9052 Harland Avenue, Sherman, Los Angeles County when he received the first patent for his air car, US Patent 1,608,802, "Fluid-Pressure Generator". Also that year he received US Patent 1,618,602, "Internal-Combustion Engine" with Morris Schlosberg of Los Angeles. They had filed the patent in 1925 when Roy was living in Hollywood.

In 1927 he was living in Los Angeles when he received US Patent 1,654,893, "Compressor" which was part of his air car design.

In 1928 he was living at 7768 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles when he obtained UK Patent 266712, "Fluid Pressure Generator", his British patent for the air car.

In 1930 he was living at 956 S Harvard Boulevard, Los Angeles, and working as a general mechanic.

In 1934 he made an exception and registered as a Democrat. At that time he was living at 116 ½ South Vendome Street, Los Angeles.

In 1942 he was 62 years old but still required to register for the draft because of the world war. He printed and signed his name "Roy Jrome Meyers" on the registration card. By then he was back in northern California, living at 425 North Street, Healdsburg, Sonoma County, just north of San Francisco. He had given up his beloved southern California, possibly to be closer to his mother who was 90 years old. When she died in 1943 they were all living in Fortuna again near the coast.

Roy & family didn't return to southern California, instead settling in North Sacramento where he lived the rest of his life, working as a machinist. Maybe his ceaseless wandering ceased; he is found living at 319 Oakmont in *both* 1944 and 1946!

Back in the latter half of the 1920s when he lived in the Los Angeles area, Roy had started his air car project with a policeman named Fritz Goertz Hiebert. They were partners on the air car patents. Fritz was active in the earlier years of the project but things were rough at first and negative publicity at that time might have induced him to back out of his involvement or else stay in silently so his career wouldn't be affected. Newspaper accounts of the project's rocky first incarnation said he was an ex-policeman, but the trouble must have been another false arrest caused by impatient investors who wanted instant results, like what happened in New Orleans 15 years earlier. Later voters registrations reported that Fritz was on the police force, so the 1928 charge of fraud must not have been taken seriously by the court, or Fritz would have had to change careers. But Roy learned to stop using the term "perpetual motion", and when his successful air cars finally appeared in the newspapers and magazines in 1931 and 1932, he claimed only that, once perfected, they would go 500 to 1000 miles on one fill-up of low pressure air. After so much trouble from disgruntled investors, even if the car never ran out of air he would probably be afraid to say so.

Fritz Hiebert was from a large family that settled in Kansas when the parents, who were German, immigrated from Russia. In those days, whole communities would migrate together from place to place, and Hiebert's parents had originally come to Russia in such a migration from Germany, and finally ended up in Kansas in a community of German speaking immigrants from Russia. Fritz was nearly 20 years younger than Roy Meyers. His parents were farmers in Kansas and Oklahoma after they immigrated to the US in 1874.

Roy blamed the flop of his first air car on the engine's being undersized, and went back to the drawing board. In October 1931, his second engine was demonstrated privately to engineers in a 35 mph test run from Los Angeles to Bakersfield on one fill-up of air. The resulting newspaper articles were published all over the country by reporters who had obviously been impressed with what they'd seen. He had learned a lot over the years, the hard way. Modern Mechanix published an article with photos of Meyers in hat and tie showing off his air car to businessmen in Los Angeles.

In spring 1932, Roy Meyers again hit the press with his third air engine and increased his estimate of its ultimate driving range from 500 miles up to 1000 miles per fill-up of air. There is a possibility that he and his car were a subject of a Universal NewsReel at this time, but I haven't found the details on that yet. An article appeared in Popular Science, and…that's all folks! Why did Roy Meyers suddenly drop out of the public eye? No more patents until 25 years later when he was on his death bed. No more articles in newspapers or magazines. He lived a quiet life with his wife and daughter, worked in machine shops, and brought home the bacon.

Or did he sell the air car patents, retire, and work in machine shops for fun?

On May 20, 1958, two years after filing a patent in Washington, DC, unknown 79-year-old North Sacramento inventor, electrician, mechanic, and machinist Roy J Meyers was granted his last patent. It was for a children's playground toy, a merry-go-round that was powered by a teeter-totter. He had been dead for two weeks.

Roy J. Meyers' three air car projects: the bad, the good, and the ?sold?

Los Angeles Times, September 9, 1928, p. B12

TWO ARRESTED IN PROMOTION

Investors in Invention Make Complaint to Police

Perpetual Motion Discovery Neglects to Move

Thousands of Dollars Said to be Involved

Investment of thousands of dollars by Los Angeles business men and women in a so-called perpetual motion machine obtaining its motive power from hot air, and which engaged the serious attention of local scientists, was revealed yesterday when Detective Lieutenants Sears and Moug of the police bunko detail filed their reports on the arrests of Roy Jerome Meyers, 49 years of age, of 4703 Orion avenue, and Fritz Heibert, 29, 7768 Santa Monica Boulevard, said to be the inventors of the contrivance.

Meyers and Heibert, the latter an ex-police officer, according to reports, were taken into custody at the District Attorney's office last Thursday. Complaints charging them with five counts of grand theft were issued by Dep. Dist.-Atty. McKay and they were taken directly before Municipal Judge Gibbs and arraigned. Meyers was released on $5000 bail, McKay stated, and Heibert, on recommendation of the deputy District Attorney, was released on his own recognizance in order that he might have a number of creditable local engineers inspect the machine.

FIVE NAMED

While it was stated that more than twenty local citizens invested thousands of dollars in the development of the machine, the following five persons' names were contained on the complaints as having been victimized; Ruth C. Fale, $500; Herndon J. Morris, $500; C. B. Crist, $1250, and Olive Redmond, $250.

In addition to these complaints police stated that Crist and S. R. Orfutt of 3030 Hollycrest Drive gave Meyers and Heibert $4500 for the purchase of plans and specifications for the construction of the apparatus. Crist and Orfutt then employed an engineer, Robert Gonsett of 902 South Cloverdale avenue, to construct one of the machines according to these plans, police stated. When it was completed it did not work, they complained.

LACKS POWER

According to McKay, the machine as constructed by Meyers and Heibert and put on display in their so-called laboratory at 7768 Santa Monica Boulevard would work for a short time, but was entirely incapable of producing power. The principle upon which it was supposed to work, according to McKay, was that cool air was caused to pass over heated coils and the hot air, expanding in specially constructed chambers, produced the power to run the machine.

Meyers and Heibert are scheduled for preliminary hearing on the 19th inst.

Los Angeles Times

October 4, 1928, p. A2

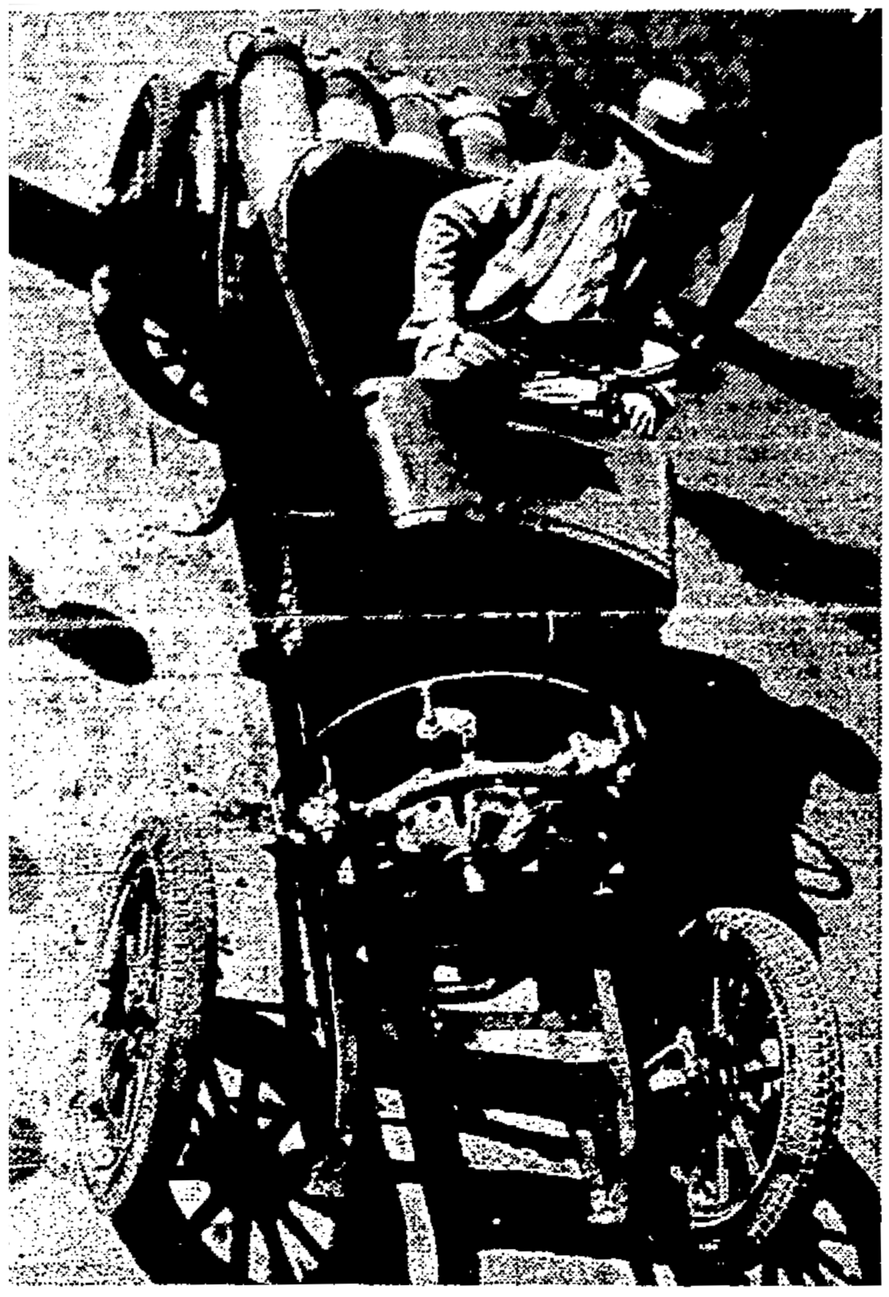
PERPETUAL MOTION HEARING DATE FIXED

Preliminary hearing of Roy J. Meyers and Fritz Heibert on charges of grand theft in connection with their so-called perpetual-motion machine, was postponed yesterday by Municipal Judge Baird until November 5, next, on stipulation of counsel. Meyers and Heibert are charged by Dep. Dist.-Atty. Kearney with obtaining thousands of dollars from Los Angeles business men to develop their invention.

Oakland Tribune OCTOBER 15, 1931 20

Compressed Air Drives Auto

ROY J. MEYERS, Los Angeles inventor, is shown here with the automobile in which he uses compressed air as "fuel" for the motor. He believes that the idea will be particularly valuable for aircraft, lessening fire danger and eliminating weighty gasoline tanks.
—*A. P. photo.*



Left, above and below: This is what happens when you try to build a "perpetual motion machine" with someone else's money.

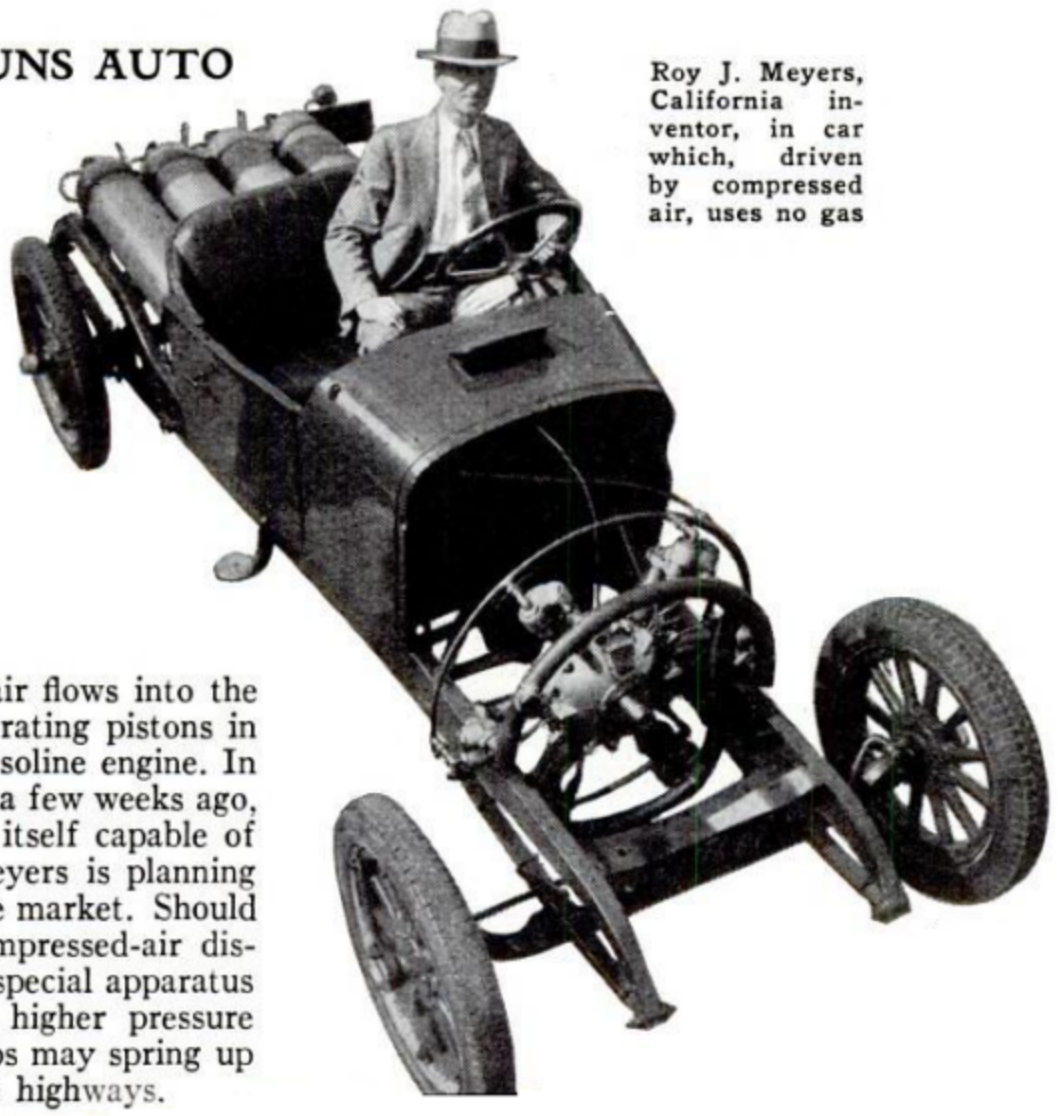
Above: Roy has learned his lesson and no longer promises to break the laws of thermodynamics. He drove this car from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, about 100 miles, on a single fill-up. He believed that when perfected the range per fill-up would be 500 miles.

Next page, above: another article about his second air car, the one with a radial engine.

Next page, below: Roy's last known air car project. He has given up the radial engine and now claims that when perfected, his car can go 1000 miles per fill-up. He drove the car from Los Angeles to San Francisco and back at a cost of $1.25.

Popular Science Monthly, January 1932, p. 59

COMPRESSED AIR RUNS AUTO

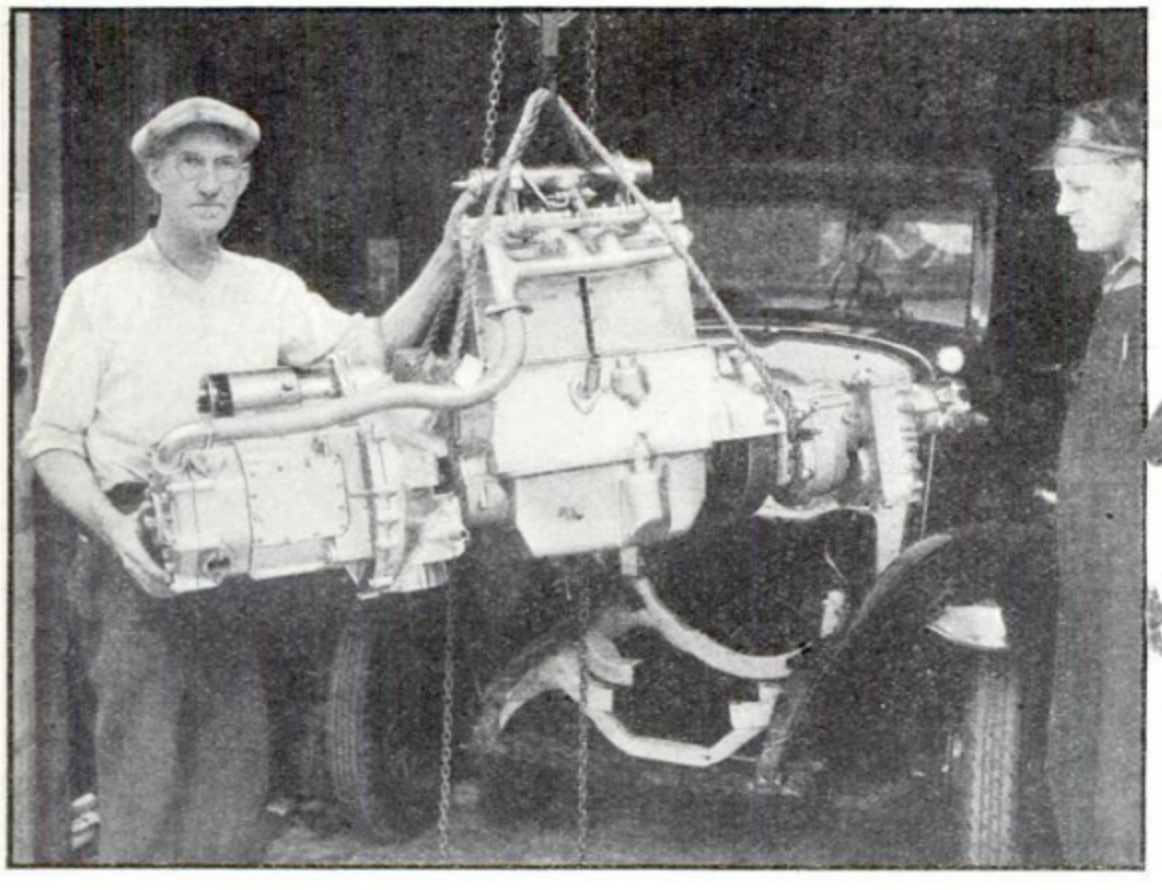


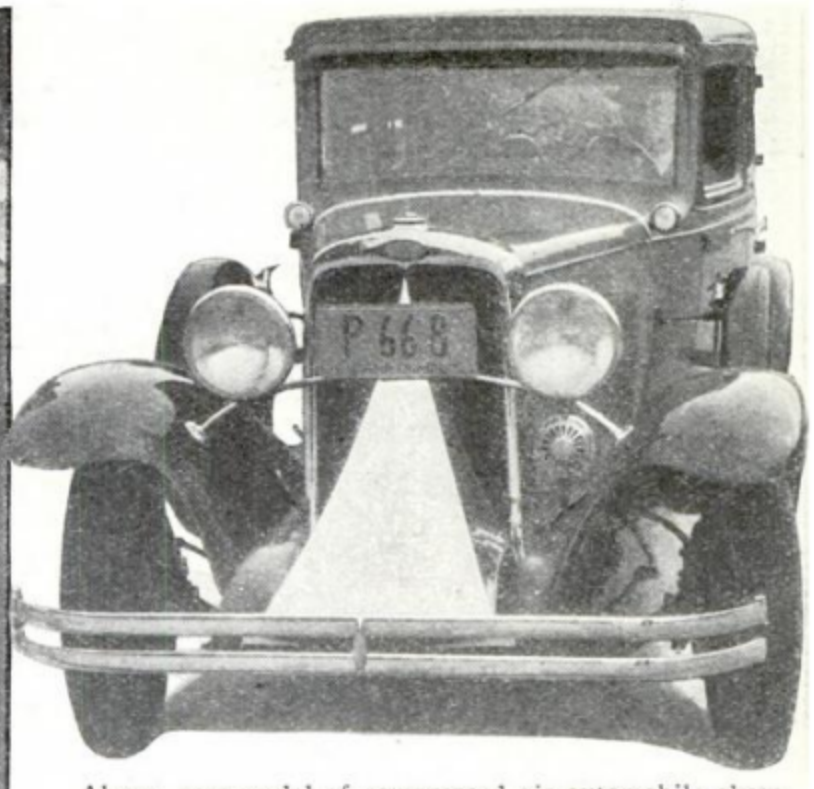
Roy J. Meyers, California inventor, in car which, driven by compressed air, uses no gas

No DANGER faces Roy J. Meyers, California inventor, of running out of gas, for the remarkable automobile he has invented doesn't use any. It runs on compressed air. Devoid of such working parts as a carburetor or ignition or cooling system to harass the motorist, its machinery is attractively simple. Four tanks at the rear hold the air, compressed to a pressure of 500 pounds to the square inch. When the driver opens the throttle, air flows into the six cylinders of the motor, operating pistons in much the same manner as a gasoline engine. In a demonstration at Los Angeles a few weeks ago, the compressed-air car showed itself capable of thirty-five-mile speed. Now Meyers is planning to put his strange vehicle on the market. Should his plans prove successful, compressed-air dispensing stations equipped with special apparatus capable of supplying air at a higher pressure than that of ordinary tire pumps may spring up beside filling stations along the highways.

Popular Science Monthly July 1932 page 49

New Compressed Air Auto Powered with Vertical Engine





Above, new model of compressed air automobile showing the flaring housing that holds electric reheating apparatus. At left, vertical motor that replaces rotary

ROY J. MEYERS, California inventor who a few months ago exhibited a car driven by compressed air instead of gasoline (P.S.M., Jan. '32, p. 60), has now perfected an improved model of his unusual vehicle using a vertical instead of a rotary engine. In front of the new car's radiator, a flaring housing gives the machine a distinctive appearance. It accommodates electric apparatus that reheats the air from the motor's exhaust, so that it expands and may be used once more.

In October 1931, Roy Meyers' air car was news all over the U.S.A.
Left: typical Associated Press story
Right: typical United Press story

OWOSSO ARGUS-PRESS, OCTOBER 13, 1931. PAGE NINE

COMPRESSED AIR IS USED TO RUN AUTO

Car Travels at 35 Miles Per Hour; Inventor Predicts Faster Speeds

Los Angeles, Oct. 13—(AP)—Roy J. Meyers, inventor, predicts motorists soon may refill their tanks with air instead of gasoline.

Meyers yesterday demonstrated an automobile with a six-cylinder radial type engine, minus the usual carburetor and ignition and cooling systems, but equipped with a compressed air tank filled to 500 pounds pressure.

He pulled a lever and the car picked up speed quickly and smoothly, with a slight hiss of air from the exhaust valves. The motor was geared so the maximum speed reached was 35 miles per hour, but Meyers said that, with a gear shift and a higher powered engine, speeds equal to or higher than those of gasoline driven cars may be attained.

As the air goes through the engine, forcing pistons up and down, much of it is recaptured and recompressed, Meyers said. The cooled air returns to the pressure tank, which is heated by electricity from batteries and a generator.

This heating, he explained, expands the air in the tank, increasing the pressure. He did not make clear how many pounds of air would be required per mile.

BERKELEY DAILY GAZETTE

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 13, 1931

Compressed Air Used as "Fuel" To Propel Auto

By United Press

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 13.—Roy J. Meyers, inventor, drove about Los Angeles today in an automobile propelled by air instead of gasoline.

After six years of research work Meyers proved to a skeptical group of engineers that his scheme was practical by driving his automobile more than 100 miles on one tankful of compressed air.

A six-cylinder radial type engine mounted in the place of the usual gasoline motor, connected with a tank containing 500 pounds of air, furnished the motive power.

The air goes through the motor, forcing pistons up and down in the same manner as a gasoline engine. Much of the air is recaptured and recompressed by a motor attachment.

To circumvent the cooling of the air by decompression, the tank is heated electrically by a generator, also attached to the motor. The heating, Meyers pointed out, expands the air and thus increases the power.

The car is without gears, being operated only by the opening and closing of a valve. Although it was geared down to a maximum of 35 miles an hour today, it can develop much greater speeds, he said.

Meyers hopes to develop an airplane motor on the same principles. The safety factor would increase with the use of gasoline obviated, he pointed out.

COMPRESSED AIR MAY BE FUTURE FUEL OF AUTOS

COAST TRYOUT IS SUCCESSFUL

Inventor States It Is as Yet Only Experimental.

Los Angeles, Cal., Oct. 13.—(AP)—If the plans of a Los Angeles inventor are fulfilled, motorists of the future may use air to fill their fuel tanks instead of gasoline.

Roy J. Meyers, who has experimented with air devices for two decades, has tested successfully an automobile that runs on compressed air.

The machine traveled at 35 miles an hour, but it probably could outspeed most gasoline automobiles if the gear ratio were more powerful, Meyers said. "A tank with a capacity of 200 pounds air pressure drove the machine 150 miles, from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, Cal.

The fuel consumption averages about 10 pounds for every 1.3 miles traveled and leakage of air is but 10 per cent on each 100 pounds.

The experimental automobile, yet some time away from the stage of practical use, gives the impression to the driver of gliding over the highway. The only noise is the hiss of air escaping from exhaust valves.

The automobile, demonstrated before newspaper men and the backers of a company, formed to finance the invention, has an unusual appearance. The conventional in-line design of cylinders is abandoned for the airplane type of a radial engine with six sylinders and is mounted in an upright position on the front of a standard chasis. It has neither ignition, carburetor nor cooling system.

By a single lever, the air throttle, the driver feeds air into the cylinders, forcing the pistons up and down and a device to recapture the spent air and compress it anew has been developed. The fuel tank is heated by a battery, expanding the air and doubling the power.

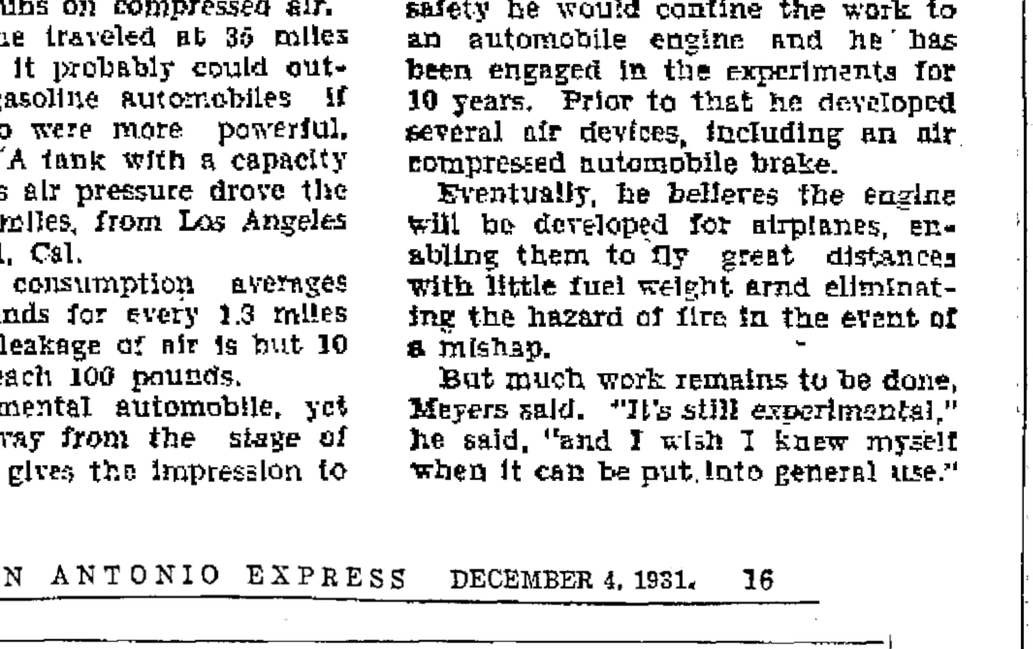
It is the third automobile of this design that Meyers has built. He began originally with the idea of developing such an engine for airplanes but he decided that for the sake of safety he would confine the work to an automobile engine and he has been engaged in the experiments for 10 years. Prior to that he developed several air devices, including an air compressed automobile brake.

Eventually, he believes the engine will be developed for airplanes, enabling them to fly great distances with little fuel weight and eliminating the hazard of fire in the event of a mishap.

But much work remains to be done, Meyers said. "It's still experimental," he said, "and I wish I knew myself when it can be put into general use."

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS DECEMBER 4, 1931. 16

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS -:- -:- -:- By John Hix

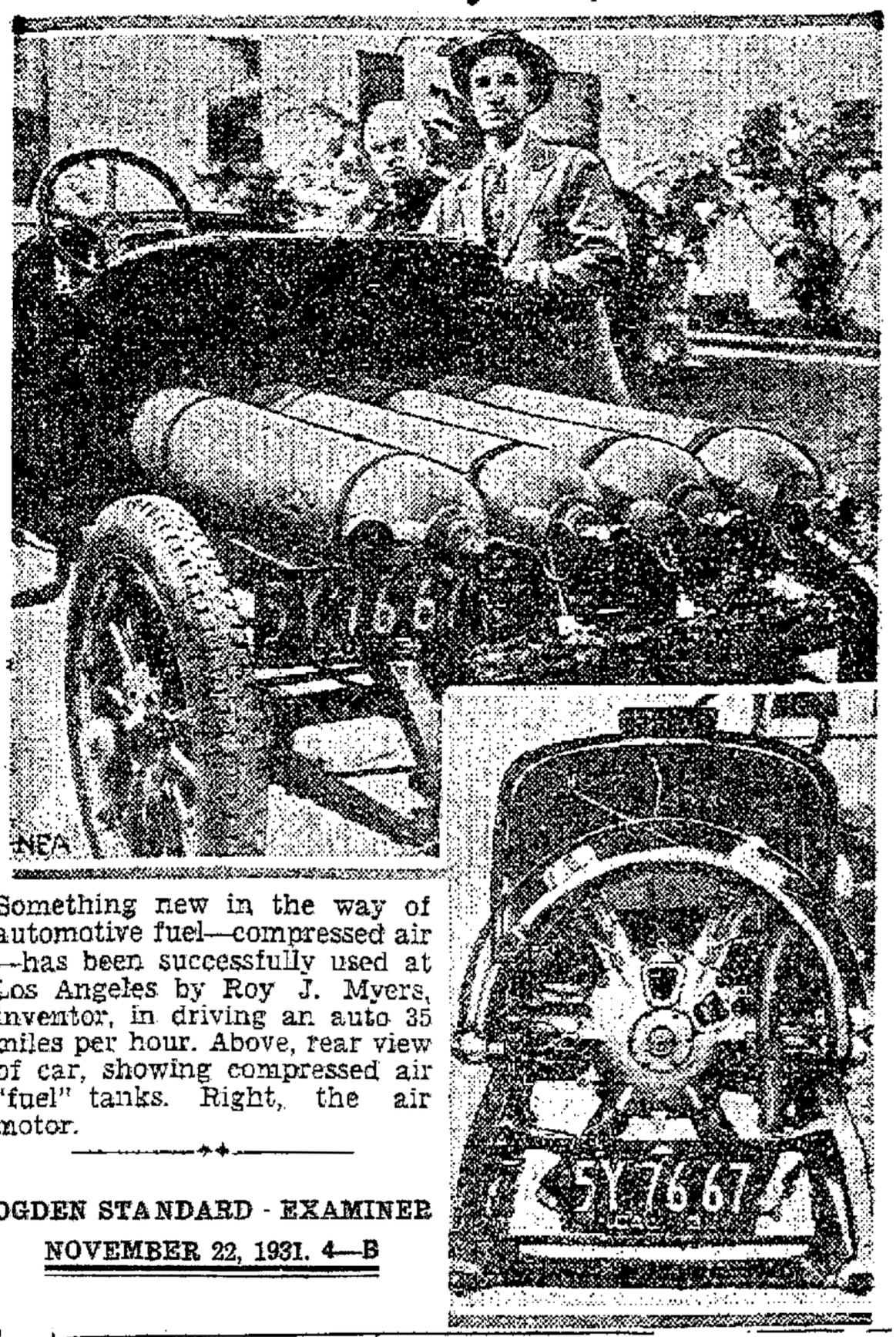


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Roy L. Meyer's new automobile is run by compressed air, under 500 pounds pressure. An air throttle is the only lever that the driver has to operate. The car travels 35 miles per hour, but Meyers says that it can be made to go much faster. He claims to get 600 miles on one filling of air, which is contained in tanks placed in the rear. The compressed air expands in the cylinders, forcing the pistons up and down as gas explosions do in ordinary motors.

Any reader wanting further proof of anything depicted here should address the author, care of this paper, and enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope for reply. JOHN HIX.

This Car Runs By Air, Not Gas



Something new in the way of automotive fuel—compressed air—has been successfully used at Los Angeles by Roy J. Myers, inventor, in driving an auto 35 miles per hour. Above, rear view of car, showing compressed air "fuel" tanks. Right, the air motor.

OGDEN STANDARD - EXAMINER
NOVEMBER 22, 1931. 4—B

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1931 7

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL



Compressed Air Runs Car —Acme-P. & A. Photo

Roy J. Meyers (at the left) has devised an automobile propelled by air instead of gasoline, operating without gears being run only by the opening or closing of a valve. The air, forced into the six cylinder radial type engine, forces the pistons up and down, much of the air being recaptured and recompressed. Meyers proved his car in Los Angeles, when he drove 100 miles on one tankful of compressed air. A generator heats the recompressed air, expanding it and increasing the power of the engine. Left to right (above) with the compressed air car are Roy Meyers, the inventor; R. D. McCormack, and Nick D. Harris.

MOTOR AND HIGHWAY NEWS

Compressed Air Auto Operates Cheaply



ENGINE OPERATES VERY WELL ON AIR TANKS

By DAN THOMAS

LOS ANGELES Oct 31—(NEA)—Airplanes flying the Atlantic with only a single tank of compressed air as the fuel load . . . automobiles being driven for days at a time without refueling.

These are two possibilities which Roy J Meyers promises with the use of a compressed air motor he has perfected after six years of intensive work He had the motor running an automobile through the streets of Los Angeles recently and was well satisfied with its operation

Three factors give this compressed air motor advantages over gasoline engines Meyers claims They are

1—Low cost of manufacturing

2—Low cost of operation

3—Wider traveling radius on one fueling

SMALL AND POWERFUL

The motor resembles a radial airplane engine in appearance, and is half the size of the ordinary two hundred horsepower gasoline motor, being thirty-two inches in diameter, fourteen inches in width and weighing only 114 pounds Despite its small size, however, it develops 182 horsepower at 2400 r p m

The car in which Meyers has installed his motor has attained a speed of thirty-five miles an hour With the proper gearing, says Meyers, this same motor will drive a car more than one hundred miles an hour

And it will travel more than five hundred miles without refilling the compressed air tank, he adds

Air is put into the tank from an ordinary compressed air chamber at a pressure of one hundred pounds By means of an electric heater operated by batteries and a generator, the air then is heated until it attains a pressure of two hundred pounds

RECOVERS MOST OF USED AIR

As the warm air goes through the engine valves and is cooled it is recovered and drawn into a compressing chamber where it is heated and again forced into the main tank In this way nine-tenths of the air used for operating the motor is used again.

"As far as I know my motor is the simplest ever constructed," Meyers says 'It has only thirteen main working parts and I have no worries as to overheating, carburetor trouble or ignition The motor operates with a simple lever which controls the amount of air released into the cylinders

'I believe this motor will revolutionize flying as it will eliminate the necessity for carry heavy loads of fuel and do away with many of the dangers as well One of the principal dangers of flying today is fire and with my motor there is nothing to cause a fire

COST EXTREMELY LOW

'Nor is there any danger of an explosion since we carry only two hundred pounds of air pressure and the tank is constructed to withstand a pressure of five hundred pounds

'A factory turning out these motors in a fair quantity could build them for not over $75 each, much less than it costs to build a gasoline motor of the same power today

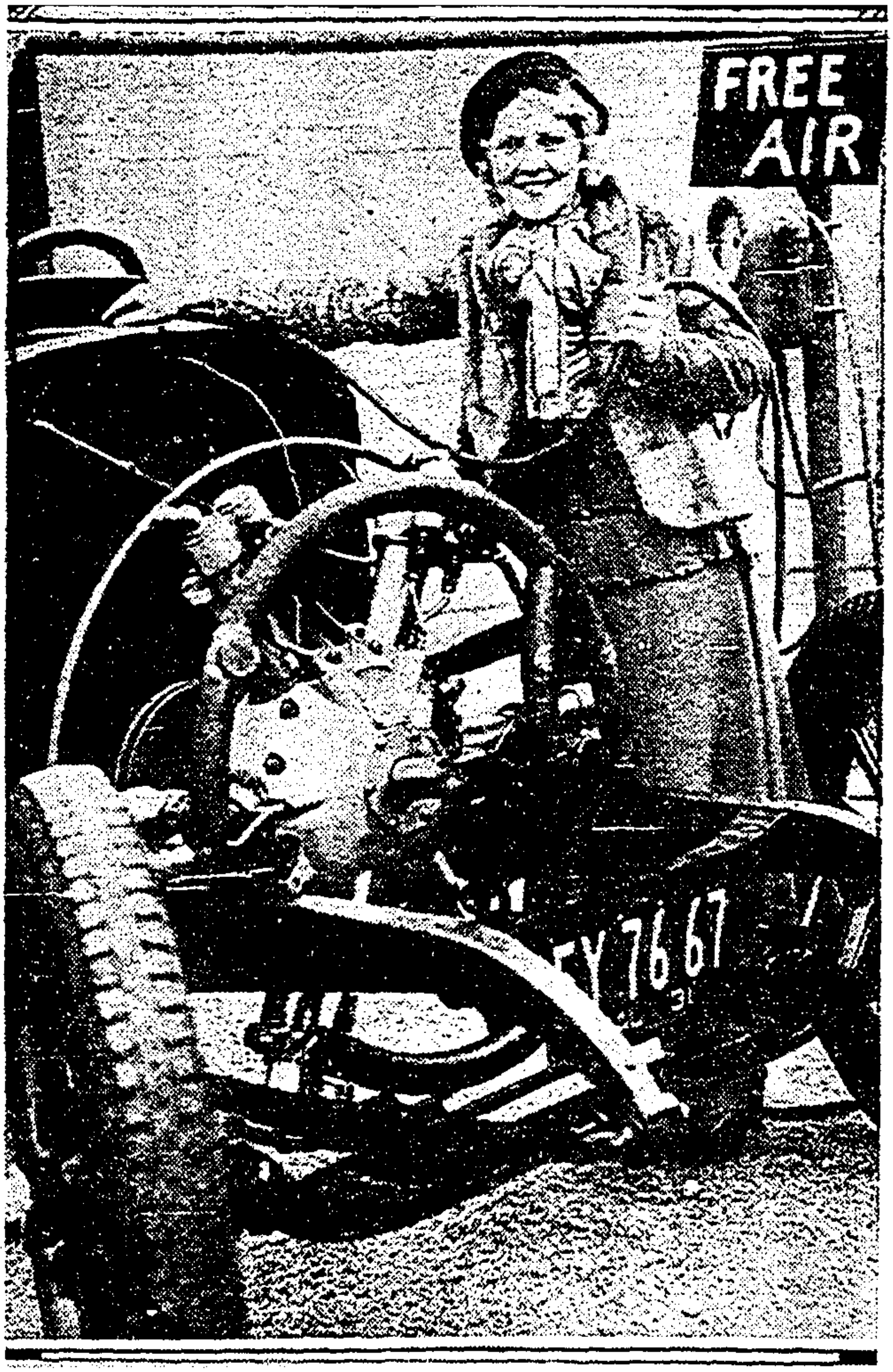
"As for the cost of operation, I don't ever like to talk about that, it is so negligible One tank of compressed air, which will run the car more than five hundred miles, costs me ten cents

"The only real cost of running a car equipped with this motor, would be for tires'

AIR ENGINE MAY REDUCE DANGER, COST OF FLYING AND MOTORING—An automobile run by compressed air, shown at top, with Roy J. Meyers of Los Angeles, its inventor, in lower photo beside the unique engine.

Los Angeles Times, October 13, 1931, p. A1-2

Engine and Tires Use Same Spigot



[Wide World photo]

Her Auto "Air-Minded"

All that Alice Doll has to do when she starts out for a morning drive is to go into a service station and fill the car's tank with air. The new compressed-air engine is shown mounted in the chasis of the car in the foreground.

COMPRESSED AIR RUNS CAR

Auto Engine Refills Compression Tank as Machine Speeds Here Without Cost for Fuel

Compressed air as motive power for the automobile is harnessed. In an amazing demonstration conducted in secrecy here a standard automobile chasis, powered by a newly developed compressed-air motor, whizzed around the city streets at not one cent cost to the driver for fuel.

Those who observed the performance of the startling advancement in motive power pointed out that its perfection means the possibility of driving a car with tires as the only item of upkeep.

The engine is the result of six years of research and work by Roy J. Meyers, local inventor. He produced a smaller engine three years ago, but for the past year has devoted his entire time to perfecting the larger six-cylinder radial type engine tested yesterday.

LIKE PLANE MOTOR

Resembling in general appearance a radial airplane motor the engine is mounted in an upright position in the same location as that of a gasoline engine in a standard motor car.

But it requires no cooling system, no ignition system, no carburetor or the hundreds of moving parts included in a gasoline motor.

The driver operates one lever. That is the air throttle.

Before starting a compressed-air tank is filled to about 500 pounds pressure. The engine throttle is opened and the car picks up speed quickly and smoothly, the only sound emitted being a slight hiss of air from the exhaust valves.

AIR RECOMPRESSED

As the air goes through the engine, forcing pistons up and down on the same principle as that of gasoline explosions, most of it is recaptured and recompressed by a compressor built as a part of the engine.

The cooled air returns to the pressure tank, the latter heated by electricity from batteries and a generator. This heating, Meyers pointed out, expands the air in the tank and doubles the air power.

The motor, operating under this system, not only furnishes power for the automobile, but has the ability to build up its own motivating body.

CAN GET MORE SPEED

In the first demonstration the motor was geared down so that the maximum speed attained was thirty-five miles an hour. With a gear shift, the inventor explained, a higher-powered engine will drive a car at speeds equal to or greater than those now achieved in gasoline-powered cars.

It is the intention of Meyers to perfect the compressed-air engine for airplanes as well as for automobiles. He pointed out that such an engine for aircraft would obviate the fire hazard and permit flying ships to carry more weight in passengers or airmail in place of the fuel loads now necessary.

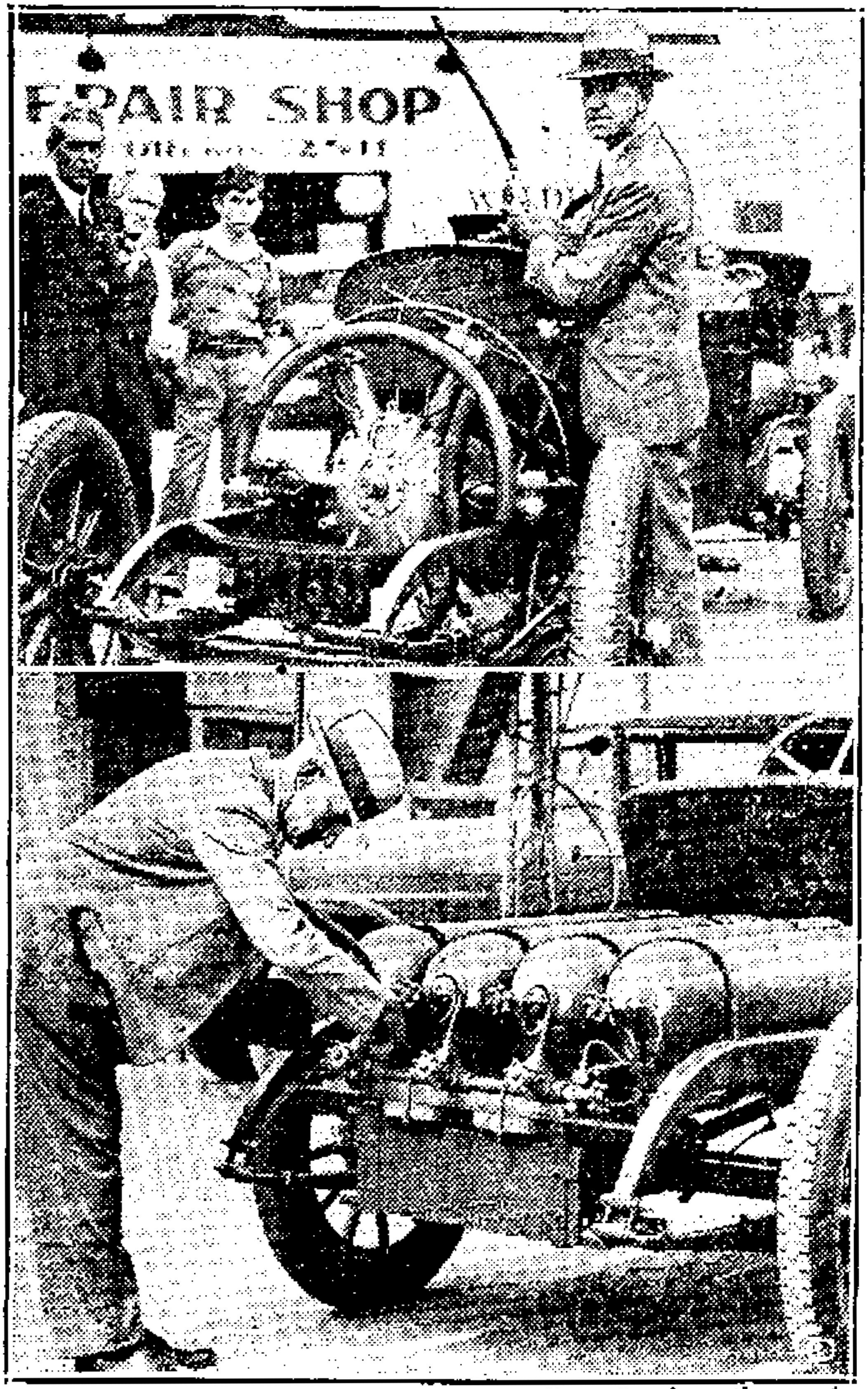
He has protected his rights to the invention in an organization known as the Air Power Corporation.

KNOWN AND READ WHEREVER OIL IS PRODUCED OR REFINED

THE OIL CITY DERRICK.

ASSOCIATED PRESS LEASED WIRE — THE ORGAN OF OIL — CENTRAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

ESTABLISHED IN 1871. NO. 21,973. — 16 PAGES — OIL CITY, PA., TUESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 20, 1931. — 16 PAGES



Top, front view of the air-driven automobile, showing the motor, with Roy J. Meyers, the inventor, alongside; below, filling the compressed air tanks at the rear—the only "fuel" necessary

"Fill 'er Up-With Air!"

New-Fangled Automobile, Whose Only "Fuel" is Compressed Air, Soon May Revolutionize Motor Industry

By Central Press

Los Angeles, Cal., Oct. 19.—Roy J. Meyers, inventor, drove his car up to a filling station here the other day.

"Gas, mister?" queried the attendant.

"No," replied Meyers, "just a little wind," and he proceeded to the rear where a sign "free air" could be seen.

Coupling the air hose onto a connection, he eyed a pressure gauge on the dash. In a few minutes he was satisfied, and climbed into the seat with the remark, "Well, she's good for another hundred miles now," and drove off, leaving the gas station man goggle-eyed.

"Free air" means free fuel for Meyers, for he has succeeded in harnessing compressed air as an entirely practical motive power by means of a newly developed motor which he has just disclosed for the first time in an amazing demonstration.

Six Years' Research

"The new motor is the result of six years of research and experimentation," said Meyers, as he drove it around Los Angeles. "This is the second complete motor I have built, my first experimental model having been made three years ago. This latest motor has taken a year to perfect."

Going over the six-cylinder engine, which resembles a radial airplane motor in general appearance, Meyers pointed out that it requires no ignition system, no carburetor, no gas tank nor the multiplicity of moving parts necessary in the ordinary gasoline power plant. There is but one control and that is the air lever, governing the supply of air to the cylinders.

Tanks in the rear of the car are filled with compressed air to 500 pounds pressure. On opening the control valve the car moves off with smooth ease, and picks up speed quickly. The only sound on starting is a slight hum which ceases as the car gains way.

This experimental car, said Meyers, is direct geared, and is only good for a speed of 35 miles an hour, but with the addition of a gear shift in conjunction with a larger sized motor, normal maximum automobile speeds or greater can be made, he maintains. Greater power and speed is simply a matter of piston displacement as in the gasoline motor, Meyers explained, in showing the general principles on which his creation works.

How It Works

"The air expands in the cylinders, forcing the pistons up and down as the gas explosions do in the ordinary type motor," the inventor pointed out. "Similarity ceases there, for then the air is recaptured and recompressed by a compressor built into the motor itself.

Continued on Page Four.

Continued from Page One.

This cold recompressed air is returned to the pressure tanks where it is heated by the electricity from batteries and generator. The expansion from the heat greatly increases the air power as it goes back into use.

"I intend to carry my experiments further and perfect this motor for airplane use as well as for automobiles. Such a motor would be absolutely certain in operation and eliminate any possible fire hazard. By doing away with the fuel loads now necessary, the use of the air motor would greatly increase the pay loads of aircraft."

As he experiments, Meyers drives his present car around Los Angeles, picking up a little free air here and there, his transportation costing him not a cent except the wear and tear on his tires.

THE LETHBRIDGE HERALD
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1931

NEWS OF THE MOTORING WORLD



Helpfull Hints of interest to all Canadian Motorists

Ray Meyers of Los Angeles, whose invention of an automobile driven by compressed air is bringing him into the limelight, in a recent interview had a few reasons to advance for the belief that cars of this sort could be manufactured and sold to an advantage.

"As far as I know my motor is the simplest ever constructed," Meyers says. "It has only 13 main working parts and I have no worries as to overheating, carburetor trouble or ignition. The motor operates with a single lever which controls the amount of air released into the cylinders.

"A factory turning out these motors in a fair quantity could build them for not over $75 each, much less than it costs to build a gasoline motor of the same power to-day.

"As for the cost of operation, I don't even like to talk about that, it is so negligible. 'One tank of compressed air, which will run the car more than 500 miles, costs me 15 cents."

The motor resembles a radial aeroplane engine in appearance, and is half the size of the ordinary 200-horsepower gasoline motor, being 32 inches in diameter, 14 inches in width and weighing only 114 pounds. Despite its small size, however, it develops 182 horsepower at 2,400 r.p.m.

The car in which Meyers has installed his motor has attained a speed of 35 miles an hour. With the proper gearing, says Meyers, this same motor will drive a car more than 100 miles an hour.

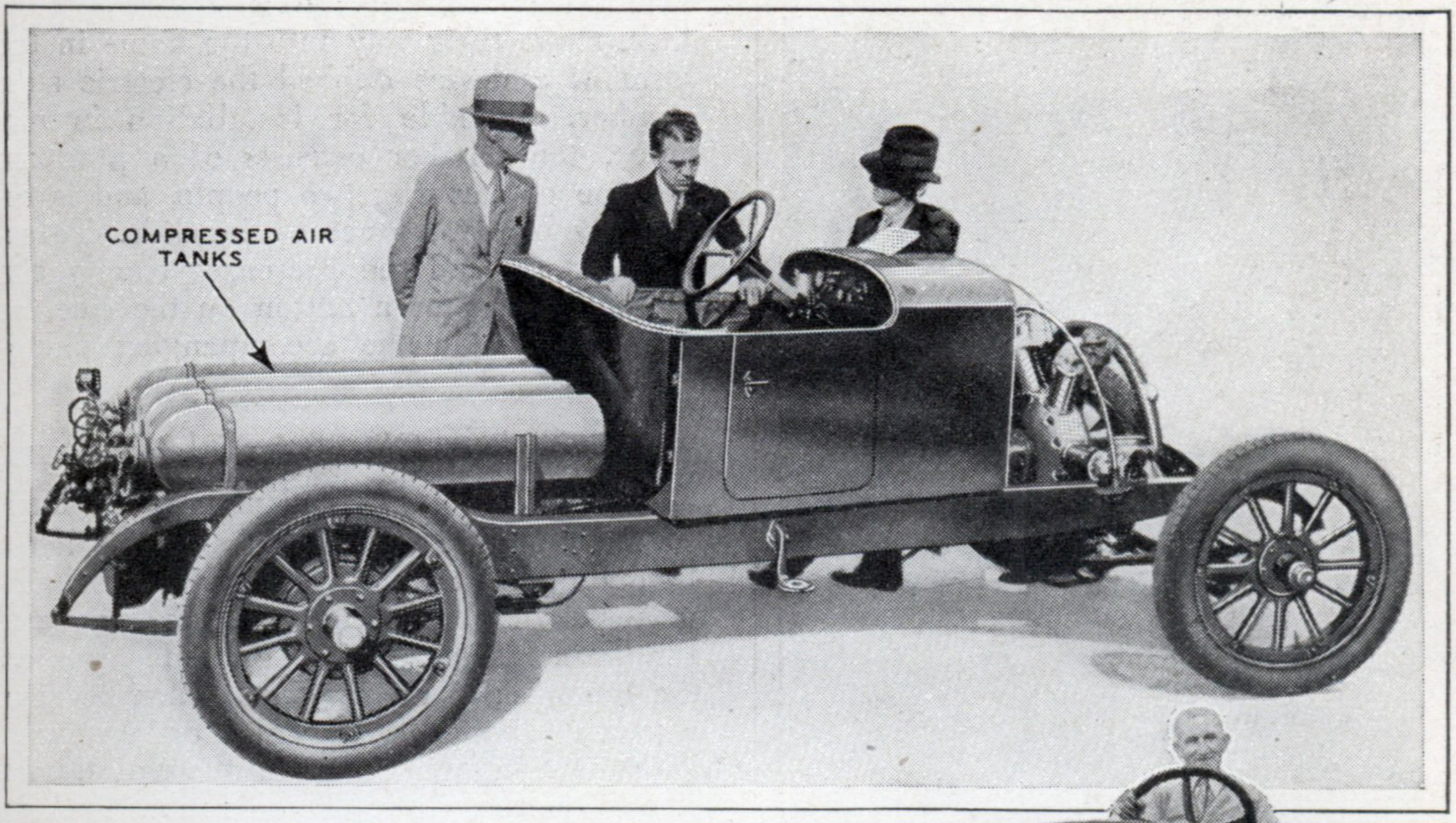
And it will travel more than 500 miles without refilling the compressed air tank, he adds.

Air is put into the tank from an ordinary compressed air chamber at a pressure of 100 pounds. By means of an electric heater, operated by batteries and a generator, the air then is heated until it attains a pressure of 200 pounds.

As the warm air goes through the engine valves and is cooled it is recovered and drawn into a compressing chamber where it is heated and again forced into the main tank. In this way nine-tenths of the air used for operating the motor is used again.

Modern Mechanix 1932

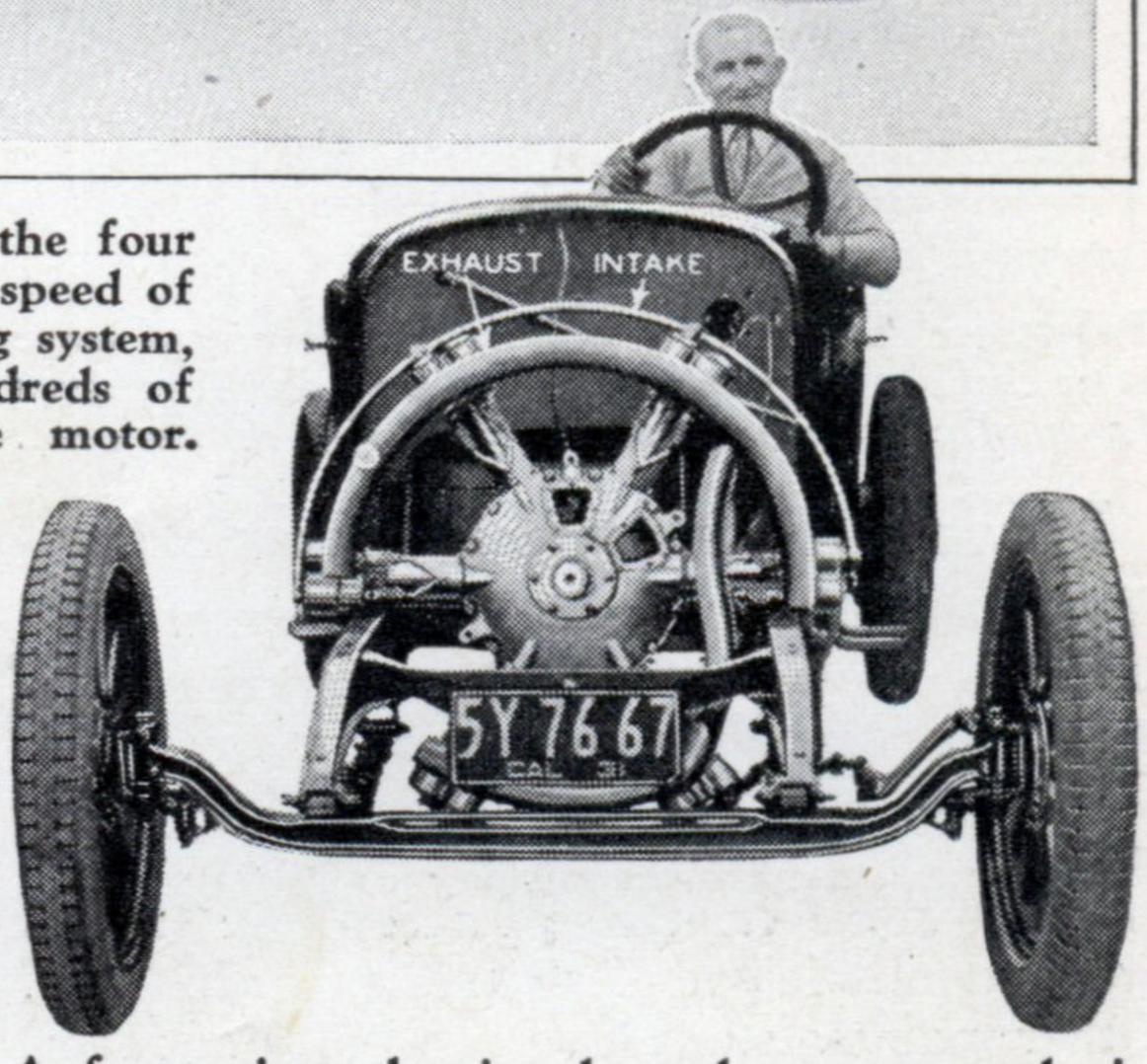
Compressed AIR MOTOR Runs Car



A side view of the compressed air car, showing the four fuel tanks which will drive the car 500 miles at a speed of 35 miles an hour. The engine requires no cooling system, no ignition system, no carburetor, nor the hundreds of moving parts included in a standard gasoline motor.

EITHER the era of "free air" is about to come to an end, or the cost of motoring is about to be reduced to practically nothing. In an amazing demonstration conducted recently in Los Angeles a standard automobile chassis, powered with a newly-developed compressed air motor, whizzed around the city streets at not one cent of cost to the driver for fuel.

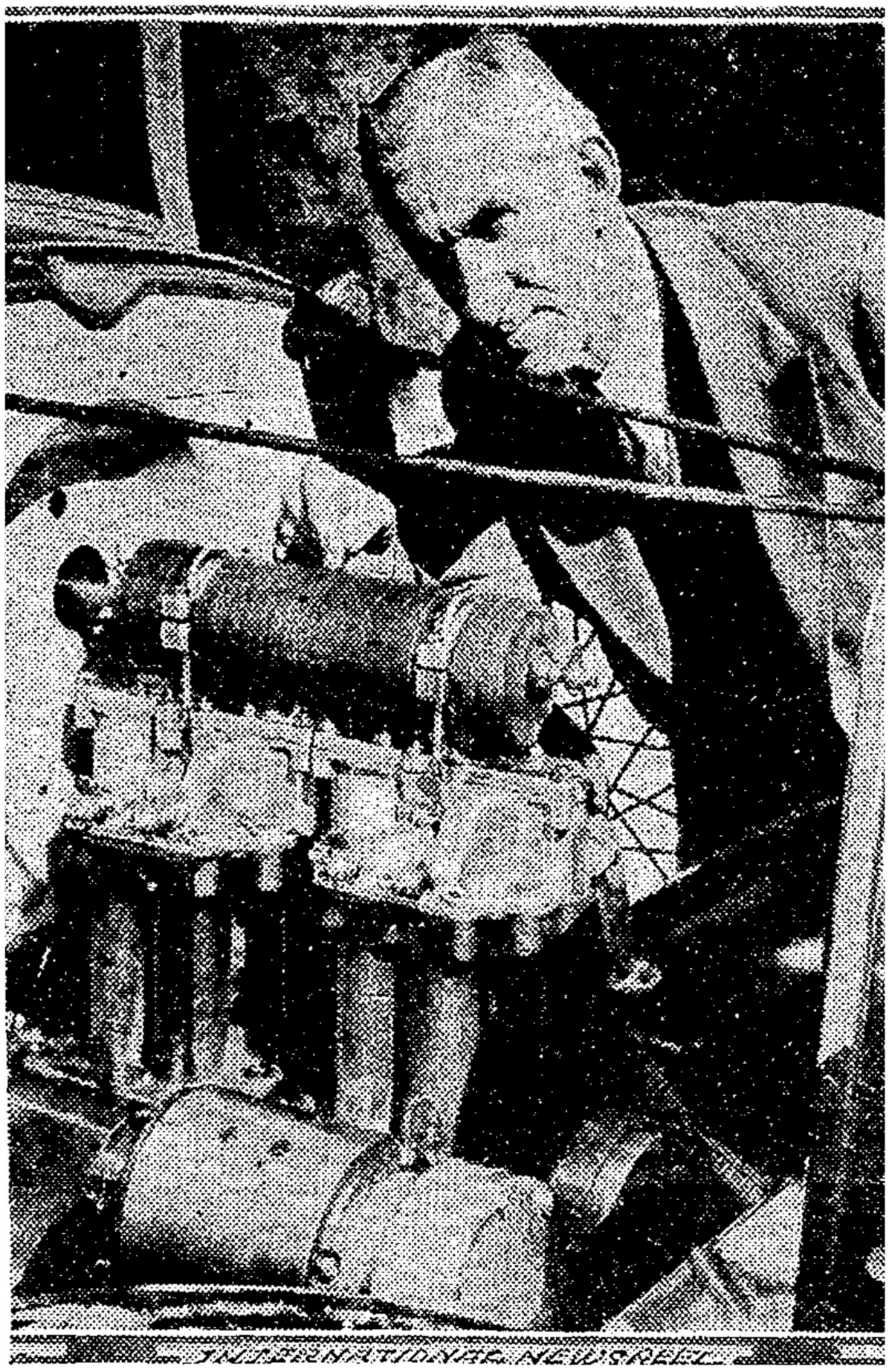
The engine, which is the result of six years of research by Roy J. Meyers, resembles in general appearance a radial airplane motor. It is mounted in an upright position in the same space occupied by a gasoline motor in standard cars.



A front view, showing how the compressed air engine is mounted. An electric heater, operated by a battery and generator, heats the air until it attains a pressure of 200 lbs. As the warm air goes through the engine and is cooled, it is recovered and drawn into a compressing chamber, where it is heated again and returned to the tank.

THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT

COMPRESSED AIR MOTOR

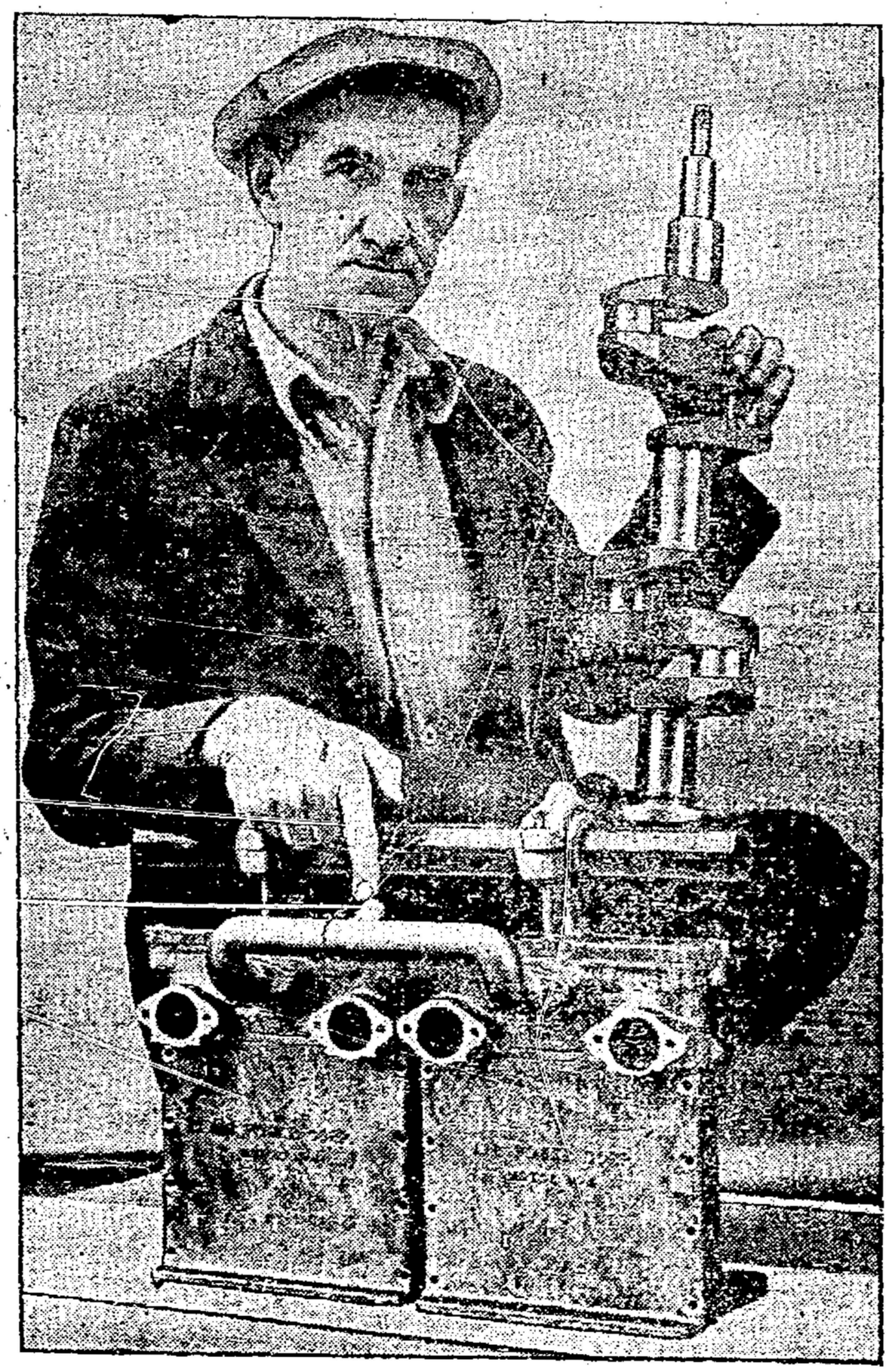


Roy J. Meyers, Los Angeles inventor, put final touches on unusual motor which uses no fuel but runs on compressed air. Tank of 500 pounds pressure is sufficient to operate it for several hours. He recently astonished Los Angeles with his use of the airpower automobile whose "fuel" supply was the free air hose of the nearest service station. He drove it to San Francisco and return at cost of $1.25.

MARCH 28, 1932. 3-A

Latest Facts from Science, Mechanics and Invention

A Motor Run by Cold Air



The Compressed Air Motor Which Weighs Only 50 Pounds and, According to the Inventor, Can Develop 100 Horse-Power and Be Driven 1,000 Miles on One Tankful of Air.

AIR as a fuel gas for propelling motor cars may eventually take the place of gasoline for that purpose, as the result of the invention of an entirely new type of engine.

This new motor, which was perfected by Roy J. Meyers, is propelled by cold, compressed air, was designed especially for use in motor cars.

The improved model of this engine which Mr. Meyers recently completed, weighs only 50 pounds. Despite its small weight and size, however, the inventor expects it to be able to develop as much as 100 horse-power.

The tank of an automobile powered by this compressed air engine is filled with cold air, under a pressure of 150 pounds. This pressure in turn is raised to 500 pounds by means of an electric manifold.

Mr. Myers claims that one tankful of air is sufficient to drive a motor car 1,000 miles.

Los Angeles Times, April 27, 1912 p. I-1

Genius.

ELECTRICITY FROM AIR BY A CONVICT'S DEVICE.

Kate Barnard of Oklahoma Discovers Him in Arizona Prison, Gets the Legislature to Release Him and Heads Lawmakers' Money Gift With Fifty-dollar Donation to Obtain a Patent.

[BY A. P. NIGHT WIRE TO THE TIMES.]

PHOENIX (Ariz.) April 25.—A unique incident occurred in the State Legislature today when, after an address on "Prison Reform," by Miss Kate Barnard, State Commissioner of Charities of Oklahoma, the assembled legislators took up a collection to send a convict in the Arizona State Penitentiary to Washington, in order that he might patent an invention, which, according to Miss Barnard, is worth millions. This was done after the Legislature, by a rising vote, gave its consent to the parole and Miss Barnard headed the subscription list with a donation of $50.

The convict in whose behalf Miss Barnard has become interested, is Joy J. Myers, convicted of forgery. According to Miss Barnard, Myers's invention, perfected in the prison at Florence, will revolutionize mechanics. The device, she stated, successfully takes free electricity direct from the air and utilizes it to generate the "spark" for the operation of gasoline engines. She said that she had advised Myers to destroy all of his blue-prints in order to avoid discovery and possible theft of his device.

Miss Barnard addressed a joint session of both houses, speaking for nearly three hours. Comment following indicated that her talk will have an important effect on prison legislation in Arizona.

CONVICT SNATCHES AIR'S ELECTRICITY

Astonishes Incredulous Patent Office Men and Goes Back to Serve Sentence

PHOENIX, ARIZ., June 3.—Protected by a caveat covering the details of his invention, Roy J. Meyers, released from the Florence Penitentiary by Governor Hunt for the purpose of securing patents on a device for collecting [illegible] quantities of electricity from the atmosphere, talked of his invention for the first time.

"When I arrived in Washington," said Meyers, "and laid my drawings before the Patent Office experts they merely smiled and told me that I would have to build a model and demonstrate my claims—that it seemed strange that I, unknown to the electrical world, should have accomplished the things for which Edison, Tesla and other experts have been striving for years.

"There was little time to spare as I had only twenty days left of my leave and I set to work and in a few days was able to take a crude model around to the Patent Office to make a demonstration.

"Arriving at the Patent Office the absorber was hoisted on two short poles and made to work. There was no trouble after that. The officials had seen the thing actually work. While they were unable to understand the principles involved and hardly willing to believe their own eyes they were forced to admit that I had something new and different, and told me I might file my application without further delay.

"I am going back to Florence today to resume the serving of my sentence, which will expire in ten months."

Trenton Evening Times, June 3, 1912

Los Angeles Times, June 16, 1912, p. V23

Bird in a Cage.

MAKES A MODEL OF HIS DEVICE.

Convict Declares He Obtains Electricity from Air.

Files an Application to Patent the Device.

Forger Wins Many Friends to His Novel Theory.

[Special Correspondence of The Times.]

PHOENIX (Ariz.) June 14.—Having convinced the hard-headed Patent Office officials that he has invented a method of taking static electricity from the air and transforming it into dynamic current, Roy J. Meyers, Arizona's inventor-convict, is back from Washington. After his thirty-day leave of absence, he is once more an inmate in the State penitentiary, anxiously awaiting the time when his sentence will expire to make arrangements to manufacture and sell his machines.

Meyers is serving a term in the penitentiary for forgery. He will remain there eighteen months longer unless, in the meantime, it is demonstrated beyond a doubt that he has discovered the secret for which Edison and Tesla have sought in vain. In that event there probably will be a popular demand for his pardon, which Gov. Hunt will not fail to heed. Gov. Hunt has already treated Meyers to the extent of allowing him a thirty-days' leave of absence, with permission to go to Washington, investigate and apply for a patent.

With letters of introduction from Gov. Hunt and others, Meyers filed applications for patents on his electrical machine and another of his numerous devices. The other invention is an electric button for the control of fire hydrants. In the course of time patents will be issued on the two.

SECRET IN HIS HEAD.

When he went to Washington, Meyers had nothing in the way of a model or drawing. His secret was all in his own mind. The only machine he had ever manufactured remained at the penitentiary, and on the advice of friends he destroyed every drawing he had made.

Meyers called at the Patent Office and tried to explain the principle of his invention to the officials. They were skeptical. The next day they told him that only on presentation of a working model could they receive his application. Thereupon Meyers went to work to construct a machine. His leave was rapidly passing. Besides, he had planned to get away from Washington with time to allow a short visit to his wife in New Orleans.

The machine, more crude than the one he had made in the penitentiary, was completed and taken to the Patent Office. It did not work, since a certain steel plate had not been magnetized, but the officials seemed to dimly understand the principle he was trying to explain and they received his application. Already they had received an application for a patent on a fire hydrant control button. Meyers hurried to New Orleans, stayed two or three days with his wife and was back in Phoenix with two days to spare.

Benjamin Franklin's experiment with a kite inspired Meyers to invent a machine which he says will take static electricity from the air and transform it into dynamic current. He experimented only two months before he was given leave to go to Washington and apply for a patent. The prison authorities gave him every assistance. After much careful work he succeeded in constructing an instrument that delivered a current estimated at 8½ amperes. There was no method of measuring the current exactly, but it operated a large motor, with which Meyers twice pumped the prison tanks full of water.

THE DEVICE DESCRIBED.

Meyers brought back from Washington a drawing of one of his machines, which, he says, is large enough to illuminate a city of 20,000 inhabitants. The apparatus, which is quite inexpensive, is set on a tower, like a windmill, 200 feet high. It will collect electricity from any strata of the atmosphere, but it is better to have it off the surface in air that is disturbed as little as possible.

On the tower is placed what Meyers, for want of a better name, calls an "absorber." It is a bell-like affair, at the back of which is a steel plate magnetized by a process which is the principal secret of the invention. This is the mechanism that attracts and accumulates the electricity from the air currents, the positive coming from one pole and the negative from another. By wires the accumulated electricity is carried to a transformer of the "step-up" type, on the ground. From this transformer it is conducted through wires to power machines or lamps, either incandescent or arc.

The flow of electricity is constant, according to Meyers. When it emerges into the transformer it is in the form of a direct current. The absorber will attract electricity night and day, and will work whenever wireless apparatus will work. To prevent trouble in storms, when the air is charged with an abnormal amount of electricity, Meyers has devised a modified form of circuit breaker, such as is used for a lightning arrester on telegraph lines. This conducts into the ground the extra electricity gathered by the accumulator.

Meyers has found that the position of his accumulator makes a material difference. He places his machine in such a position that it will intercept the currents flowing between the magnetic poles and gets better results than when the accumulator is in an east and west position.

Convict Rival of Edison and Tesla.



Roy J. Meyers,

An inmate of the Arizona State penitentiary who has just returned to prison voluntarily from Washington where he was permitted to go to file an application for a patent on a device with which he says he can get something from nothing, or electricity free from the free air.

News of Meyers' invention was at first received with the greatest skepticism in Phoenix. Miss Kate Barnard, Oklahoma State Superintendent of Corrections, paid a visit to the penitentiary, in Florence, and told the world that "a poor convict had invented a machine that would revolutionize human industry," since it drew power from inexhaustible sources at practically no cost. She went to Gov. Hunt and asked that Meyers be given leave of absence to go to Washington and apply for a patent.

THE GOVERNOR SKEPTICAL.

Gov. Hunt was skeptical. He remembered Meyers, who had asked for permission to come to Phoenix and drive the Governor's automobile. On that occasion the Governor had declined to make him an "honor convict" because upon looking into Meyers's record, he found that he had served a term in Folsom Penitentiary in California.

Miss Barnard and Warden R. B. Sims of the penitentiary labored with the Governor several days, but he remained firm in his decision not to take the unprecedented step of giving a convict leave of absence to go out of the State unguarded. Then Miss Barnard went before the Legislature, described Meyers's invention and forecast what it would mean to the human race. With no opposition the legislators passed a joint resolution giving the Governor their consent to accord Meyers leave for thirty days, and went down into their own pockets to help make up a purse to pay the convict's expenses on the trip to Washington.

Roy J. Meyers is 33 years old. He was born in Iowa, but he never stayed in one place very long. At different times he has lived in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Montana, California, Arizona and other States. Most of his life has been spent in working around electric plants. For a year or more he worked at the Edison Electric Company's works, in Los Angeles. While in California he was convicted of forgery and served a term in Folsom.

At the expiration of his sentence, some three years ago, he came to Arizona. For a time he was assistant superintendent of the Humboldt smelter, and he held several positions in and around Prescott. One day he forged a $50 check, passed it at a Prescott store and left the country. After several months he was located in New Orleans, where he had married the daughter of a prominent, well-to-do family. Meyers has always refused to tell the name of her relatives in order that she and they shall not be annoyed.

Meyers was brought back to Arizona and sentenced to three years and nine months in the penitentiary. With the usual time off for good behavior, he will be released in about eighteen months.

HAS MANY FRIENDS.

The quiet, unassuming manner of Meyers has won him friends. He is quite deaf and this is one reason why he is not willing to talk at any length. He says he has invented several electric appliances now in common use. Since his commitment to the penitentiary he has been granted a patent on a device to keep a trolley wheel on the wire. This is merely two spiral springs, extending out like horns from the two ends of the wheel axle. When the wire jumps off it is caught by one of the spirals, which runs it back on the wheel.

More complicated is the fire plug control button. Meyers says that with this invention fire plugs in a wide radius can be operated simply by pushing buttons in a central station.

At the prison Meyers has a model of a combination automobile and aeroplane. It has widespread wings shaped like those of an oriole, attached to a small automobile. The idea is that when the roads are bad the machine can fly. But the most extraordinary part of the machine is the motor, which is of an improved type. The cylinders are controlled separately by the driver. When one goes wrong it can be thrown out of gear from the seat and the others continue to work the same as before.

a Boston newspaper before November 11, 1912 copied this from Technical World Magazine

PICKS POWER FROM THE AIR

A remarkable scene took place in the legislature of Arizona this spring when the lawmakers enthusiastically voted for the parole of a certain convict in the State penitentiary, granting him leave of absence for thirty days and by means of private contributions raising a fund to defray his expenses to Washington, D. C., and return.

The prisoner, Roy J. Meyers, is serving a three and a half year sentence, but in spite of the fact that he bears the stigma of a convicted law breaker, he has demonstrated that a convict can be a useful member of society. During his imprisonment he perfected an electrical device of such original character as to arouse feelings of wonder and skepticism until experts had seen it in actual operation. It is a device to draw electricity from the atmosphere for light and power, and the thirty-day parole was granted in order that the inventor might protect his rights through the patent office at Washington.

With the acquiescence of the legislature, Governor Hunt granted the parole and the prisoner was allowed to go free without any guard or any assurance but his word of honor that he would return. Two days before the period had elapsed, Meyers again presented himself before the Governor, having accomplished his mission, and then returned to the penitentiary at Florence, where he continues to serve his sentence.

This, in brief, is the picturesque story which has called attention of the civilized world to a newly discovered electrical genius, and to another feature of the case which is equal importance and human interest; namely, the enlightened policy pursued by our youngest state in its treatment of convicts.

Meyers' chance came when Governor George W. B. Hunt chose as superintendent of the penitentiary at Florence a man of very different type from the political hanger-on who too often fills such a position. "Big Bob" Sims was a business man of advanced views, and was chosen for the position because of his knowledge of human nature and his executive ability.

One of the progressive steps he took was to abolish the stripes in the penitentiary, and to adopt a much less rigorous confinement of the inmates. The "honor system" with the cooperation of Governor Hunt, was inaugurated.

Before entering the prison, Meyers had already applied for various patents, among them one for an improved trolley head which prevents the trolley wheel from jumping the wire. Meyers had a conference with Superintendent Sims and Parole Clerk Sanders, and it was to these gentlemen that the inventor first explained the principles of his new device for securing electrical energy from the air. The officials were willing to give the man an opportunity to develop his plan and a little wooden building outside the walls was turned over to Meyers and was fitted up as a workshop and a laboratory. The first demonstration of the new apparatus was made shortly thereafter, the electricity drawn from the atmosphere being used to spark the gas engines of the pump house, and although the device was crude yet it did the work, and removed the doubts of his friends. Further development of the "absorber" followed, and his second model was constructed, and developed eight volts.—Technical World Magazine.

ARIZONA STARTS PRISON REFORM

Newest State Abolishes Needless Humiliations.

MEN TALK FREELY TOGETHER.

One Allowed to Go to Washington to File a Patent—Convicts Enjoy the Daily Papers—No Lockstep, Chains or Handcuffs—System Seems to Work Well.

Arizona, the youngest state in the Union, is adopting some prison reforms that are attracting the attention of her older sister states. Here is a story that illustrates what is being done:

The joint houses of the legislature of Arizona at Phoenix assembled one day last spring to listen to Miss Kate Barnard, commissioner of charities of Oklahoma. She is a little wisp of a woman, all fire and spirit, and she talked to these men on prison and other reforms for two hours and a half. They listened without fidgeting.

Just coming from the Arizona penitentiary, Miss Barnard told the legislators of the experiment she had just witnessed in the prison, in which a convict, Roy Meyers, had run his pumping engine by an electric spark caught from the air. She asked the lawmakers to sanction the governor in permitting Meyers to go to Washington to file his patent. She pledged $50 on her own part to help bear the expense. Her impetuousity swept the legislators off their feet, and they not only gave a ringing assent, but surged about her to add to the sum.

Meyers went to Washington, filed his patent, visited his family on his way back and then returned to the prison. He is at his pumping station once more.

This was not the first time that Governor Hunt had shown his trust in members of his prison family. A short time before he had allowed a long sentence man to go to New Mexico and spend Easter with his family. The man was gone the allotted period and returned on schedule time.

No Lockstep.

One of the prisoners puts it this way:

"The governor thinks we are worth saving, and he is willing to let us try to come back. He has taken away all our useless humiliations that kept before us our condition. There is no lock step; we can talk freely together; we get a daily mail; we may read a daily paper. Before we had mail once a week and never saw a paper. You don't know what it means to one to be able to keep in touch with the world."

The man's speech, nicely grammatical in a land where grammar is not insisted on, was puzzling. It was without surprise I found him to have been a newspaper reporter. He continued:

"You won't hear the clank of a chain or see a pair of handcuffs. The governor trusts to our honor to obey the prison laws, and there is not an English speaking prisoner at least here who would do anything to bring discredit on the governor's policy or on the warden who carries it out. You have no idea already of the difference in the men among themselves. We used to have fights every day. Oh, I tell you it was h—l. Now, although we are restless and every man longs for liberty, we are at peace."

A Mutual Improvement League.

The prisoners have organized the Mutual Improvement league in order to support from "inside" the governor's policy. Its president is a mining engineer now in charge of the power house. Its executive officer is a "lifer" who but for what was deemed a speedy tuberculosis would have been hanged. Instead of dying he has grown brown and husky.

Thus officered by the prisoners of education and experience the convicts have rallied and subscribed to the rules of the Mutual Improvement league. These are:

"To try each day to do some good deed.

"To assist each other in all matters of grievance.

"To assist the officers in the discharge of their daily duties.

"To avoid and prevent disorderly conduct.

"To refrain from profane language."



GEO. A. CUSTER CIRCLE

MRS. ALZOA BOMGARDNER

ELIGIBILITIES:
FATHER, TWO
HUSBANDS,
TWO UNCLES

FRESNO, CAL.

GAR stands for Grand Army of the Republic and FCL stands for Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty which is the motto of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Fraternity referred to the brotherhood and sisterhood of those who had served together, Charity referred to the work the organization did to ensure the well-being of widows and orphans of veterans as well as the pensions obtained for them, Loyalty referred to loyalty to the Constitution and flag of our country.

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army who had served in the American Civil War.

To the Board of Prison Directors

July the 25th 1908

Sirs, I present this petition for Parole of Roy J Smith No 4856. who has been a Prisner for two years the 17th of last Jun for passing counterfeit notes.

He Roy Smith loaned a friend $5. and for pay was asked to have a note cashed which he did in two places Fresno, & Sacramento his Friend used him for a cats claw and Roy thinking him a fine fellow all the time I was knowing to the first loan & cautioned Roy against loaning money to a stranger. I am Roys Mother he being my onley Son by my first Husband. Charles. M. Smith. an Old Soldier & Freemason who was laid to arest with all the Honors of an upright Law abidering Citizen leavening Roy a boy of 11. years of age

I hope you will consider the Parole and if you find him worthy grant it. I will do all a Mother can do - yours respectfully

Mrs Alzoa Bomgardner.

Fresno, Cal.

Roy J. Meyers

Inventor

2613 Carondelet St
New Orleans, La,

July 1th - - - - 1913,

Geo W.P.Hunt

Phoenix, Ariz,

My Dear Governor ,

Yours of May the 26 received, Please excuse me for not answering sooner, I also received your writeup of the prison form which I think is fine and many thanks for the news,I always like to hear how you are getting along, Well Governor I know how you feel about the Honor System , And I know that you have done lots of good since you came into office in Arizona, The last day I saw you in Phoenix before leaving for the south I felt real happy hoping that every thing would come out alright , since three month ago when I was getting started , then I began to drag on the ground-stone that was about the time when I made my first test with the machine ,then after that Mr Chenot had me on pins and needles I tried to do the best I could for him , and he has been trying to make trouble for me every day, this is what he said in his last letter ,that is if I dont sign up some more agreements with him , Said that he could wire Gov Hunt that I was obtaining money under false pretence and in six hours later he would have an officer here to take me back to Ariz , but he is only saying that to scare me so I will sign another contract with him , First was he wanted to be boss of the whole patent , Second was he was trying to get England and third he wanted Canada , at last I gave him a chance on Canada without any cash and signed contract with him and another man , and yet he is not satisfide , but he is satisfide with the machine but I know now that I have my hands full, I will write him a letter in a few days that I will give him back his four thousand dollars and take Germany back, that is if he thinks I am trying to get money on false pretence , If you wish to see his letters and contract I have signed up with him I will be glad to send them to you, I keep them on file as a witness, I am getting along nicely with my machine again , I have my shop at home

my shop right at home where I can watch after it, I have not learned any thing about the lost box that had part of the machine in it , only that it was missing at Baltimore, We have been having lots of rain down here which makes it cool , I am enjoying good health and am gaining in weight every day, Well Governor I have told you all the news at present, And hope this letter finds you well , Let me hear from you and tell me the news, My wife health is much better,

With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,

Ray J. Meyer

RJM/CTM.

2201 Park Avenue, St Louis, Mo.
5 - 15, 1914.

J. J. Sanders, Esq.
Florence, Arizona.

R Dear Sir:- Will thank you to give me the names and addresses of electricians that saw and examined Meyer's electrical machine in actual operation. There has arisen a question as to whether his invention is bona fide or a fraud. Can't get him to explain to me how he gets results nor to prove to me that it is not a fake, even tho he has my good cash for the German rights.

I suppose you heard of the fake robbery he pulled off in New Orleans last November. He was exposed in his fake and the suspicion is that his invention is a fraud too.

Awaiting your reply, I am,

Yours very truly,

W. E. Chenot.

P. S.
I am the party who appeared before the Governor, November 1912, in Meyer's behalf, and after which he was paroled by the Governor. I begin to feel like a fool, as tho I had wasted good effort, besides losing my good money.

I really believe in cases of this kind, if fraud is proven, the defrauding party should be sent to prison, put to <u>hard</u> work, allowed pay for the work, and all above his cost of keep should be turned over to party defrauded. I am sure this would act as a very powerful deterrent to crime, and also be just in the end to all concerned. This is food for thought.

A prompt reply will be greatly appreciated.

W. E. C.

June 11th, 1914.

Mr. W. E. Chenot,

St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of the 6th inst., and I note what you say abour our officials being fooled by Myers on his electrical device. No one here has been fooled at all. I have given some time and thought to theories concerning electricity, and I am free to say that I believe Myers has the nucleus of a very great and useful electrical invention. Myers needs encouragemnnt to aid him in perfecting the device. He has more in electricity than Watt had in steam for a starter. Edison has nothing on Myers when it comes to concentrating the mind on a mechanical invention.

The fact that the Patent Office threw out his application spells nothing. Washington laughed poor old Langley to death over his flying machine. What is Washington doing now for Langley??? The Commonwealth of Massachusetts sent a man to the insane asylum for claiming the air could be navigated in the way the Wright brothers navigated, and he died in the asylum.

Very truly yours,

HON. R. B. SIMS,
Superintendent and President
DR. W. G. RANDALL,
Prison Physician
HON. J. J. SANDERS,
Parole Clerk

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PAROLED PRISONERS
FOR THE
Arizona State Prison

HON. GEO. W. P. HUNT,
Governor
HON. G. P. BULLARD,
Atty. General
HON. J. C. CALLAGHAN,
State Auditor

Florence, Arizona

May 19th, 1914.

Hon. G. W. P. Hunt,

Phoenix, Arizona.

Dear Governor:-

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I received today from Mr. W. E. Chenot, the man who bought the German rights in Myer's electrical device. He seems to think that he is some kind of a fool, and incidentally he offers "food for thought" on what he thinks ought to be done with a man who defrauds another.

The man who tries to get something for nothing has existed since the dawn of civilization, and as far as I can see he will always exist. Something ought to be done with the man who makes it possible for the other fellow to work the "skin game". If the state is to be made the guardian of the fraud, as Chenot suggests, then the state should take care of the credulous as well. It would appear to me that they both are in need of some kind of a guardian.

Sincerely yours,

J. J. Sanders

ON. R. B. SIMS,
Superintendent and President
DR. W. G. RANDALL,
Prison Physician
HON. J. J. SANDERS,
Parole Clerk

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HON. J. C. CALLAGHAN,
State Auditor

Florence, Arizona

June 8th, 1914.

Hon. G. W. P. Hunt,

Phoenix, Arizona.

Dear Governor:-

I am enclosing another letter from our friend (?) Mr. Chenot. When you have drank its contents return it to me. Here is a controversy of a fool over a knave. Chenot seems to think Myers too dangerous a criminal to be at large. A fool is a greater menace to society at any time than any criminal has ever been, and I think Chenot belongs in the fool class. Anyhow, in Western parlance, he is not a "dead game sport", or he would take the invention up where Myers left off and make of it a commercial success. Lack of faith is the breeding ground of suckers.

They may say that Myer's electrical device is a fake all they want to. It is not a fake as far as he went with it. He had more to begin with in an electrical invention than had Watt with his steam kettle for a steam engine. Had not Miss Barnard filled Myers with mistrust of everything in human shape. he would have gone ahead and tried to make of this device a success. He was working nicely on the device until his soul was crammed with distrust, then after that neither I nor Mr. Sims could get him to work any more on it.

Myers is gifted with great powers of concentration, and as his mind takes to invention like a duck to water, encouragement is all that is needed to aid him to bring out some invention of great use to man.

Something can always be done with the criminal, but the great God Almighty can find no useful thing for a fool to do. It is our fool friends we must lookout for and not our crafty ones.

Sincerely yours,

W. G. Randall

HON. R. B. SIMS,
Superintendent and President

DR. W. G. RANDALL,
Prison Physician

HON. J. J. SANDERS,
Parole Clerk

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Atty. General

HON. J. C. CALLAGHAN,
State Auditor

Florence, Arizona

June 11th, 1914.

Hon. G. W. P. Hunt,

Phoenix, Arizona.

Dear Governor:

I am enclosing a copy of the letter I have written Mr. Chenot in reply to the one he wrote me about Roy J. Myer. If those fellows who have been throwing their coin at Myer's feet to get in on the device would show the same energy in aiding him to perfect it, then something new in an electrical device would be forthcoming. The field of invention in the electrical world presents infinite possibilities to the man who can concentrate his mind on mechanical things.

Sincerely yours,

J. J. Sanders

Parole Clerk.