THE EARLY YEARS

GILMORE CAR MUSEUM

is a truly remarkable experience in automotive history
waiting to be discovered—by you!

Nestled on its 96-acre park-like setting only a short country
drive north of Kalamazoo, you’ll encounter nearly 200
extravagant vehicles spanning more than 100 years of automotive heritage
showcased in restored historic barns. Here you’ll find exhibits ranging from
an 1899 Locomobile to the classic Duesenberg, the elusive 1948 Tucker, and the
muscle cars of the 1960s. The exhibit “Kalamazoo—The Other Motor City” features the largest collection of Kalamazoo-built cars in the county, including examples of Burley, Checker, Roamer, Handley-Knight and Michigan autos dating from 1903 through the early 1980s. Besides the towering 19th century barns, visitors will find a re-created small town train depot, a replica 1930s gas station and a restored 1941 Blue Moon diner with an era appropriate lunch menu.

Open May 1 – October 31, every day 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WE TRY AGAIN

KALAMAZOO VALLEY MUSEUM

is a nationally accredited participatory museum of history, science and technology that features two exhibition galleries, the latest planetarium technology with the Digistar 4 Laser projection system, simulated space missions in the Challenger Learning Center, museum-like experiences for pre-schoolers, science and history galleries, and the Mary Jane Stryker Theater that hosts concerts, movies and documentaries. The downtown Kalamazoo museum showcases three nationally touring exhibitions each calendar year and offers weekends full of hands-on activities for families.

Free General Admission. Open Monday — Thursday and Saturday 8 a.m. — 5 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. — 8 p.m., closed 1-5 p.m. Closed Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

(269) 373-7990 • www.kalamazoomuseum.org
1. KALAMAZOO'S FIRST CAR
Northeast corner of Water St. & N. Rose Street.
The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is located at 230 N. Rose Street, the same dirt road down which Jay B. Rhodes drove his steam wagon in 1880, making his invention the first self-propelled vehicle in Kalamazoo. To the south, at 112 N. Rose, stood the Blood brothers' bicycle shop. There, in June 1902, they built the first gasoline-powered horseless carriage to be manufactured in the city. The Bloods sold over 150 vehicles six months before Henry Ford sold his first Model A in July 1903.

2. KALAMAZOO CARRIAGES
Northwest corner of Water St. & S. Rose Street.
Across the street, the stately building at 207 S. Rose Street housed Cash & Supply, manufacturers of 150 different horse-drawn vehicles from 1880 until the early 1900s. The site was purchased by the United States government in 1913, serving as an inter-urban station.

3. LELAND GOODSPRED'S RESIDENCE
From Water St. to Rose St. S. mile to the stop light at Kalamazoo Ave. and turn left and move to the right lane, driving west .6 mile to 921 W. Kalamazoo Ave.
This duplex is the former residence of Leland Goodspeed who set the 1921 world speed record of 194.5 mph driving a Roamer on a Racine-Dusseldorf engine on the sands of Daytona Beach. Goodspeed also served as the head coach of the University of Dayton football team.

4. 5. JAY RHODES RESIDENCE & FACTORY
FIREHOUSE # 9
From the Goodspeed property, drive .1 mile and turn right on Stuart Ave. Drive, 1 mile to stop sign at North St. and turn left. Drive .3 mile to Douglas Ave.
The former Jay Rhodes factory stands on the s.e. corner of North and Douglas Streets and still carries “Rhodes” — 1913 — at the top. Rhodes made a fortune by patenting an oil dispensing bottle. The house at 812 Douglas Ave., where he lived until his death in 1931 at the age of 66, is the first building you turn to the corner. A fire truck built on a Kalamazoo truck chassis was assigned to Firehouse #5 in 1920. It’s located across the street on the s.w. corner of North and Douglas. (The factory where the Kalamazoo truck was built serves at the present site of Reed Blvd. & Field St.)

7. FULLER RESIDENCE
Turn left, driving south on Douglas Ave., staying in left lane. After crossing North St., the house at 227 Douglas Ave., on the n.w. corner of Douglas and West Main, is the former residence of Charles D. Fuller, president of Fuller Manufacturing. This company furnished for excellent transmissions, eventually became Eaton Transmission and is now located off I-94 at the Climax exit.

8. GAZETTE RELIABILITY TOUR
Turn left, staying in left lane, and driving east on West Main St., 1.2 mile to left on Woodward Ave.
This corner was the site of the accident with the 1920 Michigan automobile during the reliability tour from Kalamazoo to South Haven, sponsored by the Kalamazoo Gazette. George Shaker, the driver of the Caille-Bisson Piano Co. was the independent judge who was thrown from the car and killed when the vehicle skidded on the wet trolley tracks. This corner borders the Stuart Historic District.

9. BLOOD FAMILY HOME
Continue north on Woodland Ave. and driving 2 mile to 435 Woodland Ave. (on the left).
Maude Blood, head of the Blood family and founder of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Co., who, at the time of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Shop. There, in June 1902, they built the first gasoline-powered horseless carriage to be manufactured in the city. The Bloods sold over 150 vehicles six months before Henry Ford sold his first Model A in July 1903.

10. THE BLOOD FACTORY
Continue north on Woodland, less than .1 mile and turn right on Elmwood Drive. Short block and turn left on Elm St., then .1 mile to Roswell. Turn right, driving .3 mile to the Blood factory at 635 W. Roswell St., (Sador Building Supply).
Here was built the Cornelian light car and the Cornelian racing car that competed at Recreation Park. (now the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds on Lake St.) on September 26, 1914.
The Cornelian raced at Indianapolis in May 1915 with Louis Chevrolet at the wheel.

11. RAILWAY STATION
Continue driving east, 3 mile, turn right (south) on Rose Street, crossing the railroad tracks to the light at Kalamazoo Ave.
Note the Michigan Central railroad station to the left and the brick building on the right that was in place in October 1913 when Victor & Mary Palmer attempted to escape to New York to avoid the bankruptcy hearings of Michigan Buggy Palmer, secretary/treasurer of the company and was sent to Lanesworth prison in June 1914 for using the mails to defraud the banks.

12. THE LANE CASTLE
Turn right on Kalamazoo Ave. and move to left lane, driving west .2 mile to the light at Westwood Ave. Turn left, driving south .3 mile on Westwood to W. Michigan Ave.
Henry Lane, president of the Michigan Buggy Company, built a $73,000 mansion on the s.e. corner of Westwood and Michigan Ave. around 1900. It was demolished in the 1990s.

13. 14. 15. PALMER, LAY, & HANDLEY RESIDENCES
Stay in the right hand lane and continue south .2 mile, passing the former site of Victor Palmer’s residence at 320 S. Main (Westwood St.). At Lowell St., turn right, driving .1 mile to Oak St., passing what remains of Frank Lay Jr.’s home on the right at 611 W. Lovell. Turn right on Oak St., driving .2 mile to stop signs at South St.
The home at 617 South St. (s.e. corner of Oak and South) is the former residence of John Handley, owner of the Handley-Knight automobile company. He arrived in Kalamazoo in 1920 to build his Knight-powered car, but sold the factory in 1923 to Morris Markin of Checker Car Manufacturing. Handley committed suicide on a train in Texas in 1931, presumably because of financial failure due to the Great Depression.

16. 17. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHLISTS—UPJOHN & LAY
Drive .1 mile east on South Street back to Westtown.
Turn left at the corner. The William Upjohn mansion (186) is at 530 W. South St., on the left. The Frank Lay mansion (177) is at 523 W. South St., on the right. Upjohn was the first “automobilist” in Kalamazoo and the first to use a “horseless carriage” for business ventures. Frank Lay moved into the home at 520 W. South St. in 1909 and was president of the Michigan Buggy Company in 1913 when the company was forced into bankruptcy.

18. THE KALAMAZOO TELEGRAPH PRESS
Cross Westwood Ave. and continue driving east .2 mile on South Street. Crossing Park Street, Bronson Park is on the left. Cross Rose St. and continue driving east, .2 mile to the next light.
The left corner at 114 South St. (now the Miller Castle building) was the former site of the Kalamazoo Evening Press, as well as the Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph, once owned by Victor Palmer and Henry Lane. The two papers were combined into the Kalamazoo Telegraph Press in 1912. With Edward Douglass as editor, it was at the center of the bankruptcy hearings and scandal surrounding Michigan Buggy in 1913 and 1914.

19. DEALERSHIP
Continue on South to the light at Bardick (current Kalamazoo Mall), the home at 617 South St. (s.e. corner of Oak and South) is the former residence of John Handley, owner of the Handley-Knight automobile company. He arrived in Kalamazoo in 1920 to build his Knight-powered car, but sold the factory in 1923 to Morris Markin of Checker Car Manufacturing. Handley committed suicide on a train in Texas in 1931, presumably because of financial failure due to the Great Depression.

20. 21. BURTT & BLOOD FACTORIES
Continue south, curving left to the east and through the light at Partridge St. 2 mile to Edward Street. Turn left, drive north through the light at W. Michigan Ave., 1 mile to the block on the right.
This series of buildings is believed to have housed the early Blood brother’s machine company factory, at 114 S. Edwards and the Burt factory, at 124 – 130 N. Edwards, where the Cannon was built.

22. 23. 24. FULLER, HANDLEY-KNIGHT & CHECKER
Continue north on Edwards. 2 mile. Cross Kalamazoo Ave. and Pitzer, then turn right on Ransom. Go east .2 mile to Porter St. (Note: sign is behind white building.) Turn left, driving .7 mile to the north light. The road jogs to the left and becomes Pitzer St. Continue north on Pitzer.
The Fuller plant stood .2 mile from Pitzer, on the s.e. corner of Porter and Proust. At this writing, the Handley-Knight and Checker plants survive. 4 mile further, at 1800 N. Pitzer. The long building on the east side of Pitzer is the former Handley-Knight plant, sold to Checker in 1923, with additions designed by architect Albert Kahn in 1930. The plant was sold in June 1990, and part of it razed, as its future is unknown.

25. MERRIS MARKIN HOME
Continue driving north on Pitzer, 4 mile from Checker factory to the stop sign at Beulah. Turn left, and drive west .5 mile to the stop light at Westtown. Turn right on Westtown and drive north .3 mile to Markin home at 5335 on the left (north) side. The Markin Markin home was designed by Ray Detrich, the famous automobile designer. Markin Glen Park is built on land to the east that once belonged to Markin.

26. A SCENIC TOUR TO THE GILMORE CAR MUSEUM
Continue north 2.6 mile on Westwood to the stop at D Ave. Turn right on D, driving east 1.9 miles to the blinker at Riverview Dr. Turn left on Riverview, driving north .2 miles to B Ave. Turn right on B, driving east 1.5 mile to the stop at 26th St. Cross 24th St. and continue east on R, 1.2 mile to the stop at N-89. Turn right on N-89 EAST driving 3 miles to the stop at M-43. (Note the old inter-urban railroad beds for trains serving the Gal Lake Park area in the early 1900s.) Turn left at the stop at M-43. Drive north to M-43 EAST around Gal Lake, then 4.6 mile to Hickory Rd. and the Gilmore Museum. As you drive M-43, bear right at the first T intersection, and then bear left at the second T intersection just past the public access to the lake. The large red barns are on the right as you approach Chikery Rd. Turn right at Chickery Rd, the museum entrance is on your right.