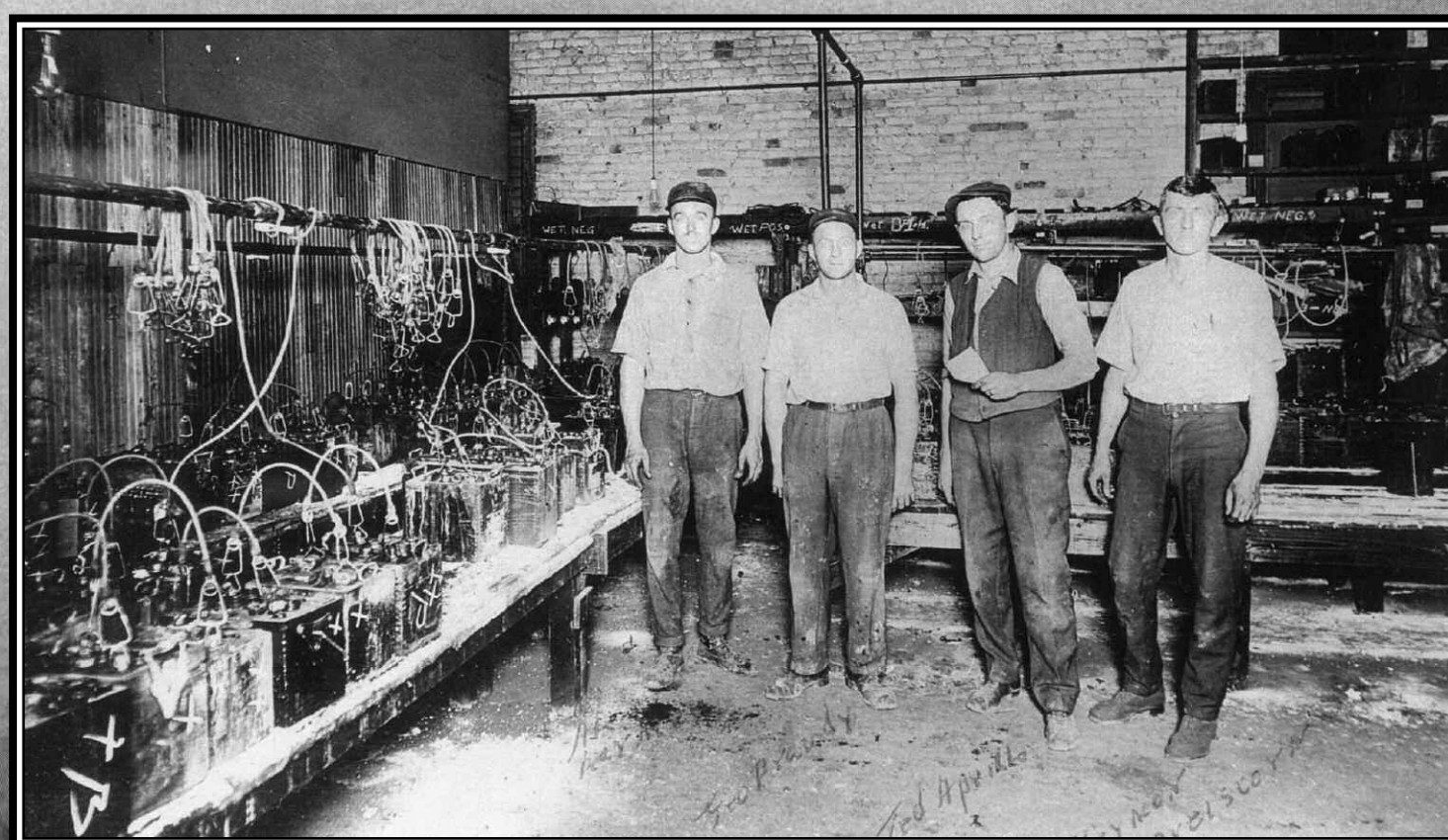


**A & L BATTERY SERVICE, 106 SOUTH FIRST STREET, CA. 1927**



THEOPHIL APRILL (SECOND FROM RIGHT) AND ALBERT LARMEE (LEFT) STAND BESIDE RECHARGING BATTERIES IN THEIR SOUTH FIRST SHOP. THE BUSINESS GRADUALLY MOVED TO 529 SOUTH MAIN. UNDER THEOPHIL'S SON TED, A&L BECAME ONE OF THE LARGEST AUTO PARTS DISTRIBUTORS IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN.



**FROM HORSES TO CARS:  
EARLY AUTOS, SERVICE, AND PARTS**

**B**y 1925, when Theophil Aprill joined with Albert Larmee to found Ann Arbor Exide Battery Service, this neighborhood was already a center for automobile sales, garages, parts, and service—much of it owned and staffed by German Americans. It was a natural transformation from carriage works, blacksmiths, and livery.

The first auto was offered in 1900 at Staebler's bicycle store across West Washington from here. By 1925 you could buy a Dodge at Alber's—a former livery at 206 West Huron—or, within a block,

a Pontiac, Maxwell, Chrysler, Hudson, Essex, Reo, Oakland, or Franklin. Trucks, as well as cars, were sold at Ann Arbor Buick on Ashley and Huron.

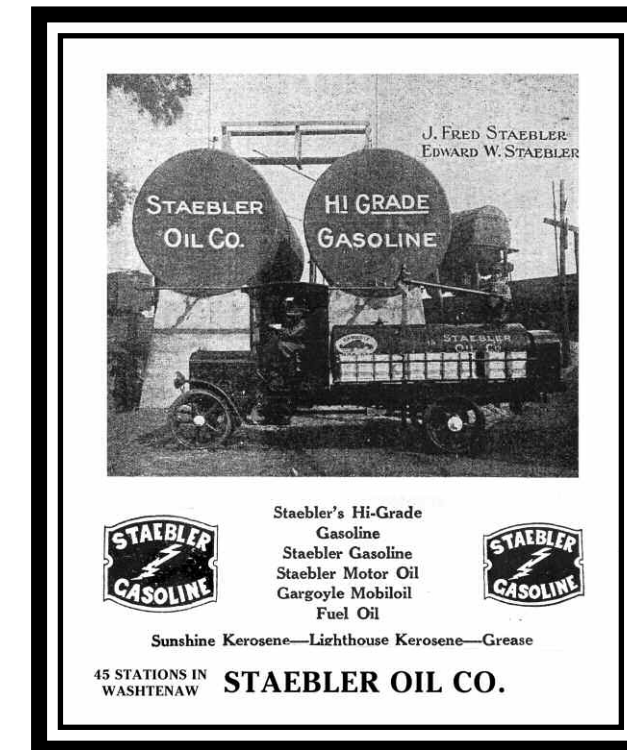
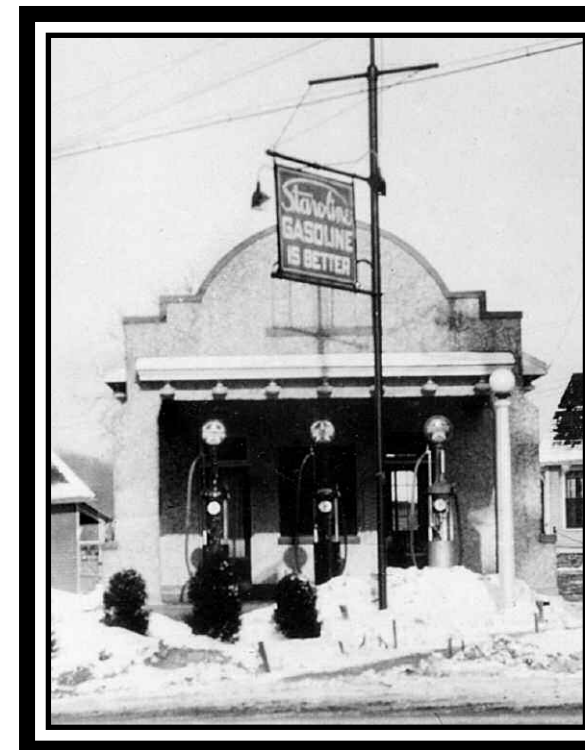
Between 1916 and 1925, Motor Products Corp. manufactured windshields in both the former Allmendinger Organ Works and the former Krause Tannery. King-Seeley took over the tannery in 1925 to produce the nation's first dash-mounted gas gauges. American Broach, manufacturing auto-machining parts, replaced Schlemmer's Fluff Rug factory next to the railroad on West Huron.

ON WEST WASHINGTON AND SOUTH FIRST, BETHLEHEM, THE OLDEST GERMAN CHURCH IN TOWN, WAS FIRST CONVERTED TO A STABLE AND THEN A GARAGE FOR THE HORSES, WAGONS, AND DELIVERY TRUCKS OF MACK & CO. DEPARTMENT STORE. THE SITE LATER BECAME PART OF BROWN'S CHEVROLET DEALERSHIP.



IN 1918 THE TOWN'S FIRST OFF-STREET GAS STATION OPENED, REPLACING CURB-SIDE PUMPS LIKE THE ONE IN BACK OF FRED STAEBLER'S GROCERY STORE ON SOUTH ASHLEY, A FEW FEET LEFT OF HERE. TEN YEARS LATER THERE WERE 35 GAS STATIONS IN ANN ARBOR, 29 OF THEM DOWNTOWN, INCLUDING HUNTER'S (RIGHT) AT WEST HURON AND NORTH FIRST.

CITY OFFICIALS ORDERED HORSE HITCHING POSTS REMOVED FROM THE MAIN STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT IN 1922 AND THE LAST HORSE DRAWN CAB QUIT IN 1924. AUTOS NOW DOMINATED THE ROADS.



SPONSORED BY THE THEOPHIL APRILL FAMILY

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