

## **CARS, PEOPLE AND ROAD SIGNS**

**Rendered by *Oleksandra Kravchenko, April 2018***

***Self-edited***

On January 29, 1885, the German engineer Karl Benz received a patent for the world's first car with a gasoline engine. From that day on, a new automobile era began on Earth.

Of course, Karl Benz is not the undisputed and sole inventor of the car. Simultaneously with him a lot of talented people worked in this field more or less successfully. What is more, the history of the creation of this vehicle started much earlier. It is believed that the idea of inventing a primitive car with a steam engine belongs to the Greek mathematician Heron Alexandria, who lived in the first century of our era. Heron even managed to build the first steam turret (siege tower). Nevertheless, if you research deeper, the ancient inventor of the wheel, without knowing it, laid the foundation for the development of the future automotive industry.

### **"The miracle of technology" in Kherson**

Thanks to newspapers it is possible to determine exactly when Kherson`s people saw the first car. In the summer of 1901, the local newspaper "The Yug" reported, *"Yesterday three travellers came to Kherson from Nikolaev by car: the owner of the car Leontovich, the mechanic of the Kudel factory in Aachen, from where the car was brought, Varfolomeyev, and the mechanic of the Zorn warehouse in Odessa Baisart. They passed the distance from Nikolaev to Kherson within 3 hours without a stop-off. However, on the road, the travellers added water into the boiler. The price of the car is about 3,000 rubles."*

The number of cars grew. Every arrival of a never-before-seen vehicle was a real sensation for the citizens. Local boys ran after every smoking and sniffing "tanabile" with joyful shouts. Even respectable city men and extremely curious ladies poured out into the streets upon hearing a sound of the motor and the jingle of its metal parts on the badly paved Kherson streets.

Volokhin, Linke, Skarlato, Falz-Fein, Sokolov and others were people "not poor" and well-known to Kherson`s citizens, and they became the first owners of the newest vehicles. In 1908 three dozen cars drove around Kherson. By that time, by not following any rules (because there used to be none) cars began to annoy the pedestrians. A little later a car ran over a boy in Pochtovaya Street.

New transport created problems for horse-cab drivers, too. Horses were frightened and rushed away, mutilating those who happened to be in the way. Therefore the Council started formulating traffic rules. These rules were adopted by the provincial territorial meeting and approved by Kherson`s Governor on January 9, 1909. According to these rules, in case of encounter with a carriage, the speed of the car had to be lowered to the minimum. Driving a car weighing more than three hundred poods (4914 kilograms) along territorial highways and bridges was prohibited. Each driver had to carry around "The certificate of weight" which he was obliged to show on bridges. District justices were allowed to prohibit the passage of vehicles in case of heavy rains or the spring and winter periods when roads were impassable. There was a special rule on passing along floating bridges which became a stumbling block for all motorists. It stated that on them cars had to "be carried cold" – that is with the engine switched-off! It was necessary for the disciplined drivers to go to neighboring villages for help, and the enterprising peasants as well as horse owners soon raised the prices for transportation of a car to 10 rubles. It was a very decent sum of money for those times.

*Based on "Херсонские истории, предания и были". Author: Виктор Хмель.*

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