

The **PROFESSIONAL** *CAR*



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COVER PHOTO – It's been a long time – well over a decade, in fact – since we last featured *horse-drawn* professional vehicles in this publication. A perusal of the current PCS Membership Roster shows quite a few horse-drawn hearses owned by our members. Although *The Professional Car* is primarily a specialty car club publication, it's also a "journal of record" – a repository of historical information about professional cars, and the people and companies that made them. Before the motor hearse chugged onto the scene just over a century ago dozens of companies were making horse-drawn hearses, ambulances, casket wagons, undertaker's buggies and pall-bearer's coaches. The principal feature in this issue is a chronology of the evolution of the horse-drawn hearse by noted funeral car historian Thomas A. McPherson. Tom also contributed our secondary feature – a rare photographic tour of the Crane & Breed hearse factory in Cincinnati 99 years ago, in 1912.

The beautifully restored horse-drawn ambulance on our cover is owned by the County of Lambton, Ontario. Built by the *Petrolia Wagon Company* in 1908 it saw service in the small town of the same name (site of the first oil well drilled in North America) and has never left the area. The restoration was done by Skip Izon, a master boatbuilder, two years ago. Lambton County Cultural Services Manager Robert Tremain stands beside the vehicle while Valerie Catlos holds the reins of Regal, the horse that is pulling it. We're extremely grateful to Lambton County EMS Manager Jeff Brooks for this wonderful portrait.

CENTERSTRETCH – The *Rock Falls Manufacturing Co.* of Rock Falls, Illinois was one of America's premier makers of horse-drawn hearses and ambulances. Tom McPherson came up with this 1905 Rock Falls ad promoting the company's diverse product line. The ad shows an undertaker's buggy, ambulance, casket wagon and hearse.

BACK COVER – Taken in the late 1890s, this is the only photo we've ever seen that shows a *separate* horse-drawn vehicle being used to carry the funeral flowers. The open-top casket/flower wagon and the hearse following it were owned by Morrice, Michigan undertaker C.W. Jennings. Our own Brady Smith came across this historic gem a few years ago.