



S&S VICTORIA DRIVEAWAY, 1953

NUMBER 101 THIRD QUARTER 2001

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FACTORIES GONE?

THE PROFESSIONAL CAR

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ON OUR COVER - The principal feature in this issue is a photo tour of some of the old factories which were once home to the American funeral coach and ambulance industry. A surprising number of these old plants and office buildings are still standing today, decades after the once well-known companies that built and operated them went out of business. Most of these former hearse and ambulance factories were located in Ohio.

The Hess & Eisenhardt Company was the successor to the Sayers & Scovill Company of Cincinnati, O. Hess & Eisenhardt moved from downtown Cincinnati into a large, new plant on Blue Ash Road in the suburb of Rossmoyne just after the Second World War. The new H&E plant boasted a spacious front lawn on which the company often photographed its products. That lawn, incidentally, was where we parked our cars during the very first Professional Car Society National Meet which was held in Cincinnati in 1977. Our cover photo shows a fleet of six factory-fresh 1953 S&S Cadillac Victoria Landau funeral coaches ready for delivery to the Pierce Brothers Mortuary of Los Angeles. Shortly after this photo was taken, the hearses headed for the west coast. This photo courtesy of Thomas A. McPherson.

INSIDE BACK COVER - This is what the Rock Falls Mfg. Co. plant complex in Rock Falls, Illinois looked like in 1913. The building on the left is the Rock Falls casket manufacturing plant. The one on the right is the separate facility where Rock Falls horse-drawn hearses, ambulances, casket wagons and first-call buggies were made. Within a year, Rock Falls began production of its first motor-driven vehicles.

BACK COVER - The Superior Coach Corporation open a second plant, in Kosciusko, Mississippi in the early 1950s. This is where all Superior Pontiacs were built from 1953 to 1975. The Southern Division plant also built school buses. Our back cover photo shows a new 1959 Superior Pontiac Landulet Funeral Coach idling in front of the Southern Division plant offices awaiting delivery to its purchaser, the Sinnots Funeral Home. Note the blanked out rear quarter windows.