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Portland, Oregon.

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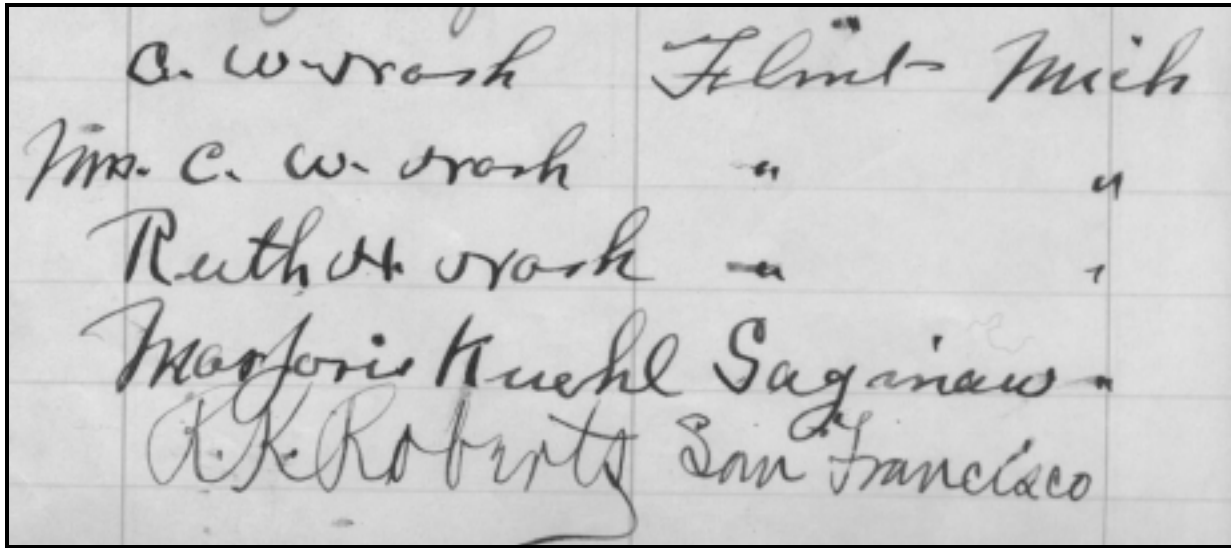
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CHARLES W. NASH

R16-130

Signed in Guestbook: March 5, 1916



Party entry above:

- C. W. Nash.....Flint, Michigan
- Mrs. C. W. Nash.....Flint, Michigan
- Ruth H (sp?) Nash....Flint, Michigan
- R K Roberts.....San Francisco

Charles W. Nash Vitae:

Profession: Automaker

Born: January 28, 1864/DeKalb county, Ill.
Died: June 6, 1948/Beverly Hills, Ca. (age 84)

Age at Chalet: 52 years



Three Chalet guests: Charles W. Nash (far left with mustache), listens intently to a conversation between Henry Ford and cigar-smoking Barney Oldfield.

**DETAILED STUDY OF NASH ENTRY.....>>
FOLLOWING PAGES**

DETAILS / CHARLES W. NASH ENTRY

Workaholic in Oregon

What was Charles Nash doing in Oregon? One guess is that he was simply vacationing, although it is reported that Nash was a workaholic and didn't take a vacation from 1916-1925. Referring to the Guestbook entries above, we find that Mrs. Nash is Jessie Halleck, who Charles married in 1884. Ruth H. Nash is likely a daughter.

Charles W. Nash is a classic Horatio Alger story; not an uncommon theme that might be used in association with numerous other Chalet guests such as Henry Ford, F. W. Woolworth and Marshall Field. Nash was abandoned by his parents at age six and indentured to a Michigan farmer. He variously worked as a farmer, carpenter, wool raiser, hay cutter, grocery store clerk and seat cushion stuffer. His formal education ended at the 6th grade and he later purchased his own books to teach himself to read and write.

In later years, as an automaker, he was paradoxical: sometimes a benevolent patriarch but most often a tyrannical dictator. One story is told of him being called to his assembly line, which had been turned off due to an injury. When he arrived at the site, he found a worker with a hand bleeding profusely. Three bloody fingers were seen lying on the floor. The foreman explained that the other workers were upset about the accident. *"Brush them off and keep going"*, Nash ordered, and he turned the assembly line back on.

The self-reliant Nash was completely unsympathetic to the rise of organized labor. He said that his low wages - the lowest in the industry - and unsafe working conditions were simply part of making a profit. Without profit, there would be no jobs. If a worker was unhappy, he should quit and find another job. *"Before I'll recognize a union, I'll close the plant and throw the keys in Lake Michigan"*, he said in 1930. He was opposed to the New Deal policies of FDR, which were eroding the power of capitalists such as himself. Nash once shared his business philosophy, and we may assume that it played a significant role in his success: *"Avoid debt, resist hasty expansion, go slowly and carefully, and most of all be the boss."*

Other

- Nash began his transition into the auto industry in the 1890's, when he was hired as a cushion stuffer at the Flint Road Cart Company owned by William Durant. In 1895 he became manager of the Durant-Dort Carriage Company. In 1910 he took over the floundering Buick Motor Car Company, reorganized it and made it successful. In 1912 he became president of General Motors and lifted it from bankruptcy to success. He then left GM to buy out the Thomas B. Jeffery Co. plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin, producers of the Jeffery Automobile. On July 29, 1916, almost 5 months after Nash left the Chalet, he changed the name of the company, and Nash Motors was born. He remained as president until 1932 and was a board chairman until he died.
- In 1920 Charles Nash introduced the luxurious Lafayette automobile in an attempt to capture the upscale car market. Selling at about \$5,000, it met a market plagued by a depressed economy and proved a commercial failure. In 1925 he moved into the low end market with the introduction of the Ajax (\$865-995), which later was labeled the Nash Light Six - this auto did well.
- By 1928 more than 138,000 Nash automobiles had been produced and the company had made over \$20 million.

- In 1936, at age 72, Charles Nash had accumulated a personal fortune estimated at \$100 million. There is no reason to believe that his financial position had been eroded when he later retired to Beverly Hills.
- Nash automobiles ceased production in 1954, when Nash merged with Hudson to become American Motors.

Sources:

(1) *Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805-1942*, 3rd edition. Krause Publication, Iola, WI. (1996)

(2) Internet: KenoshaCounty.com