

Steer yourself to Locomobile exhibit

The Locomobile isn't a new fun bus transporting passengers to a weekend of craziness in Vegas.

It's a steam-driven automobile that can travel as quickly forward as it can in reverse. It's also the subject of a new exhibit at the Arizona Historical Society titled "Arizona's First Automobile: Dr. Fenner's New Buggy."

A steam-driven car similar to the one on exhibit was purchased by Dr. Hiram W. Fenner, a Tucson physician and prominent community leader. He paid the grand sum of \$600, plus another \$200 to have it shipped by train from back East.

It arrived in Tucson Dec. 29, 1899, and took off with a jolt and a rattle, the engine banging and steam billowing.

It did not have a steering wheel. Instead, the vehicle was maneuvered with a joystick-type device in the floor of the car.

Unfortunately, the arrival of

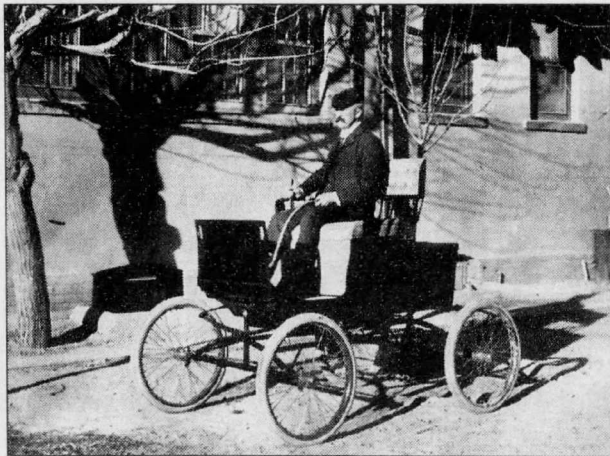


Photo courtesy of Arizona Historical Society

Dr. Hiram Fenner in his Locomobile — Tucson's first automobile — in photo taken Dec. 30, 1899, at his home on Pennington Street.

the first automobile coincided with Tucson's first traffic accident. Dr. Fenner wrapped his horseless buggy around a large saguaro during his initial spin through the Old Pueblo.

The exhibit runs 10 a.m.-4

p.m. Mondays-Saturdays and noon-4 p.m. Sundays through Jan. 28 at the Historical Society, 949 E. Second St. For more information, call 628-5774. (free)

— Kimberly Matas