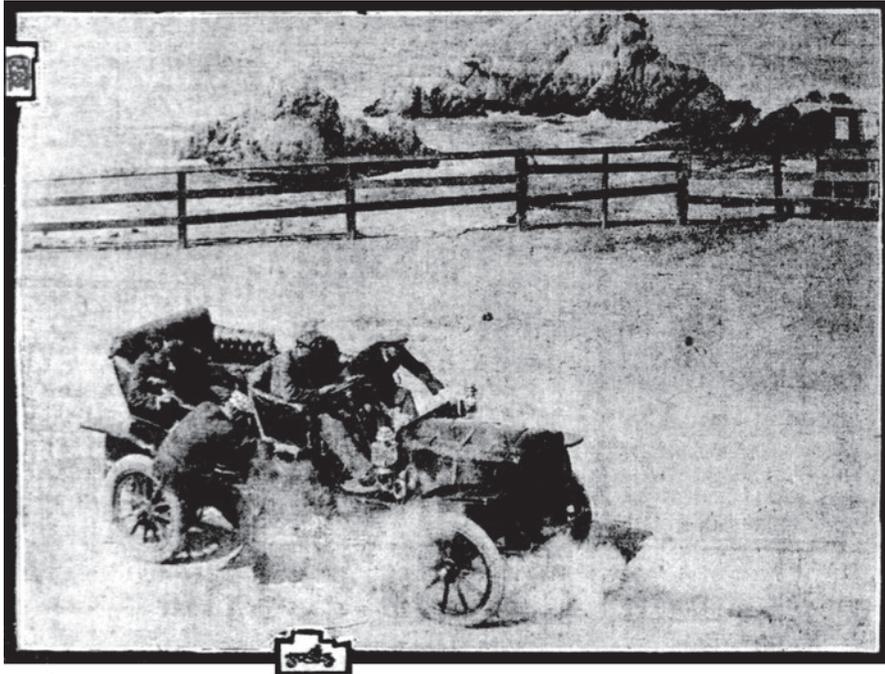


Automobiles at Lands End



In March 1900 a group of automobilists gathered at the Cliff House to create the Automobile Club of California, which later became the California State Automobile Association (CSAA).

The club was organized to promote the automobile, help drivers get to their destinations “with greater comfort, safety and convenience,” and to encourage drivers not to abuse the privileges they had been granted as motorists. J.M. Wilkins, proprietor of the Cliff House, was the club’s secretary and meetings were held on a regular basis at his establishment.



San Francisco Maritime Museum, Courtesy of Golden Gate NRA Park Archives

Top: White Steam car climbing the Cliff House grade, photo from *San Francisco Call*, 19 April 1908; *Bottom:* J.M. Wilkins driving an automobile of fellow automobilists, ca. 1900-1907.

The CSAA petitioned the Park Commission for more access throughout the city. Automobiles were allowed to drive through Golden Gate Park in 1904 and the portion of Cliff Avenue that connected to the Great Highway was opened to autos in 1907. The Cliff House was often the end point in auto runs organized by the club and continued to be the club’s monthly meeting place. The steep grade and winding curves of Cliff Avenue and the scenic views and straightaway of the Great Highway is still a draw for adventurous motorists.

As the automobile gradually became the preferred mode of transportation, Lands End made changes for its accommodation: Cliff Ave. was widened, garages were built across from the Cliff House, and the hillside was terraced and paved for parking lots.