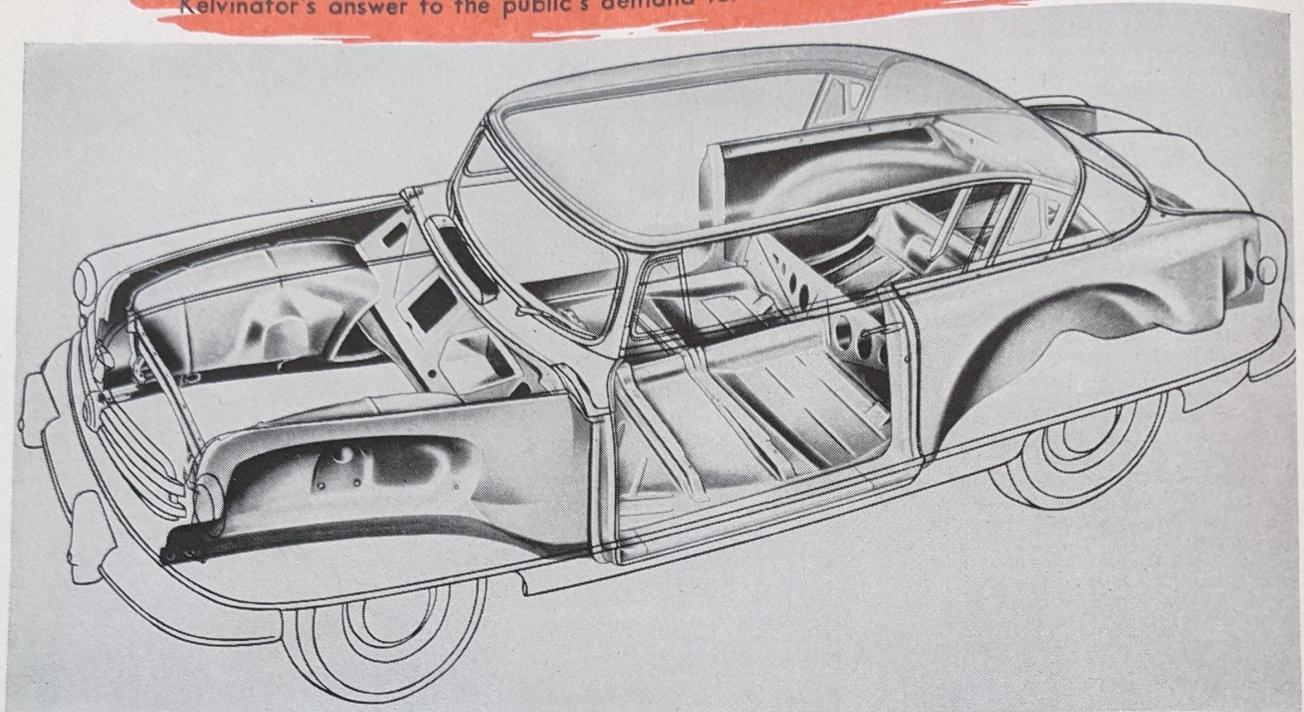


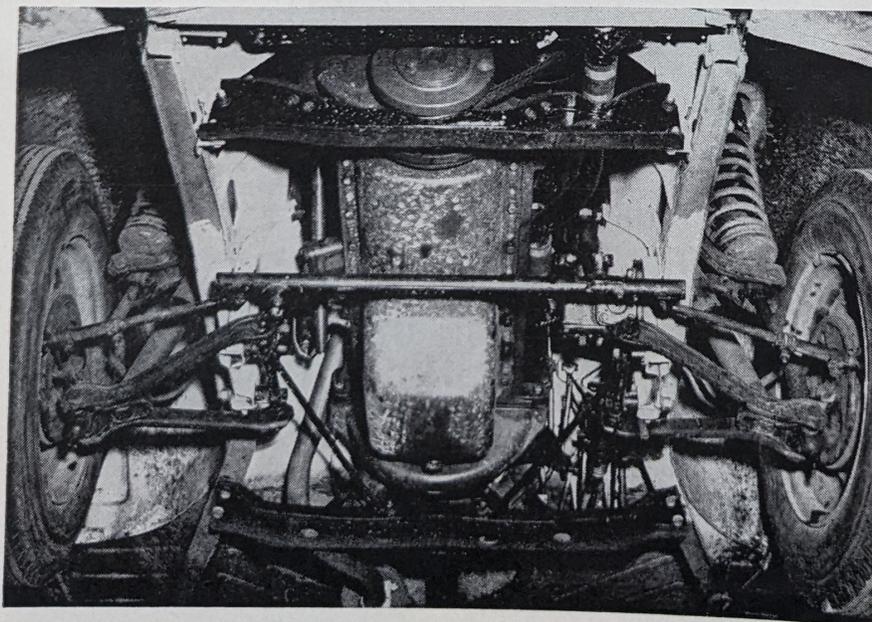
This second in a Series of SPEED AGE automobile road test reports features Nash-Kelvinator's answer to the public's demand for a small highway passenger car.



This cutaway drawing shows the Airflyte construction of the Nash Rambler Country Club Model.

NASH RAMBLER TEST

By **TED KOOPMAN**—SPEED AGE Director of Automotive Testing



This photograph of the underside of the Nash Rambler shows the suspension set-up.

ENLARGING a small car results in one that appears larger but remains fundamentally a small car; however, the small automobile scaled down from a larger one will still be a large car, regardless of dimensions.

Thus it is with the Nash Rambler. It appears to be a small car, but there the similarity ends, for in reducing the dimensions of the larger Nash models, the more desirable features were retained and added to the Rambler.

Consequently, by eliminating the disadvantages of the heavy car and incorporating none of a small car's weaknesses, the engineers developed a modified version of the deluxe automobile scaled down to meet the requirements imposed by today's congested traffic conditions.

The Rambler Country Club, or hard-top convertible, may be classified as a semi-sports car and the nearest approach to the M. G. produced in America today. The Rambler corners and accelerates nearly as well as the best M. G.

On winding roads, the Rambler will give any car a bad time and the heavy car driver who follows or stays ahead of it for 25



Cap Capwell Photo

Ted Koopman, Speed Age's director of automotive testing, gives the Nash Rambler a stiff work-out at the Norwood, Mass. Midget Speedway. Ted makes a hard turn on the gravel parking area. At this point, about 55 mph, the left front wheel started to lift.

miles on twisting roads will be exhausted in comparison with the Rambler owner. Even on long straight stretches, this aggressive youngster doesn't admit defeat and unless a car goes well over 80 MPH, the Rambler will dog his trail as though being towed.

And best of all, the Rambler does all this and averages well up to 30 MPG, while its heavier competitor will be fortunate to average 12.

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, if the larger car gives twice as much in return for twice as much gas?

The first Rambler I saw was driven by Nascar's Commissioner, Cannon Ball Baker, as a pace car for Langhorne's opening race in 1950. As I watched, I marvelled at the way the little car clung to the track as Baker pushed it through the turns, and at its exceptional speed on the front stretch.

I use the term "little" because from where I sat the car did look small and not until after the race, when I was closer to it, did I realize how wrong my impression had been. Its novel styling and generous dimensions, together with the demonstration of handling I'd witnessed, were impressive.

Since then I've seen many on the road, but had never examined one closely until Bill Haworth, Assistant Public Relations Director for Nash Motors, made a Rambler available for the SPEED AGE Test Report. As I looked it over with Bill, I wondered how my six-foot, 200-pound carcass was going to fit behind the wheel.

When I did slide into the seat, there I was, with enough room to spare to put on two suits of underwear, and ample leg room, also.

I planned to drive to the SPEED AGE office at Washington, D. C., and Bill assured me it was just the type of jaunt the Rambler revelled in. I didn't question his judgement, but I still had to be shown.

What bothered me was the idea of a 100-inch wheelbase car offering the quality ride Haworth claimed for it. Could be, I thought, and then again his enthusiasm might lend a slight bias to his predictions.

Jokingly, I said, "And you were the guy

who said I'd enjoy driving this what-cherma-call-it to Washington."

"I'm the guy," he shot back, "and I'm so sure that I'll make a slight wager—say two blondes against one brunette—that you'll not only enjoy the ride, but wish it were longer by the time you're back in Newton, Mass."

I considered a moment, but as I couldn't take my prize home if I did win, replied, "Nothing doing."

In connection with the Washington trip—in my report on the Hudson Hornet I stated a policy of withholding judgment of any car before driving it at least 1000 miles. In my opinion, attempting a complete test analysis with only a few short trial runs as a guide, is unfair to both car and driver.

An experienced driver can judge the fundamental worth of a car almost instantly; but qualifying that judgment requires sufficient continuous driving to allow the car to develop its own driver fatigue potential and determine its effect on physical and mental condition after 8 to 10 hours of steady driving.

That information, coupled with learning an automobile's individual traits, will enable a driver to write an honest and graphic report.

I'll give but a brief description of the trip to Washington which began in Newton, Mass. at 7:30 on a Friday evening and ended in front of the SPEED AGE office at 8 a.m. Saturday.

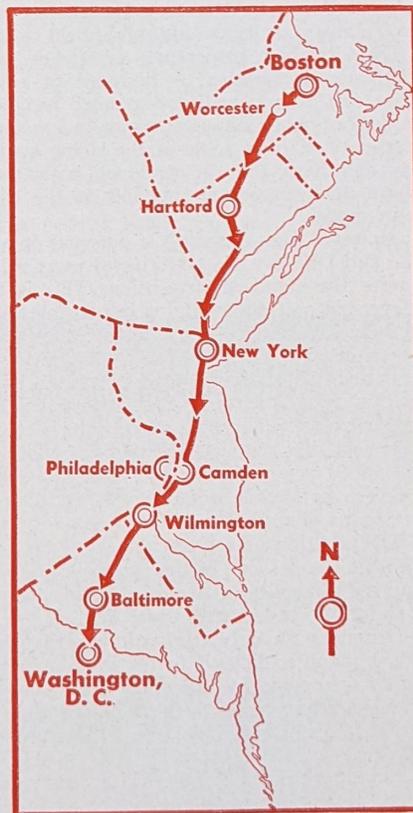
The speedometer showed only five miles when I pulled out of the Nash Motors branch in Boston and the car was redolent with that lovely but strange new car smell which grew stronger as the car warmed up as we got underway.

I kept the needle in the vicinity of 40 MPH for the first 100 miles and after leaving Hartford, Conn., stepped it up and held at 55 most of the way to New York. Running time to that point was four hours and 40 minutes, no record to be sure, but not napping either.

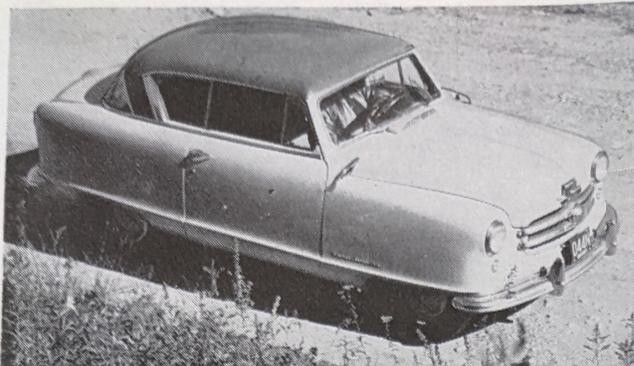
Driving through the Merritt Parkway gave me ample opportunity to acquire the feel of the car, which was pleasing under all conditions, but the overdrive, at least to my mind, is the feature that makes the automobile so successful.

Once in o.d., the car slips along smoothly without noise or vibration, much like a sailboat running before the wind; but without this gearing, the Rambler would be just another automobile.

The six-cylinder, 172-cubic inch engine, rated 82 HP at 3800 RPM, has such reserve



This map, prepared by Art Director Zang Auerbach, depicts the route taken by Ted Koopman on his seven-state 905-mile round trip road test, Boston to Washington.



Cap Capwell Photos

These pictures, made by the Speed Age photographer's high speed camera, show the Rambler making short work of hills and rough roads, as Koopman hits better than 55 miles per hour. The little car's unusual front suspension gives big car riding qualities.

power that it loafs at normal cruising speeds and owing to its high torque at low engine RPM, its snappy acceleration is bewildering.

Through the Holland Tunnel and over the Pulaski Skyway to New Brunswick, N. J., there to swing onto Route 130, a faster road to the South and the first chance I'd had to bear down and see how it handled at higher speeds. Running close to 70 MPH, the solid feeling of its steering, the rapid acceleration and effortless braking made this type of high speed traffic driving a pleasure.

We went twisting and winding through the parade of Baltimore and Washington-bound trucks, through Bordentown, Burlington and Palmyra and skimmed the outskirts of Camden, Paulsboro, Penns Grove and finally Pennsville, docking point for the New Castle Ferry—since replaced by the Delaware River Memorial Bridge.

Three hours and 125 miles. Slow, you say? Perhaps, if considered only by the miles per hour average, but it's a slow route at best and anyone making it under 3½ hours is driving every minute of the way.

The Rambler had demonstrated its ability to take hard driving and though held at 65 MPH over cobble stones, car tracks, worn out asphalt and broken concrete, it never once complained or faltered.

The suspension gives reasonably rigid cornering and good handling, yet is soft enough to absorb the greater portion of road shock, while the little that remains is dissipated in the foam rubber seat cushion.

I was in New Castle, the Delaware terminus of the new bridge, nearly an hour to eat and check the car's running gear bearings while it was on the grease lift. With no trouble apparent, I started for Baltimore.

Traffic was light on Route 40 passing through the city and although the myriad of traffic lights slowed progress, I eventually came to the Washington turn-off and the last leg of the journey.

Running on a long straight section of divided lane highway, I decided to see how fast the car would travel. In a matter of seconds the speedometer indicated 70 MPH. There was no sign of front wheel wander and no wind weave, although a certain amount of body sway was noticeable.

Then slowly but steadily to 75—the front end began to feel lighter and passing through some slight depressions, the body

rolled and galloped somewhat. Must be nearly the top, I thought, but to my surprise the needle continued to climb.

Just about the time it stopped rising, I saw what appeared to be a rough section of road in the distance and unable to gauge its roughness or be certain of the car's ability to take extreme roughness at that speed, I dropped back to 65 MPH.

The Rambler is fast—faster than the average person wants or is capable of driving on the highway, but in checking the speedometer afterwards for error, I found the actual road speed was nine miles an hour less than indicated and that is still fast enough for anyone.

The car gives that delightful feeling of pulling you along rather than the sense of continual mental pushing and shoving to get ahead. Actually it responds as though alive and delighted to be going as fast as you'd allow; as if it would sulk if held back.

The Rambler suspension, as set up for domestic distribution, is designed to give that soft riding quality demanded by the American public, though personally I would prefer to sacrifice some of the riding quality and have the car equipped with the more rigid suspension supplied on the export model.

However, that is strictly a personal opinion and I believe the majority of users will prefer the standard suspension. This is a clever piece of design and is responsible for the big car riding qualities of the 100-inch wheel-base.

I found when riding alone, however, that certain types of road irregularities had a tendency to produce a sharp jolt in the rear seat, but with one or two passengers, the added weight eliminated that action and a level comfortable ride resulted, regardless of the roughness of road surfaces.

The addition of a green tell-tale light to indicate the position of the overdrive would be very convenient as would a dimmer control for the instrument panel light.

Driving with only the parking lights in use, I found it difficult to tell if they were off or on except by reflection and if they were wired in series with the panel light switch, this uncertainty would be eliminated.

Having the dome light switch at your finger tips is one of the handiest new ideas I've seen, and is so much better than fumbling blindly around on the roof or side panel.

The foam rubber cushions in the Rambler

readily adjust themselves to the body and although a bit more height at the front edge of the seat would give better leg support, I could have easily driven another 500 miles.

As for convenience, I could fill pages with little things and big things, too, that combine to make the Rambler a most thoughtfully designed car.

The Rambler, having no tiring effect other than the normal fatigue potential, speaks well for those who designed so much comfort and performance into 100 inches of wheel-base.

The actual driving time had been nine hours and 30 minutes for the 424 miles at an average speed of 44.6 MPH. For that combination of highway and traffic I believe it is better than average for any car regardless of size, and with an average of 25.3 MPG, the car and its performance was a revelation of the possibilities latent in the modified automobile.

The return trip was uneventful and leaving Washington at 1 p.m. Sunday, I drove in a light rain all the way to New York,



Cap Capwell Photo

Ted Koopman mounts a new pressure feed fuel consumption meter, considered more accurate than the gravity feed type

with the wet roads a good test on the Rambler's ability to handle on slippery going. I travelled as fast going back on wet roads as I did coming down on dry roads, and not once was there any loss of traction, either in acceleration or in braking. I reached Newton at 9.05 Monday morning with an actual driving time of nine hours and 15 minutes and the 35 gallons of fuel I burned for 905 miles gave an average of 25.9 MPG.

Refusing to bet with Bill Haworth was a good move on my part. I'd have lost that one!

The following Wednesday, I picked up SPEED AGE Cameraman Cap Capwell and at the Motor Vehicle Research Laboratory we made dynamometer and speedometer checks and later a series of highway deceleration tests. In connection with the stopping distances shown, these are not the shortest distances in which the car can be stopped, but rather those in which it may be done with passenger comfort.

Interested in finding out how much centrifugal force the front suspension could handle, I located a smooth area in the parking lot at the Norwood, Mass. Speedway and ran some tests. The illustration shows the amount of body tilt when cornering sharply at 55 MPH and it is practically the limit. A moment after this picture was taken, the left front wheel started to lift.

That brought out another point in the Rambler's favor—the gradual lifting of the wheel rather than the characteristic of some cars of holding to the exact limit and then snapping over so rapidly nothing can be done to prevent the roll. That unusual front spring mounting has something to offer of far greater efficiency than the normal suspension, and once you become accustomed to the odd movement, it is about the best to be found on an American car.

The ability of the front suspension to absorb extreme and sudden loading without excess declination, is clearly shown in the cover picture, which was taken head on at the instant of applying the full pressure of brakes, which stopped the car in 45 feet at a speed of 50 MPH.

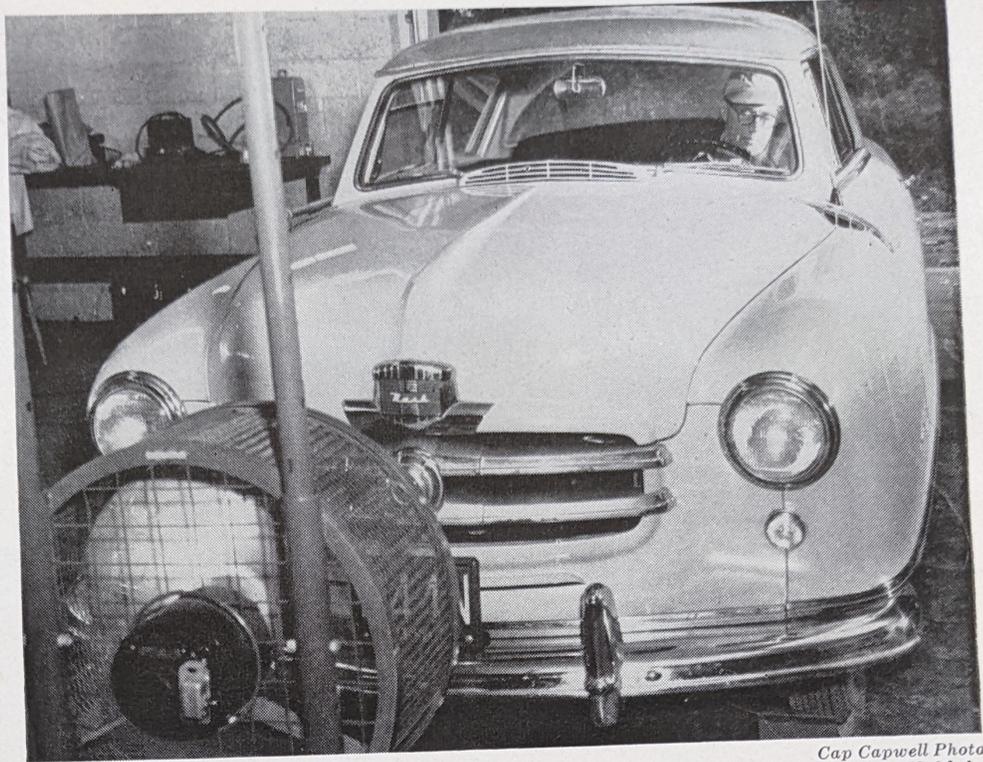
While it shows excellent braking efficiency, it cannot be anticipated under normal highway conditions and in this case was the result of an unusually high coefficient of friction in that particular surface.

In respect to wet weather driving and ignition break-down, I doused the running engine with the fine spray from the hose and at the end of three minutes continuous showering there was no skip nor the slightest hesitation.

At this point, the opinion of Mrs. Betty Bradford is interesting, for Betty is another of the Sports Car Club of America wives who is a "natural" behind the wheel of any type car.

No doubt many recall the Ladd Special, affectionately called "The Old Grey Mare", which won the Mount Washington race and had an enviable record of wins in various types of racing. Betty drove it on a flat clay track and did a grand job in winning the event. At Thompson, Conn., on the paved half-mile, she set the fastest time in her class.

She has driven from coast to coast a number of times and knows cars well enough to judge the performance of the



Cap Capwell Photo

Koopman checks speedometer error on the dynamometer rollers at the Motor Vehicle Research Laboratory. The fan at the front of the car is to keep the engine cool while it is being tested with the regular fan disconnected. Fuel tests also were run.

Rambler. From the woman's point of view, she concludes: "The first thing I noticed was the larger rim of the steering wheel and for once I didn't cramp my fingers grasping it solidly. I also like the quick acceleration and the even and smooth braking action.

"Driving a car with a curved windshield that doesn't distort one's vision is unusual and the location of the hand brake is very unusual. Even though I'm left handed, I can't find it half the time. However one would get used to its location after a time.

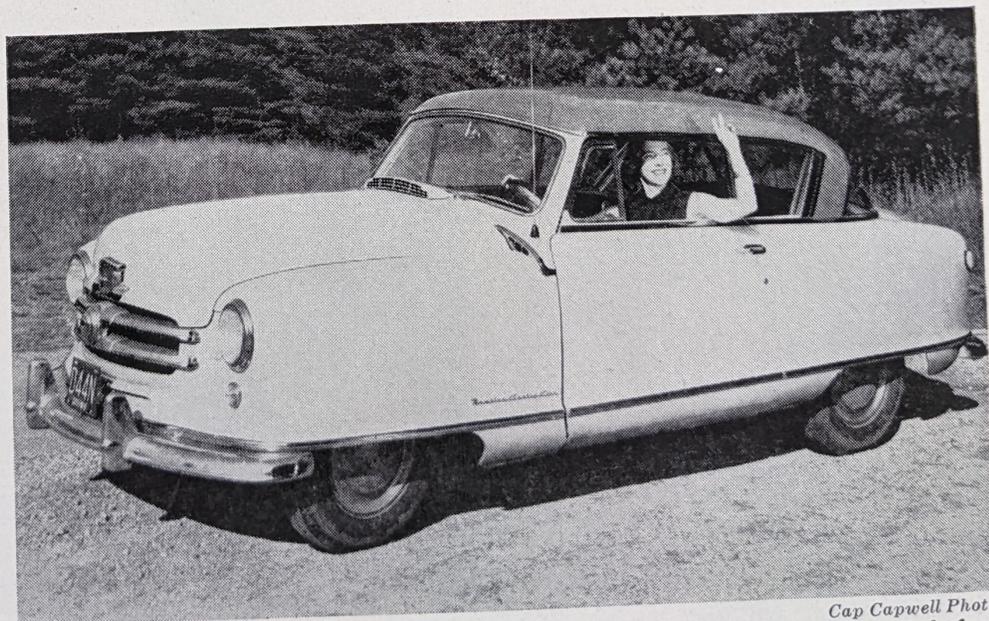
"The interior finish is very smart and the upholstery colorful and of good quality. The dash is handy and good looking, but what takes my eye is the tricky glove compartment. That's neat."

The compression ratio of the Rambler is 7.25 to 1—exceeded only by eight other cars, one of which is the Ambassador. Of that eight, only two are sixes, as is the Rambler, and two are fours. The other four are eight-cylinder jobs. Since compression ratio, especially a high one, is indicative of expected high fuel economy all else being equal, mention of this is important.

Of 15 sixes, the Rambler weighs less than all but one, the Henry J. The Rambler weight is 2430, still quite hefty.

In brake horsepower per square inch of piston area, considered a valid index of quality of engine design, the Rambler comes out to 1.78 which places it 19th in comparison with all other models and still

(Continued on page 46)



Cap Capwell Photo

Betty Bradford gives the Nash Rambler Country Club a thorough work-out before reporting her impressions of its performance as Speed Age's feminine guest tester.

NASH RAMBLER TEST

(Continued from page 17)

is not a bad position when you consider it ranks 12th among the sixes.

Along the same lines, measured in brake HP per cubic inch, which is also an index of engine efficiency and economy, the Rambler figures to .475 which places it seventh among the sixes currently on the market.

Piston travel in feet per minute, the gauge by which engine life can well be measured or predicted, gives the Rambler a 2375 FPM. Only four other sixes have a lower FPM and of all cars, the Rambler rates 11th in this respect.

Mechanically, the Rambler is a rugged,

well built automobile, as all Nash products have been for years, including the original Rambler of 1902 vintage.

The first year Thomas B. Jeffery manufactured Ramblers at his Kenosha, Wis., plant he produced 1,500 cars and was the second largest mass producer of automobiles, exceeded only by Oldsmobile.

In 1914 the car's name was changed to Jeffery and continued thus until C. W. Nash purchased the factory in 1916. A year later the new Nash was presented.

There is something about the 'new' Rambler that gets under the skin; a something that draws you to it—a 'now I'm home' feeling which gives the car a distinct personality.

Nash's radical departure from usual body design standards has become extremely controversial with strong arguments advanced both for and against their stylings.

Never having been a solid supporter of Nash body styling, when I first drove the Rambler I wasn't over-fond of its appearance. However, as does the car itself, the body design grows more attractive with familiarity and I can honestly say that I now like its looks, although I think reducing its puffiness in various spots would help.

But whether or not you approve of the Rambler design, there is no question of its excellent mechanical qualifications and our inquiry, "Is it a good car mechanically" brings an unqualified, "Yes."

From the safety angle, it is customary to consider the automobile from two standpoints—passenger safety and pedestrian safety.

The Airflyte unit, or integral construction, offers greatly increased passenger safety over the usual frame and body style of manufacture and the chances of surviving a collision will be better in the Rambler than in most larger cars, with the

station wagon standing higher in that respect than the other models. The Rambler comes in three models, station wagon, cloth top convertible and the hard top Country Club.

The omission of the center door support in all the so-called hard-top convertibles weakens the roof structure to some extent and reduces its protective ability in event of a roll over.

The comparative smoothness of the Country Club interior with its excellent instrument panel design makes it an unusually safe car to ride in and with positive door catches and flush door handles, it could be considered a standard for the industry.

The exterior is also above average from the standpoint of pedestrian injury and the elimination of the hood ornament is an intelligent advance in safety control. Again, flush door opening devices would place it on a level with the interior and the entire car might well be accepted as a standard for rating the safety level of all automobiles.

It is an extremely safe car, regardless of its size, and the designers should be congratulated for building lives-saved into the Rambler.

But despite its high rating, there are limitations and any prospective purchaser should balance his requirements against the car's ability to meet them. Obviously the Rambler isn't a practical car for a large family or the door to door salesman who would be getting in and out hundreds of times a day, but for the average salesman and home to work transportation, it has no peer.

Actually, a new terminology should be applied to cover cars of the Rambler size group. Describing it as a small or little car causes the average person to bracket it with Crosley, American Austin, Bantam or

Performance Data Nash Rambler Country Club Model

Engine Specifications

Number of cylinders.....	6
Arrangement.....	L head
Bore and stroke.....	3 7/8" x 3 3/4"
Piston displacement.....	172.6 cubic inches
Compression ratio.....	7.25 to 1
Brake horsepower.....	82 BHP at 3800 RPM
Torque.....	138 foot pounds at 1600 RPM

Chassis & Body Specifications

Wheelbase.....	100 inches
Overall length.....	176 inches
Tread, front.....	53 1/4 inches
Tread, rear.....	53 inches
Turning radius.....	18 feet, 7 inches, either way

Rate of Acceleration

0 to 30....	4.15 (first only)
0 to 60....	18.17 (1st & high)
0 to 60....	17.61 (1st-2nd-high)
20 to 50....	9.96 high
30 to 50....	8.26 high...11.85 in Overdrive
30 to 60....	14.26 high...19.29 in Overdrive
40 to 60....	10.44 high...16.78 in Overdrive

Braking and Deceleration Time

Complete Pedal stop from Pressure Distance Time	
30 MPH... 60 pounds... 34 feet... 2.44 seconds	
40 MPH... 65 pounds... 61 feet... 3.65 seconds	
50 MPH... 71 pounds... 105 feet... 4.94 seconds	
60 MPH... 77 pounds... 231 feet... 5.46 seconds	
(Driver reaction time not included)	

Fuel Consumption

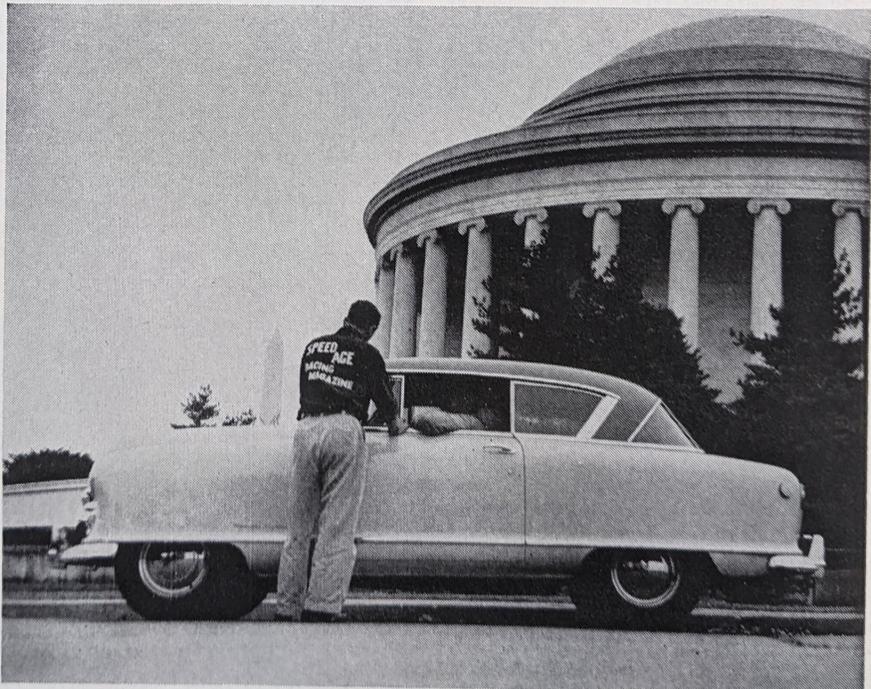
25 MPH (Regular gas).....	33.05 MPG
30 MPH.....	32.4 MPG
40 MPH.....	31.33 MPG
50 MPH.....	28.6 MPG
60 MPH.....	25.2 MPG
Heavy traffic.....	19.4 MPG
Average of 905 miles.....	25.9 MPG

Speedometer Error

Indicated	Actual
20 MPH.....	18 MPH
30 MPH.....	27 MPH
40 MPH.....	37 MPH
50 MPH.....	45 MPH
60 MPH.....	54 MPH
70 MPH.....	62 1/2 MPH

Dynamometer Readings Maximum Axle Horsepower.

2700 RPM—54 MPH—58.75 Axle HP
35 pounds pedal pressure required to release clutch



Don O'Reilly Photo

When Ted Koopman drove the Nash Rambler Country Club to the Speed Age home office in Washington, Don Grant, Speed Age Advertising Director, took him on a tour of the Capital's scenic spots for a test run. In front of the Jefferson Memorial, with the spire of the Washington Monument in the background, Grant, checks the car's performance.



Don O'Reilly Photo

Cannon Ball Baker, Nascar Commissioner, drives the Nash Rambler convertible as the pace car at a Nascar race at Langhorne, Pa. Speedway, with Miss Kate Murtah, musical comedy star and model for Tall Timber Tessie of Smilin' Jack comic strip fame.

Simca and the Rambler doesn't fall into that classification. Neither will it fit the same group with Ford, Plymouth and Chevrolet.

With quite a few cars, if foreign makes are counted, included in the 100-inch wheel base category, the Rambler joins the Henry J, A40 Austin, M.G. and 1400 Fiat, among others. What would be more logical than to create a group name for them.

In considering the economic position of the Rambler, the facts are not as favorable as might be hoped for. The car, delivering on the East Coast for approximately \$1,900, falls into direct competition with the Ford Six, Studebaker Champion, certain models of Plymouth and Chevrolet—all of which deliver at considerably less.

Even though the Rambler is fully equipped as compared to the barest of ne-

cessities in the others, it is not in an enviable competitive position, particularly when its rather high rate of depreciation is considered.

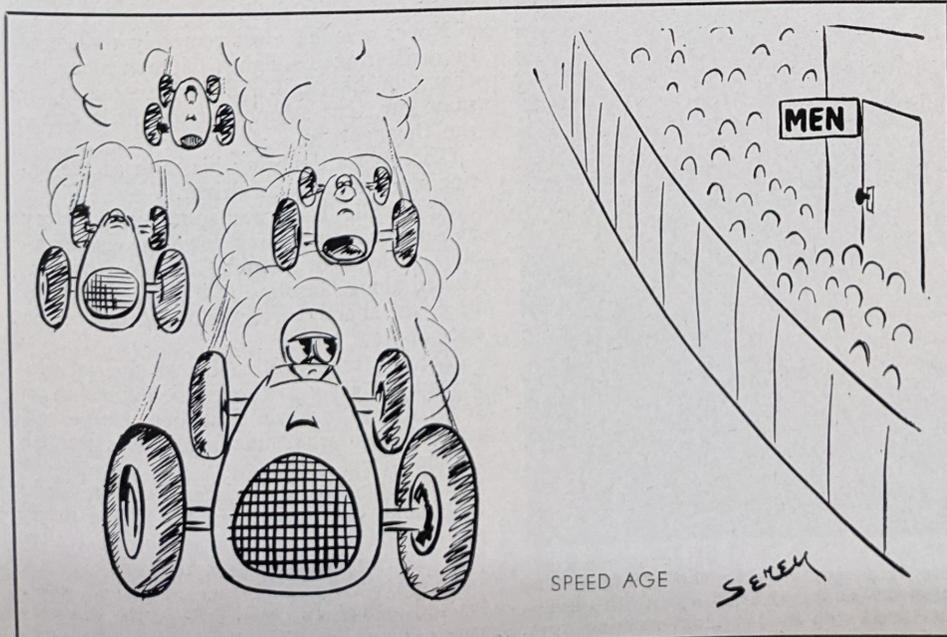
In concluding this trial of the Rambler, we might well turn back the pages of automotive history and quote from the company's early advertising which fits today's Rambler, even as it did its ancestor.

They wrote: "Picture to yourself a handsome, high-grade, beautifully finished, luxuriously easy-riding, closed car—put as much quality into the picture as you can—and you still will not be overestimating its quality and appearance.

"Yet the cost of this car complete, is extremely moderate."

In 1905 the Rambler slogan, was "Rambler—The car of steady service."

Why not for 1951 as well? ☆ ☆



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