



# Altadena Historical Society

From our Files

July 8, 2010

Transportation

Located at 2095 N Lake Avenue Altadena's **Witten Motors** was one of only a few hundred automobile dealers exclusively authorized to sell the "Car of Tomorrow."

Introduced in 1947 by Gary Davis, the futuristic 3-wheel automobile (lower right, *Library of Congress* collection) was 14 feet long, had a removable top and was wide enough to seat 4 people. Witten placed ads in the February 19, 1948 issue of the Altadena Press (top right) guaranteeing 30 mpg and a top speed of 116 mph. For only \$995 (the average cost of a car at that time was a little over \$1000) the vehicle would be delivered directly to Altadena. We don't know how many Altadenans ordered the Davis motorcar, but history tells us that none were ever delivered.

Davis employed numerous engineers and staff to design and build an assembly line at his 57,000 square foot former aircraft facility in Van Nuys. Inexperienced and under funded, Davis was unable to meet demand and built only 17 cars. In 1948 his ex-employees sued for back pay and his franchise dealers and investors filed lawsuits for fraud. Company records were seized by law enforcement and in 1950 all assets of the Davis motorcar company were sold for tax claims. Davis was convicted of fraud and spent two years in a low security prison near Castaic. After his release Davis helped design and produce the Start-O-Car – the familiar amusement park bumper car.

Witten Motors disappeared from the City Directory in 1950, replaced by Bilderback and Lesh Auto Repairs. Today it's the site of Brake Masters.

## Altadena Historical Society

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GET YOUR ORDER IN TODAY!  
FOR THE  
CAR OF TOMORROW

*Davis*

3 WHEEL  
MOTOR  
CAR

DAVIS DATA

\$995

DELIVERED HERE

LOOK AT THESE FEATURES!

- Operated 30 Miles to the Galton.
- Top Speed of 116 Miles Per Hour.
- A Full Size Automobile, 14 Feet 6 Inches Long & 4 Feet Wide.
- Comfortably Seats 4 Persons—60" Width Seat—Approximately 19" Wide Thin Steel Caps.
- Removable Top.
- 23 Cubic Feet Fuel Tank.

—OPEN EVENINGS—

**WITTEN MOTORS**

EXCLUSIVE AUTHORIZED DAVIS MOTOR CAR DEALER FOR ALTADENA  
2095 North Lake Ave., Altadena Phone SYcamore 7-2244

