CHAPTER 28

LEE TIRE & RUBBER
AND THE SMILING TIRE

John Ellwood Lee was born on November 15, 1860 in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. He was the oldest of five children from a well-to-do family and studied at Conshohocken High School, graduating in 1879. After completing his studies, he joined the surgical equipment company of William Snowden in Philadelphia. In 1882 he married Jennie W. Cleaver, the eldest daughter of the powerful and wealthy Wood family. Lee's enterprising mentality, his talent in business and access to capital caused him to leave his job in 1883 and decide to start his own company, the J. Ellwood Lee Company, also known by the acronym JELCO.

Lee began his professional journey manufacturing and assembling medical and surgical goods for hospitals—bandages, antiseptic sponges and surgical sutures, among others—in the attic of the family home that would soon become outsized by the growing demand for the company's products. In 1887, production was moved to a three-story factory built in the urban area of Conshohocken to respond to the wide range of products offered by the J. Ellwood Lee Co., many of which were based on the company's own patents. By the turn of the century, Lee's factory employed about 600 workers. In 1905, JELCO was acquired by the leading company of pharmaceutical and medical products, Johnson & Johnson. This transaction was carried out smoothly due to the good relationship between both parties, especially between Lee himself and Johnson & Johnson's founder and owner Robert W. Johnson. John Ellwood Lee continued to be linked to JELCO directing the business as Executive Vice President from the Conshohocken factory (figs. 70-71), which would maintain its productive activities as a company within Johnson & Johnson.

1. From bandages to (pneumatic) tires

Apart from the flourishing business of medical articles and taking advantage of knowledge acquired in the treatment and transformation of rubber, Lee became interested in a burgeoning activity, the manufacture of automobile tires. To initiate the business with the particularities of this technology, a specific department dedicated to research and development was created within the J. Ellwood Lee Company. In 1909, Johnson & Johnson decided to concentrate their productive activity in their facilities in New...
Brunswick. As a result, J. Elwood Lee chose to become independent and refocus the company’s future, acquiring and recovering all of the business related to the J. Ellwood Lee Company and their former factory in Conshohocken. From then on, without abandoning hospital products and other rubber products, Lee would focus his efforts on the tire industry.

The business adventure began with a reduced production of tires, which were subjected to all kinds of testing for technological improvements. In May 1910, Jelco tires equipped the car registered by J. Ellwood Lee for the third annual automobile endurance race organized by the Norristown Automobile Club. The tires provided good results and the automobile managed to finish the race without suffering mishaps, which helped to publicly endorse the tires’ quality. That same month contacts with different distributors began to arrange the commercialization of the pneumatic tires that the J. Ellwood Lee Co. factory would produce, identified as the Jelco Tire Puncture Proof Inner Case and Jelco-Atlas Puncture Proof Inner Case brands. These tires were characterized by incorporating three superimposed flexible layers of steel discs supported by vulcanized rubber in between the rubber-impregnated textile fabrics that formed the tire casing. In this way the inner tubes were protected with an ‘armor’ against punctures. In June, the Spencer & Dando facility in Philadelphia was already advertised in the press as the exclusive official Jelco tire distributor for the territories of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia.

In the following months the business continued growing, and the productive capacity of the old Conshohocken factory proved insufficient to adequately respond to the market demands. At the end of that year the first phase of construction for a new factory situated on the outskirts—about a kilometer and a half away from the original factory—was completed in the Spring Mill area, next to the Schuylkill River and parallel to the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad. The location was ideal because it combined the availability of abundant water with access to an efficient means of transport for moving raw materials to the factory and transferring the tires from there to their final destination. The industrial complex had a large concrete building consisting of four stories with floor dimensions measuring 25 x 122 m, destined to house the offices as well as the warehouse, reception and dispatching of goods. Behind this, another large brick building—with similar dimensions but two stories high—accommodated the production activity and the power plant.

In December 1910, huge luminous signs placed on the terrace and along the façade of the central building publicly advertised the launch of the new company, the Lee Tire & Rubber Company, manufacturer of rubber articles and Jelco tires. The horizontal structure, consisting of three meter high capital letters with a total length of 88 meters, was illuminated by approximately 2,800 light bulbs (figs. 11, 16 and 73).

On June 16, 1911, J. Elwood Lee formally established the Lee Tire & Rubber Company, registering it following the laws of the state of Pennsylvania with a founding capital of $ 100,000. His partners were Albert A. Garthwaite, Samuel Wright, Maurice O’B. Hallowell and Charles Ileber Clark—all four being citizens of Conshohocken—; J. W. Johnson, C. A. McCormick and F. R. Jones—all from New Brunswick, New Jersey—; and J. C. Delacom from Camden, New Jersey. The 1911 tire catalog featured the Jelco Tire Puncture Proof Inner Case tires and two types of inner tubes, the Jelco Red Tubes and Jelco Gray Tubes, each with its characteristic color.

Production at Lee’s original facilities, awaiting the start-up of the new factory equipped with modern machinery, was limited to between fifteen and twenty tires per day. Within a few months the entire manufacturing process would take place in the new Spring Mill complex, which would have a workforce
of 800 workers and an estimated production capacity of 500-600 pneumatic tires and 1,000 inner tubes per day.\textsuperscript{10} It was also time to change the brand’s name and stop using “Jelco,” as J. Elwood had been advised by his friend Henry Ford. According to the automobile industry mogul, the term jelco bore similarities to jelly [gelatin], which made it unsuitable as a brand for durable, non-skid tires. From that point on, the words “Lee of Conshohocken” were engraved on tire sidewalls which served to identify the tires manufactured by the Lee Tire & Rubber Company.\textsuperscript{11} In early 1912, Lee took control of a competing firm located in the same state, the Arrow Tire Co., which changed their name to the Leeland Tire Co. The tire brand “Leeland” would be incorporated into the Lee Tires & Rubber catalog.

At the end of the summer of 1913, Lee presented their new Lee Anti-ski pneumatic tires, with an all rubber tread that was composed of a distinctive pattern formed by longitudinal zigzagging grooves.\textsuperscript{12} In fact, the name “Zig-Zag” was the name given to the design of the tread.\textsuperscript{13} In January 1914, the company launched press advertisements about the development of a new technology that was to be applied from then on to their tires, “Vanadium” rubber. It seems that the addition of vanadium to the rubber substance after vulcanization produced a rubber product with high resistance to erosion without affecting its elasticity (fig. 30).\textsuperscript{14}

John Elwood Lee died of a heart attack on April 8, 1914, at the age of 53. Nevertheless, the company continued their successful journey under the supervision of new management under the leadership of Albert A. Garthwaite as President and, subsequently, by John J. Watson.\textsuperscript{15}

2. The next decades

The 1920-1921 crisis that affected the entire tire industry also had an impact on the Lee Tire & Rubber Co.’s sales. In January 1920, the production of the Spring Mill factory in Conshohocken was 1,500 tires daily and growth forecasts aimed to reach, by the end of that same year, 4,000-5,000 daily units.\textsuperscript{16} The reality was that, at the beginning of 1921, the Lee plant was only operating at 50% capacity, with a production of about 800 tires per day. Although in June of the same year the production reached 2,000 tires per day, it was not until April 1922 that recovery began. After three campaigns with significant discounts on prices, tire sales had increased by 42% compared to the same period in the year 1920, and by 50% with respect to 1921, whereas the sales of inner tubes had doubled.\textsuperscript{17} Among the different models offered by the company the new Lee Cord with cord technology stood out. This presented an evolved model of the Zig-Zag tread with a central ridge and triangular lateral studs in the shape of an arrowhead (figs. 36-38).

In 1922, the company had an important commercial network supported by thirteen of their own branch offices and close to sixty distributors in the main cities throughout the country, a network that increased throughout the decade (figs. 26 and 82-83).\textsuperscript{18} In 1923, Lee Tire & Rubber acquired their competitor Republic Rubber Co., a tire manufacturer based in Youngstown, Ohio which was in a financially weakened position.\textsuperscript{19} From then on, the company changed their name and was known as the Lee Rubber & Tire Corporation. Between 1942 and 1945, in times of war and restrictions, the corporation became part of the National Synthetic Rubber Corp.—a government-sponsored entity dedicated to the development of synthetic rubber—which also involved the following companies: Godall Rubber, Henitt, Inland (a branch of 3M Corporation) and Hamilton Rubber.
In 1962, the Lee Rubber & Tire Corp. passed into the hands of a group of New York investors, changing their legal name to Lee National Group. In 1964, after two years of inactivity plagued by labor problems and long worker strikes, Goodyear acquired Lee, incorporating them into their group of companies and reinstating the original name of the Lee Tire & Rubber Company. With their purchase, Goodyear acquired the industrial patents, commercial brands, original molds and the buildings, equipment and infrastructures of the Conshohocken industrial complex. After a major investment, the factory was put back on track although its life would last only fifteen more years, affected in part by the arrival of radial tire technology. The already obsolete Lee factory closed in 1980. Two years later, the production of Lee tires moved from Conshohocken to nearby Valley Forge where it remained until 1987, when it became entirely dependent on the historic Kelly-Springfield company, converted into a subsidiary of Goodyear since 1936. In the following years, Lee tires continued to be manufactured, targeting specific sectors such as heavy vehicles and the agricultural market. At the end of 2006, Goodyear announced that the production of Lee tires would cease, putting an end to almost one hundred years of the brand’s history.  

3. Finite smile

John Ellwood Lee was an enterprising and active person who was involved in every aspect of the business, from research, engineering, production, workforce relationships, marketing and even the design and printing of product labels and promotional materials. The incorporation in 1912 of the “Laughing Face” mascot created to advertise their tires also had his approval (figs. 1-3). In this early stage, the advertising activity of the company was under the responsibility of H. M. Applegate, who served as advertising director until his departure at the end of the summer of 1914.  

As specified in the design’s legal registry —reference number 68,692, granted on July 15, 1913—, it was the “Illustration of man’s face in section of tire.” Being more precise, the cross section of a pneumatic tire from a frontal view created a characteristic horseshoe-shaped profile that framed the smiling face of an automobile driver, recognizable by the protective glasses propped up on his forehead. As for the pneumatic tire, the part that corresponded to the tread—the crown on the head of the character—, shows a pair of twisted nails that are unable to perforate the tire’s tough cover which was reinforced by inner layers of metal discs that formed an impenetrable mesh. This resistance is what makes the driver happy, who wears a satisfied smile feeling impervious to punctures.  

This figure, invariably in his gestures but sometimes endowed with a body and animated, was accompanied by the slogan “Turn Miles into Smiles” or its variant “Smiles at Miles.” Both slogans made use of the formal and phonetic similarity of the words smiles and miles. The phrase “turn miles into smiles” refers to smooth driving, without blowouts … and without irritation. The agency responsible for the creation of the mascot and its happy slogan was the Charles Blum Advertising Corp. from Philadelphia, founded in 1907 by the same Charles Blum (1880-1965), “(…) responsible for numerous national advertising successes, principally auto accessories, seeds and flowers, books, and suburban and farm home supplies. Originated among other slogans, ‘Turn Miles Into Smiles’ (…).”  

The smiling tire was reproduced in press advertisements (figs. 4-12 and 16-24), identification signs, on delivery vehicles (figs. 75-77) and in all types of corporate informative and promotional material, as well as in that used by establishments of the company’s commercial network (figs. 13-15), until its early retire-
ment in 1917. It is likely that the dark times experienced as events of the Great War in Europe developed and of the imminent United States entry into the conflict influenced the withdrawal of such a cheerful mascot.

In parallel to the constant presence of the mascot, the design of the advertisements for Lee tires used another series of graphic elements in their composition. This included enhancing the brand by applying a large initial ‘L’ as a border containing different messages and illustrations (figs. 16-21). They also took advantage of the unmistakable zigzag tread pattern and its imprint on the road as an ornamental and identification element (figs. 21-25). Between 1913 and 1920, the advertisement illustrations, in addition to showing the large pneumatic tires and their technological virtues (figs. 30-33), also portrayed different characters. Some were protagonists of everyday driving scenes while others referred to patriotic symbols such as the Statue of Liberty or the Bald-headed eagle (figs. 34-35). Or they embodied malevolent beings who were responsible for the main evils stalking tires on the road (figs. 26-29).

4. Pedigree tires

At the beginning of 1920 an extensive advertising campaign was launched to present the three basic models of Lee pneumatic tires. It employed the image of a dog—one that was in movement, running—as a symbol which embodied numerous treasured virtues. Associated positive concepts such as protection, reliability and safety were perfect to express the behavior required by tires while being driven on the road. Each of them was associated with a different breed: the American pit bull terrier for the Puncture Proof model; the Russian greyhound for the Cord; and the Airedale terrier for the Fabric model. The image of the three dogs running parallel to the tire they represented was applied to press advertisements, billboards and various promotional media (figs. 92-94).

In the mid-twenties an important advertising effort was made to promote the Lee Cord De Luxe pneumatic tires, the manufacturer’s star model. In the graphic aspect, the company’s logotype formed the word ‘LEE’ and was temporarily cast in thick capital sans-serif letters (figs. 36-38). After the smiling corporate and promotional mascot was eliminated, the elements of graphic identity—the logotype or the zigzag footprint—were joined by a new triangular symbol with the appearance of an arrowhead inspired by the shape of the lateral studs characteristic of the pneumatic tire tread (figs. 38, 78 and 82-83).

One of Lee’s campaigns that had the greatest impact was titled the “Torture Test.” In 1922, specifically during the third week of June, establishments throughout the country associated with their commercial network carried out public demonstrations of the Lee Puncture-Proof tire’s resistance to perforations. Supported by a press campaign published in the respective local newspapers, these businesses showed attendees of various exhibitions how an automobile equipped with Lee tires carrying passengers, bearing all that weight, could be driven over a bed of nails without being punctured. For this purpose the manufacturer distributed around 10,000 panels 90 cm long, 20 cm wide and about 5 cm thick with sloped ends to facilitate the mounting of the vehicle. These panels contained nineteen rows of nails with each having a width of five nails, although some establishments manufactured their own “bed” of nails (figs. 84-90 and 92). 25

By the end of 1926 Douglas A. Patterson, the director of advertising at that time, left Lee Tire & Rubber Company and was replaced by George H. Duck. 26 It was under his leadership when, at the beginning of 1927, a new character emerged that would persistently be utilized as a mascot—shown in different manners in press advertisements—and as a corporate symbol—in a characteristic fixed pose—in the
company’s tire advertisements. This new mascot consisted of a fox-terrier breed of the so-called “wire-haired” variety with a characteristic spot on the back and another, like a patch, framing his left eye. I was unable to determine the reasons for the choice of this animal, beyond verifying its presence in advertisements between 1927 and the early 1940s. Perhaps it was linked to the possible consideration of fox-terriers being associated with high end consumers. In the 1927 and 1928 campaigns, the illustrator Lyle Justis (1892-1960) was commissioned to make numerous illustrations in which the automobile—equipped with Lee tires—was the protagonist in scenes of leisure and socializing where numerous characters were portrayed and where the fox-terrier was also present (figs. 41-50). In later campaigns between the 1930s and the beginning of the following decade, the mascot appeared as an emblematic signature for advertisements, independently of illustrations shown in them, taking the role of a corporate symbol (figs. 53-60).

Between 1942 and 1946, the Lee Tire & Rubber Corporation advertisements focused on strengthening the company’s image after fully incorporating Republic Rubber as a division of the group. They also contributed to the patriotic current and the war effort generated by the Second World War (figs. 61-64). The Republic factory in Youngstown, Ohio concentrated its production on hoses and belts as well as on molded and extruded rubber products and parts. The Lee Tire & Rubber factory in Conshohocken was basically dedicated to producing tires and inner tubes. After the end of the conflict, the advertising campaigns that had shown the industrial contribution of Lee and their Republic division in the manufacture of material destined for military use gave way to others where, in a climate of unity and reconstruction, the values of the American family and the aspirational longing for the ‘American way of life’ prevailed (figs. 65-69).

5. The smiling tire

In 1958, the BF Goodrich tire company launched an advertising campaign with the slogan “Smileage!” This merged into a single word the ideas expressed by the slogans “Smiles at Miles” and “Turn Miles into Smiles,” the titles which had headlined Lee Tire & Rubber advertisements from 1911 until 1917. The term ‘smileage’ was the result of contracting smile and mileage, although the new word acquires another powerful associated meaning: ‘smileage,’ the sum of smile [smile, laugh] and age [era, epoch, age] would literally mean “the era of smiling” or “the time to smile.” The graphic representation chosen to formalize this concept was that of a tire with a face exhibiting a huge smile emerging from its center. The illustration of the smiling tire was used in advertisements, in all kinds of promotional elements as well as in the identification signs for establishments and repair shops associated with the commercial network of BF Goodrich until the end of the decade (figs. 97-103).

This “Era of Smiling” proclaimed in the BF Goodrich advertisements is related to the analysis made by the psychologist Norman Kiell (1961) in his article “The myth of fun” which is referenced in the bibliography. Kiell cites BF Goodrich’s “Smileage!” campaign as yet another from a list of examples for advertising texts and slogans of the time, in which advertisers conveyed the desire and longing for a happy life. As he states:

“The exclamation point [present in “Smileage!”] is apparently the imperative demand for us to have fun, to make the most out of a pallid life, to be happy.”
In fact, it appears to be a call to consumption, to the demand for goods that satisfy real or created needs and indirectly, a boost to productive activity that would reactivate the flow of the economy in an era of anxiety:

“Despite our compulsive drive to have fun and be happy, somehow or other most of us are not having happy fun. This compelling need for fun and happiness seems to be a reaction formation masking people’s real needs. Fun, injected into things that previously no one thought required fun, is a symptom of the age of anxiety. These things could be satisfying or pleasurable but not necessarily fun.”  

A tire in and of itself is not fun … therefore, in advertising, to transmit and connect with human moods and emotions—the expressiveness of facial features is basic—, it is common to resort to the anthropomorphization of inanimate objects (see figs. 95-110). This is exactly the case of the smiling face framed in a pneumatic tire to simulate a human head. The smiling tire was the advertising response to a time of crisis and changes that BF Goodrich was undergoing.

Between 1955 and 1962 the company saw their profits decrease by 45%. The success of the chemical division had led to the neglect of the historic tire division, which constituted half of the business’ volume. Two aspects were crucial in turning the situation around. On the one hand, company management implemented a severe corporate strategy that emphasized marketing principles. Structures and personnel were changed to develop a plan in which “Manufacturing executives, like those at Goodrich, were supposed to adopt a marketing orientation toward production—not making goods and offering them for sale but exploring what customers desired and designing and fabricating products accordingly.” The other key factor was the approval in 1956 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which defined the financing of constructing an extensive interstate highway network. Improving road facilities for traveling by car would translate into greater mobility of the population, both for commuting to homes located far away from cities as well as for the opening of new routes to enhance tourism. In anticipation of this demand, the tire companies reacted by increasing their production capacity and developing the relevant distribution and sales channels.
Notes

1. As can be read in “Early twentieth-century expansion,” one of the sections of The Conshohocken Historical Survey, a report prepared by the Bureau for Historic Preservation of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission with the help of the historical society and the local City Council. Available at the official municipal website: www.conshohockenpa.org/visitor/history.


3. As explained in the 1910 news item published in the newspaper The Conshohocken Recorder, “Town notes,” May 17, and “Few perfect scores in Norristown run,” May 20. The tires were tested in other competitions. Lee entered a new vehicle on the Glidden Tour held between June 14 and 30, 1910, consisting of route covering 2,850 miles. Approximately thirty participants had to start from Cincinnati, cross several states and reach the finish line in Chicago, as stated in the article “Town notes,” The Conshohocken Recorder, June 14, 1910, p. 4.


8. “New incorporations,” The India Rubber World, August 1, 1911.


11. As Burbank explains (1990), referring to Dorothea Staley, Conshohocken historian and author of the article “Biography of J. Ellwood Lee,” published in 1987 by the Conshohocken Historical Society.


14. As can be read in the text of the advertisement published in the specialized magazine The Horseless Age, January 28, 1914. The trademark “Vanadium” was registered legally on June 9, 1914 with reference number 76,698, for commercial use in the rubber industry sector.


18. Ibid.

19. In the chapter “The Industry in Depression, 1929-1940.” p. 60, from the excellent book by Michael J. French (1991), The US Tire Industry. A History, the prolonged effects of the crisis of the stock market crash of 1929 is explained. This allowed Lee Tire & Rubber to take over, in 1936, one of its
rivals in the sector, the financially weakened Republic Rubber Co., a tire manufacturer based in Youngstown, Ohio. It must be an error because it was really in 1923 when the acquisition occurred. “Lee R. & T. Co. takes over Republic Rubber Co.,” The Conshohocken Recorder, May 25, 1923, p. 1.

20. “Goodyear will eliminate Lee and Star associate brands,” Modern Tire Dealer, November 27, 2006. The article cites company sources to explain the reduction of associated brands as part of a business strategy dedicated to focusing efforts on their main products. The “Star” brand was also eliminated, another historic reference in the tire business since 1912 and incorporated into Goodyear after the purchase of Kelly-Springfield—who, in turn, had acquired The Star Rubber Company in 1962. The text also explains Goodyear’s intention to keep active other brands such as “Kelly-Springfield,” “Republic” and “Remington.”


23. “Recent patents relating to rubber,” The India Rubber World, September 1, 1913.


25. As explained in the article “Getting dealers to make successful street demonstrations,” Printers’ Ink Monthly, August 1922, pp. 50-53. An example of the local application of the campaign is reflected in the news—a type of advertising camouflaged as editorial content—published in the newspaper “Tires will be given hard tests,” Oakland Tribune, June 4, 1922.


27. For more information on Lyle Justis, see the short article “Lyle Justis,” The Philadelphia Scene, Philadelphia: Gatchel & Manning, December 1941. This data, as well as more information about his life and work, was personally provided to me by Bill Patterson, President of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, of which Justis was at the time, a prominent member. The Sketch Club is an institution founded in 1860—the oldest of North American plastic arts—which, in 1894, already had more than 400 members. Some of the illustrious artists who were listed as members were Joseph Penell, N. Wyeth, Howard Chandler Christy and Maxfield Parrish, among others.


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Quattrone, Frank D. “Conshohocken,”


Rodengen, Jeffrey L. *The Legend of Goodyear. The First 100 years.*

Welsh, Phillip and Sharon. *Conshohocken in Vintage Postcards.*

“Getting dealers to make successful street demonstrations,”
*Printers’ Ink,* August 1922, pp. 50 and 53.
SMILE! The smiling tire mascot headed the promotional and corporate stationery of Lee tires since the company’s inception, promising "No more punctures" and giving motorists a smile. The character stood out as a contrast to the typical image of the bad-tempered driver, systematically afflicted when traveling by car due to poor road conditions along with the continuous obstacles and complexity that involved the maintenance and repair of automobile parts such as the tires themselves. John Ellwood Lee went from manufacturing medical and surgical supplies that doctors utilized for their patients’ health care treatments to producing new, smiling and healthy tires that were immune to punctures on the road.

1. The smiling tire illustration from the cover of the brochure No more Punctures, published by the Lee Tire & Rubber Company in which the advantages of Lee Puncture-Proof tires are explained along with advice and user testimonies, 1911.  
2. Detail of Lee’s corporate stationery header, from a letter dated March 1912.  
3. Photographic portrait of John Ellwood Lee, c. 1900.
FROM THE JELCO ACRONYM
TO THE LEE SURNAME.
The series of advertisements presented on this double page shows how the first Jelco Puncture-Proof tires manufactured by the J. Ellwood Lee Company changed their name to Lee Puncture-Proof once the company was re-founded and legally constituted in June 1911 as the Lee Tire & Rubber Company. The name change can be seen in the footer of each advertisement and it is also clear that the mascot associated with the product remained unchanged during the process.

4-5. Modular advertisements published in Motor magazine, December 1910 and March 1911.
28. LEE TIRE & RUBBER AND THE SMILING TIRE

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**JELCO PUNCTURE-PROOF TIRES**

Turn **Miles** into **Smiles**

You can’t expect the man who has to change tires in the hot sun, or the pouring rain, to smile. But the man who uses the Jelco Puncture-Proof goes by smiling—can afford to, when he remembers the time and trouble he saves, the delays he avoids, the expense he is spared. No need of demountable rims; maintenance and equipment cost cut to a minimum.

**Guaranteed 100% Puncture-Proof—and as resilient as any regular casing**

Booklet E explains the unique construction and many advantages of the Jelco Puncture-Proof. Send for it today. Special proposition for dealers—get it today.

**LEE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY**

Conshohocken, Pa.

Makers of Jelco Tires and Tubes and Jelco-Atlas Puncture-Proof Inner Cables.

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**LEE TIRES**

**FORMERLY “JELCO”**

Running all through our products you will note the fixed purpose to excel that means more than all else in the production of better goods and lasting reputation.

Their beautiful lines and workmanship appeal to the expert eye. Examination reveals unequalled quality of rubber, and the strongest and best fabrics that money can buy.

The result is increased mileage—and satisfaction every mile of the way.

We do not always follow the beaten path; we progress—but we prove every new departure by scientific and practical road tests.

**Lee Zig-Zag Tires**

Differ materially from the conventional “anti-skids” in pattern—also in the fact that they actually prevent skidding and give a surprising mileage under the hardest circumstances.

It took courage, in the face of prejudice and other people’s failures, to work out successfully the problem of making rubber tires puncture-proof without loss of resilience.

**Lee Puncture-Proof Tires**

Have worn out. Even in the hard service of medium trucks and taxicabs they are giving that increased of mileage and decrease of bother that put our “puncture-proof” smile on the faces of the owners.

If you want “better” tires, send at once for our booklet F.

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**LEE TIRE & RUBBER CO.**

Conshohocken, Pa.

J. Clarence Lee, President.

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*We have a new specially interesting proposition to large distributors. Advertising help furnished for all Lee Tire products.*

**STORES AT**

325 No. Broad St., Philadelphia; 439 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago

1426-28 Broadway, New York; 1312 Woodward Ave., Detroit

162 Massachusetts Ave., Boston; 615 Century Bldg., St. Louis

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PROTECTIVE SMILE. According to the advertisement text, this varied collection of nails, tacks, horseshoe fragments and screws were removed by different drivers from their Lee Puncture-Proof tires and sent to Lee Tire & Rubber as a sign of the tires' imperviousness. In the center, surrounded by hardware and immune to their punctures, we see the unmistakable smiling mascot.

FULL BODIED. This page shows two appearances of the smiling mascot adapted in the form of full-length figures in two Chanslor & Lion advertisements, an official Lee tire distributor for the Pacific Coast area. The illustrations show the mascot embodying the Lee Puncture Proof smooth-tread tires, accompanied by the usual slogan “Smile at Miles,” and the new Lee Anti-skid tires with a rubber non-skid tread pattern, accompanied by an alternate slogan “Laugh at Rain.”

FACIAL BRANDS.
The above images present three examples of how the pneumatic mascot was applied in different supports: in the company’s corporate stationery, in one of their commercial brochures and as a promotional gift object.

13. Corporate envelope of the territorial Lee Tire & Rubber branch office in Philadelphia, addressed to one of the establishments associated with the commercial network, postmarked on March 26, 1913.

14. Promotional Lee tire tape measure, manufactured by Whitehead & Hoag Co. in Newark, New Jersey. Dimensions: 5 cm in diameter, c. 1912.

15. Cover of a promotional brochure, c. 1912.
IDENTIFYING FRAME. The advertisement shown above employs, in addition to the image of the smiling mascot, one of the graphic elements that characterized the design of the first campaigns: a large capital letter ‘L’, the initial of the Lee Tire & Rubber Co.

Driving Scenes.

Several of the advertisements for the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. during 1912-1914 utilized the large capital "L"—Lee's initial—as a square frame to border the text, illustrations, logotype and the corporate mascot. The examples included on this page present three different scenes. Above, a large tire shows the new Lee Puncture-Proof tire tread and its characteristic zigzag pattern. The above image on the right depicts a desperate driver who has a blowout that prevents him from arriving in time to catch the last boat, which has already sailed off and left; his car was not equipped with Lee tires. To the right, a proud chauffeur is congratulated by his passenger after three weeks of traveling by car without having any punctures; the automobile is, of course, fitted with Lee tires.

17. Advertisement in Life, January 11, 1912
19. Advertisement published in The Literary Digest, August 30, 1913.
The above illustration shows one of the outdoor publicity billboards advertising Lee Tire & Rubber Company tires. In fact, such billboards really did exist with this same design and were usually placed in strategic places such as alongside motorways, at intersections and next to entrances accessing cities and towns.

The above advertisement combines three design elements that were identifying characteristics of Lee Tire & Rubber Co. advertising: the initial 'L', the track of the Zig-Zag tread and the corporate mascot. In this case additional emphasis is placed on the safety provided by driving with a non-skid tread, employing an ingenious play on words and the seductive hissing sound of the letter 's': "The tire that put the sure in pleasure" [interpreted as "The tire that brings safety to the pleasure (of driving)"] and "The tires that give dealers that real enthusiasm which spells 'S-u-c-c-e-s-s'."

THE BRANDED TRACK. The singular design of the Lee tire zigzag tread and the track that it marked on the surface of streets and roads by the automobile that was equipped with them were the protagonists of a long series of advertisements and their modular variants published in numerous widely circulated magazines, such as the examples shown here.

PERILS OF THE ROAD. This double page shows some of the advertisements from the 1916 advertising campaign, in which deleterious mascots were employed. This type of advertising strategy consists of creating malevolent characters that embody the problems or enemies that the consumer/user will overcome thanks to the reliability and virtues of the advertised product. In the advertisements shown above and on top of the following page, the four demons of the road Wear, Puncture, Blowout and Tear are presented, who admit their defeat due to the protection provided by Lee tires. In the lower section of the opposite page, destructive road agents, who are portrayed as muscular workers, try to perforate and damage Lee pneumatic tires using sledgehammers and drills to no avail.

27. Half-page horizontal advertising module published in the monthly magazine Touring Topics, August 1916.
‘V’ AS IN VANADIUM. The patented tires with Zig-Zag treads incorporated a special additive known as vanadium during the manufacturing process. It is likely that the company applied the knowledge acquired in the production of medical supplies, since vanadium is a metal utilized in alloys to obtain high quality steel. The steel obtained was of great tenacity, resistant to corrosion, and used in machinery, tools and surgical instruments. As stated in the advertisement text, it gave their tires a resistance and durability that allowed them to double their life beyond the average tire life offered by their competitors.

Layer by layer. Part of the press advertisements published between 1918 and 1920 emphasized the technical characteristics and materials used in the manufacture of pneumatic tires, with detailed illustrations showing their parts and components.

32-33. Full-page advertisements published in the monthly magazine The National Geographic, February and March 1918.
SYMBOLS OF FREEDOM.
The bald-headed eagle, the Capitol Building and the Statue of Liberty emerge as symbols of latent patriotic exaltation during the years of the First World War. The advertisement shown above compares the service provided by Lee tires to drivers with the service offered by the Government of the United States to citizens and the country. The advertisement on the right highlights, under the motto “Emancipation” and with the Statue of Liberty in the background, the “freedom from puncture, blowout, undue wear and high cost” as advantages that Lee Puncture Proof tires offer.

In the 1920s, the Lee Cord De Luxe tire model was launched, which was advertised with a publicity campaign designed for targeting elite motorists—those who were used to moving comfortably on roads with a uniform surface and requiring maximum comfort. The illustrations utilized appealed to this sophisticated consumer, as can be seen in the two examples below.

In the one on the left, the pneumatic tire is presented in an academic way, as though it were a still life portrait. The text of the second advertisement states: “There are two kinds of tires, the kind that ‘come with the car,’ and the kind that the motorist himself chooses. The Lee Cord De Luxe is very definitely of the latter kind. This accounts for the great number of fine cars that you now see equipped with Lee Cords. Have you started using Lee Cords on your car?”

38. Full-page advertisement published in the monthly magazine Vanity Fair, January 1924.
THE WOMAN DRIVER. The growing presence of women at the wheel of the car was a fact that called the attention of those manufacturing vehicles and their components. As can be seen in the advertisement model shown above—published in women’s and lifestyle magazines such as House & Garden, The Countryside Magazine & Suburban Life, Hearst’s International and Vanity Fair—, the female consumer was one of the advertising targets for the Lee Tire & Rubber Co.

A GOOD TRAVELING COMPANION. In another advertisement from 1922, by Chanslor & Lyon—an authorized official Lee Tire & Rubber distributor for the Pacific Coast—, a reference was once again made to the female consumer. Lee Puncture Proof tires which were immune to blowouts, were "designed and built especially for those persons who deserve the utmost in safety, convenience, riding qualities and economy," as can be read in the advertisement’s text.

FIDELITY IN FEBRUARY. As of 1927, illustrations for the Lee Tire & Rubber advertisements included the presence of a small character who repeatedly appeared in the different scenes portrayed, a fox-terrier that served as the brand’s mascot. This canine fidelity—the fidelity to Lee tires—is the same that is expressed in the advertisement shown above. The date that the advertisement was published—February 25—and the subject matter are closely related. This is due to the fact that during the month of February, tribute is paid to two great figures of American history, George Washington—born on February 22, 1732—and Abraham Lincoln—born on February 12, 1809. The illustration depicts a limousine parked in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. The passengers, along with other citizens, head towards the building that houses a large marble statue of President Lincoln in honor of his memory. The memorial, in the form of a Greek Doric temple, was authorized by the United States Congress on February 9, 1911 and three years later construction began, with the first stone placed on the emblematic date of February 12th.

41. Full-page advertisement published in the generalist magazine The Saturday Evening Post, February 25, 1928.
ELEGANT PROFILES. The advertising campaign launched in 1927 would have continuity for another year, always counting on the elegant illustrations of society scenes portrayed by Lyle Justis (1892-1960). Justis was a prominent artist of his time, working as an illustrator for magazines, adventure and historical books as well as for advertising commissions. His line, vigorous and direct in sketches, became fine, detailed and delicate in his refined advertising illustrations. During the First World War, Justis was assigned to France as a member of the 80th Division. Already as an ex-combatant, Justis used to visit hospitals and give drawing classes to patients. In 1944 he made a successful solo exhibition at the Sketch Club of Philadelphia —which he was a member of between 1944 and 1960—, showing sketches and drawings of sailors and soldiers in action. The sale of these works was used to finance social events in honor of veterans and those wounded in the war.

A WHEEL FOR ALL SEASONS. During 1928, the multiple illustrations of Lyle Justis with the familiar omnipresent fox terrier presented different driving scenes linked to leisure activities occurring at different months of the year. In the texts of the campaign the consumer was reminded of the need to be properly equipped at all times so as not to suffer setbacks while driving, and to enjoy outings and to be on time attending different events and social commitments. The advertisement illustrations shown above depicted the rainy days of March when the car was no longer a convertible; a spring day in April within the surroundings of Conshohocken—portraying the smoky chimneys of the Lee Tire & Rubber factory in the background of the landscape—; a meeting at the golf club in May; and a getaway to watch the regattas from the pier during August holidays. The campaign was widely disseminated, being placed in a list of generalist publications with widespread circulation such as Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Liberty, The Literary Digest, The Atlantic Monthly and American Review.

49. Advertisement in American Review, August 1928. All illustrations by Lyle Justis.
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS. The above illustration shows the facilities of a garage, a model official establishment of the Lee Tire & Rubber commercial network with its identification signs and promotional elements at the point of sale that are perceived to be in the shop windows. The text emphasizes carrying out at least one of the customary New Year’s resolutions that most of us usually promise to fulfill with determination, an intention that is often diluted as the days pass by. In this case it would be, of course, to change the usual tires for the "Lee of Conshohocken" brand.

safe!

GUARANTEED AGAINST ALL

WRITE TODAY FOR THIS PICTURE

Would you like to have this picture by Frederick Stanley in full coloring suitable for framing but without any advertising? Send 10c for postage and packing to Department S, LEE of Coshboken, Pa.

Name: ____________________________

Street: ____________________________

City: ____________________________ State: ____________________________

When you buy LEE De Luxe tires your LEE of Coshboken dealer will present you with a signed certificate guaranteeing these tires for one year against wear and tear, injuries caused by blowouts, bruises, rim cuts, glass slashes and any other road hazard. This is in addition to our warranty for the life of the tire against defective workmanship and materials—certainly a fair way to sell tires.

LEE TIRE & RUBBER COMPANY • GENERAL OFFICES: CONSH

TWELVE MILES FROM PHILADELPHIA
28. LEE TIRE & RUBBER AND THE SMILING TIRE

THE PROTECTIVE CANINE.

The advertisements shown here utilize the image of security, reliability and fidelity that dogs symbolically exemplify, the companion animal par excellence for human beings. In this case, an imposing Great Dane guards an innocent little girl holding her ball. It deals with an allegorical construction where it is likely that the reference to the featured tire—which is not shown—is insinuated through the presence of the air-filled ball. A similar message is reflected in the poster shown below, which was part of the same advertising campaign. In the illustration, a baby plays with the puppies from a litter of fox terriers under the protective watch of one of the parents. The advertisements’ illustrations are signed by The Saturday Evening Post illustrator and cover artist, Frederic Stanley (1892-1967).

51. Double-page advertisement published in the magazine The Saturday Evening Post, September 6, 1934.
LEAN TIMES. After the 1929 financial crash, the U.S. economy went into a severe depression. The tire industry was also affected, especially by the drastic decrease in the demand for automobiles. The companies that depended on orders to factory equip new cars saw their production slow down, and those that opted for the replacement and used tire market entered into strong price competitions. This crisis was intense between 1937 and 1938, the years in which factories worked at half their actual capacity (French, *The U.S. Tire Industry*, pp. 59-72). This comprises the context in which Lee’s campaign, as shown on this double page, advertised the long-lasting Double-Life Cord model since they were dealing with times of austerity. It was a long series of press advertisements presented in black and white and as half of a vertical page, with unsigned illustrations and the canine mascot accompanying the corporate logotype.

55. (opposite page) Detail of the fox-terrier in an advertisement. 56 and 60. (opposite page) Advertisements in *The Saturday Evening Post*, from left to right and top to bottom: December 10, 1938; April 8 and May 6, 1939; and January 6 and April 6, 1940.
Lee’s fox terrier was present in the company’s advertisements until the late 1940s. In addition, the beginning of that period marked the end of the recession as well as a degree of economic stimulation against uncertain times. Attention was placed on the complicated situation that was occurring in Europe which would, once again, end up involving the United States in a Second World War.
UNITED FOR THE CAUSE.
The Lee Rubber & Tire, Corp. put their two factories to work—one in Youngstown, Ohio and the other in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, managed respectively by the Republic Rubber and Lee Tire & Rubber Co. divisions—to respond to Government commissions for military equipment. The above images present two examples of illustrated war-themed advertisements showing military cargo vehicles equipped with Lee tires, signed by the artist Benton Henderson Clark (1895-1964). The image on the right consists of a photograph portraying both industrial plants for Republic Rubber and Lee Tire & Rubber. The slogan “Together in a common cause” strengthens the corporation’s image of unity and productive capacity.

63. Advertisement published in an unidentified magazine, 1944.
CONFIDENCE IN THE SYSTEM. The above image presents a 1944 example of patriotic propaganda for commercial purposes in an advertisement by the Lee Tire & Rubber Corporation. The illustration shows a fictional scene portraying the future return of U.S. troops—received by a large crowd—to their country after the military victory that marked the end of World War II. Employing the slogan “When victory is ours…” the rationale of the advertisement is developed as follows:

“All Americans are confident that ultimate victory in this war is ours. When the same confidence in our post-war economy prevails, our future is secure. Pent-up demand for every kind of consumer goods promises capacity business all round. That means more employment for all who wish to work, wage money aplenty for all who wish to buy, more sales, more manufacturing, more employment. The manufacturers of Republic Rubber industrial products and Lee of Conshohocken tires believe in this natural sequence, believe that America can face the post-victory world with unalloyed assurance. On that foundation of confidence we can all help build the Nation’s future prosperity.”

64. Full-page advertisement published in the magazine Collier’s Weekly, July 8, 1944.
MY MOTHER’S RECIPE.
On this double page, examples are presented of the Lee Tire & Rubber Corporation campaign in which the groundwork is prepared for post-war times. The recovery of normalcy in the economy and the vindication of the American way of life was graphically translated into scenes like those shown in these advertisements. The image on the right shows a 1946 advertisement where a boy eagerly watches his mother prepare the dough for a cake. According to the text, the experience acquired and demonstrated combined with the best recipe, chosen ingredients and the right equipment—in this case the kitchen and its appliances—are shared elements that are present in the tire manufacturer’s history and productive activity.

66. Advertisement in the magazine Collier’s Weekly, 1944.
67. Advertisement published in the magazine The Saturday Evening Post, October 26, 1946.
UNITED WE STAND. The patriotic climate and assertion of identifying values were reflected in the advertisement for the Lee Tire & Rubber Corp. shown above, with the slogan “The American Way”: “Every American wants his own home, good schools for his children, a church for his spiritual needs and civic leaders who inspire confidence and respect (...) Americans like himself are the labor, the consumers and the capitalists in America (...) they are all three (...) and this fact assures their independence. Lee Rubber & Tire Corporation employees, management and stockholders unite in perpetuating American independence (...) the American way of life.”

THE FORMER FACTORY.
The name Conshohocken means “tranquil valley” and is a phonetic transcription of the native word in the language of the Lenape tribe, the original settlers of these lands. This tranquility contrasted with the intense industrial activity that would take place in the area. Towards the turn of the century, the factory of the J. Ellwood Lee Co., located in the urban area of Conshohocken, consisted of seventeen warehouses that occupied a space of 2,200 m² in which 500 employees worked.

70-71. Two engravings depicting the industrial complex and the offices of the J. Ellwood Lee Co., approximately between 1898 and 1905.

72. Emblem utilized since 1883 by the J. Ellwood Co. for the medical supplies brand “Jelco,” and withdrawn in 1905 after their absorption by the leading company of the sector, Johnson & Johnson from New Brunswick, New Jersey.
THE NEW FACTORY. This page shows two photographs of the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. factory that was built in Spring Mill, just outside of Conshohocken, which would allow for the development of tire production under adequate conditions. The above image shows the large letters that adorned the roof of the building for years, which were installed in December 1910. Below, the name of the company was stamped on the chimney of the thermal power plant and on the surface of the water tank, a common practice in industrial plants of all sectors which was commonly see in many images from that period.

73. Facade of the main building of Lee Tire & Rubber in Spring Mill, c. 1911. 74. Photograph of the Lee Tires & Rubber factory, c. 1930.
A FRIENDLY FACE. This page presents three examples of identification elements for the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. in which the smiling face of the corporate pneumatic mascot was applied.

75. Photograph of a cargo vehicle from the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. factory in Conshohocken, extracted from the 1917 catalog of industrial trucks manufactured by The White Company.

76. Indicator sign for the F. E. Howard garage in Faribault, Minnesota. Dimensions: 30 x 90 cm, c. 1912.

77. Metallic identification sign for authorized Lee establishments. Manufactured by Chas. W. Shonk Lithographic Co. in Chicago. Dimensions: 60 x 40 cm, c. 1912.
28. LEE TIRE & RUBBER AND THE SMILING TIRE

BUSINESSES AND ESTABLISHMENTS.
The examples included on this page show the facades and shop windows of several establishments from Lee's commercial network in 1926 and 1927, as well as the exterior signs that identified them as such during those years.

**78.** Double-page advertisement published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 17, 1926.

**79.** Vertical metallic identification sign of contracted establishments for Lee's commercial network, designed to hang laterally next to access points. Dimensions: 46 x 180 cm, c. 1927.

**80.** Metallic identification sign for Lee's contracted establishments. Dimensions: 47 x 70 cm, c. 1927.
FROM THE FACTORY TO BUSINESSES.
The images here present a graphic testimony of the appearance of contracted establishments that comprised Lee’s commercial network in the decade of the twenties. The use of the arrowhead symbol can be observed, with the characteristic thick letters and an internal shadow outline as identifying elements for these businesses. Additionally, in this case, the exterior side wall is used to hang a large billboard.

81. Photograph of installations of the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. factory, c. 1920.
82. Facade of the Lee Tire Sales Company establishment located in Washington D. C., around 1921. Photograph from the collection of the National Photo Company.
CORPORATE BUILDING.
In the photograph on this double page, employees pose in front of the building facade of the Lee Tire & Rubber Co. commercial branch office, located at the corner of 26th and McGee Streets in Kansas City, which housed the offices, warehouse and mechanical workshop.

83. Company portrait. Photograph from The Commercial Photo Co. in Kansas City, c. 1922.
THE TIRE FAKIR. In June 1922 the Lee Tires & Rubber Company organized numerous public demonstrations of the qualities of their Puncture-Proof tires. They were held throughout the country with the assistance of their contracted establishments. For these events, they employed cars equipped with their tires which were placed on a bed of sharp nails without suffering punctures, as though they were the circus act of a fakir. This image of imperviousness was documented by promotional photographs and utilized graphically in corporate stationery and press advertisements.

84. Detail of the header for Lee Tire & Rubber Co. corporate stationery, in a letter dated March 19, 1912.
85. Photograph of a Lee Puncture Proof pneumatic tire put to the test in a demonstration, 1921. National Photo Co.
FULL-COLORED TORTURE.
The above image shows the employees of the Frank & Kramer Garage posing on the business’ distribution truck, whose rear wheels rest on a bed of nails. This photograph depicts one of the many demonstrations that establishments associated with the Lee Tire & Rubber Company’s commercial network held throughout 1921. In this particular case it was the auto repair and car accessories shop from the town of Wallace, Idaho. As can be seen, they employed identification elements that indicated that they were an official establishment of the tire manufacturer. The original color poster presented on the left portrays the same image that is shown in the above photograph, hanging from the side of the vehicle.

87. Advertising poster distributed by contracted Lee establishments. Dimensions: 64 x 94 cm, 1921.
ON FOUR WHEELS.
The Campbell-Niedringhaus Company was the official distributor of Lee tires for the territory of Pennsylvania. Their headquarters was located in Pittsburgh, but the company had branch offices in the main cities throughout Pennsylvania. The image presented here shows Horace B. Johnston, director of Campbell-Niedringhaus, at the wheel of the automobile during the inauguration of a branch office in August 1921 in the town of Harrisburg, located at 108 Market Street. The scene, in which beds of nails arranged under the wheels of the vehicle can be observed, again portrays Lee Puncture-Proof tires’ resistance to punctures in a demonstration carried out in 1921 in front of the establishment’s facade.

28. LEE TIRE & RUBBER AND THE SMILING TIRE

[Image of a man sitting in a vintage car outside a shop named "Lee Rubber"]
INEFFECTIVE NAILS.
The image on the right presents an example of press campaign advertisements, with detailed photographs of pneumatic tires parked on a bed of nails and exhibiting their capacity to resist perforations. Below, a photograph of another demonstration carried out by businesses associated with the commercial network of the Lee Tire & Rubber Company.

89. Full page advertisement published in the specialized magazine *Motor Land*, March 1922.

90. Photograph accompanying the article “Getting dealers to make successful street demonstrations,” *Printers’ Ink*, August 1922.
PUNCTURES, WEAR AND TEAR. The above image shows a fresh milk delivery truck of the Walker Hill Diary Company in the city of Washington. The rear wheels of the vehicle are equipped with solid rubber tires, while the front wheels are fitted with Lee Puncture-Proof pneumatic tires and their all rubber treads. One of the front tires is extremely worn out and degraded due to intense use while the spare tire is held by the mechanic mounted on the vehicle. No further information is available about the scene, although it is likely that it also deals with a promotional photograph linked to the use of Lee Tire & Rubber Co. tires.

28. LEE TIRE & RUBBER AND THE SMILING TIRE

"Get their number"

Number 1. The LEE CORD *** the tire beauty *** swiftest in the world *** made with the high-grade rubber *** in whatever company you put it, it works out.

Number 2. THE LEE FABRIC *** the induction, which can do everything any ordinary dog can do, and lick the other dog. This regular Lee Fabric makes many of the widely advertised Cord tires. The collagen is there.

Number 3. THE LEE FURNITURE-PROOF. The tire that fights away spikes and glass in hedging with *** and has never been licked, yet it is a true Pneumatic Tire, with all its resilience. Good as good makes *** but bold roads cannot injure it. The only Pneumatic Tire made with a money-back guarantee.

CHANSLOR & LYON CO.
1238 Van Ness Avenue
Phone Prospect 929

Broken sales records are a common occurrence at the Oakland Chan- lor & Lyon headquarters. Manager Cory is putting the Lee tires over in excellent shape through his well-trained energetic sales force.

You see ladies and gentlemen, I have them perfectly trained!!

See this guy, Cory keeps us working like...
TRAINED MASCOTS. The photograph above shows a demonstration carried out by one of the establishments associated with the Lee Tire & Rubber Co.’s commercial network. The car is parked next to a billboard in which the figure of the dog was used—a different breed for each tire model—to embody the virtues of the manufacturer’s tires, an image that was employed in the early twenties. The humorous illustration on the opposite page presents these same mascots being trained by the director of the Chanslor & Lyon distributor in Oakland to help promote Lee tires.

93. (opposite page) Illustrated news item published in the Oakland Tribune newspaper (Oakland, California), February 29, 1920.
94. Photograph of a demonstration for Lee Puncture-Proof pneumatic tires conducted in 1921.
EUROPEAN SMILES.
The humanized and smiling tires that conveyed positive feelings were not exclusive to Lee’s advertising. This double page shows two European examples of advertisements that utilized this graphic element. Above, a smiling tire functions as the sun illuminating the cover of a German advertising brochure for Balloon technology tires manufactured by the Continental Caoutchouc & Guttapercha Compagnie from Hannover. In the advertisement shown on the right, travelers aboard an automobile circulate through a landscape in which all inert objects and animals have been anthropomorphized. Their faces—including those of the vehicle’s wheels—are shown smiling in an attitude of joy.

95. Die Lebensfahrt, 1926. Illustrated by Otto Schendel.
96. Advertisement published in the British press for the tires distributed by the BF Goodrich Co., Ltd., c. 1910. Illustrated by the cartoonist Tom Wilkinson (1869–?).
A SMILING WORLD.
Singular result of that beneficent law—
THE GOODRICH AVERAGE.

GOODRICH TYRES
THE B. F. GOODRICH CO., Ltd., 117-123, GOLDEN LANE, LONDON, E.C.
A RADIANT FACE. The BF Goodrich mascot is presented with asexual features: the finely profiled lips, long eyelashes and small nose seem to refer to a female character, although the bushy, short eyebrows do not coincide. In the advertisements shown above, the smiling tire of BF Goodrich is proposed as an effective measure that insures against any mishaps on the road. Its warm smile will protect motorists from the difficulties of traveling on ice and snow as well as possible flat tires from punctures.

THE PLEASURE OF DRIVING. “Relax!” “A summer of fun,” “Drive worry-free,” “Enjoy trouble-free mileage,” “Happy mileage” ... are some of the slogans by BF Goodrich in advertisements from the campaign launched at the end of the fifties and early sixties. How to achieve this? As explained, it was only a question of stopping before a smiling tire poster that would direct you to an official service station authorized by the BF Goodrich tire manufacturer.

SMILEAGE. Beyond the Atlantic, and around the same time, the British National Benzele fuel company used a slogan similar to BF Goodrich's smiling tire: "For higher smileage ... go National Benzele." The corporate mascot par excellence of this company was Mr. Mercury, the god with a winged helmet who was the sole protagonist of other advertisements for the oil company and who appears here as a rhomboidal corporate symbol, along with the slogan. In the illustrations, a ship’s figurehead, statues from a fountain, a maid portrayed in a roadside sign and a snowman in a snowstorm come to life and greet the family car that passes by them. Happy trip!

OTHER SMILES. The above images present three examples of other tires that were also humanized and smiling. In this case they were utilized during the sixties and seventies by American companies in the sector such as Dayton, Firestone and the Canadian Tire Corporation.

108. A promotional gift in the form of a children’s puzzle showing the Big Sport tire mascot—also utilized in press advertisements—of Big Sport tires manufactured by The Dayton Tire & Rubber Co. in Dayton, Ohio, 1968.
109. Promotional keychain by Firestone, c. 1970. 110. Discount coupons with the appearance of dollar bills to be spent at Canadian Tire Stores, the service stations of the Canadian Tire Corp., and distributed to encourage customer loyalty, 1962.