



BAD INVESTMENTS

If you thought you knew all about wasting money on cars, read this.

BY WILLIAM JEANES

A lot of you probably look out and see something in your driveway that has "bad investment" written all over it. Sure, that 1978 Fairmont may have provided transportation with near-regularity for years, but what's it worth? Not much, right?

Well, cheer up. The car that you consider a bad investment makes good financial sense if you give it credit for the years of service. To be sure, it's a wise investment compared with some other automotive expenditures we could think of. In fact, we've thought of ten such blunders and are pleased to present to you our Ten Best Bad Automotive Investments.

It Was Fascination . . .

Last seen in Sidney, Nebraska, a hotbed of automotive engineering if ever

there was one, the Fascination was the three-wheeled, eggish concoction of a man named Paul Lewis. As many as two of these things were built, neither of which worked very well, but the concept was to investors as maple syrup is to mayflies.

Billed—long-windedly—as "The low-cost, economical, safe, smog-free, modernistic, quiet, easy-to-handle, easy-to-park car millions of car buyers want," the Fascination held just that for a large number of people.

We actually sent a writer to investigate this strange vehicle, and he was astounded to see its creator's in-box bulging with letters from people who were just dying to invest huge sums in Lewis's Highway Aircraft Corporation. Today, we're somehow unable to find the stock listed in the financial section of our daily paper.

A Tucker Dealership

Some 1800 eager automotive entrepreneurs succumbed to the blandishments of Preston Tucker, and each sent in a check for a Tucker franchise. Some 51 examples of the rear-engined Tucker 48 "Torpedo" appeared in 1948, hardly enough to supply a dealer network.

You've seen the movie, you've maybe read the books and magazine articles, and you no doubt know that the Tucker represented, if nothing else, the zenith of the small-man-kicks-big-butt chapter in the "Book of American Dreams."

Like most dreams requiring investor cash, this one turned into an investor's nightmare. No one, including Preston Tucker, got out with much more than a souvenir brochure or two, certainly not the