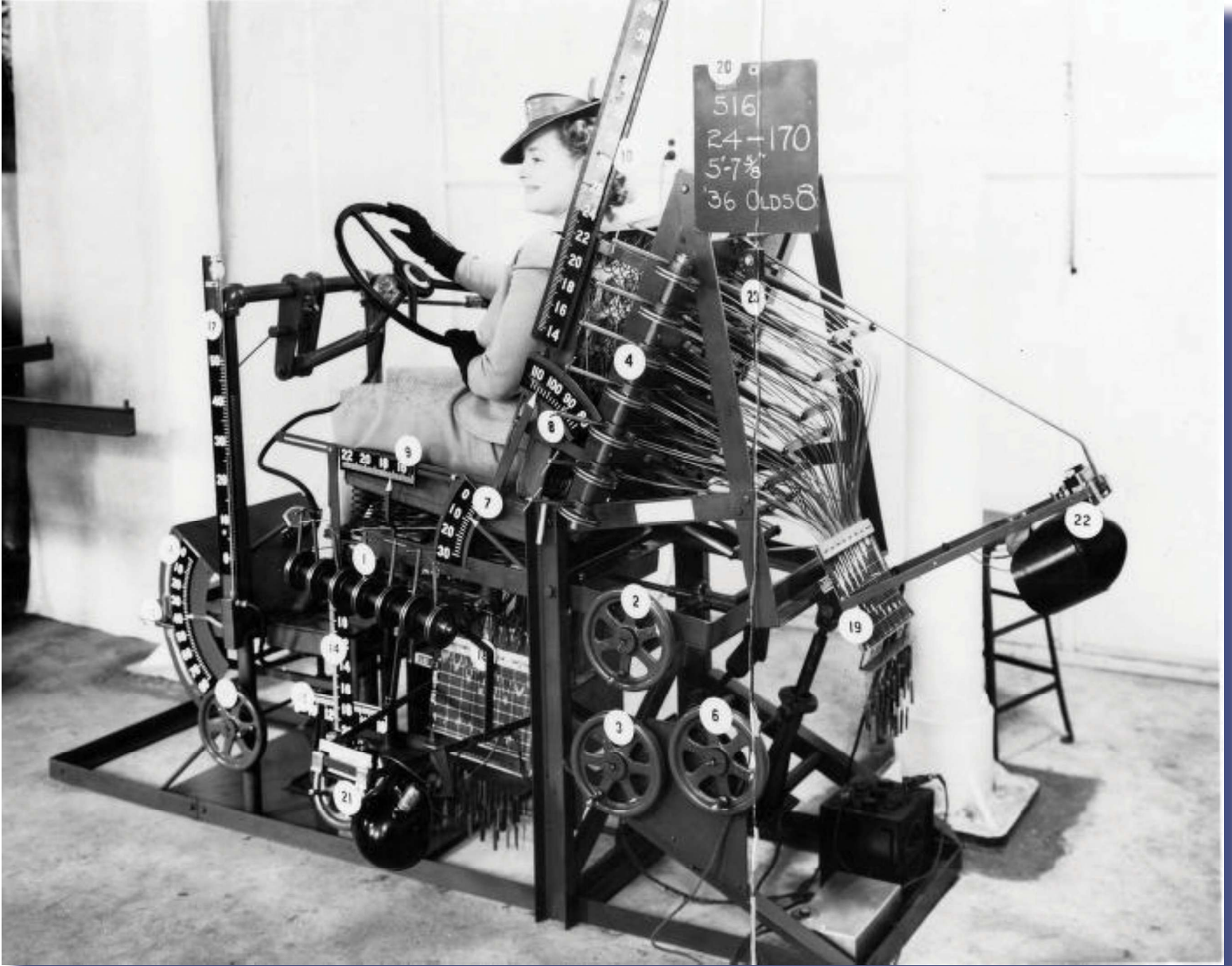


Automobile Industry Milestones: The Seater Meter

By Carl Worstell



Eileen Lay sits in the Seater Meter designed by her father.

In the early years of automobile development many ideas were passed around the automakers' "think tanks" in an effort to encourage higher automobile sales. One idea car companies had was to add luxuries and "extras" like more comfortable seats.

This photograph shows a woman seated in a device designed to test for the most comfortable possible car seat. The "Seater Meter" was a contraption designed by University of Michigan

mechanical engineering professor Walter E. Lay and installed at the U-M Automotive Laboratory in the 1920s. Thousands of people sat in it over the years, generating a library of measurements that helped automakers to design an automobile seat to fit a wider range of people.

(Photo courtesy of Diana Bachman—the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan and Carl Worstell)

