

Reeves Octoauto (USA, 1911)

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Scale **1/43**

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Four axles, eight wheels – a flop

Miserable road conditions in the USA on the threshold of the 20th century led Milton Othello Reeves to think about giving drivers a pleasantly soft ride.

In 1910 he bought a noble sedan from the U.S. manufacturer Overland and implemented his idea to increase driving comfort – he doubled the number of axles. He mounted another axle on both the rear and front, so that the luxury sedan grew up to eight meters in length. The rest of the car was pretty much left as standard. With the double-axle construction, Milton Othello Reeves thought he could cushion the unevenness of the roads much more pleasantly. Reeves thus transferred the idea of George Pullman, who invented the parlor car in railway in 1867 under the very same aspect a train of thought – spreading the load and reducing the vibrations by doubling the amount of wheels – to the automotive industry.

In order to be able to steer the excessively long vehicle, Milton O. Reeves designed the two front and one of the rear axles steerable – the front one had the largest steering lock, the second one a slightly smaller one, and the hinder rear axle

steered in the opposite direction than the front axles. Thus, the car de facto turned around its own medial axis. In practice, the system seemed to work and the car pioneer went on a 3,000-mile promotion tour with his car. The journalists were very impressed by the unusual passenger car in terms of comfort. Based on the number of wheels, Reeves offered his vehicle under the name 'OctoAuto'.

But in the end, Reeves did not sell a single copy of his car, as it was far too expensive with its purchase price of U.S.\$ 3,200.

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