but it was plentiful enough to get them to the next pharmacy, to move the automobile out of an epoch and to make it famous for that which was about to follow. Based on this remarkable customer demand, the “Stadt-Apotheke Wiesloch” became known as the 1st filling station of the world, and pharmacist, Willi Ockel, became “the first filling station attendant”.

Technical difficulties like defective ignition cables or clogged fuel pipes could be fixed by the pioneers themselves. The battered brake pads, made of leather, were repaired by a shoemaker in the town Bauschlott. A constant, however relatively easy-to-solve problem, was the refilling of the cooling-down water. Berta Benz confirmed later, that this voyage is definitely worthy to bear the name, “the 1st long-distance drive,” mainly because of the technical difficulties that needed to be overcome along the way.

This turn of an era can be viewed today, in front of the pharmacy, where a monument designed by the artist Pit Elsasser, captures the moment most dynamically.

Automatically, this location became a regular place of pilgrimage in old-timer rallies. “The Berta Benz Journey”, initially held in 1988 - to mark the 100-year anniversary of the story - is now an annual event. It normally takes place on the 1st weekend of August. The route goes from Mannheim – Ladenburg – Heidelberg - Wiesloch – Bruchsal – Wilferdingen and on to Pforzheim. The return journey goes over Bauschlott – Gondelsheim – Bruchsal – Forst and then back to Mannheim. Automobiles made prior to the years 1930 can take part.

It is historically ironic that the 1st filling station of the world is now located in a designated pedestrian zone, and that the limits of growth for the automobile community are already visible. That this condition would be reached after just 120 years was certainly not imaginable for those first 3, run-away mavericks.
The earliest existing document of the firm is the electoral privilege dated 1735. It states that the pharmacy was privately owned by the pharmacist Thollaus, unusual for this period of time, when tenure contracts were more common. It is also known that another pharmacy had previously existed in Wiesloch, but had been neglected by its former owner, Hoffmann, because of other economic interests.

In the course of the 250 year company history, the location of the pharmacy moved from one place to another around the church square. The building, known today as the historical “Stadt-Apotheke,” was built and furnished when it changed its hands to church square.

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He collected information on other’s experiences, combined them with his own observations and published them in farmer’s journals. This met the approval of the Baronial landlords. The Margrave of Baden is said to have visited J. Ph. Bronner in Wiesloch.

We know little about his family life. Four children stemmed from each of his 2 marriages with G. Märklin and E. Heddaus. His first wife apparently died during childbirth.

His open-minded personality and extensive travel experiences certainly nourished a liberal way of thinking. Thus, it is not strange that his son, Eduard, had to flee because of involvement in the 1848 student revolts in Heidelberg. He became a renowned eye specialist in England and was very active serving the public and caring for others. Johann Philipp Bronner, came to Wiesloch after his apprenticeship and wandering years and married into the “Stadt-Apotheke”, run then by pharmacist Märklin.

He was born in Neckargemünd, where his father ran the pharmacy there. His widespread knowledge of nature and the environment and his studies in pharmacy enabled him to assist and guide the winegrowers in Wiesloch. He soon became well-known and famous for his journeys and studies in these fields outside of his hometown.

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