

First Car Memories

Personally, being born in 1935, I don't really remember anyone having a Model T Ford that they used for regular transportation. I don't remember anyone having a Model A Ford for their automobile. In fact, if Lloyd Broecker had not had a 1930 Model A when he was in high school, I probably would not have remembered it either. He had the habit of spinning around on the icy roads and making the ride exciting. At least it was a way to get to Lapeer High School without having to ride Bus Number 5.

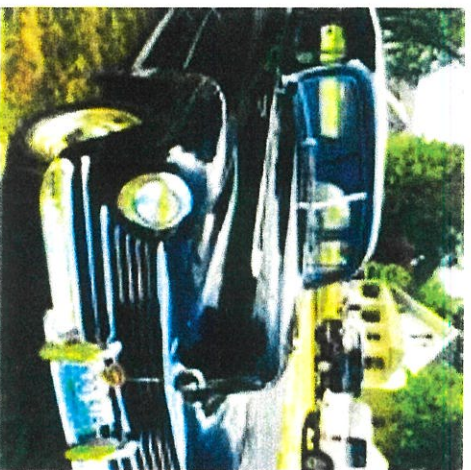
My grandfather had a 1941 Hudson so he must have bought it just before World War II as the car companies stopped making cars soon after that year except for a few to use during the war. I expect that was because my mother had wrecked his Whippet. That was the best car ever. It had foam rubber cushions and ample space for two milk cans to stand upright in the trunk. Every so often Grandma would want to make some brown bread and she would need some buttermilk from the creamery just down the road. Whatever was left after she used what she needed for the brown bread went to the pigs.

I do remember my first Model T. Gene Hartwig wanted to know if I was interested in going "halves" with him on a car that he had heard about. "Why not", I thought. I guess I could scrape up \$12.50 and be "car partners". We went out to this chicken coop on Mervin Road and dragged out this old Model T. It was covered with chicken poop and it was a mess on top of that. It was parked out by my grandfather's barn for a few days and then Gene came by and wanted to know if I wanted to sell my half. Not knowing a thing about cars, I agreed to sell my half and pocketed the \$12.50. No profit, no loss. Later on, Gene sold the car after he and the new owner went out to the chicken coop and found the rumble seat. I wonder if he made a profit?

Cars then were "just cars". A method of getting here and there. Ernest Green, down the road, who had a "chicken factory" had a big green Chrysler brand of automobile. He always called his car the "machine". "Let's go get some chicken scratch." We would hop in the "machine" and off we would go. I expect I would not remember much about that car either but it had an "automatic" transmission. Off Ernest would go and when he would get up enough speed, he would lift up his foot and "clunk", we would be in "drive".

I guess that brings me to my 1946 Hudson. With that car, one could choose what transmission mode one wanted. It had three buttons on the dash. Push the first one and you would shift through the three gears. Push the middle one and the clutch would operate on its own. You still did the shifting. If you would prefer a full automated, push number three. The shifter stayed in "high" but all you needed to do was push on the gas. I guess that was better than my Nash. The starter button was under the clutch pedal. At least one always had the clutch down when he wanted to start the car. Now I turn a knob on the dash to decide if I want to go forward or backward. What next? I know, "Go forward", "go backward". Actually, I've talked to my cars for years.

By Kent Copeman - HTHS Vice President



1946 Hudson Sedan



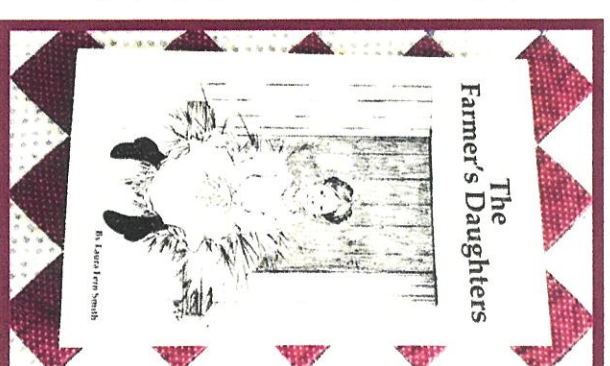
1915 Model T Ford

The Farmer's Daughters by Laura Fern Smith

I just don't know how one little girl could get into so much trouble! These autobiographical stories about growing up in the early 1900's on a small poor farm near Hadley are as engaging as Anne of Green Gables' and just as charming. Little Laura fought the family bull and the snakes under the bridge and even traveled on the train to Flint without parents. This book is a window into a simpler time when children had the opportunity to explore their world unsupervised and with great freedom.

Gary Smith donated many copies of this book to the HTHS and they will be on sale this summer at the Museum Shop. Gary's mother was the author and Reta Copeman typed the manuscript. The bindings on these copies are falling. Because of the poor durability, we are offering them for only \$5 each. I promise you will laugh and be amazed!

Review by Elyse Lewis – HTHS Archivist



Toys for the Museum



Museums are like a time machine. If they don't move with the time, they get old, dusty and ready for the "dust bin". We do not want our Hadley Mill Museum to go the way of the dust bin. Things that are "new" to us are "old" to someone else. An automobile that is from the teens might be exciting to some but of no interest to a younger person. He might want to see something from the fifties or even newer. Our museum tends to move towards the twenties or thirties but are different from what might be seen at other museums. That seems to be our "happy place". Most of our visitors tend to agree.

Right now, we are thinking of the antique toys that are appearing at our door. What, for our museum, is an antique toy? We have a few items that have been donated to the museum but where do we draw the line? We seem to agree that we do not want plastic. If we go back seventy years, that brings us to 1953. That seems like just yesterday to most of us. Plastic was new and brittle. Go back 100 years and its 1923. So, let's think of early toys that we enjoyed in the past such as Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, Jacks, Trains, Trucks, dolls, etc. Think wood, tin, cast, cloth.

Our museum might want to consider gathering a small collection for a display in the future. We recently had a Lionel train donated. It's not perfect but it was used, played with and loved. We have a few other items that have been donated along the way. Some of these items might be tossed out but, before you do, give us a call and see if it would fit into an antique toy collection.

Oops!

In the last edition we made a mistake naming the co-partner in the Cory and Hartwig Company. The partners were Al Corey and Ralph Hartwig.

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Hadley Township Historical Society -- Winter -- 2023

Hadley Mill Museum



Remembered
Don Story, husband of Betty Lou Kulka Story, passed away at Christmas time 2022. Betty Lou grew up in Green Corners and she and Don were great supporters of the Hadley Historical Society and always looked forward to this newsletter.

Current Board Members

President: Brenda Green Reamer
Vice President: Kent Copeman
Secretary: Joyce Ivory
Treasurer: Dennis Emery
Co-Treasurer: Barb Hartwig
Archivist: Elyse Lewis
Trustees: Gary Reamer, Ann Goodwin, Mark Polk,
Brian Martin, and Kristie Walker
Editor: Kent Copeman

The President's Corner

My first year is behind me and what a great year it was. We have many new members and our merchandise seemed to be hit. Best of all, we had a record number of participants that enjoyed our Saturday events and evening programs.

The museum is in the process of getting a new floor in the "apartment" which will be done within the next month. Out with the carpet, in with the look of maple flooring.

Our archivist and volunteers are working on a donation of Hadley Township cemeteries records and some genealogy records. There might not be events happening at this time, but there is still much work being done. The museum door is open every Tuesday morning. If you are interested in seeing what is happening stop in.

The winter season is a time for physical rest but much planning is taking place for the 2023 year's events and programs. We have them scheduled and will release the dates in the Spring issue. We are always open to suggestions and ideas for the museum. You can email hadleyhistorical@gmail.com or you can call me at 810.797.4202.

If you are interested in attending the Historical board meetings, which are open to all, please send your email to: hths@gmail.com with your and email address. We will alert you when a board meeting is scheduled.

Brenda Reamer, President