



The new highway

Dad told us that if we drove north on our road we'd reach Canada. And if we went south, we'd arrive at the Texas coast on the Gulf of Mexico. We were about half way between those mystical places.

We thought that was awesome and wondered if any of the cars going by would reach either end. Our knowledge of distance was quite limited, but dreams of traveling to faraway places had begun.

CARS

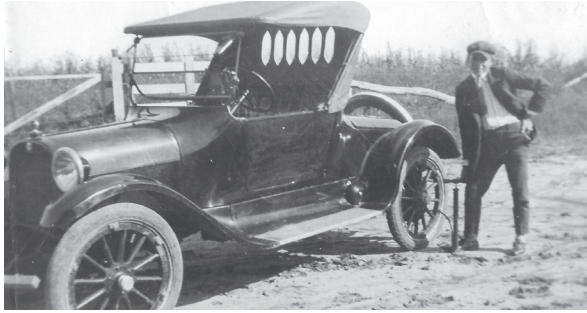
In the far end of the garden, an old abandoned car attracted our visiting cousins in the summertime and became a wonderful play area. Because our legs were not long enough to reach pedals, one kid would man the steering wheel; another pressed the gas pedal or the brake, until everyone had a part to control. Someone would take the crank, place it in its socket and pretend to turn, doing his part to get the car started. Sammy usually became the old time 1915 race car driver, Barney Oldfield. Imaginations ruled those stationary expeditions, taking us far away.

By the time cars became available in the early 1900's, Grandpa and his sons were ready to switch from horse and buggy to the modern auto. They were sure that caring for a horse and buggy was more work than hopping into a car and speeding along in high style. Farm work still needed horses for plowing, planting, and reaping, but that was soon to change when noisy tractors and other machinery came on the scene.

Uncle Sam had been delivering the U.S. mail by horse and buggy and be-

A Kaleidoscope of Memories

lieved that driving a car was the sensible option. He chose a Buick and began a lifelong fascination with cars, opening an Auto Repair shop in Stratton, Colorado. We liked riding with him on hilly roads, and shouted “whoops” when a bump was hit. We loved those whoop bumps.



Sam Adair's Dodge Roadster

Grandpa had chosen a touring car. When he first started driving and tried to slow down, he yelled “whoa!” pulling hard on the steering wheel, as one does on the reins of a team of horses. However he soon became a good driver. Years later Grandpa bought a new 1928 Buick to take the family camping in Pike’s Peak, Colorado.

Dad enjoyed his Model T and its dependability on frequent 100-mile drives to court Mary in Des Moines. He couldn’t have done that with a horse and buggy.



Earl in his model T; Des Moines

Later, Dad and Fred both bought Model A's and added platforms to them. Dad used his for transporting water during the drought, carting animals, feed or whatever. On his platform, Fred fastened washing machines and vacuum cleaners that he sold door-to-door.

Dad's pet purchase was the LaSalle; an elegant beauty with 'jump' seats that folded down for extra seating. We kids were proud that our family owned this car; we felt like royalty. On nights of out-of-town basketball games, that car was crammed full. One night we counted seventeen people filing out of the car! Mom and Dad seldom missed a game and we could hear their cheers as we played on the court. Mom was so vocal during games that Dad even threatened to leave her home. We kids felt special wearing those blue satin outfits, playing our best as the whole town cheered for our teams. The ride home was always filled with excitement as we recalled our time on the court. Cars were a definite asset for attending school events. I wonder if the horses were happy to have a quiet evening at home in their stalls.

UNCLE ARTHUR'S FAMILY VISIT

Excitement swirled around us! Uncle Arthur's family was coming for a visit—all the way from Bangkok, Siam (now Thailand). We kids were in awe because they had spent years living in far away Siam, where Arthur was a Physics Professor at Bangkok University. Uncle Arthur was Aunt Jennette's and Mom's older brother. Mom had spent her final years of high school at a private school that Arthur and his wife Bess had helped establish. Her relationship with them was both as sister and as a student.

Mom seemed intent on impressing Aunt Bess and we were proud to help. Perhaps that was why our spring cleaning was so very thorough. We swept, dusted, polished and placed freshly starched doilies on the gleaming surfaces. Windows were washed and clean curtains hung. We were finally going to meet this family whose letters seemed to come from a magical fairyland. A place where a cook and maid prepared meals, cleaned the home, and where girls had governesses.

We girls worried that our dresses were not fancy and that we would seem 'ordinary' to our cousins. Dad assured us that we were bright kids, as good as anyone living across the ocean. Our clothes were well made by Mom's clever hands or were hand-me-downs from our cousins. Dad reminded us we had nothing to be embarrassed about. We had a loving family, friendly neighbors, a supportive church and a good school with competent teachers. He