

How I Happened to Get a Model A

By Dan Foulk

As long as I can remember, I have had an interest in old things, even Shelby is a couple of years older than me, so at least I am consistent. I can remember when the old crank telephones were replaced by dial telephones in my hometown of Jonesville, Michigan. I had a fairly sizeable collection of the old crank telephones. Eventually, my Dad made me take them to the dump. I bought an old crank telephone on the latest CCRG tour - oh to have those old phones back!



My Grandmother was an antique dealer, and she used to take me on her forages through the country - she called it "Antiquing". I can distinctly remember her joy at finding an old cylinder type Victrola in someone's attic. She carefully instructed me to not express too much joy at the find, lest the owner would know that it was worth something, and we would end up paying too much for it. I don't remember what she paid, but probably around five dollars.

Grandma used to make a decent living "Antiquing"; she would often buy complete households. She would then auction off the newer stuff and take the antiques to her shop, and sell them there. Old Oak furniture was considered junk, and often Grandma would chop up an old oak wardrobe or oak secretary and use it for kindling wood.

The small town where I was raised is about 100 miles due west of Detroit. When I lived in Michigan, the automobile was king, and everyone drove American cars, there was no other choice. Our small town was supported primarily by supplying parts to the automotive industry. I can remember a trip to Dearborn, Michigan with my parents to visit Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum. I think it may have been about 1953, because I think we drove to Dearborn in our "53" Ford (my Dad only ever had two Fords while I knew him, a '53, and a '59, after the '59, Dad pretty much hated Fords!) I would have been 11.

We attempted to do the entire complex in one day. Greenfield Village has all kinds of interesting things, Thomas Edison's laboratory (he and Henry Ford were great friends), the chair that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in, and lots of other stuff. Henry Ford museum was toward the latter part of the day, and I was absolutely fascinated there. I can remember seeing all kinds of old cars, of course old cars then are really old now! I can remember seeing Model "T" cutaways, where the car would be split right down the middle so you could see what the insides of the cars looked like. As I remember it, it was dark when we left, and I didn't want to leave. I can remember thinking about that museum for months, they even had antique underwear in there!

Many of you know that I am in the Information Technology (IT) Industry. I have been into computers since 1968. I started in my career in Michigan working for one of those parts suppliers to the automotive industry. In 1974, we moved from Michigan to California. Shelby is a Californian, and I tried to make a Michigander out of her, but it didn't work!

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In 1978, I went to work for the old "Twenty Mule Team Borax Company" working in their IT Department on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. Our computer supplier was IBM, and many of the people that I worked with on a daily basis were IBM employees. One of the best IBM'ers was a guy by the name of Mike Read.

Now fast-forward about twenty five years. I no longer worked for Borax, in fact, I had hit a couple of different parts of the country, in particular West Virginia, and Berkeley, California. As luck would have it, eventually, I came to be working at my current job, back in Los Angeles, and Mike Read, no longer at IBM, happened to become one of my employees. So, at that point in time, I had known Mike for over 25 years.

One day, we were talking, and Mike said, "come on down to the garage, and I'll show you my Model A". "Model A", I said, "I didn't know you had a Model A!" "Sure", he said, "I've got two of 'em, a '29 open cab pickup, and a Murray sedan". Can you believe it, all that time I knew Mike, I never knew he liked old cars. Mike eventually let me read all of his Restorer magazines - he has almost all of them! I went down to the garage, and looked at Mike's unrestored pickup that he actually did work with, like hauling bricks, and gravel. I was envious. I told him that I had "always wanted to have one." Mike said, "why don't cha get one?" I told him that I just didn't have the room for one, I already had an old pickup that was my Dad's, a '65 Chevy, that was taking up what little extra space I had in my garage in Orange County.

I swear, within two weeks of talking to Mike and lamenting about wanting to have a Model A, I had one! The year was 1996. My mother still lives in the same house in the little town in Michigan where I grew up, and every year at least once, we go to visit her. Well, the morning after arriving at my mother's house, I was looking out the window, and lo and behold, what does the neighbor have for sale? My '28 Open Cab Pickup! Just like Mike's, except one year older. My mother's neighbor had actually built the truck from parts, got it almost completed, and lost interest in it. It had sat in his garage for 10 years, never quite completed, and had less than 10 miles on a rebuilt engine. The price was right, and I bought it. My mother's two car garage now had two vehicles in it again, and would have for four years before I managed to get it hauled to California. In April of 2000, it arrived at my home in Bakersfield, and now you know the "rest of the story."

Fast forward to 2011. I am retired and no longer live in Orange County. Mike Read is still working, but now lives in Sedona, Arizona, he sold his sedan, but still has his truck. My mom passed in 2006, her home of 65 years was sold in 2004. But my little black Open Cab Pickup still performs admirably, having passed over about 30,000 miles of road since I bought it in 1996.

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