

Henry's Wonderful Model T (1908-1927)

By Floyd Clymer

Bonanza Books, New York, Publisher, 1955, first printing
 Hardback Book 219 pages: includes 500 photographs, cartoons, ads, songs, jokes

by Paul Duncan

Book Review

I won a copy of Henry's Wonderful Model T 1908-1927 at a Tin lizzies meeting raffle that had been donated by Vaughn Rockafellow. The author Floyd Clymer (1895-1970) became the youngest Ford dealer in the country at age 14. He first started selling cars in Berthoud, Colorado at age 11! Clymer became known for his motorcycle racing and later owned the Indian Motorcycle Company. He wrote numerous books, magazine publications and racing articles. He became a friend of Henry Ford and dedicated this Model T book to Ford's memory.

The Model T book is organized into 7 chapters. Six chapters are written by Clymer and the third chapter is written by Leslie R. Henry. The third chapter was a preview to Bruce McCalley's monumental 1994 book the "Model T Ford-The Car That Changed the World." Chapter 4 details the workings of the Model T. Chapter 5 published Model T ads. Chapter 6 delves into Model T humor and quotes Henry Ford, "The jokes about my car certainly helped to popularize it. I hope they never end." Chapter 7 is titled "5,000 Accessories."

Clymer points out that the "many Model T owners in the 1909-1927 era knew what made the *flivers* tick." Owners had access to the diagrams in Chapter 4 and Clymer notes that "most of the ordinary adjustments needed would be learned by the owner to do by themselves."

Floyd Clymer also wrote a series of Historical Motor Scrapbooks beginning in 1944. Clymer dedicated his initial scrapbook and those that followed to "those who in the early days of the Motorcycle and Automobile industry pioneered new ideas and improvements that seemed of great importance at the time." In his series of Scrapbooks, he covered many different makes of motorcycles and automobiles that were produced in the early 20th century. Clymer claimed that there were 2,200 makes of automobiles manufactured at that time. He produced a total of 8

Scrapbooks. Clymer's writing is relaxed, informative and enjoyable. In Scrapbook No. 1 (1944) he talks about his early years growing up in Berthoud, CO. In 1902 when Cramer was 7 years old, his father, a small-town doctor, bought a new Oldsmobile in Denver. The car had wire wheels, a one-cylinder rear engine, chain drive and a tiller steering lever. From the Denver, CO dealer, they drove it the 54 miles home to Berthoud.

Clymer includes a Ford advertisement (July 26, 1905) that pictures a Ford Model F with the statement, "It seats five people, climbs hills on high speed, has a roomy side entrance tonneau, is light, strong and rides like a yacht."

Clymer includes an advertisement (April 30, 1921) titled "The Triumph of the Steam Car" that describes the Stanley Steam Car as easy to look after and cheap to maintain as it has no gear box, no magneto, no plugs, no carburetor and only 37 moving parts.

In Scrapbook number 2 (1944) he talks about the Osborne Brothers who ran a Stanley Steamer Stage service

between the train station in Loveland, CO and Estes Park, CO. The Stanley steamers out performed gasoline powered autos of the era on the 34-mile trip over steep mountainous terrain.

Most Clymer automobile books are readily available through used book sellers and offer the reader hours of entertaining reading about early automobile history. Also, the Model T book is also available to check out of the Tin Lizzie library.

