

Killers of the Flower Moon

Co-produced, script co-written and directed by Martin Scorsese
2023, running time 206 minutes
Starring, Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio and Lily Gladstone
Now streaming on Apple TV+, Amazon Prime Video and others.

by Paul & Marilyn Duncan

Movie Review

For this issue of the newsletter, we decided to write a movie review about the current non-fiction feature film “Killers of the Flower Moon” because Model T’s play an important part in the movie that is set during the period 1919-1929. The Osage Indian Reservation is located north west of Tulsa, Oklahoma and during the 1920’s

was a major center of oil production. As a result, many Osage Indians became very wealthy. A number of non-Indian men were involved with various schemes to enrich themselves by killing Osage tribal members.

One particularly heinous scheme involved gaining oil money shares (head rights) following the deaths (murders) of various family members by manipulating inheritance laws. One notorious historical character was local wealthy business man William King Hale (Robert De Niro) who with his nephew Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo Di Caprio) conspired to gain oil revenues from Burkhart’s Osage wife Mollie (Lily Gladstone) and her sisters. Both Hale and Burkhart were eventually arrested by Federal agents and sent to prison.

The movie was shot onsite in Pawhuska and Fairfax, Oklahoma using sets that were recreated for historical accuracy. The Production Designer, Jack Fisk wanted to use vehicles that were historically accurate and real. In a recent New York Times Podcast Fisk comments, “Regarding the choice of cars in the movie, if someone drove a car, why not make it real and make the car like the one he drove.”

As the movie unfolds, the streets of Pawhuska (Fairfax) are filled with Model T cars and trucks. There is a Ford dealership as well as a Dodge

Brothers and Studebaker agency. DiCaprio drives Mollie around in a Model T taxi. Information about the movie shoot was posted on the MTFCA Forum (May 30, 2021), by Mike Garrett of Palmer, Texas and others. Garrett reported that there were 80 Model T’s used in the movie along with a number of other period cars and trucks including,

Dodge Bothers, Packard, Lincoln, Buick, Pierce Arrow, etc. Garrett was one of the drivers in the movie and his 1926 speedster was in the race down Main Street. In addition to the vintage cars a 1916 Baldwin locomotive ran on 4 blocks of



Model T Speedster race.. Screen grab from the movie “Killers of the Flower Moon” trailer (Ref. 1.) by Marilyn Duncan, December, 2023

reconstructed track for the depot set.

Recently, the movie received seven Golden Globe nominations including Best Motion Picture, Best Director (Martin Scorsese), Best Screenplay and Best Original Score along with Best Performances by Lily Gladstone, Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro. We feel that Club members would be entertained by watching this movie and getting a feel for an era in the 1920’s when half the cars on the road were Model T’s!

References:

- (1) **Movie Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cx9nCHsemc>
- (2) **Set Designer Jack Fisk:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/magazine/jack-fisk-movie-sets.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>
- (3) **MTFCA Forum:** <https://www.mtfca.com/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=21434>
- (4) **Grann, David, Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI**, 2017, 352 pages.
- (5) **The Osage Murders: The True Story Behind “Killers of the Flower Moon”:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akT8eq2lRk0>