



# The FLIVVER FLASH

The Official Newsletter of The Space City T's ~ Houston, Texas

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Volume 42 Issue 3

March 2018

## Two Generations of a Tennessee Model T Family

By Bruce Carter

After returning from his tour of duty at Pearl Harbor in the 1940's, my dad, J. N. Carter (1922-1992) purchased a 1915 Model T Ford Touring car from T. B. Sutton, owner of the Sutton General Store in Granville, Tennessee (<http://www.granvilletn.com/attractions/t-b-sutton-general-store>). The car had a unique history as it was Mr. Sutton's first automobile and he owned it for many years with it always being on the streets of Granville prior to dad purchasing it from him for \$25; filled with gas!



For some reason dad had painted the car the worst shade of "burnt" red you could imagine and trimmed it in green. Regardless of the color, it ran well and was mechanically sound. The car was used in Granville for many special functions such as the Dr. L. M. Freeman Parade (1955) which celebrated Dr. Freeman's 50<sup>th</sup> year of practice in the rural Tennessee town. The streets along the parade route were lined with people whom Dr. Freeman had delivered as babies (over 300) during his medical practice in the area. I had a front seat to all the festivities in the parade that day by riding between my dad and Dr. Freeman in the old Model T as dad chauffeured him through town. At age four, it was my earliest memory of the car that eventually captured my mechanical interests as a youngster. Pictures of that day are scattered along the walls of the Granville Antique Car Museum.

I found one newspaper article that referenced the car as being a 1916 model but dad always claimed it was a 1915. The 1915 Model T is somewhat unique in the sense that during the 1914-1916 production, the Model T's went through several changes and modifications in appearance. Henry Ford never wasted any parts so you will find early 1915 models with the 1914 carbide headlights and late 1915 models with some of the 1916 features. If the motor casting number is known (which I never knew or paid any attention to at the time), the car's manufacture date can be closely determined (if it is the car's original engine). The car was equipped with flywheel magnets and a magneto which were first utilized in the 1915. As result, all evidence indicates that it was a 1915 Model, other than the one newspaper article.

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As I grew older, I watched my dad work on the old Model T and enhance its appearance as he collected parts from old barns and sheds in the surrounding middle Tennessee area. As a salesman of livestock feed directly to the farmers, he was always bringing in kerosene side lamps, headlamps, frames, wheels, tires, transmission bands, bows for the top, even a full functioning front assembly still mounted on the front axle and tires that had been used to drive a band saw in a lumber mill! What he couldn't find in "the wild", we searched for in the J. C. Whitney parts catalogs during the evenings! He finally painted it black and we reupholstered the seats using the old material as a pattern. We never got around to making the top even though we had the bows.

My passion for cars, Model T's in particular, grew as dad eventually allowed me to work on the car. As I learned more about the mechanical operation, my interest grew relative to the detailing as well. The old four cylinder engine in the Model T was the first that I ever tore down and rebuilt. I hand sanded and painted the body, hood, fenders, and running boards repeatedly until the finish was smooth and shining.

One Sunday afternoon in the mid 1960's, a friend of dad's, Mr. Leonard Harville, came to visit. Another gentleman was with him and Mr. Leonard said that the fellow had heard of dad's car and wanted to see it. Dad, always willing to show the old car off, headed to the shop and pulled the tarp from the Model T. Mr. Harville's companion walked around looking at the car complimenting its appearance and then asked the question that I'd heard many times. "Is it for sale?" Dad told him that it could be for a price. They talked for a few minutes and then dad priced the car at \$2000, as I had heard him do several times under similar circumstances. The gentleman said, "Well, if it will start, I'll just take it!" My heart sank. I knew the car would not only start, but would run well.

We rolled it out of the storage building into the street between what is now the two Granville Bed & Breakfast buildings. Dad crawled into the car and I pushed him about ten feet and the car fired to life. Dad drove it around the block and pulled up in front of us as we stood by the edge of the street. The gentleman pulled out a roll of \$100 bills and paid dad the \$2000 that none of the previous inquirers would ever consider. He told dad to leave it running while he went down the street and hooked up his trailer that he had parked out of sight.

The old 1915 Model T, the only thing my dad ever had that I really wanted, was loaded and hauled away that evening. Dad made a good deal that afternoon even though he never had any idea someone would give that much money for a 50 year old car in those days. After all, \$2000 would buy

you a pretty nice new car at that time. He tried to justify his reasoning in many ways at dinner that evening. I think that he was disappointed for pricing the car and seeing it hauled away as well. To my knowledge, the car was re-stored and placed in a museum somewhere in North Carolina. As much as I thought about the car through the following years and the passion grew to own a Model T of my own, I never considered to search for the one that had initiated all those feelings and interests until I actually started writing this article. It just didn't feel the same after someone else had made the changes and rebuilt the car after dreaming of doing the same to it myself. However, I'll add the research of finding it to my bucket list and hopefully get a chance to pursue it in the coming years.

My first car was a 1970 Mustang Mach I that I eventually rebuilt after driving several years. I maintained the stock appearance and had a lot of fun with it on the street. I was fortunate in the sense that I got to race other people's cars on the drag strips and dirt tracks through the years but the memories of the old Model T always haunted me when I would see one on the road or one being exhibited. Ironically, I eventually sold the 70 Mach I in 1980 while living in West Virginia in much of the same way dad sold the old Model T. A gentleman came knocking on the door early one Sunday morning and announced that he wanted to buy "that car" as he pointed to the Mach I sitting on my open car hauler. I explained that it really wasn't for sale but he responded, "Son, everything is for sale if the price is right!" After much discussion, I priced it and the gentleman pulled out a roll of \$100 bills and paid me for it. I re-deemed myself somewhat for that mistake in 2012 purchasing a Mustang GT when Ford was promoting the "retro" look. Since the car's body style looked similar to the 1970, I customized it with a Mach I package which included painted badging and stripes, ground effects, a Ford racing suspension package, upgraded 20x8.5 and 20x10 wheels and oversized Toyo tires, 4 post spoiler, stainless steel tubular headers and Flowmaster American Thunder exhaust system, and an operating RAM air injection system. The 2012 Mach I Mustang GT still sets in my garage some six years later with a total of approximately 3100 miles displayed on the odometer as of this writing. The point of this forty-two year car summary is that with all the fun I'd had with various automobile relationships, I still had this deep, burning passion to once again have an affair with a good looking Model T Ford!

The opportunity presented itself early in February 2016 when a business associate advised me that her grandfather, who had rebuilt approximately forty Model T's during his lifetime, was selling his remaining collection of cars, parts, and the property where his house and storage facilities were located. She indicated that he had two cars remaining, one of which (a 1921 Center Door Sedan) had a sale pending. The other car, a 1927 Runabout, was available for an immediate purchase. I called Mr. Delton Stokes that afternoon and schedule an appointment to look at the cars the following day.

When I visited Mr. Delton, the 1921 Center Door really caught my attention because I had never seen that particular body style. He had modified the car for participating in touring events where owners gather and drive their cars throughout the countryside. Model T owners are different than other car collectors; we not only maintain and show our cars, but we capture the enjoyment of driving them!

The 1927 Model T Runabout had been totally restored at one point but due to Mr. Delton's age (83) and health, it had not been serviced and driven in about four years. While this was not the 1915 that I had truly desired, many of these Model T's have been hoarded by older owners and cars in excellent condition were difficult to find. We negotiated a price and I decided to buy the car. My wife was out of town at the time so I decided that I would soften the surprise of my actions by announcing that I had purchased her a 1927 Mustang convertible!



A few weeks later I received a call from Mr. Delton indicating that the pending deal on the 1921 Model T had collapsed and if I was interested, he would sell me the car for the same price negoti-

ated with the other potential buyers. The Model T Center Door Sedan was a unique vehicle during the day, since it exhibited so many "luxury" items for a car of those times. It was fully enclosed with one door on each side, bucket seats in the front, a large bench seat in the back, a headliner and carpeted floors, and flower vases mounted inside the doors. As noted earlier, Mr. Delton had added other features to make it road worthy during the touring events such as a two speed Ruckstell rear axle (which was an approved third-party accessory by Henry Ford), high compression head, dual exhaust, new spoked wheels, turn signals, and replaced the flywheel magnets and magneto with a twelve-volt ignition and wiring system. The 1921 Model T's came from the factory with an electric starter which was a life saver from a physical point of view. Again, this was not the 1915 Model T that I truly desired but with only about 50 Model T Center Door units remaining in operating condition in the state of Texas I didn't think I should pass up on the opportunity to acquire one.

This vehicle was purchased with two specific conditions that I agreed to. The first was that it would not be transformed into a hot rod, which is a common occurrence with these old cars. The second was that I would make the car available to haul the Stokes' one remaining unmarried grand-daughter from the church on her wedding day. Mr.

Delton had done the same previously with all his other granddaughters. Unfortunately, Mr. Delton passed away in April, 2016, just a few weeks after we finalized the purchase and I took possession of the vehicle.

2016 was apparently my year for purchasing Model T Fords. In August, while reading through my copy of the "Vintage" magazine, I saw a beautiful 1915 Model T Brass for sale in Oklahoma. After already purchasing two cars earlier in the year, what was I going to do with a third if I pursued this find! This time I got permission from my wife before making any calls because, not only of another purchase, but the storage of all my toys was becoming a logistical nightmare. I had already invested in a transport trailer in June for hauling the other two cars so my actions over the past few months were taking on the appearance of becoming more of an obsession than a hobby. Regardless of the resulting issues, I had finally identified the Model T that I had been desiring for 50 years.



After numerous calls and remotely investigating the history and condition, we drove to Tulsa, Oklahoma to finalize the deal and pick up the car. This was another amazing find. This car had been exhibited in a Tulsa, Oklahoma automobile museum for 18 months and was in excellent condition.

It was originally owned by the Moore family who ran a salvage yard in Joplin, Missouri and ownership was passed from the grandfather to the grandson, D. C. Oly Moore. The longest trip that the vehicle was ever driven during the Moore ownership was from Joplin to Springfield, Missouri and back. D. C. Oly Moore sold the car in 1965 to Ted Beard in Tulsa. Ted Beard was a young man at the time and several older gentlemen in the area took it upon themselves to help him restore the vehicle in 1966. The names of these people and what they did are inscribed on the bottom of the rear seat. Andy Hope conducted the painting, the motor was serviced by Felix Graves, the seats and top were refurbished by Jim Kirk, and other miscellaneous repairs were made by Ted Beard himself. Between 1966 and 2007 when Mr. Beard sold the car to Ted Forcum, only minor tune ups and maintenance was conducted on the vehicle. Ted Beard drove the car regularly in local parades and touring events.



The purchase of this car also came with a condition. The only reason Mr. Forcum sold the car was because being in its original state, one must hand crank the engine to start it. Mr. Forcum, also 83, simply could not meet the physical demands required and wanted to find the car a home with someone with the same passion that many of these old gentlemen feel about their Model T's. The condition of the sale required the promise that this vehicle would not be converted to a hot rod as well. In fact, that was a condition in which Mr. Beard sold the car to Mr. Forcum in 2007.



Based on the motor casting number (659463), the car was built on February 17, 1915. The car is currently exhibited in the 1966 refurbished condition with only minor changes appropriate for the car's time period. It was shown at the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA) 2016 Central Fall Meet in Galveston, Texas where it received the Century Club Award and won a Driver Participation Class Award. The car was featured in the 2017 Granville, Tennessee Wine Festival parade and again at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Gran-



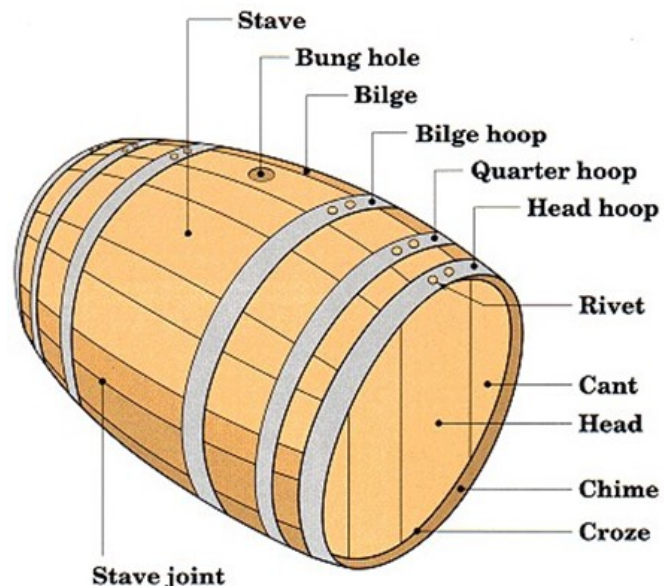
ville, Tennessee Heritage Day event where it was a parade headliner, won the H. F. Houston Memorial Production Award and was recognized as an AACA National Class winner at the event. It was exhibited at the 2017 Conroe, Texas Kids Festival, appeared in numerous promotional videos and is a recent winner of the Katy Cruizers Car Club photo contest in Katy, Texas. In October, 2017 the car was driven in the annual Texas T Party touring event based in Kerrville, Texas.

The purchase of this car has fulfilled a life long dream of owning a Model T Ford like the one my dad once had and enjoyed so much. Sharing the pride and passion that members of the previous generation feel about their vintage vehicles helps us appreciate a less stressful and peaceful time relative to faster pace of today's routines and requirements. I hope to pass these experiences and fulfillments on to the next generation that others have afforded to me.

## Wine Barrel Trunk

By Peter Adey

I wanted to add a little "pizazz" to my 1914 runabout pickup conversion. Back in the 70's a previous owner had made the conversion to a pickup and decided to move the gas tank into the pickup bed. I am not sure what inspired me, but for some reason I thought the idea of putting a wine barrel back there to enclose the tank would look pretty nice. So I searched around and found a small business that sells oak wine barrels here in Houston and went to have a look. After coming home with a very nice French oak barrel, the project began. One thing I did not have an appreciation for was how big these barrels actually are!



I was most concerned with the length of the barrel. My pickup bed is 34 inches wide. Wine barrels are 35 inches high. It was fairly simple to remove the head hoops and cut a ½ inch off each end (chime) – that was the easy part. My plan was to simply lay the barrel on its side in the bed and put the gas tank inside it. This was a non-starter - the girth (at the bilge or widest point) is so large the car's vinyl top and bows would not collapse down far enough for them to rest in the top support braces on the car. Clearly a little engineering was in order. This is where the fun began.

First you must realize that wine barrels are simply pressed together – no glue can be used for obvious reasons. Simply cutting the metal hoops of the barrel would result in the entire barrel falling apart! So after some careful measurements I drilled holes in the metal hoops and placed wood screws on each side of each stave joint where I was going to cut. Cutting the hoops with



an angle grinder cut-off wheel allowed the removal of over one third of the barrel. Removal of the barrel staves and cutting the head created a flat spot on the bottom that can lay flat in the pickup bed. After test fitting over the gas tank I knew I had a workable solu-



tion. The girth reduction allowed the car's vinyl top to rest in the support braces as it should. All I would need to do is cut a door in the barrel to allow access to

the gas tank filler. Intrigued by the fit I pressed on. Cutting the door in the side of the barrel is harder than it looks. Again one has to be concerned over maintaining the integrity of the barrel structure (especially after I had already cut it in half!). I drilled and screwed every barrel stave to the hoops where

the door was going to be. I then used an angle grinder saw to cut four staves between the stave joints. After cutting the barrel hoops the door fell right out in one piece and the barrel, thankfully, stayed intact.

I then widened the cuts and stave joints to make the door a looser fit and hinged it with some black strap



hinges. After sanding, staining, varnishing, painting the barrel hoops black and adding a handle and locking latch, I had the finished product.

The end product fits perfectly in the pickup bed without any modification to the bed itself, and wow - what a great look! Not only had I covered up the gas tank, I added a lot of lockable trunk space for tools and spare parts. One thing I did not expect, my garage still smells like red wine!







## 2018 TEXAS T PARTY OCTOBER 10 - 13

**We're heading to Schulenburg, TX**

It is time to mark your calendars for the **41st Annual Texas T-Party**. This year's event will be in **Schulenburg, Texas**. We will start the tour on Wednesday morning Oct 10 and will close it with the banquet on Saturday evening October 13.

The hotels are: Main hotel is **Holiday Inn & Suites at 200 Heinrich St, Schulenburg, TX 78956**, call (979)307-5555 (service animals **ONLY**). Overflow hotel will be the **Best Western Plus at 101 Huser Schulenburg, TX 78956** call 979)743-2030 (\$20 fee per night for **pets**). Make your reservations now, you can cancel later if you need to. Mention the **Texas T-Party** when you call, rates are \$109 (includes breakfast). Unfortunately, there aren't any RV Parks nearby, the nearest one is 16 miles away in Weimer. There is plenty of grassy area with the trailers.

Tour fees will be \$175 for the car & driver, passengers will be \$150 and children 12 and under will be free. We will accommodate a few single day visitors – call for a daily amount – but if riding more than one day, please figure the full tour amount.



[2018-T-Party-Registration-Form.pdf](#)



Tour the  
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And maybe...

Check out a Car  
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The Flivver Flash is published by the Space City T's chapter of The Model T Ford Club of America in Houston, Texas twelve times per year. This newsletter is produced for the education, edification and enjoyment of members and those expressing interest in joining the Space City T's. Said education, edification and enjoyment is as it pertains to the Model T Ford automobile. The Flash is also shared with other antique auto clubs. Other clubs may feel free to use articles from this publication with credit to this newsletter or the original source. News, articles, ads or anything of interest to club for publication must be submitted to the editor by the deadline of the 20th of month preceding the month of publication. Emailing takes place the last week of the month. Annual dues are \$25.00 per year.

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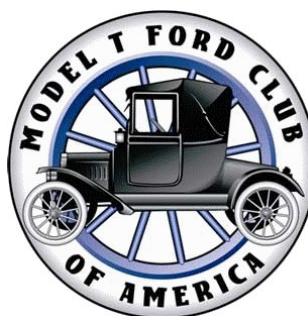
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The Space City T's Club is the Houston, Texas Chapter of The Model T Ford Club of America. All questions concerning membership in the Model T Ford Club of America, The Vintage Ford magazine, MTFCA Library, Chapter Insurance, purchase of manuals, back magazine issues or store items can be directed to the following:

#### Model T Ford Club of America

309 N. 8th Street, PO Box 996

Richmond, IN 47375-0996

Phone: 765-855-5248

E-mail: [susan@mtfca.com](mailto:susan@mtfca.com)

\$40 Annual dues includes six issues of The Vintage Ford

Join MTFCA at: <http://www.mtfca.com/>

## Calendar of Events

- Mar 4-8** [FL Model T Ford Winter Tour](#)
- Mar 24** [Lakeview Elementary School](#)  
[100 yr. Celebration:](#) [Beth Mullins](#)
- Apr 14** [Cleveland TX Liberty Church](#)  
[Car Show:](#) [Andrew Britt](#)
- Apr 28** [Conroe Kidzfest:](#) [Larry Foerster](#)
- May 5** [Galveston Tour:](#) [Bobby Wright](#)
- May TBD** [Ice Cream Social in Bacliff:](#)  
[Bill & Pat Sherrill](#)
- Oct 10-13** [Schulenberg Texas T Party:](#)  
[Rosemarie Stokley](#)

## Flivver Flash Inputs Needed

Do You Have Something to Share? A Barn find, Funny and not so Funny Model T stories? Tour Photos, or articles about Model T's? Your Model T acquisition stories, Restoration Photos or Swap meet finds? A special interest article? **Please email ads, articles, photos, stories, etc. to:**

[topkick7@outlook.com](mailto:topkick7@outlook.com)

**Next Meeting**  
**March 14, 2017**



**Dine with Friends at**  
**Demeris BBQ at 6:00 P.M.**

**located at**  
**1702 West Loop North,**  
**Suite A, Houston, TX 77008**

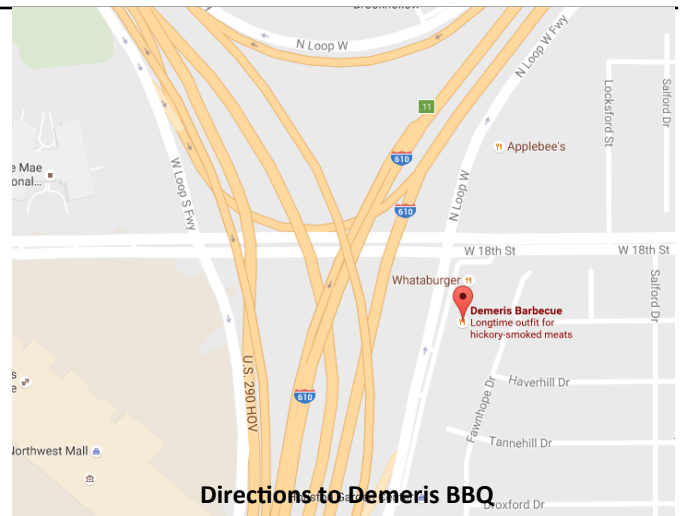
**Then attend the**  
**Space City T's Meeting at 7:30 P.M.**

**Place:**

**Lazy Brook Baptist Church**  
**1822 West 18th Street in the Heights**

**Website:** [www.spacecityts.org](http://www.spacecityts.org)

**Email:** [modelt@spacecityts.org](mailto:modelt@spacecityts.org)



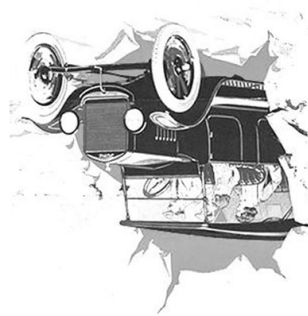
**Directions to Demeris BBQ**

**NOTICE: FM 290 CONSTRUCTION DETOURS**

If construction allows, from the east or west on I-10 or the south side of downtown, take the I-610 West Loop North and get off at the 18th Street Exit.. Demeris BBQ will be immediately on the right after Houston Garden Nursery.

If construction allows, from the west on Highway 290, exit at Mangum and turn right to 18th Street. At 18th, turn left, cross under West Loop and turn into the Whataburger parking lot on the right.. Proceed to Demeris BBQ after the Whataburger.

If construction allows, from the north on I-45, take the 610 North Loop West around to the I-610 West Loop South to the Hempstead Highway exit.. Make a U-turn under I-610 and proceed north on the frontage road



**First Class Mail**



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**302 Torrey Court**  
**League City, Texas 77573**

**The FLIVVER FLASH**