

# The Flivver Flash

The Official Newsletter of the Space City T's - Houston, TX

## ICE, ICE, BABY AND THE MODEL T

by Debbie Marino

As this article is being written, the weather may show signs of fall in other parts of the country, but the Houston area still faces three-digit heat indexes and high humidity. This author thought she'd try to cool you down by enlightening you on the subjects of ice harvesting, refrigeration, and the Model T ice truck.

Long before we casually stored our leftovers in the fridge, the early cold storage systems in the United States were underground in the 1700s. From an ice storage pit discovered at the Jamestown settlement, crafted like those in England during the time, to an ice house at the former site of the President's House in Philadelphia, to the ice well of City Tavern in Alexandria, Virginia, underneath the street, history shows the importance of having a supply of ice for both food storage and entertaining. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/ice-harvesting-electric-refrigeration>

The City Tavern, known as Gadsby's Tavern, circa 1793, was part of the ice harvesting



*Into the 1930s, households used large blocks of ice to keep food cold in "iceboxes." This photo is from the 1920s. Courtesy of the Sloane Collection.*

industry that began to take off in the early 1800s. In the City Tavern's case, ice was cut from the Potomac River in the winter, and stored for use throughout the summer.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/IceWell> Ice harvesting involved the dangerous sliding of bone-crushing blocks of ice weighing at least

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300 pounds, in conjunction with numb hands, frigid waters, and sharp tools. Eventually, using horses to pull plow-like ice cutters from frozen lakes and ponds, somewhat akin to crop harvesting, was more efficient, but still an arduous process. <https://packagedice.com/the-history-of-ice/>

Towards the end of the 1800s and into the 1930s, the ability to store ice expanded from commercial use and private wealth to include many other households via an insulated "icebox" mostly made of wood and lined in tin, zinc, or lead. The icebox stored their perishable food, along with a large block of ice needed to keep those items refrigerated. To accomplish this, an iceman would make daily deliveries. Cards left in the windows of their customers would tell the icemen how many pounds of ice were needed, often increments of 25, 50, 75, or 100 pounds.



<http://www.woodsholemuseum.org/icehouse/delivery.html>

The iceman would use an ice pick to chisel the requested amounts from an ice block of approximately 300 pounds, measuring roughly

4 feet by 2 feet by 1 foot. He would then use large tongs to hoist the ice over his shoulder and onto his back, carrying it to the house and placing it in the icebox. Children loved to follow behind to plead for ice slivers to keep cool in the summertime. Even through the 1920s, apartment buildings were constructed with ice doors that opened into the kitchens.

Because ice is such a perishable commodity, ice coupon books were initiated, with weighted amounts specified on the papers. Customers buying these books directly from the ice company received a small discount for purchasing in bulk, eliminating the need for icemen to handle cash. This new record-keeping system of inventory limited the icemen from making any side deals that could be chalked up to melting product, but also reduced customer complaints that they had been shortchanged. (Rees, Jonathan (2018) *Before the Refrigerator: How We Used to Get Ice* (pp. 2-3). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.)



Delivery of ice to the South was suspended during the Civil War, which led many of the

southern states to turn to “mechanical ice”, an artificial means to manufacture ice. By the war’s end, competition with “natural ice” manufacturing was increasing. Notably warm winters in 1889 and 1890 essentially decimated the natural ice business, as the country grew to rely on the mechanical ice houses. <http://ultimatehistoryproject.com/ice-house.html> These ice plants manufacturing the mad-made ice were particularly expansive in the sweltering South, with the first one opening in 1868 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and many that followed in Mississippi before the turn of the century. Manufactured ice was a booming industry. The 1920 U.S. Census Bureau reported that there were 4800 block ice plants that employed 160,000 people, producing 40 million tons of ice that year alone, which equates to roughly 750,000 blocks of ice every 24 hours.

The ice industry led to a boom in other businesses, as well. Farm produce and seafood were two such industries that benefitted. What were once local commodities, these highly perishable goods progressed to regional, then national items, shipped on railroad cars. The country was becoming so reliant on ice that a man working at an ice plant could be excused from duty during both World Wars. <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/343/making-ice-in-mississippi>

However, both World War I and II also kept the natural ice trade alive, due to the government promoting its use rather than artificial ice, which needed valuable resources of ammonia and coal in its production. With the ending of the Second World War, reliance on artificial ice-making and mechanical cooling systems exhausted the natural ice industry. It’s been hinted that the growth of personal home electric refrigerators was driven by service men returning from WWII duties, due to a long-standing rumor from WWI that many wives

were a little too acquainted with the iceman while their husbands were off at war, thus creating a need to hastily replace the icebox. <https://packagedice.com/the-history-of-ice/>



Ice was initially delivered via horse and wagon, often with colorfully decorated lettering promoting their company. A horse would learn the route so well that it might even pull ahead to the next customer while the iceman was still delivering ice at the previous home. <http://www.woodsholemuseum.org/icehouse/delivery.html> It soon became more cost efficient to use motor vehicles for ice delivery, as illustrated in the *Ford, A Business Utility* booklet circa 1920, which mainly consists of customers’ testimonials on their satisfaction of Ford’s cars and trucks.

“Middletown Artificial Ice Company, Middletown, Ohio, have built up their Ford equipment from one to eight Ford Trucks. These are the reasons why: "The initial cost of a Ford Truck is much less than any other truck on the market, of equal capacity, but instead of carrying a ton on a Ford, we never leave the plant with less than one and one-half tons of ice to the truck. Hence, we are overloading this



truck fifty per cent. (We) have been operating these trucks two years and have experienced no trouble by overloading. Our annual reports show that we can operate a Ford Truck on retail business at a cost of from sixty cents to one dollar on the ton cheaper than can be done with the horses."

"Just one-third of horse team expense" is the record of the Nevada Coal & Ice Company, Nevada, Iowa, covering a Ford Truck. "We have had a Ford Truck in service one year, and have had no upkeep expense except a few spark plugs. Our running expense is just one-third of our team expense. We have been using the truck for delivery of coal, ice, cement, lime and sand."

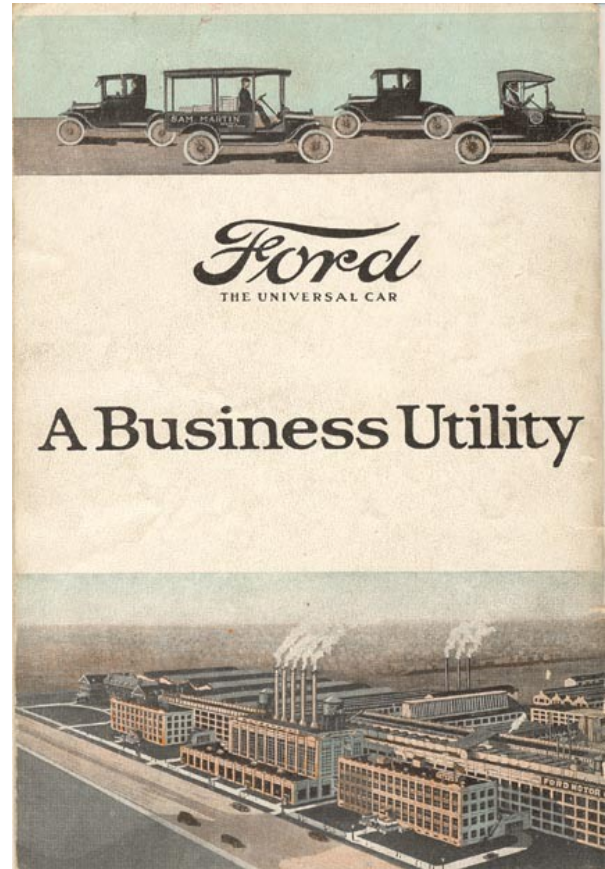
"Crystal Ice & Storage Co., of Portland, Oregon, owns 27 Ford Trucks, 19 of which operate in the city of Portland as ice and ice cream deliveries. These trucks are in operation 8 to 10 hours daily, and have been found superior to any other truck."

"An inevitable decision---and The Lawrenceville Ice & Storage Company, Lawrenceville, Ill., tell the reasons why: "We have always until this year used heavier trucks in our business. We purchased a Ford Truck the first of the year, and have found it to be so practical for our business that we have placed an order for another one, and expect to dispose of all our heavier trucks and replace them with Fords."

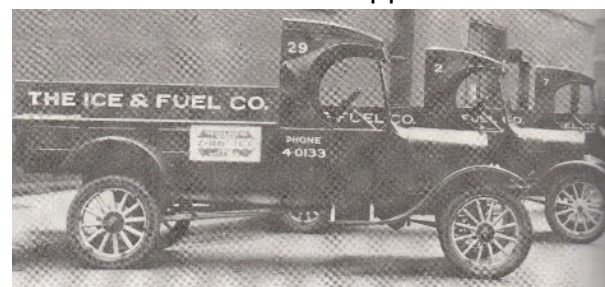
"The Fort Smith Retail Ice Company, Fort Smith, Ark., say: "This is the second truck that we have purchased and we find it the very thing in every particular for our line of business. The upkeep and operation are so small that we cannot find anything that would compare with them for the price compared with the service rendered. In regard to depreciation, the Ford Truck which I had used two years, I sold recently, and received about 75 per cent of the original cost for same."

Ten Ford Trucks and one Ford Roadster is the

equipment of the Tacoma Ice Company, Tacoma, Wash. This is their letter: "We are now operating 10 Ford Trucks and 1 Roadster. Low investment and economy of operation were the factors in prompting us in our decision to standardize on the Ford Truck."



If you would like to view the entire booklet online, it can be found at the following MTFCA link. [https://www.mtfca.com/books/ford\\_business.htm](https://www.mtfca.com/books/ford_business.htm) Many of the ice trucks were coal trucks in the winter months to capitalize on both seasons' business opportunities.



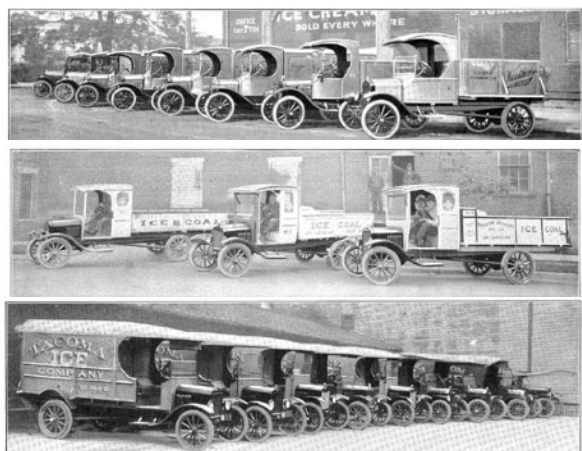
Ice Trivia:

"Early theaters kept their patrons cool by placing a block of ice before a fan to chill the air. Fancy theaters had an elaborate cooling

system in the basement that blew chilled air into the theater. The more people who showed up to view a movie, the more ice required to chill the room. Hence, a popular movie became known as a "blockbuster." <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/343/making-ice-in-mississippi>



William Shaw's Ice & Coal Company, Model T Ford truck. *The Old Motor Photo*, [theoldmotor.com](http://theoldmotor.com)



Above three photos: [https://www.mtfca.com/books/ford\\_business.htm](https://www.mtfca.com/books/ford_business.htm)

In 1927, John Jefferson Green, who ran the Southland Ice Company's dock in Dallas, supplemented ice sales in his ice distribution shops with the permission of Southland's founder, Joe C. Thompson, by selling milk, eggs and other items he kept cool with the ice he was distributing. His shops opened early at 7 am and stayed open till 11 pm after grocery stores had closed so that working customers could pick up their blocks of ice. As the market

shifted from ice to convenience items his shops were renamed Seven-Eleven in 1946. <http://ultimatehistoryproject.com/ice-house.html> In 1963, a 7-Eleven near the University of Texas in Austin was inundated with customers following a football game, resulting in staying open past 11 pm. The store's sales were so impressive that night, that the location changed its hours to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The company's other stores then followed their lead. <https://www.pymnts.com/news/retail/2018/amazon-go-convenience-store-7-eleven/>

At last Space City T's of Houston club meeting it was requested to get prices on the SCT's Oval Club Logo signs.



If you want any of these please contact Bobby Wright at email [bcw54800@gmail.com](mailto:bcw54800@gmail.com) or by text to 409.771.5548 and place your order. When Bobby gets a few orders he will have them made.

	Magnetic	Peel & Stick
6 inch	\$10	\$5
12 inch	\$20	\$10
18 inch	\$25	\$15

**For more Space City T's of Houston info:**

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

Email: [ModelT@spacecityts.org](mailto:ModelT@spacecityts.org)

**34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**  
**ALDERSGATE UNITED**  
**METHODIST CHURCH**  
 13217 FM 1764, Santa Fe  
 (409) 925-2552  
**COUNTRYFEST**  
**BAZAAR &**  
**CRAFT SHOW**

**October 19 - 9am - 4pm**



**Fun, Food, Pumpkins,  
 Children's Games,  
 Silent Auction, Antique  
 Car & Tractor Show  
 Barbecue Lunch**

**Homemade Goods & Crafts Vendors**  
**FREE GAMES for the KIDS!**

Please text or call Bobby Wright at  
 409.771.5548 or email:  
[bcw54800@gmail.com](mailto:bcw54800@gmail.com) for information  
 to bring your Model T & Trailer.

**2019 Calendar of Events**

**Wednesday Oct 9th - Saturday Oct 12th** - 42nd  
 Annual Texas T Party in Brenham, TX

**Saturday October 12, 2019** - Pleasant Hill  
 Baptist Church will host our 5th annual  
 "Cruisin' for a Cause" Car and Truck Show. 9am  
 to 1pm with the recognition of the top cars and  
 trucks. Pre-register at [www.phbctyler.com](http://www.phbctyler.com).  
 Please contact Debra at 903.561.0445 or send  
 an email to : [debra@phbctyler.com](mailto:debra@phbctyler.com)

**Saturday Oct. 19th** - Aldersgate United  
 Methodist Church CountryFest Bazaar & Craft  
 and Antique Car & Tractor Show. 9am to 4pm.  
 13217 FM 1764, Santa Fe, TX. Please text or  
 call Bobby Wright at 409.771.5548 or email:  
[bcw54800@gmail.com](mailto:bcw54800@gmail.com) for information on  
 bringing your Model T & Trailer.

**Saturday Oct. 19th - 9AM - 3PM** - 4th Annual  
 Fulshear Police Foundation Benefit Car Show at  
 the Fulshear PD at 29255 FM 359 hosted by  
 Westenders Car Club. Contact: Bill Heede  
 847-980-7246

**Saturday Oct. 19th** - [La Grange Czech Heritage Center](#)  
 - 10am. Rita (979) 743-6561

**Saturday Oct. 19th** - [Needville Harvest Festival with Car Show](#)  
 contact Email: [needvilleharvestfest.org](http://needvilleharvestfest.org)

**Saturday Nov. 9** - Old Kingsbury Aerodrome  
 Airport [Fall Wings & Wheels Fly-In!](#) 190  
 Pershing Ln, Kingsbury, TX 78638, Email:  
[info@pioneerflightmuseum.org](mailto:info@pioneerflightmuseum.org) or call: (830)  
 639-4162.

**Sunday Dec. 1st** - Space City T's of Houston  
 Christmas Banquet - 5pm. We will be playing  
 the "White Elephant Game" again with gift  
 limits set at \$20 to \$25. Also collecting new  
unwrapped toys for Toys For Tots. **Please RSVP**  
**with Dave Lucas at 713-299-3059**

Thanks, Dave Lucas  
 SCT Club President 2018/2019  
 713-299-3059 mobile



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 and enjoyment of members and those expressing interest in joining the Space City T's. Said education 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 use articles from this publication with credit to this newsletter or the original source. News, articles, ads or anything of interest to the club must be submitted to the editor by the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Emailing takes place the last week of the month. Annual dues are \$25 per year.

#### 2019 Space City Club Officers and Board Members

President	Dave Lucas	281-388-0761
Vice President	Rick McCracken	281-351-0701
Secretary	Rosemarie Stokley	281-574-7850
Treasurer	Jerry Smith	281-461-9906
Board Member	Broderick Thompson	713-269-3820
Board Member	Bobby Wright	409-771-5548
Board Member	Bill Severn	936-273-3592

## THE FLIVVER FLASH

Anthony J. Marino  
302 Torrey Court  
League City, TX 77573  
281-482-4156

email: [modelt@spacecityts.org](mailto:modelt@spacecityts.org)

## New Members Wanted

Please visit our [Space City T's of Houston Texas web site](#) and view our club future and past Model T Ford events and activities.

If interested, please provide your name, address, mobile phone, & email, and make a \$25 check payable to:

**Space City T's**

Please mail your information and check to the Treasurer at:

**Jerry Smith**  
**13723 Llano Lake Court**  
**Houston, Texas 77059**

The Space City T's Club is the Houston, Texas chapter of the Model T Ford Club of America. All questions concerning membership, The Vintage Ford magazine, the 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

Email: [susan@mtfca.com](mailto:susan@mtfca.com)

\$40 annual dues includes six issues of the Vintage Ford

Join MTFCA at: [www.mtfca.com](http://www.mtfca.com)



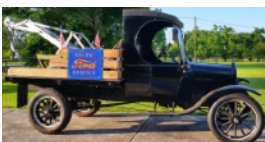
**ANTIQUE AUTO**  
MODEL A & MODEL T SPECIALIST

**ROSS LILLEKER**

**979.218.4083**  
**WWW.MRMODEL.COM**

#### For Sale:

#### 1924 C-Cab Wrecker



Starts, Runs, Drives as it should. High Speed rear end, Muncie Aux transmission with reverse, Signs not included. **\$11000**

**Bobby Wright, text or call 409.771.5548 email: [bcw54800@gmail.com](mailto:bcw54800@gmail.com)**



**For Sale: Single axle trailer.** Great for a Model T! Has tail lights, license bracket, and uses 1 7/8 in. ball. **\$750**  
**Ed Messenger, Longview, TX call 903-759-1602, leave message.**

## FLIVVER FLASH INPUTS NEEDED

Do you have something to share? A barn find, funny or 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. etc. to: [topkick7@outlook.com](mailto:topkick7@outlook.com)

## Next Meeting

**Texas T Party Oct. 9-12, 2019**



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

**located at**

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

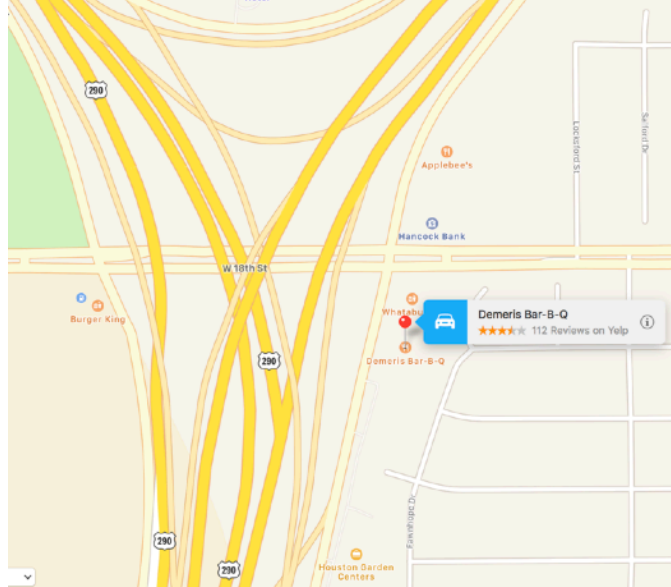
**Then attend the  
Space City T's Meeting at 7:30 P.M.**

**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**

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.

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.

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 to just before 18th Street, Demeris BBQ will be on your right after Houston Garden Center.



**First Class Mail**



Space City T's of Houston  
Anthony J. Marino  
302 Torrey Court  
League City, Texas 77573

**The FLIVVER FLASH**