

Forney

MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

Newsletter March 2023

"Moving Forward"



Hurrah for the Red, White & Buick!

The new exhibit is in full swing and everybody loves a Buick! With 28 Buicks on display, there are so many amazing cars to see, such as the all-black 1986 Regal Grand National, the yellow 1970 Skylark 'GS' (front and center) or the '58 Century painted in 'Laurel Mist Metallic' seen below. Maybe it's the 1953 "Golden Anniversary" Skylark painted in 'Pinehurst Green Metallic' on the bottom right. There's sure to be a favorite Buick for everyone!





Look Who's Back!

The Museum's 1940 Graham Supercharged Model 107 has returned from several months on display at the Orphanage Art Gallery & Museum in Yuma, Colorado. Restored and donated by Carl Nordin of Wheat Ridge, Colorado in 2019, this vehicle is a museum favorite with



its distinctive "Shark Nose" front end, beautiful "Riviera Blue" finish and the remarkable condition to which it was restored. This Graham is one of fewer than a dozen known to survive in running condition. Now on display at the Forney Museum of Transportation.



This Month in Transportation History

March 12, 1609 - The island of Bermuda was colonized by the British after a ship on its way to Virginia was wrecked on the reefs.

March 29, 1806 – President Thomas Jefferson signed into law the first federal highway program, to establish the National Road connecting the new state of Ohio to the cities of the East.

March 18, 1834 – The first railway tunnel in the United States is opened in Pennsylvania as part of the Allegheny Portage Railroad. At the time of its opening, the Staple Bend Tunnel was just the third of its kind in the world.

March 15, 1906 – The first caisson lighthouse in the Gulf of Mexico is lit near the mouth of the Sabine River in Texas. Caisson lighthouses have a superstructure built onto a concrete or metal caisson to withstand severe weather, and the Sabine River lighthouse was tested by a major hurricane in 1915. Despite extensive damage to the superstructure, the foundation was found to be intact and the lighthouse was rebuilt, continuing in service to this day.

March 8, 1946 – The single-rotor, single-engine Bell 47 becomes the world's first helicopter certified for civilian use by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the predecessor of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

March 20, 1949 – The California Zephyr begins its inaugural run from Chicago, Illinois to San Francisco, California. Notable stops along the route were Denver and Salt Lake City. With the distinctive 'Vista-Dome' train car, and the incredible scenic views of the American West, helped to make the Zephyr one of the United States' most iconic rail journeys. Still in operation today the modern California Zephyr is Amtrak's longest daily route.

March 9, 1951 – The first trolleybus route is opened in Mexico City. Trackless trolleybuses continue to operate in Mexico City today, as part of the modern Servicios de Transportes Electricos (STE) of Mexico City.

March 7, 1969 – The Victoria Line of the London Underground is inaugurated. The first entirely new line of the Underground to be built in 50 years, it wasn't until the third section was completed that ceremonies were held, with Queen Elizabeth II taking part in the festivities.

March 18, 1974 - The five-month-old Arab oil embargo against the U.S. was lifted. The embargo was in retaliation for American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. In the U.S., the resulting embargo had caused long lines at gas stations as prices soared 300 percent amid shortages and a government ban on Sunday gas sales.

March 27 1976 – Washington D.C.'s Metrorail rapid transit system opens. With 4.6 miles with five stations between Farragut North and Rhode Island Avenue, now part of the Red Line, all rides were free for the first day of operation.

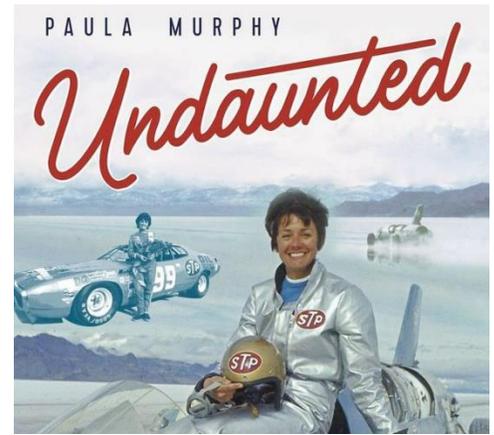
March 27, 1977 - The worst accident in the history of civil aviation occurred as two Boeing 747 jets collided on the ground in the Canary Islands, resulting in 570 deaths.

March 24, 1989 - One of the largest oil spills in U.S. history occurred as the oil tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in Prince William Sound off Alaska, resulting in 11 million gallons of oil leaking into the natural habitat over a stretch of 45 miles.

March 26, 1992 - Soviet Cosmonaut Serge Krikalev returned to a new country (Russia) after spending 313 days on board the Mir Space Station. During his stay in space, the Soviet Union (USSR) collapsed and became the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Forney Speaker Series

Saturday, March 16th, at 2 PM, the Forney Museum will be presenting a screening of the documentary *Undaunted: the Paula Murphy Story*. Named the “World’s Fastest Woman on Wheels,” Paula Murphy was a race car driver during the 1960s who raced Studebakers, among others, and broke speed records and gender barriers alike. At a time when names like Andretti and



Petty dominated motorsports, a single woman stood out from the shadows and made a name for herself. Fast and fearless, the racing world had never seen anything like her before.

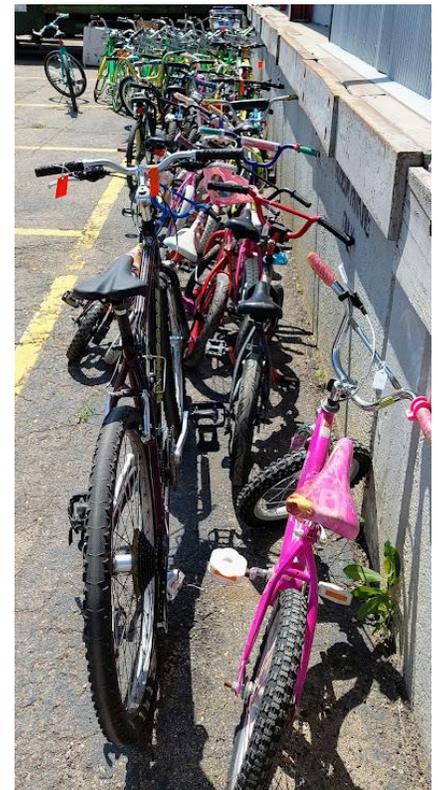
Come join us during Women’s History Month, on March 16th, at 2 PM, for this fascinating documentary about a woman whose grit and determination should inspire us all. The

presentation will be moderated by Studebaker aficionado and historian, Ray Petros, and is included with admission, making for a great opportunity to learn about one of the lesser known sides of history.

4th Annual Forney Bike Giveaway

We are happy to announce the Forney Museum’s 4th Annual Bike Giveaway! On June 8th, 12 pm at Swansea Elementary School, 4650 Columbine St. In collaboration with our Globeville-Elyria-Swansea neighborhood partners, these bikes are given away to area families in need. The bikes are distributed on a first come, first serve basis unless you register early. Registration information will be posted here soon!

Last year’s event was a huge success for everyone involved, with over 65 bikes finding new homes. Taking place in the park behind the school, we had vendors, volunteers and partners on hand to ensure everything went smoothly. Most importantly, everyone went home happy with their new wheels!





We are putting out the call for any bicycles in good condition, especially children's bikes, tricycles or scooters you might like to donate to the museum. We will fix and clean them up to give out as part of the Bike Giveaway. If you have an old bike that you have been thinking of getting rid of, help us give it a second life. Any inquiries can be sent to our Education Coordinator, Jennifer at education@forneymuseum.org.

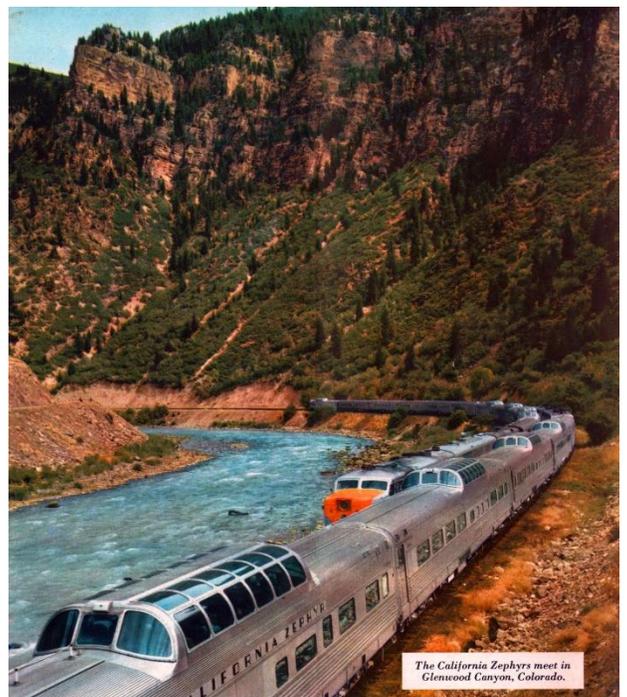
All Aboard the California Zephyr!

This month we are also highlighting the 75th anniversary of the inaugural run of the California Zephyr on March 20, 1949. Some new infographics and exhibit signs have been installed to highlight the history of this amazing route, and the rail line that made it famous. Connecting Chicago to Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, Reno and the San Francisco Bay area, it passed through the Rockies and Sierra Nevada Range along the way, the Zephyr was arguably the most scenic rail line in the United States. Come celebrate the history of the California Zephyr with us this month.

Following is additional commentary from our Rail Archivist, Don Vogel:

"The California Zephyr was a joint venture of the Western Pacific, the Denver & Rio Grande Western, and the Chicago Burlington & Quincy railroads. Their concept was to offer a streamlined luxury train of sleek, lightweight passenger cars. The California Zephyr's specially designed "Vista Dome" cars became its distinguishing feature.

Each train's consist included baggage cars, chair cars (coaches), sleeping cars with various bedroom layouts, dining cars, dormitory-buffet-lounge cars, and bedroom-buffet-lounge-observation cars. Every train had five Vista Domes, each with a unique design. Budd's Vista Domes offered stunning views to the lucky travelers. Best of all, the California





observation car at the end of the consist).”

Zephyr’s schedule was arranged to provide the most beautiful scenery during daytime hours.

The beautifully furnished cars had names such as the Silver Ranch and Silver Mustang (coach cars), Silver Aspen and Silver Shore (sleeping cars), Silver Banquet (a dining car), and Silver Sky (a Vista Dome

Forney Vehicle Spotlight

1908 Sears Motor Buggy

(Catalog No. 21R333)

Founded in 1892 the Sears & Roebuck Company’s mail order catalog had become the primary way Americans ordered products and goods in 1900. Allowing a way to bypass brick-and-mortar general stores, by 1895 the company was putting out a 532-page catalog to meet the demand. This prominence of Sears & Roebuck to the American



consumer meant that any product sold in the catalog took on an outsized visibility nationwide. In 1908 when Sears introduced their own automobile in the pages of the catalog, it marked a major milestone in early automobile history as Americans in cities or in small rural communities suddenly had access to a vehicle of their own. Sold for a flat rate of \$395 for the complete vehicle, or \$370 for a runabout version that shipped without fenders or top, the motor buggy advertisement emphasized the vehicle’s reliability, economy, durability, comfort and ease of use. “Speedy, economical, noiseless, durable and safe... a child can run it” all for a single published price. It is no wonder the motor buggy became such a sensation.

For the first two years of production the only model offered was this solid rubber-tired high-wheel runabout. Sears expanded the line in 1910 to offer five models, with over 3,500 produced by the time production ended in 1912.

Manufactured in Chicago, Illinois the buggy had been designed by Alvaro Krotz who had previously been designing and building electric cars in Ohio. While seeming like an odd choice, Krotz brought a different viewpoint to the design than many other early automobile builders. The design seemed reminiscent of an earlier era, as the market at that time was shifting towards automobiles with more powerful engines that



could comfortably and safely drive at higher speeds.



The Sears Motor Buggy was advertised as reaching 25 mph, which meant a cruising speed closer to 15 mph, at a time when a Ford, Buick, Maxwell or Franklin were capable of top speeds over 40 mph. In fact, the Sears catalog leaned into this point claiming, "We do not believe that the average man desires to go whirling through the country at 40 to 50 miles an hour. We furnish in our Sears Motor Buggy a practical car for use every day in the year over rural or city roads; a car that will climb the hills and go over any of the roads that are ordinarily found in any part of the United States."

There were many satisfied customer testimonials sent in to the Chicago offices such as one from a Harry Dobbins that read, "It beats a horse bad, as it don't eat when I ain't working it and it stands without hitching, and, best of all, it don't get scared at automobiles."

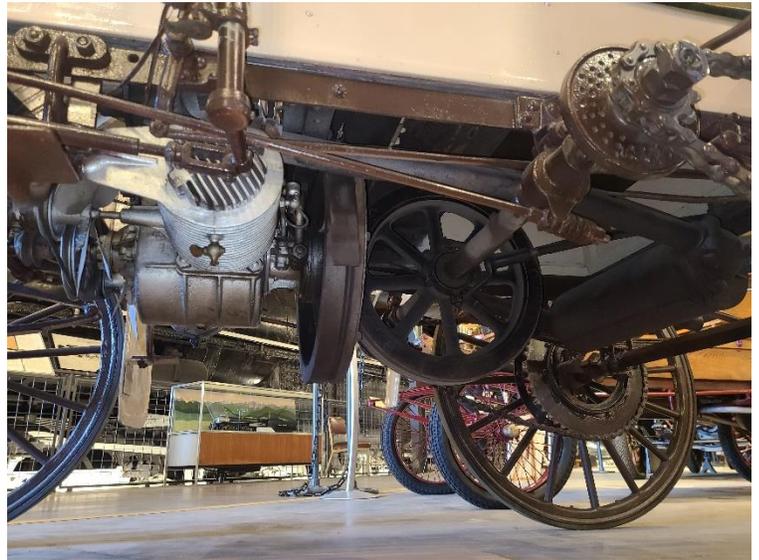
Stressing that the price included everything a new car owner would need the catalog boldly stated, "We furnish everything, including 1 gallon of lubricating oil. You have nothing to buy when you receive the car but gasoline."





Steered with a tiller, the vehicle had a tiller-mounted throttle and a shift lever on the driver's left hand, with two pedals on the floorboard: a "clutch" and a brake. Although unconventional by modern standards, this era saw constant experimentation in controls, and this arrangement would not have stood out as unusual at the time.

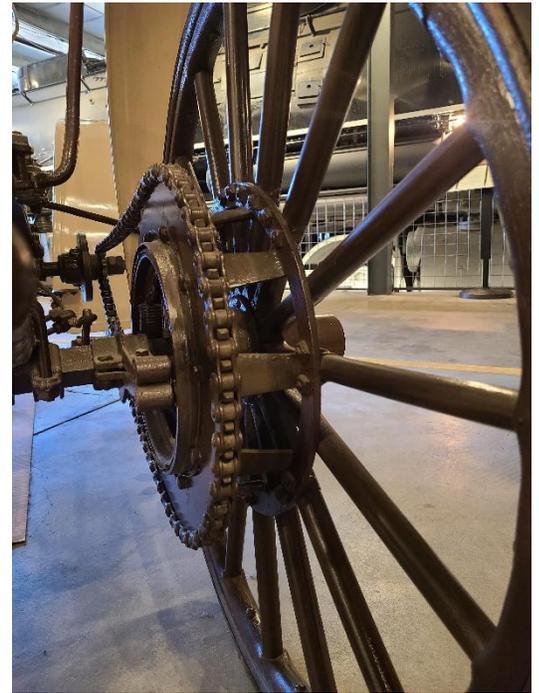
Featuring a friction-drive transmission where a roller on the front sprocket shaft is pressed against the rear surface of the engine flywheel, thus driving the shaft, drive chains and rear wheels. Moving the shift lever altered the position of the roller on the flywheel, effectively changing the gear ratio. Moving the roller past the center point spun it backwards to give it reverse gear. The drive shaft was free to slide forwards and backwards slightly to move the roller away from the flywheel, operated by the "clutch" pedal. This meant the clutch required the driver's foot on the pedal to stay in gear, releasing the pedal caused the roller to break contact from the flywheel putting the car in "neutral" so it could be cranked without rolling forward.



This vehicle has an air-cooled, horizontally opposed, two-cylinder engine. Located under the floorboards beneath the driver's feet, the engine was crank-started in the front. This model was rated at 10 horsepower, with a top speed around 25 mph, but later models sported an improved 14 horsepower engine.

The engine was lubricated by an "oiler" attached to the engine via a belt from the main crankshaft. While it had four adjustable drip feeds with separate lines to engine bearings and other areas, all the components of the transmission were exposed requiring occasional manual greasing and service.

In a neat quirk of design the Motor Buggy had a differential action created by building each front drive sprocket with a two-way clutch. The clutches engaged when the shaft turned in either direction, but disengaged when the wheel turned them faster than the shaft. This meant when driven in a straight line, both clutches would engage and provide power to both rear wheels. When cornering, the outer wheel would spin faster than the inside wheel, thus disengaging the outer wheel, powering the inner wheel only. On slick or uneven surfaces, like snow, sand or mud, if one wheel lost traction then the other wheel would continue to pull until both wheels had traction once more. Since the body was so light, this meant the Motor Buggy could successfully navigate snow or mud that would



immobilize a heavier car with a standard differential.



Despite the early success of the Motor Buggy, by 1912 the car had waned in popularity, whether due to the old-fashioned body design or the underpowered engine, and was discontinued. Sears decided the product was a loss for the company, and sold much of its machinery to Lincoln Motor Car Works who would continue to produce a variation of the Motor Buggy for one more year before ending production of the Lincoln Touring Car in 1913. This vehicle can be seen on display at the Forney Museum of Transportation.

Volunteer of the Month

Our Volunteer of the Month is Carl Enger.

Born and raised in Golden, Colorado, Carl went to work on diesel engines for the railroad and decided to expand his newly found interest in trains as a volunteer at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden. He told me that is where he met steam and fell in love.



His quest for steam brought him here to us and to the U.P. 4005 Big Boy. “There’s nothing else like the Big Boy,” he said, and his enthusiasm for the subject is obvious to anyone who has had the opportunity to chat with him while he is here volunteering as a docent. One of our newest volunteers, Carl can often be found by the trains to answer the questions of our guests – and maybe even questions people didn’t know they had! He’s even here during off hours to help clean the trains.

When asked why he chooses to volunteer, Carl told me “it means something to me to make an experience more interesting. Most people don’t have much experience with or knowledge of trains anymore, especially with Big Boy, and it is a special feeling to pass some of that knowledge on.” Thank you, Carl. That passion for what you do is what allows us to do what we do.

The Museum needs YOU!

If you also have a passion for passing on knowledge and experience to others, volunteering with the Forney Museum might be right for you. Anyone interested in volunteering or donating please reach out to us at the museum or email inquiries to volunteer@forneymuseum.org.

Forney Memberships

Become a Forney Museum Member TODAY! With many options available for as little as \$50, the right membership for you can be purchased in the museum gift shop or online at forneymuseum.org. Memberships are good for one year and also make great gifts!

Shop Needs

We are putting out the call for several items that are needed here at the museum. If you see anything in this section that you think you would be able to donate to the museum to help us with our operations please reach out to our Assistant Director, Dan at asstdirector@forneymuseum.org, or call the museum at (303) 297-1113.

- 1) Rags for use in the auto shop.
- 2) A floor-scrubber for the museum’s concrete exhibit floor.
- 3) Enclosed trailer (20-foot or longer) to transport Forney Museum vehicles safely & securely
- 4) Modern tire changing machine
- 5) Modern wheel balancing machine

Thank you!

The Cars of Summer

As the Colorado winter begins to turn toward spring, it is the perfect time to start thinking about this summer! The Forney Museum will be hosting our “Top Down Fun II” exhibit May 2nd through July 29th, 2024, and we are still looking for another half-dozen or so classic convertibles to display. If you have a convertible built before 1980, and would like to participate, email director@forneymuseum.org to submit your vehicle for consideration. Thank you!