

# Forney

## MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

### Newsletter January 2025

*"Moving Forward"*



#### Go SAAB!

Thought to be the single largest and most comprehensive assemblage of SAABs done outside of the SAAB Heritage Museum in Sturgis, South Dakota, there is less than one month of our "Go Swift! Go Safe! Go Saab!" exhibit left, and we will certainly be sad to see them go. From the elegant and refined, such as the 1959 93B seen top right, to the class of the 1990 900 Turbo convertible, as seen bottom left. Or even the quirky and unique such as the 1994 NG900 SE 5-door, seen bottom right, which features the choice of headlight wipers!



With all this and so much more, make plans to visit the Forney Museum today, before they are gone!



# Chevy

We are excited to announce that starting February 5<sup>th</sup>, we will have the “Pre-War Chevrolets” exhibit, which will feature the first decades of the company from 1914 through the GM merger in 1918 and continuing until the cessation of automobile production for war-time efforts in the 1940s. With all this history on display, you won’t want to miss this exhibit!



## This Month in Transportation History

**January 1, 1502** - Portuguese explorers from Pedro Alvares Cabral’s fleet landed at Guanabara Bay on the coast of South America and, mistaking the bay for the mouth of a river, named it Rio de Janeiro (January River). The city of Rio de Janeiro was later founded on Guanabara Bay by the Portuguese in 1565, and is today Brazil's second largest city.

**January 26, 1788** - The British established the first European settlement in Australia at Sydney Cove when 11 ships of the First Fleet of convicts, under command of Captain Arthur Phillip, arrived in Botany Bay. Over a thousand settlers, including 778 convicts, founded a penal colony to relieve prisons in England that were overcrowded with the loss of the American penal colonies after the Revolutionary War.

**January 27, 1830** - The first railroad in Kentucky, the Lexington & Ohio Railroad, was chartered by the state legislature. With a goal of moving goods and people from the inland communities of Kentucky to the Ohio River, operation had begun by 1832, with steam locomotives being introduced to the line by 1833. Although the L&O would be out of business within a few years, it helped to establish the economic potential of rail, and over 596 miles of track would be built in Kentucky by 1860.

**January 26, 1895** - The The First National Exhibit of Cycles, Cycle Accessories, and Sundries came to an end in New York City. “The most successful cycle show ever held in this country, and probably in the world, was brought to a close at Madison Square Garden last night,” asserted the next day’s edition of the New York Tribune. A vast array of bicycles – including early motorized models – and bicycle products were on display, attracting thousands of attendees during the week-long show. Overall, the show helped set the standards and expectations for subsequent bicycle exhibitions, and highlighted the bicycle’s exponential growth in popularity.

**January 23, 1912** - Regular service begins on the Overseas Railroad. Construction had begun in 1905, and upon completion the 156-mile long railroad extended the Florida East Coast Railway through the



Florida Keys, all the way to Key West. The railroad served the Florida Keys region until destroyed by a hurricane in 1935. The Overseas Highway was subsequently built on the foundation of the railroad bed.

**January 28, 1915** - The U.S. Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service under the Department of the Treasury. The U.S. Lighthouse Service would be merged into the Coast Guard in 1939. One of the six United States Armed Forces, the U.S. Coast Guard is the largest coast guard in the world, and is today considered the world's 12th largest naval force.

**January 28, 1962** - The first era of streetcars in Washington, D.C. comes to an end when Car 766 reached the Navy Yard Car Barn for the last time. With the first horse-drawn streetcars being introduced to the city in 1862, the streetcar system in the nation's capital had operated for a hundred years before city officials required the streetcars be replaced by bus lines. It would be 54 years before streetcar service returned to the city, in 2016.

## Holiday Tea

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Tea last month was a great time for everyone involved, from the guests who got to experience all the teas and wonderful British fare and desserts, to the volunteers who make the entire event possible.

Forney Board Member and longtime volunteer, Sharon Robinson, coordinated this event, and – as always – did a marvelous job keeping everything organized and running smoothly. A HUGE thank you to Sharon for everything she does, and to all of the Forney volunteers and staff who contributed!

From Sharon:

“A massive and heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this annual holiday afternoon tea at the Forney a huge success. This couldn't happen without the amazing group of staff and volunteers who work tirelessly planning, organizing and working to make this tea a reality.

It has turned into an annual event for a lot of our guests and tickets sell out very quickly which really speaks volumes about this team. The decorations are always fantastic, they really make the tea, and the front desk, waiters and Christof really make this something special.

Of course as a fundraiser we want to make money but we also want to bring people, some who may not usually come, into the museum and hopefully after a wonderful afternoon they will share with others and encourage them to visit.



I know it's a LOT of work & I can't thank everyone enough for being part of this event, and now tradition - what an amazing TEAM!"

Special Thank You to the following volunteers and staff:

Sharon Robinson, Steve Robinson, Lori Melamedas, Nicole Bleau, Rex Osborn, Brian English, Paul Martin, Michael Ferreira, Ben Greene, Jay and Deb Hokanson, Chris Hildenbrand, Kitty and Andrew Janiesch, Ron Wenger, Rich Birnie, Glen Laber, Kelly Wyatt, Jennifer Holm, Dan Hays, Jeff Warren and Christof Kheim.

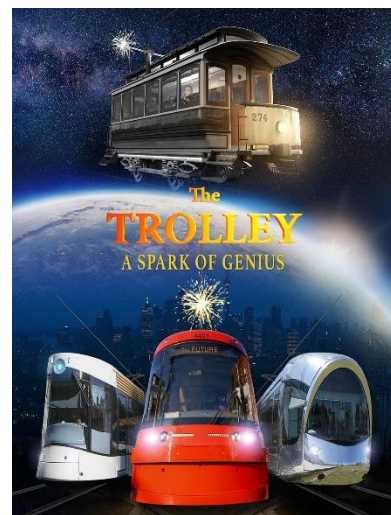


The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Teas will take place December 13<sup>th</sup>, and December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Check our website for updates, with tickets on sale in early October. Tickets go fast, so mark your calendars today!

## Forney Speaker Series

Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 2 PM, the Forney Museum will be screening the documentary *The Trolley: A Spark of Genius*, all about the history and development of that wonderful exemplar of mass transit: the trolley! From its development in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, through its explosive worldwide adoption; learn all about the trolley's use in both world wars and the conflicts with the automobile age in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Explore the trolley's role in our modern world, the fight against climate change, and the shifting transportation ideals that are coming to define our current age. As humanity's needs and demands have changed through the decades, this extraordinary machine has proven again and again to meet them.

These presentations are free with paid admission, and make for a fantastic opportunity to learn more about some of the lesser known sides of history. So come join us on February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 2 PM, for the presentation of *The Trolley: A Spark of Genius*.





# Forney Vehicle Spotlight

## 1925 Harley-Davidson JD with Sidecar

The Harley-Davidson story begins in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1901, when William Harley first came up with a design for a small (7 cubic inch) single-cylinder engine designed to be mounted to a standard bicycle frame. Harley brought in his friend, Arthur Davidson, and the two began to work on building a “motor-bicycle” prototype in the machine shop at the home of a mutual friend. Working over the next two years, and bringing in the help of Arthur’s brother, Walter Davidson, that first prototype was finished in 1903. Upon testing, however, it was discovered that the engine was too underpowered to be able to climb the hills around Milwaukee without pedal assistance.



Taking the lessons from that first effort, Harley and Davidson went back to the drawing board to design a larger, more efficient engine. The result was a 24.74 cubic inch single-cylinder engine – weighing 28 pounds! – built into a loop-frame, similar to the contemporary 1903 Milwaukee Merkel motorcycle. This new engine, and the loop-frame design moved the Harley-Davidson company away from engines

for standard bicycles and towards the development of a purpose-built motorcycle.

Assembled in a 10 x 15 foot shed in the Davidson backyard, and with new machined parts likely produced at the west Milwaukee railshop where the eldest Davidson brother, William, worked as a toolroom foreman, the prototype loop-frame motorcycle was completed in 1904. On September 8, 1904 the prototype was raced at the State Fair Park in Milwaukee, placing fourth, and proving the design.



Initially focusing on producing stand-alone engines for the home do-it-yourself market, and with minimal sales, in April of 1905





Harley-Davidson was producing complete motorcycles in limited numbers. Soon realizing that the company would need to expand, in 1906 Harley and the Davidsons built their first factory on Chestnut Street in Milwaukee, still the location of Harley-Davidson's corporate headquarters. Even though the original factory has long since been replaced by modern facilities, the backyard shed, where the original motorcycles were built, was moved to the factory and stood for many decades as

a tribute to the humble beginnings of the company.

Production in 1905 and 1906 were all single-cylinder models with 26.84 cubic inch engines, but in February 1907 the newly incorporated Harley-Davidson Motor

Company introduced a new engine design at the Chicago Automobile Show. This prototype was the company's first attempt at a 45° "V-Twin" engine. Although very few were built between 1907 and 1910, this first V-twin design was a 53.68 cubic inch engine that produced about 7 horsepower. Roughly double the power of the single-cylinder engine, the top speed for the V-twin motorcycles was about 60 miles per hour!



Sales increased from 450 in 1908 to 1,149 in 1909, and the company never looked back.

An improved 49.48 cubic inch twin was introduced in 1911, featuring new mechanical intake valves. Smaller than the prior engine, performance was better and by 1913 the



majority of new Harley-Davidsons were V-twin models. This time period also saw the introduction of a new "Full-Floteing Seat" with spring suspension in the seat tube. This was the classic Harley saddle and seats of this type were in continual use until 1958.

All this innovation put Harley-Davidson in the driver's seat of the American motorcycle market, outselling primary competitor Indian

Motorcycles. In 1914, Harley production boomed to 16,284 motorcycles! With the



advent of U.S. involvement in World War I, there was a sudden sharp increase in military demand for motorcycles. The U.S. Army purchased 20,000 motorcycles from Harley-Davidson, cementing Harley as the premier motorcycle manufacturer in the country, as well as exposing most of the servicemen to the joy and convenience of motorcycle travel for the first time. World War I also left a legacy on Harley-Davidson style as the company would exclusively offer the Army Olive Drab color option on its product for several years after the conclusion of the war.



By 1920 Harley-Davidson was the largest motorcycle manufacturer in the world, with over 28,000 produced in that year alone, sold in over 67 countries. To many, Harley was becoming synonymous with motorcycles, and this reputation for excellence was bolstered in 1921 when a Harley-Davidson became the first motorcycle to win a race with an average speed greater than 100 miles per hour!



Despite this success, the company never stopped innovating and 1921 also saw the introduction of a new engine: a 74 cubic inch, V-Twin F-head engine known as the “J”. By 1924, the company had decided to overhaul the J engine, instead of doing a full redesign, and introduced the new “JD” engine. Alemite lubrication was introduced for all bearing-surfaces and iron-alloy pistons were introduced, reducing the engine weight, but increasing power and efficiency.

A new “teardrop” style gas tank was introduced, that changed and streamlined the motorcycle’s lines. To accommodate these changes the frame was dropped, and the saddle sat lower than previous models, giving the 1925 JD a distinct look from the Harley-Davidsons that had been built before. Wider, but smaller diameter wheels gave the bike a stockier look as well. While lacking rear suspension with a hard-tail rear, riders appreciated the introduction of softer sprung front forks.







Lighting and ignition was powered by a 6-volt generator/ignition unit storage battery: headlight, taillight, and motor-driven oil pressure light. This ignition system involved a circuit breaker, distributor and high-tension coil located behind the engine to shield from weather. Rubber footboards were fitted along with a rear luggage-rack and kickstand and a fork-mounted tool kit made its debut. Painted in the standard Harley olive drab, there was

nickel-plating throughout and painted rims over stainless-steel spokes.

The three-speed hand-shift lever for the sliding gear transmission was moved further forward along the side of the gas tank for convenience. With a wheelbase of 65 inches and an overall length of 100 inches, the JD weighed approximately 500 pounds. Other standard features on the JD include chain-drive, a front brake, and a foot-operated rear drum brake, two-bulb headlight and klaxon horn.

While not standard, side cars like the one featured on the Forney Museum's bike were a common accessory at the time. Combine all these changes with the teardrop gas tank, and the classic Harley-Davidson look was complete.



The 74 cubic inch 9.45 horsepower V-Twin with Schebler carburetor found on the 1925 JD is an F-head, or Intake Over Exhaust (IOE) model, a four-stroke engine whose valvetrain comprises Overhead Valve (OHV) inlet valves within the cylinder head, and exhaust side-valves within the engine block.

The F-head engine combines features from OHV and Flathead engine types, with the inlet valve operating via pushrod and rocker arms, and opening downwards like an OHV, while the exhaust valve is offset from the cylinder and opens upward via a pushrod activated by the camshaft, like in a Flathead. Harley-Davidson would continue to feature the classic F-head engine until 1929, when it was replaced by a



more conventional flathead engine.



The V-Twin, with its patented 45° angle between cylinders, has a crankshaft with a single pin that connects to both pistons through connecting rods. The V-angle is an engineering compromise that allows larger, higher-torque engines in more compact spaces. However the shape causes the cylinders to fire at uneven intervals, producing the choppy “putt, putt” sound associated with the Harley-Davidson brand. The dual-fire ignition system causes both spark plugs to fire regardless of which cylinder is on its compression stroke, while the other fires on its cylinder’s exhaust stroke, “wasting a spark.” The exhaust note is a signature throaty growl with occasional popping. Thus the design of the engine creates a plug firing sequence that is the origin of the engine’s unique sound.



This motorcycle design remained with just minor tweaks until 1929, and the popularity of the JD model helped Harley-Davidson cement its position as the biggest motorcycle manufacturer in the world. All this success would help position the company to weather the hard times of the Great Depression that were right around the corner. In the end Harley-Davidson and Indian were the only two major U.S. motorcycle manufacturers to survive the Depression, and indeed Harley had continued to innovate throughout this period, priming it for the vast turnaround in fortunes that marked the onset of wartime production in World War II.



Weathered and formed from the intense pressures of two World Wars, and the economic devastation of the Depression in between, Harley-Davidson in the mid-century period became the monolithic motorcycling juggernaut that it remains to this day. Known for large, heavyweight cruising motorcycles to this day,

Harley-Davidson is one of the largest motorcycle manufacturers in the world, as well as licensing and marketing merchandise like home décor and clothing that have helped cement Harley-Davidson as one of the major name brands in motorcycling.

This classic 1925 Harley-Davidson JD can be seen on display as part of the Forney Museum Collection.

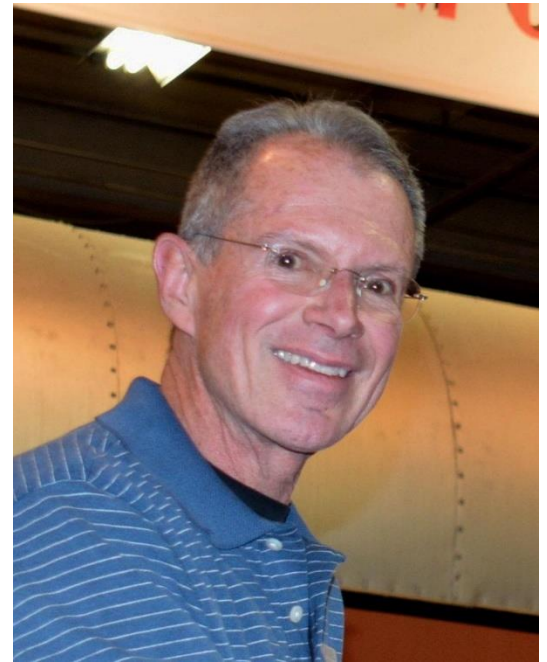
## Volunteer of the Month

Our featured volunteer for January is Don Vogel. Don's enthusiasm for trains and railways has brought him to his current role as the Forney Museum's Rail Archivist, managing the museum's collection of rail artifacts, books, magazines, paperwork and much more! Don grew up in Bellevue, KY, where the C & O Railroad Mainline passed by his home. He moved to Colorado in 1974 and worked for the phone company for 24 years, then for a commercial appraisal company for 10 years.

Don became involved with The Forney Museum in 2012, helping to organize all of the rail books and magazines. He has spent a lot of time organizing the Rail Library and curating the museum's railroad artifacts, exercising his passion for railroad history.

When asked about other interests, Don mentioned his fondness for collecting railroad artifacts – such as china and glassware – traveling, The Sunday Afternoon Car Klub, and his HOA, all of which keep him busy. We asked Don what's next for him after completing the restoration of the Museum's Pikes Peak Dining Car, and he replied that he'll be focusing on the 1962 GP30 Locomotive.

Thank you, Don, for your hard work and dedication to the museum. We're grateful for everything you do!



## Volunteer Birthdays

1/10 – Torrey Brinkley

1/26 – Sharon Robinson

1/16 – Eric Robison

## The Museum needs YOU!

Anyone interested in volunteering or donating please reach out to us at the museum or email [volunteer@forneymuseum.org](mailto:volunteer@forneymuseum.org)

## Memberships

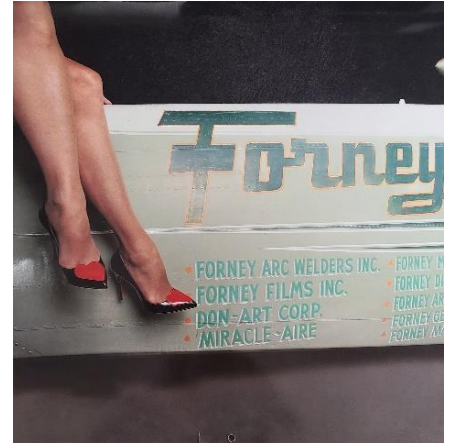
Become a Forney Museum Member TODAY! We have memberships in many different levels to fit your particular needs, with options available for as low as \$50, the right



membership for you can be purchased in the museum gift shop or online at [forneymuseum.org](http://forneymuseum.org). Memberships are good for one year and make great gifts, so help support the Forney by buying a membership today!

## Forney Museum Calendar

In addition to the many other wonderful items in the gift shop, the Forney Museum is selling our exclusive 2025-26 Pinup Calendar. Only \$15, calendars can be purchased in the Museum Gift Shop or online at [forneymuseum.org](http://forneymuseum.org), and all proceeds benefit the Museum. Fun, flirty and for a great cause, get your calendar today and help out the Forney Museum! Special thanks to all the wonderful volunteer models who helped make the calendar possible.



## General Museum 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](mailto:asstdirector@forneymuseum.org), or call the museum at (303) 297-1113.

- 1) Enclosed trailer (20-foot or longer) to transport Forney Museum vehicles safely & securely
- 2) Modern tire changing machine
- 3) Modern wheel balancing machine

Thank you to everyone who has already donated!

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The Forney Newsletter team is:

Editor-in-Chief, Christof Kheim

Contributing Editor, James Hansen

Graphics and Design Assistance, Damion Cope

Research Assistance provided by: James Hansen, Jennifer Holm, Damion Cope, Dan Hays

Special Thanks to all of our readers!