

PAPA'S HUPP

Written by Ernest M. Cheek (Submitted by Jack Baggenstoss)

In 1933 John W. Berry of Tracy City, Tennessee, purchased a new 1933 Hupmobile from Crescent Motor Company on 528 Broad Street in Chattanooga, TN. On August 29, 1990, Ernest M. Cheek of Sparta, TN, bought a 1933 Hupmobile from Edward Congleton in Champaign, Illinois. There is nothing significant about these persons, places, dates or purchases unless one knows that Ernest M. Cheek is the great-grandson of John W. Berry, and the 1933 Hupmobile purchased by Ernest M. Cheek in 1990 is the same Hupmobile purchased by John Berry in 1933. The age-old story of "the car" ones parents or grandparents once owned seldom has a happy ending. The usual story is that it was sold for a small price never to be seen again or left to rust away behind the barn. Fortunately for me, my story has the happiest of all endings. I now own "the car" my great grandfather purchased new.

My great grandfather, known within the family as Papa Berry, never learned to drive, but wanted a vehicle so he would only have to borrow a driver. He lived with his daughter and son-in-law who owned a car, so the Hupp was used only for special trips rather than for daily use.

The car developed some mechanical problems in 1936, the same year Papa died. The Hupp stayed in its garage until 1954 when my grandmother sold the Hupp to a traveling salesman from Chattanooga, TN. The purchase price for the 27,000 mile car was \$100.

I had hoped during my early teen years to own the Hupp and had on occasions aired the tires and washed away the dust. When the Crosley I was driving needed a horn, I "borrowed" one from the Hupp. Also "borrowed" was the gearshift knob and one windshield wiper. Although I regret these items stayed with the Crosley when sold, these missing items would assist me later in positively identifying the Hupp. Around 1969 while reading my Hemmings, I noticed a four door Hupp for sale in Chattanooga. I called the owner Hugh Lifsey, whom I learned was not the one who purchased the Hupp from my grandmother. He had purchased it from the traveling salesman. (This salesman's name is the only owner's name lost during the Hupp's journey.) Mr. Lifsey stated that the car was 100 percent original. When I challenged this statement and told him it had a horn and wiper missing—he left the phone to look at the car and returned to state that I was correct- but how did I know? I went to Chattanooga to look at the Hupp, but we were unable to agree on terms, so I left without her.

In 1985 I again developed an interest in locating Papa's Hupp and began reading the "H" for sale listings. Several calls were made and many leads followed, but none were successful. Someone suggested I call Don Roetman and place an ad in the Hupp Parts Locator newsletter. With the information I had, which was as follows: the last known owner Hugh Lifsey of Chattanooga, low mileage, dual side mounts with wooden spoke wheels, I called Don, and he agreed to plead my case. In September of 1987, I received a letter from Edward Congelton of Champaign, IL, who stated he owned a Hupp, which fit my description, and in the papers he acquired with the car was evidence that Hugh Lifsey once owned it. I immediately called Ed and was convinced he had Papa's Hupp. Ed had purchased the car from Dr. Glen Stockwell of Sheffield, AL. A call to Dr. Stockwell confirmed the car had come to Glen from Hugh. Ed and I visited each other during the next three years, and I purchased the Hupp in August of 1990 for \$14,000. The car was driven from Champaign to Nashville where I began to experience vapor lock in the 100-degree temperature, so I trailered the car the last 75 miles to Sparta, TN, where I now live. In the spring of 1998 while returning from Nashville, the Hupp developed a rod knock, which required removing the engine for repair. My good friend Jim Sutcliffe suggested that since we had also removed the hood that we repair and repaint it. That led to the suggestion that we also paint the fenders, which eventually led to a complete body restoration, which was new upholstery, new paint, new chrome and new class all completed within 18 months by working nights and Saturdays from my backyard garage.

The Hupp at this writing in August 2004 has 48,000 miles, is a very comfortable ride and is used in several weddings each year to transport the bride and groom from church to reception, etc. After being out of the family from 1954-1990, I am pleased to have regained ownership and plan to pass ownership to our son John Wilson Cheek, great-great grandson of John W. Berry original owner.