

# Forney

## MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

### Newsletter February 2024

*"Moving Forward"*

#### Wouldn't You Really Rather Have A Buick?

Founded in 1903, the Buick Motor Company is one of the oldest automobile brands in the world, and the oldest in the United States to still be active. With 28 Buicks spanning 74 years of development on display, come and see what has made Buick such an enduring standard of quality and refinement. Our current exhibit, "Hurrah for the Red, White & Buick!" will be in place February 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, and running until April 29<sup>th</sup>.



Roadmaster, Century, Riviera, LeSabre, Electra; the names themselves convey the sense of elegance and class that is the Buick trademark. From this 1912 Model 35, which is part of the Museum's collection, to a 1986 Regal Grand National over 70 years of Buick design and innovation are on display.



You won't want to miss this one, so come to the Forney Museum and celebrate the history of Buick with us!



## Saying Goodbye to Chevy

The end of January saw our "See the USA in your Chevrolet!" exhibit close. This display was a huge hit, with 25 post-war Chevrolets to see, there was sure to be a Chevy for everyone, like this sleek, "Tuxedo Black" 1963 Chevy II Nova SS Convertible, on display courtesy of Karen Brumitt of Aurora, CO. Introduced in 1963, this Chevy II Nova is in original, unrestored condition.



These three Impalas in a row to the left found safety in numbers. A 1961 Impala SS Sport Coupe, 1962 Impala Two-Door Hardtop, and 1963 Impala SS Two-Door Hardtop, all finished in "Ermine White" with red trim; as you walk down the row you can see the development of this iconic model from year to year. These vehicles were on display courtesy of Carrol Reichen & Tammy Stone, Tom Mansfield, and Jim Collier, respectively.

This 1971 “Heavy Chevy” Chevelle on the right, in a bold “Cranberry Red”, showcases the power and strength that came to define the Chevrolet name. Billed as being heavy on looks, but light on price, this model was only offered in 1971 and 1972. Despite the lower price point, this model is very hard to find today, making it highly prized by collectors. This vehicle was on display courtesy of Cindy Adams.



This 1963 Chevrolet Corvair Monza 900 convertible, with its unique styling and engine-in-rear design, really stands out in a crowd. The Corvair was originally marketed as a family car, with design features mimicking the popular Volkswagen Beetle, but with the introduction of the Monza in 1961 it took on a sporty car image. This all-original, unrestored Corvair was displayed courtesy of Henry Vellandi.

Take in the view behind the wheel of a 1976 Cosworth Vega. Sold under the slogan “One Vega for the Price of Two,” this rare model was the perfect blend of Cosworth performance and Vega sportiness. Produced only in 1975 and 1976, early reviews already proclaimed the car to be a future collectible. Finished in the rare dark green with gold accents, this vehicle is on display courtesy of Rich Morris.



The 1947 Chevrolet Fleetmaster Sport Coupe, was one of the last of Chevy’s pre-war style, as American auto makers tried to meet the post-war demand for new cars. This gorgeous black Fleetmaster was on display courtesy of Shawn Carpenter, whose grandfather purchased this car new.

With all of these amazing Chevys, it is easy to see why this exhibit was such a fantastic

opportunity to see what made the Chevrolet name so iconic, and to understand why so many people have made the choice to “See the USA in their Chevrolet!”

## This Month in Transportation History

**February 21, 1804** – British engineer Richard Trevithick demonstrated the first steam locomotive to run on rails. The “Pen-y-Darren” locomotive successfully hauled 10 tons of iron, 5 wagons and 70 men approximately 9.75 miles along the Merthyr Tramroad in Wales. The journey took 4 hours and 5 minutes, for an average speed of 2.4 mph!

**February 11, 1809** – Robert Fulton patents the steamboat. The *North River Steamboat of Clermont* (later known as just the *Clermont*) had made its maiden voyage in August 1807, and this was the first of two patents Fulton would receive for the design.

**February 28, 1849** – The California Gold Rush begins as the first boatload of prospectors arrive in San Francisco, the first of approximately 90,000 people to arrive in California that year, in the hunt for gold.

**February 23, 1893** – Rudolf Diesel receives a patent in Germany (RP 67207) for “Working Methods and Techniques for Internal Combustion Engines.” However, it’s not until February 1, 1897 that Diesel’s prototype engine is running and considered ready for testing and production.

**February 25, 1908** – The first tunnel under the Hudson River in New York opens. Service began between Hoboken Tunnel and 19<sup>th</sup> Street at midnight February 26<sup>th</sup>, when President Theodore Roosevelt pressed a button at the White House to turn on the electric lines in the uptown tubes. The first train carrying passengers, all selected officials, had run in private the day before.

**February 3, 1943** - An extraordinary act of heroism occurred in the icy waters off Greenland after the U.S. Army transport ship *Dorchester* was hit by a German torpedo and began to sink rapidly. When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, four U.S. Army chaplains on board removed theirs, handed them to frightened young soldiers, and chose to go down with the ship while praying.

**February 3, 1959** – Rock singers Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper died when their chartered Beechcraft Bonanza aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff near Clear Lake, Iowa. Known as “The Day the Music Died,” after Don McLean’s hit song from 1971.

**February 22, 1959** – The inaugural Daytona 500 race is run. Lee Petty, father of future Daytona champion Richard Petty, won the race over runner-up Johnny Beauchamp.

**February 20, 1962** - Astronaut John Glenn became the first American launched into orbit, and the third American in space. Traveling aboard the "Friendship 7" spacecraft, Glenn reached an altitude of 162 miles (260 kilometers) and completed three orbits in a flight lasting just under five hours.

**February 6, 1971** – Astronaut Alan Shepard hits three golf balls on the moon. Shepard, Command Module Pilot Stuart Roosa and Lunar Module Pilot Edgar Mitchell were the crew of Apollo 14, landing on the moon January 31, 1971 and splashing down in the Pacific Ocean back on Earth on February 9.

**February 24, 2011** – Final launch of the Space Shuttle Discovery. With 39 missions over 27 years Discovery made 5,830 orbits of the Earth, the most in the Orbiter Shuttle program. The first shuttle to be retired, Discovery is now displayed at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum.

## Forney Speaker Series

Coming Saturday, February 24, at 2 PM, the Forney Museum is proud to host Susan Gilmore, from the Breckenridge Historical Society, for a special presentation of “The Story of Barney Ford.” An escaped slave, Mr. Ford would go on to become a wealthy entrepreneur and civil-rights pioneer in Colorado in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. An influential abolitionist, he was the first African American nominated to the Colorado Territory legislature, and he would go on to lead the fight to guarantee African Americans the right to vote in the new state of Colorado.



Come join us this Black History Month, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, to hear the fascinating tale of one of Colorado’s founding figures, and how Black History is our shared American story. The presentation is free with museum admission, and provides a great opportunity to learn about some of the lesser-known sides of Colorado history.

## Forney Vehicle Spotlight

1938 Willys-Overland Model 38 ½-ton Pickup

Best known today for the Jeep, Willys-Overland Motor Company were also manufacturers of the Overland, Willys-Knight, Stearns-Knight, Whippet and Willys automobiles. Founded by John Willys in 1912, the company quickly grew into the second-largest automotive manufacturer in the United States until 1918. Acquisitions of the Electric Auto-Lite Company, Russell Motor Car Company, Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company, and the Duesenberg Motor Company fed the rapid growth, but the onset of the Depression brought troubled times for the company, and Walter P. Chrysler was hired to turn things around. This





meant selling off many of the acquisitions the company had made during its early growth. Chrysler and his team moved on to Maxwell-Chalmers in 1921, leaving a consolidated Willys-Overland behind them.

The company's most successful model, the Jeep, was to be years in the future, and this period between the Depression and WWII was to be marked primarily by troubles at the company. The introduction of the small Whippet car in 1926 was meant to revitalize the company by serving a more economy minded public, but proved not to be a commercial success. In the early 1930s, as the company entered receivership, it was decided to focus on the introduction and development of the 4-cylinder Willys 77. After so much financial and commercial struggle, in 1936 the Willys-Overland Motor Company was reorganized as Willys-Overland Motors. 1937 saw the redesign of that 4-cylinder model, introducing a more streamlined body styling with headlamps inset in the fenders, a slanted windshield and a rounded one-piece hood. The vehicle was sold across the model range from coupe to pickup truck, with the same engine and styling.



The next year saw the introduction of the Model 38, which was much the same vehicle as the year before, with the same 4-cylinder engine and similar body styling. This Model 38 ½-ton pickup sold for \$580 new as equipped, equivalent to about \$12,500 today.



The 134.2 cubic inch engine is an inline L-head 4-cylinder, with a one-barrel Tillotson carburetor, providing about 48 horsepower. Despite the lower horsepower, the smaller-bodied Willys models of this time were still known for producing decent speeds with good fuel economy. Their light-bodies also made them popular with hot-rodders of the era. The transmission is a 3-speed floor-shift manual. This model came equipped with four-wheel mechanical brakes and steel disc wheels.

The Model 38 also came equipped with radio, clock and heater/defroster, providing much the same driving experience as more expensive vehicles from other manufacturers. Chrome front and rear bumpers complete the visual package.

Replaced the next year by the further redesigned Model 39, the Model 38 is a snapshot of a manufacturer in transition. As one of two manufacturers of the American Bantam-designed

Jeep for the US Army in WWII, along with Ford, the company's continued financial success was assured. In order to appeal to servicemen returning to the civilian market



in the post-war period, Willys focused on civilian production of the Jeep. In 1953 the company was purchased by Kaiser Motors, and the rebranded Kaiser-Jeep was acquired by American Motors Corporation AMC in 1970, with production continuing even today as the Jeep brand, under Stellantis. This vehicle can be seen as part of the Forney Museum Collection.



## Special Thanks

The Forney Vehicle Spotlight is made possible through the research assistance of our Auto Archivist, Bill Fleming, and the museum's extensive Archives. The archives are open to anyone who is doing their own automotive research, featuring thousands of books, magazines, shop manuals, ads and much more. Usually open on Mondays and Fridays, anyone who would like to access the museum library can reach Bill at [auto.archivist@forneymuseum.org](mailto:auto.archivist@forneymuseum.org) to schedule an appointment.

## 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)

## Forney Memberships

Consider becoming a Forney Museum Member today! With many options available, 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 gift ideas!

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

Rags for use in the auto shop.

A floor-scrubber for the museum's concrete exhibit floor.

We are also putting out the call for any bicycles in good condition, especially children's bikes, tricycles or non-electric scooters you might like to donate to the museum. We will fix and clean them up to give out as part of our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike Giveaway, in collaboration with our Globeville-Elyria-Swansea neighborhood partners. These bikes are always given away to people in need, for FREE! If you have an old bike that you have been thinking of getting rid of, help us give it a second life. Inquiries can be sent to our Education Coordinator, Jennifer at [education@forneymuseum.org](mailto:education@forneymuseum.org).

Thank you!

## The Cars of Summer

As the Colorado winter settles in to stay, it is the perfect time to start thinking about next summer! The Forney Museum will be hosting our "Top Down Fun II" exhibit May 2<sup>nd</sup> through July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and we are still looking for classic convertibles to display. If you have a convertible built before 1980, and would like to participate, email [director@forneymuseum.org](mailto:director@forneymuseum.org) to submit your vehicle for consideration. Thank you!