



No portion of this article may be reproduced without
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.
©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group
P.O. Box 1676
Frisco, Texas 75034
Phone: 972.335.1181
Toll Free: 877.781.7067
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: info@friscostyle.com
Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306



tricycling through the ford house

by bob warren

DOES YOUR MIND EVER FLASH BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD? It happened to me recently as one of Frisco's proud old buildings, "The Ford House", was being marked as a local historic site. During the dedication ceremonies my mind drifted back some seventy-eight years to the times I enjoyed taking a short cut through the Ford House – on my tricycle. More about that later, but first let's take a look at the building's storied past. It has quite a history.

The beautifully preserved red brick structure at 6900 Main Street was built about 1911 to house the Carpenter Brothers' Ford Dealership. One of the few buildings on the north side of Main to survive the devastating fire of 1922, it served as a car dealership until 1940 when the Carpenter brothers, Syrell and Willie, closed shop and left Frisco.

The building then began to see a variety of tenants. Before World War II, Ed Kerley's Cities Service oil business had offices there, followed, for a few years, by the Farmers' Co Op. In

the early 1950s, the Holmen Company moved in and provided employment for a number of seamstresses until they closed in the 1970s. Next came the Trio Manufacturing Company, a maker of ladies sportswear, who stayed for a time before moving across the street.

Sandwiched between some of these occupants, the versatile building once housed Marshall's auto repair shop, and for a time, served as the school district's bus barn. Then, in 1978, Vivian McCallum and her late husband, Bill bought the old Ford House and filled it with Vivian's antique furniture and Bill's collection of Model A Fords. After moving to Frisco, Vivian was shocked to find the town had no city library. She soon organized one and dedicated space for it in her building. Before long the library outgrew that space and was moved to its present location. Some time later the building was sold to its current owners, the O'Neals, who have restored and marked it as a local historic site.

That's it for history, but now let me tell you some of my Ford House memories.

The year was 1926, and I was five years old. Since a tricycle was the only "wheels" I had, I pedaled the six blocks from our home to my Dad's barbershop. Looking for a short cut, I entered the service door at the rear of the dealership and proceeded through to the showroom, pausing to admire the proudly displayed new Model T. Imagining myself in the driver's seat of this beautiful black (the only





color they
came in)
automobile, I

daydreamed a while before exiting the front door to pedal my way on to the barber shop.

Through the years I repeated that trip many times as I graduated from a tricycle to a bicycle. I got to know the Carpenters, their mechanics, Ivory the handyman, and the ever present “Jim Fat” Herndon, whose job, I presumed, was to sit on a stool in front of the building and jump at me as I rounded the corner.

The Ford House was a fascinating place for us boys. We visited regularly, pretending to drive the used cars, gawking at an old Franklin with its air cooled engine, and practicing shifting gears in a Dodge, knowing its shift pattern was different from all other cars.

In 1928 Henry Ford introduced a revolutionary new car, the Model A. It came in different colors, and some of the coupes had a “rumble seat” in the trunk. To get in, you climbed from the running board to a step on the back fender and jumped into the open aired seat. People gathered to watch salesmen demonstrate the car’s noticeably smoother running engine by standing a nickel on edge on the front fender.

The next big change came in 1933 when Ford produced a “streamlined” car with a powerful V-8 engine. The showroom was crowded for days as people checked out this sleek new model, which sold for about \$600 - without a heater or radio. We all marveled that the car’s doors opened from the front, and wondered what would happen if they came open while the car was speeding down the road. These V-8s were very fast compared to their four cylinder predecessors. I know, because in 1941 I paid a whopping \$80 for a used 1933 Ford. It was still a good, fast car, and I never lost a door!



When Carpenter Brothers closed their doors forever, it left a void in our town. But the closing could never erase from my memory the sight of that new 1926 Model T – as viewed from the seat of my tricycle, ‘cause that’s the way it was in Frisco’s early days.

Frisco native Bob Warren is a humorist, historian and former Frisco Mayor.