



Gateway Chapter

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To contact our officers,
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The Gateway Chapter of the Hudson Essex Terraplane Club is dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the vehicles built by the Hudson Motor Car Company between 1909 and 1957. Our chapter was founded in 1974 and includes the Missouri and Illinois area surrounding St. Louis, MO, home of the celebrated Gateway Arch.

If you appreciate the cars and trucks built by Hudson, we invite you to join our club, whether you own a Hudson or not.

Readers are invited to submit articles, photos, event news and any other pertinent information to the editor at the email address below:

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President's Message

Happy New Year, Gateway Chapter! Our Christmas party was a good time, and we had a nice turn out. Thank you for such a good showing. I would also like to thank Dwight and Vicki Sutterfield for hosting the event again this year. I do hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas!

I have been taking my Hudson out for drives on the few warmer days we've had, and I try to do that throughout the winter. My task for this winter is to install LED bulbs in the tail lights and dash. Hopefully they will be a little more visible than the original bulbs. A number of people have told me that they can't see my brake lights or signal lights if the sun is at my back.

In last month's article about my broken brake spring, I mentioned a number of people who helped me obtain a replacement spring and figure out how to install it. I neglected to mention Ivan Lajeunesse, the HET National's record keeper for the 1939 models. Ivan also had a part in helping me, as he sent me pictures of the brake and clutch linkages. He has all the manuals for the 1939 models and offered to copy and send any information I needed. He's a heck of a good guy and has been a great help to me in the past as well. Thanks, Ivan!

While we have no chapter events planned for January, the orphan car games at the Art Deco Fortress will be on Jan 19, 2025, from 1 PM until 4 PM. Snacks will be provided and it's a BYOB event. I haven't heard any more about the winter warm up at Hyman but when I do, I will pass the info along to you. Please attend if you are able to, as both of these are worthwhile events.

Our January birthdays are as follows: Stan Porter 01/13, Jan Porter 01/23 and Rhonda Ford 01/27. Happy birthday to you all and wishing you many more! I wish each of you a Happy and Prosperous New year!

Hudsonly,

Vic

Gateway Chapter Christmas Party

Our annual chapter Christmas party was held on Saturday, December 7th, with Dwight and Vicki Sutterfield once again hosting at their home near Troy, IL. We have enjoyed having the party at Dwight and Vicki's for several years and we really appreciate the time and effort they spend to make each party a success. We had a nice crowd this year, with about 30 people enjoying the festivities.

The party began about 1:00 PM, with everyone arriving and getting re-acquainted with their fellow chapter members. A buffet line was set up for the lunch of fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, mostaccioli, salad, and other



side dishes. A variety of delicious looking desserts was provided for those who could afford the calories, and as always, the Hudson Eating Team enjoyed lunch to the fullest!

After lunch, Vic called a short meeting to discuss a few matters. Although the Gateway Chapter has no events scheduled for January, a couple of other car clubs have invited us to participate in events they are sponsoring. On January 19th, the Packard club is again sponsoring an event at the Deco Fortress in St. Louis. Also, the St. Louis chapter of the Classic Car Club of America is planning to sponsor their Winter Warm-Up at Hyman, LTD as they did last year. Vic will be sending out a group text with all the details about these events.

Dave Carroll was the winner of the 50/50, and he generously donated most of his winnings back to the club account. Brian Letford, our chapter treasurer, was happy to report that the proceeds from the 50/50 drawing increased the amount in our chapter account to over \$1000! On a related note, a motion was made to increase chapter dues to \$20 per year beginning in January of 2026. Dues have been \$15 per year for many years.

Roger mentioned that he has sold all of his collection of Hudson parts, and if anyone needs parts they should contact chapter member Lynn Huyar.

Vic introduced Dave and Donna Vuichard, our newest chapter members. Many of us have already met them at recent chapter events, and it was good to see them again at the party. Tony Miller told us he had spoken with founding chapter member Phil Reden, who recently moved to Indiana. We were all glad to hear that Phil is doing well. Dave Carroll noted that articles in classic car magazines rarely mention Hudsons, and it's important for us to do all we can to bring attention to our club and make it stronger, so that Hudsons will receive the recognition they deserve.

Vic mentioned some of our recent events, and noted that he is working on a Route 66 cruise in Missouri for 2025. Any ideas for additional events can be brought up and discussed during our planning meeting in February. Finally, a vote was taken for chapter officers, and our current officers will all retain their positions for the coming year.

Joann and Vicki organized some games which we all enjoyed. First was a fast paced game of Rob Your Neighbor, with some players lucky enough to accumulate several gifts. After the game was over the lucky ones were kind enough to make sure every player wound up with a gift. Second was a trivia game which was inspired by Vic's participation in a trivia night sponsored by the Oldsmobile club a couple of months ago. There were a number of car-related questions including five that were Hudson related. Lastly, we played the birthday game, and I was apparently born on a lucky day as I was the last person standing!



Finally, we had the presence of mind to pose for a group picture, which was taken by Jennifer Porter. After collecting our loot and saying our goodbyes we went our separate ways, looking forward to meeting again at our future events.

Memories of Early Hudson Adventures: A Father's Passion for Classic Cars

As classic car enthusiasts, we often share cherished memories that intertwine with our love for these vintage machines. One such story harkens back to the mid-1960s and early 1970s when a father and son embarked on some unforgettable journeys in classic Hudson vehicles, specifically starting with a 1930 Essex Sedan.

The 1930 Essex Sedan made its mark on this young boy's memory, bringing to life the sights, sounds, and smells of a time long gone. Purchased by my father, the Challenger Six was in solid shape but needed a fresh coat of paint. A backyard project soon unfolded, as Dad and a few friends took on the task of sanding down the car, followed by a friend spray-painting it in a glossy black. The finishing touch, blue trim and pinstriping, added character to its classic silhouette. Even with its aged moleskin interior, which bore the scents of nostalgia, Dad kept it intact, honoring its history.



Though the Essex wasn't often showcased, it embarked on some memorable road trips, including a long journey to Macomb, Illinois, for a Spoon River meet. On that fateful trip, the journey felt eternal as the Essex, with its modest top speed of 45 mph, struggled with engine troubles. The irony of Dad's joke offering 25 cents for every car they passed was almost comical, as the slow pace resulted in just one quarter—earned when a fellow traveler encountered engine issues of their own!

The love for classic cars didn't stop there; among many others, our classic car adventures continued with a 1949 Willys Jeepster, a vehicle that quickly became a household favorite. But, in 1971, Dad traded both the Essex and the Jeepster for a 1954 Kaiser Darrin, a car that remains in the family to this day.

As time moved on, Dad's fondness for Hudsons resurfaced, leading to the purchase of a 1950 Pacemaker in 1975. Painted in an eye-catching copper hue, this classic added to the family's legacy of vintage cars. After a couple of years of enjoyment, this beloved Pacemaker found a new home as it made the journey from Quincy to New York with a gentleman who drove it home.

This tale is a reminder of how classic cars connect us to our past and create lasting memories. That 1930 Essex led me to search for and acquire my own Essex – a 1929 Sedan. They are not merely vehicles; they symbolize family ties, adventures, and the joys of automotive history—a precious inheritance we cherish as Hudson enthusiasts.

- Dennis Koch

Let's talk about engine oil for your old Hudson



This is a topic that opens a whole can of worms as far as what modern oil to use in your Hudson. Everyone will have a different opinion. In this article I will discuss basic things to consider...first, how long has the car been sitting before you acquired it?

If it's been in a barn for 20 years and has never been started, the inside of the engine is probably pretty gunked up. If you get it running and put modern detergent oil in, it will wash all the gunk loose and the engine will start clogging up. Even with the factory oil filter it only catches a small amount of dirt. I speak from experience here, that's how you learn things. The new oil cleaned up the rings, and oil usage stopped, but in short order the oil pump screen clogged solid and rod bearings started to knock.

The thing that I recommend would be to check out the motor to see if it has compression and will run. Before using detergent oil, remove the oil pan and

check how dirty the pan and oil galleries are. Modern oils are made to keep dirt in suspension so the filter will catch it. Older engines like your Hudson did not work that way. The dirt was expected to settle in the bottom of the oil pan and be drained out during an oil change. Even the factory add-on oil filter only caught a small percentage of the dirt.

I just wanted to explain why you shouldn't use detergent oil unless you know your motor is already clean. If it's an engine you just rebuilt then modern oil won't hurt - just follow the Hudson recommendations for oil weight. Modern oils won't hurt the motor but you should use a zinc additive for the valve train.

- Roger Tallent

Cassen's Garage, Hamel IL

The year is 1949, and you, your wife and kids all live in Hamel, IL along famed Route 66. After working as a B29 radio operator during the war, you return home to Hamel to resume your job at the Tourist Haven, and you've also opened a radio and TV repair shop on the side. The 1940 Hudson Country Club Six you have now is a good running car, but lately you've become fascinated with the new stepdown design that Hudson came up with in 1948.

You head over to Cassen's Garage to check out what they have on the lot. As you pull up you notice a nice '49 Commodore 8. You speak to the sales rep, and he is more than eager to show you the car. You look it over and are pleased with the interior design. When you look at the price you become a little discouraged, but the salesman tells you he still has a nice '48 on hand, and he can offer you a deep discount. You discuss this for awhile but tell him you want to sleep on it.

After you get home, you spend most of the evening thinking about the '48, and you tell your wife you've decided you'd like to buy it. The next morning you invite her to come along so you can take the car for a test drive. At Cassen's you resume talking with the salesman about the '48. He suggests you take it for a drive, and you chuckle and tell him that is why we are here! The test drive goes well, and both you and your wife are happy with the car. You take the offer and make the purchase. You are now the proud owner of a 1948 Hudson Commodore 8!

Below is a picture of the dealership believed to be from 1949:



Hudson History: The Beginning of the Beginning...

In our series of articles detailing Hudson's history, we have written about the Essex and Terraplane, Hudson models popular in the 1920s and 1930s. We have also examined the Nash based Hudsons, which were the last models manufactured before the Hudson name was retired in 1957. Since we are now at the beginning of a new year, it seems appropriate to go back to the very beginning, and examine the background events that led up to the creation of the Hudson Motor Car Company in 1909.

There were eight men instrumental in the formation of the Hudson company. Even though the automotive industry was quite young in 1909, these individuals had already accumulated years of experience in the field. It is interesting to note that the first Hudson started out as a "moonlight" project, and was developed in secret while the men were still working for other auto manufacturers. Once financing was secured, these men resigned from their positions so they could devote their full energy to the success of the Hudson project.

Roy D. Chapin was the motivating force whose ideas and ambitions led to the creation of the Hudson Motor Car Company. He was born in Lansing, Michigan in 1880, and by the time he started college he was determined to become a success in the business world. After taking a



A young Chapin at the tiller of a Curved-dash Oldsmobile runabout.

ride in an early Curved-dash Oldsmobile, he decided to pursue a future in the auto industry. In 1901, Ransom E. Olds lured Chapin away from the University of Michigan with an

offer of \$35 per month. Chapin had known Olds for about 15 years, and Olds recognized his potential as a manager. Chapin was assigned to learn the entire operation from the ground up, and became familiar with the engineering, manufacturing, testing, and marketing of the cars. He eventually became the sales manager, and notably helped to create the first comprehensive instruction manual to aid new owners in the operation and maintenance of their cars. Chapin decided to remain with the company after Olds resigned in 1904.



Roy D. Chapin, the motivating force behind the formation of the Hudson Motor Car Company.

Howard Earle Coffin was also an alumni of the University of Michigan, where he studied mechanical engineering and built a steam powered automobile while still a student. Later, he used the University's engineering shop to construct his first internal combustion engine. After graduation, he went to work for Olds as an experimental engineer, and later became chief engineer. Coffin was one of several close friends that Chapin made while working at Olds, along with Frederick O. Bezner and James J. Brady. All four were men of exceptional ability in their fields, and they shared Chapin's ambition to make a mark in the auto industry. The four men met on February 28, 1906, to create a formal partnership for an auto venture of their own, with each contributing \$1500 for capitalization. The next day, Chapin resigned from the Olds Motor Works.

During a trip to California to seek additional funding, Chapin and Coffin met E.R. Thomas, founder of the Thomas Motor Company, which manufactured the famous Thomas "Flyer". After listening to their pitch, Thomas agreed to supply funding for the new venture, which was called the E.R. Thomas Detroit Motor Car Company. Although Thomas had the controlling interest, the new company would be independent, and not a subsidiary of the Buffalo, NY based Thomas Motor Company. Chapin's group would become the top management team for the new company, with Coffin as first vice president, Brady as second vice president, Chapin as treasurer and general manager, and Bezner as



Howard E. Coffin, close friend and associate of Roy Chapin, one of the original group that later founded the Hudson Motor Car Company.

secretary. E.R. Thomas was the president, although he did not take an active role in the management. The new company would build a car designed by Howard Coffin, called the Thomas-Detroit. The first car was completed in September, 1906 and proved itself on a test drive to Buffalo, NY with Chapin and Coffin as passengers. Production began shortly afterwards, and the cars were manufactured under contract in Detroit and marketed by the Buffalo firm.

Chapin and his associates did well with the Thomas-Detroit venture, but they felt the company would be much more successful if full control could be maintained in Detroit rather than Buffalo. They began to search for a local investor to purchase control of the company from Thomas. They met with Hugh Chalmers, who had recently left the National Cash Register Company, where he had been the sales manager, vice president, and general manager. Chalmers was well regarded in the business world, and in addition to his sales experience he had excellent connections with financial institutions. He jumped at the chance to get into the automobile industry, and was able to purchase controlling interest in Thomas-



Chapin's group of four made up the management team of the Thomas-Detroit Motor Car Company. From left, Beznar, Brady, Coffin, Chapin and E.R. Thomas

Detroit, which E.R. Thomas was eager to sell as he needed money to avert a bankruptcy in Buffalo. With control of the company now firmly established in Detroit, Chalmers assumed the presidency on December 1, 1907. In June of 1908 Chalmers announced a new line of lower priced cars, which Coffin had developed to sell for about \$1500. In 1910 the company was reorganized as the Chalmers-Detroit Motor Company, and the car's name was shortened to Chalmers.

At this point we need to introduce two additional associates to Chapin's original group of four, George W. Dunham and Roscoe B. Jackson. Dunham studied engineering in college, served as chief engineer at the American Motor Carriage Company in Cleveland, OH, and left in 1904 to take an engineering job at Olds. He became the chief engi-



1908 Thomas-Detroit runabout, designed by Howard Coffin.

neer early in 1907, when he succeeded Howard Coffin. Jackson became a good friend of Chapin while they attended the University of Michigan. He joined the Olds Motor Works in 1902, and within five years he was in charge of the main assembly plant. He eventually became one of the strongest thinkers and leaders of the young auto industry.

In 1907, Chapin's group hired Dunham and Jackson and directed them to begin design work on the car that eventually would be given the Hudson name. The design was known as the Model 20 Project, since the car was designed around a 20 horsepower, four cylinder engine. Work on this design was carried on in secret since the group had to maintain loyalties and responsibilities at the companies they worked for. Despite their other commitments, work proceeded on the Model 20, most of which was accomplished by Dunham. In October of 1908 the selling price of the car was estimated at \$1750, which was not acceptable to Chapin or his associates. The group's objective was to sell the car for less than \$1000, and the design was re-evaluated in an effort to cut costs.



1910 Chalmers-Detroit Model K30 Roadster

In next month's issue of the Gateway Gazette, we will continue the story of Chapin's group, as they confront the challenges to forming a new company and manufacturing their own automobile.