

The Blue Buick Buggy

by Dan Noble Cook

During the depression days of the 1930's and the early forties, we lived on a farm at Leslie, Idaho. For several years my folks could not afford an automobile and we most often traveled by team and wagon. Occasionally the neighbors Ford Model A with a rumble seat was available to us. What a joy it was to ride in such "luxury".

About 1936 Dad was able to purchase a 1930 Buick Sedan. We thought we were in the lap of splendor. This beauty had a wooden dash, mohair upholstery, was dark blue in color and even had a luggage rack on the back bumper.

I need not remind the more mature reader that the economics of the day did not permit the purchase of anti-freeze, if it was available at all. For Dad water would do just fine. It goes without saying that there is some risk in such decisions for the memory sometimes fails. In any case, one cold wintry night the draining of the radiator was forgotten. Alas, tragedy had struck for now there was a broken block in that Buick.

Dad used a patch on the block for some time, but that proved ineffective as you might guess. To our great relief another Buick just like our beauty became available. It had been in an accident and the front was badly damaged. But the engine was in perfect shape and soon became the powerhouse for our automobile.

The real problem had been solved, but now what to do with a perfectly good Buick Sedan car body. My father was somewhat innovative and suddenly the roads in our community were sporting the strangest blue buggy ever seen in that country. Dad removed the frame back to the fire wall, moved the front axle and wheels back to the new front, installed a tongue and provided an opening through which the reins of a dashing team of horses could be inserted for the benefit of the "driver" who now sat in the driver's seat.

For several years the buggy was a favorite mode of transportation for us and for many of the neighborhood kids, who hitched a ride to school. While at school, the team was tied to a clump of trees below the two-room schoolhouse and provided with plenty to eat. I might add that they were always hot to trot at the end of the day. Hot rocks on the floor, the plush seats and good company provided many pleasurable hours of riding comfort. Sadly, the Blue Buick Buggy's demise is unknown. But there are many fond memories and smiles while gazing upon the beauty in this picture.

Thanks to Mrs. Beighley, the owner of the local store for the pictorial memory. The passengers are, beginning at the right, my sister Kay (partially hidden), sister Gayle, brother Lynn, and the driver, me at about nine or ten years of age. The neighbor, Jimmie Mathews sitting on the wheel was along for the ride. Our faithful companions are Queen, the white one in front, and Chuck.

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