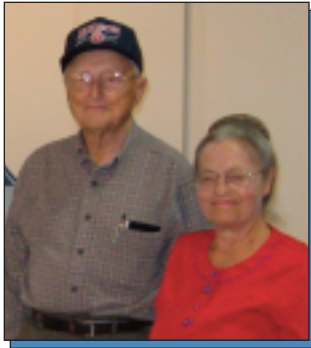




HOSTETLER'S HUDSON AUTO MUSEUM

ESSEX
TERRAPLANE

The Worlds Largest Collection of
Hudson Products



How I Got Interested in Hudson Cars

Written by Eldon and Esta Hostetler on August 17, 2005

I grew up near Shipshewana, Indiana, on the Pashan Farm. Pashan was a small town with a General Store and a Post Office before Shipshewana had one. It was a large farm of 280 acres.

In 1936, a local Amish boy left the area for Texas to follow the wheat harvest north. I was 14 years old at this time. Dad had many young men help with the corn harvest in the fall. He did not expect Ervin Yoder to return in time to help with the corn harvest. But one day soon after the start, he (Ervin) dropped in with a new 1936 Hudson Terraplane, four-door sedan, tan in color with semi-automatic shifting next to the steering wheel.

I was allowed to drive this car several times to go from farm to farm. With this automatic shifting, it was "big time stuff" as far as I was concerned. All other cars had shift levers off the floor. You had to be 18 years old before you could get a driver's license. Those were four long years for me. However, when I turned 18 in 1940, I purchased a used 1938 Hudson with the same shifting setup. My Amish grandfather loaned me \$350.00 to buy this car if I promised not to tell Mother he did this. I kept this promise. I drove Hudsons until they merged with Nash and have driven mostly Chryslers since.

I have had good fortune in my life, which made it possible to collect old Hudson cars. My wife, Esta, suggested I get into a hobby to divert some of my energy. She had also been taught to drive in a Hudson car. This is how and why we got started collecting the ones we drove at first. However, when we went back into older models, it got very interesting. Hudson had many different model cars for sale with many by many different coach builders. We were lucky to find many of these that needed restoration and did this to bring them back for display. Today, we have 48 unusual Hudson, Essex, Terraplane, Railton, and Dover brand cars and trucks. Hudson merged with Nash late 1954, and this merger became American Motors, Inc. they made big cars for three years and then put all sales and production into the Rambler models.

In August 1992, we purchased the first eight acres of land, and in August 1997, an additional 10 next to it. The plans were to put a museum on this land for the tourists to see when coming to the Flea Market. When we became aware of the museum tax problem in the State of Indiana, we started to look at other options. We found that a 501(c)3 setup is the only way this can be done. However, when done this way, the project belongs to the community and managed by a local board.

In December 1997, before Christmas, we told our six children that we spoke to Norm Kaufmann, Shipshewana Town Manager, and asked him if the town would consider building a complex for the car collection if we would donate the cars and our 18 acres of land to place it on. We would also put up an endowment for operation. Shipshewana already had 501c3 status. They agreed to keep the cars together during our lifetime.

Eldon Hostetler
Esta M. Hostetler

Today, the collection donated by Eldon and Esta Hostetler resides at the Shipshewana Town Center, the 60,000-square-foot auto museum, convention, and special event center in the heart of Shipshewana.