



Wheels

Our first family car at the end of WWII.

WORLD WAR II ended officially on September 2nd of 1945. I was five at the time, about to turn six, my sister was nine. My dad was a mailman, my mother didn't work, we lived in a rented rick row-house on Irving Street in Allentown, Pa. We weren't poor, but money was tight. My parents were frugal, but they saved what they could. We had an icebox and mom did laundry in a tub. You couldn't buy major appliances during the war years even if you had the money. Childhood pleasures were simple; penny candy, ice cream, a trip to the park to play with a ball. We had fewer toys, but we treasured them and augmented our play with imagination. Our primary mode of locomotion was to walk or use the trolley system.

Then the war ended, and the age of consumerism was born. We had a brick garage at the end of our yard locked against curious children, but we knew it contained a car. It was a 1934 Ford two door sedan. I don't know its history or how it came into our possession. My father was one of ten kids in a family that passed things like used cars around brother to brother. Then came the day when several of his brothers descended on us with tires and cans of gasoline and who knows what else and there was a flurry of activity in the garage around the car. At the end of the day the car was pushed from the garage into the alleyway. We lived on a slight hill, so the brothers pushed the car to get it rolling down the hill while my father, behind the wheel popped the clutch to try and force the engine to engage. It sputtered and clanked and puffed black smoke but failed to start. At the bottom of the hill lay a cross street that was unfortunately flat. Undaunted, the brothers pushed the car from behind as fast as their legs could work while my father worked the clutch. Half the neighborhood kids ran along-side yelling and squealing with excitement and joy. After several false starts the engine came alive and we were launched into the modern world.



Chandler Arizona October 2019