

# It All Started With Henry Ford

When Henry Ford cranked up his first Model T, he probably didn't realize that he had started something far more significant than his simple internal combustion, four-cylinder engine. As the horseless carriage began to catch on and people admitted to themselves that the contraptions really could replace the horse, more and more automobiles began to crowd the carriage roads and city streets.

During the early years, when an owner experienced mechanical problems with his machine, the natural place to have it worked on was at the village blacksmith's. After all, the Smithy shod horses and

repaired carriages and wagons, didn't he?

But rapid advances in automotive technology, and an ever-increasing demand for better, higher-powered cars soon left the local blacksmith standing beside his anvil in dismay. Engines became too complex to keep running with stove bolts and baling wire. They required people with specialized knowledge and skills.

Today automobile manufacturers and their supportive suppliers constitute the largest industry in the United States. Americans own and operate more cars than any country in the world. And more people are involved in the maintenance and repair

of these vehicles than ever before — if they are available.

Good automotive mechanics are in short supply. College of The Albemarle is making an effort to alleviate this condition by providing trained mechanics for automobile dealers and garage owners in the Albemarle region. The college offers a one-year course in Automotive Mechanics as one of its Technical and Vocational programs. This month, 16 students will receive diplomas in Automotive Mechanics. The next class will begin on September 8.

Gerry Wesner, instructor for the program, said that any person who has mechanical aptitude, enjoys working with motors, machines, electrical and electronic equipment and other mechanical devices, should be successful in the trade.

Wesner said his intensive 12-month program includes not only actual study and repair of engines, electrical



**BABYSITTING ON THE COURTHOUSE GREEN** — Linwood Hobbs of Hobbsville had the task of babysitting for three of his grandchildren last Tuesday morning. So, he pulled up a bench under a big shade tree on the courthouse green. Shown with gramps are Brenda and Linda Hobbs and brother Jake, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie C. Hobbs. (Newbern photo)

and fuel systems, power train systems and chassis and suspension, but many related subjects. These encompass introductions to blueprint reading, the structure of metals, schematics and diagrams

and applied physics. Students are also exposed to communications skills, a necessity in today's world of work, the instructor pointed out.

He said individuals who are interested in learning

more about the Automotive Mechanics program should contact Charles Francis, director of admissions at COA, at his office on the Main Campus on Riverside Avenue, or call 335-0821, extension 221.

Mr. and Mrs. Tim Johnny Broughton in Gregory of Chesapeake, Va. Hertford and Mr. and Mrs. Linford Winslow at Noah Gregory on Sunday. Belvidere.  
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Dr. and Mrs. Harold Winslow and family of White of Rocky Mount spent Scotland Neck were the weekend guests of Mrs. with friends.

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**COVERED UP WITH WORK** — Wilson White finds that sometimes he has to lie down on the job to get it done. White is aligning the front wheels on a late model automobile. The Winfall resident is a student in the Automotive Mechanics program at College of the Albemarle's Technical and Vocational Center in Elizabeth City. (COA Photo)

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