

The Preacher and His T-Model Fords

By LARRY W. MULL

Rev. Thaddeus F. Deitz, 78, a native of Jackson county, is no doubt one of Western Carolina's oldest, best-known and beloved ministers, and perhaps the only man in Jackson county who can boast of never having driven any type of car except a Model-T Ford. "In fact," he says, "I wouldn't have any kind of car but a Model-T." The one shown in picture, a 1925 model, is the fourth one owned by Rev. Mr. Deitz. He has been driving them since they were first invented.

The story connected with Rev. Deitz and his antique Ford reads as fantastically as a fairy tale. He has perhaps preached more sermons, attended more funerals, married more people, and pulled more "stalled" cars from mud holes than any preacher in this part of the State. His maternal ancestors were English, his mother being Mira Buchanan. His paternal ancestors were German. His grandfather, with three or four brothers, came from Germany to Pennsylvania. One branch of the family trekked south with a wave of pioneer settlers and took up a home in Western North Carolina.

Rev. Deitz, since his retirement as pastor of Scotts Creek Baptist church in 1942 where he served for more than 20 years, is supply pastor to Baptist churches throughout Western North Carolina. He began his career at the age of fifteen, being elected at that time as superintendent of his Sunday school. He had few advantages of education, 18 months schooling being about all he had. He studied home arithmetic, did not finish Reed and Kellogg's Grammar, and was in the third reader when he had to quit school. Rev. Deitz, one of the most popular ministers of this section, and an entertaining speaker, is self-educated, by constant reading and studying during his spare hours.

At the age of 18 he married the former Miss Theresa Cowan of Jackson county. In these days of hasty marriage and quick divorce, it is most refreshing to hear Rev. Deitz tell the love story of his life. He said: "I remember the first day I ever saw her—a little thing six years old, in a little white dress. I loved her that day and I've loved her ever since. We went to school together, we professed religion the same day at the same church, we were baptized the same day by the same preacher, and joined the same church on the same day and," with a laugh—"we were married the same day."

About the time of his marriage Rev. Deitz began to preach—to "exercise in public," as he expressed it. He also continued his studies alone at home, buying what books he could and taking advantage of every opportunity to improve himself, studying the sermons of famous ministers and their works.

On one occasion, before the first Model-T was invented, after his first effort to preach in his home church, Savannah Creek Baptist, Rev. Deitz went by train for a visit to Boone Valley, a region on the outskirts of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and on Hazel Creek, leaving his wife and small baby at home. He went by train to Bushnell, then walked to



Boone Valley, a distance of possibly 25 miles as the road now runs. At that time "Uncle" Josh Calhoun, of pioneer fame, and Benton Cook were holding a series of revival meetings. Some one told them that Mr. Deitz was there and that he "exercised in public," so the young man was called upon to preach. He demurred, feeling his inadequacy in the presence of such able men who were so much older than he, but finally he consented. He talked to the people on "The Prodigal Son," and then called for penitents. Four or five answered his entreaty. He preached again the next night and five more came to the altar. The building in which he spoke was a log school house, 18 by 20 feet—the Boone Valley School and Church. A full page photograph of this little church was published in Horace Kephart's "Our Southern Highlanders."

From this meeting Rev. Deitz walked to his home near Sylva, approximately 60 miles. Leaving Boone Valley he walked through the Gap to the head of Forney's Creek, through the mountains to Bushnell, up the railroad tracks to Alarka Creek, through the mountains to Greens Creek and on to Savannah. In those days there were no easily-trod roads, no fine highways, and no cars of any kind. There were only rough trails and "dancing" log bridges. On arriving at his home he ate supper and went on two more miles to his church where he conducted prayer-meeting and walked back home. This amount of travel required about a day and a half. Thus began the career of this man of God, a born orator of unusual capacity; emphatically a mountain man, possessing the characteristics of the best specimen of typical mountaineers, and the ability to make a name for himself in spite of meagre advantages. Rev. Mr. Deitz is yet a brilliant man at the age of 78, well versed in the Bible, thoroughly grounded in English, fluent in speaking, and equipped with a copious vocabulary upon which he draws with astonishing ease.

When the first Model-T Ford went on display, Rev. Deitz bought a touring car—without a starter. When the starter was invented, he traded for his third Model-T, a sedan, but misfortune overtook him one night after he had returned from a meeting in Bryson City. About midnight a neighbor knocked on the door of the Deitz home and said his family had detected a heavy cloud of smoke coming from their garage. Members of the family gathered buckets and tried to extinguish the roaring flames. Having to carry water several yards, the fire of undetermined origin had gained too much headway to get under control, and the Model-T Ford burned, leaving Rev. Deitz in the same handicap he experienced when he first began to "exercise in public." That was in the year of 1924.

Rev. Deitz, who was ordained to full sanctions of the Gospel ministry in July, 1891, has pastored churches at East Fork, Dillsboro, Zion Hill, Savannah, Scotts Creek, Hamburg, Love Dale, and Acre Hill, all in Jackson county; Shady Grove, Bethel and Little Brasstown in Clay; Mountain Grove, Wataga; Liberty and Oak Grove in Macon; nine years at the Andrews Baptist church at Andrews; Cherokee county, Brasstown; Macedonia church in Union county, Ga.; and Knoxville, Tennessee, where he was asked to return.

Because of the love and generosity of Rev. Deitz's friends and neighbors, especially members of the churches he pastored, they went to work in securing donations and purchased the 1925 model Ford he drives today. Even though it is an antique prize, it still looks like new and is in good condition. The man who owned the car, prior

to Rev. Deitz lived in Andrews. At first he refused to sell because he wanted to keep the Ford for his son, but after hearing about Rev. Deitz's misfortune, agreed to sell and the Ford was brought to Jackson county where it has been a familiar antique in Sylva and Jackson county in looks but not in service.

When asked if the Model-T used much gas Rev. Deitz said: "Not on your life! In fact I think I can average more miles on the gallon of gas than you can with your 1946 model."

Rev. and Mrs. Deitz celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary earlier this year. "A ride in the Model-T makes the occasion happier," he said. "I am happier today than when we were young together," he continued, "because we have each other, and the two of us still have our Model-T Ford."

Home Demonstration Club At Qualla Elects Officers For '47 At February Meet

Officers for 1947 were elected at the February meeting of the Qualla Home Demonstration club which was held at the home of Mrs. Crawford Shelton, hostess to the group. Those elected to serve were Mrs. Goldman Kinsland, president; Mrs. Crawford Shelton, vice-president; and Mrs. Emerson Cathey, secretary. All project leaders will remain the same as last year. Miss Helen Sossamon, home demonstration agent for Jackson county, was present at the meeting and gave a demonstration on roll making. Mrs. Shelton served delicious re-

Special Stamps



HERE ARE three of the four special stamps to be issued in Swaziland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Basutoland to mark the forthcoming visit of Britain's Royal Family to South Africa. The denominations, colors and designs will be the same for all territories (International)

MUSICAL PROGRAMS FEATURE OF CHAPEL PROGRAM AT SCHOOL

Rev. and Mrs. Mark Osborne, Jr., of Cullowhee, gave two delightful chapel programs for members of the Sylva High school, Friday, at 1 o'clock and again at 2 o'clock for students of the elementary school. Others included on the program were Mrs. Paul Ellis, Miss Ruth Hooper of Western Carolina Teachers College, and Miss Alice Weaver, director of Sylva glee club.

A chorus, composed of Mr. and Mrs. Osborne, Mrs. Ellis, Miss Hooper, and Miss Weaver, presented "Just Been Wondering," and "Who Knows?"

Miss Hooper and Mr. Osborne gave two duets with violin and clarinet, "Angel's Serenade," and "Evening Star," after which Mr. Osborne gave several unaccompanied clarinet solos, to show the types of music accomplished by that instrument.

Mr. and Mrs. Osborne gave three vocal duets, "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life," "Wanting You," and "My Hero."

Mrs. Grover Wilkes was accompanist for the programs. Refreshments to the eight members present.

LAST RITES ARE HELD AT 2 P. M. SUNDAY FOR MRS. SARA A. MURRAY

Funeral services for Mrs. Sara A. Murray, 82, who died suddenly at her home in Addie, Friday, Feb. 21, were held Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the Buff Creek Baptist church. The Rev. Robert

Parris officiated at the rites and burial followed in the church cemetery.

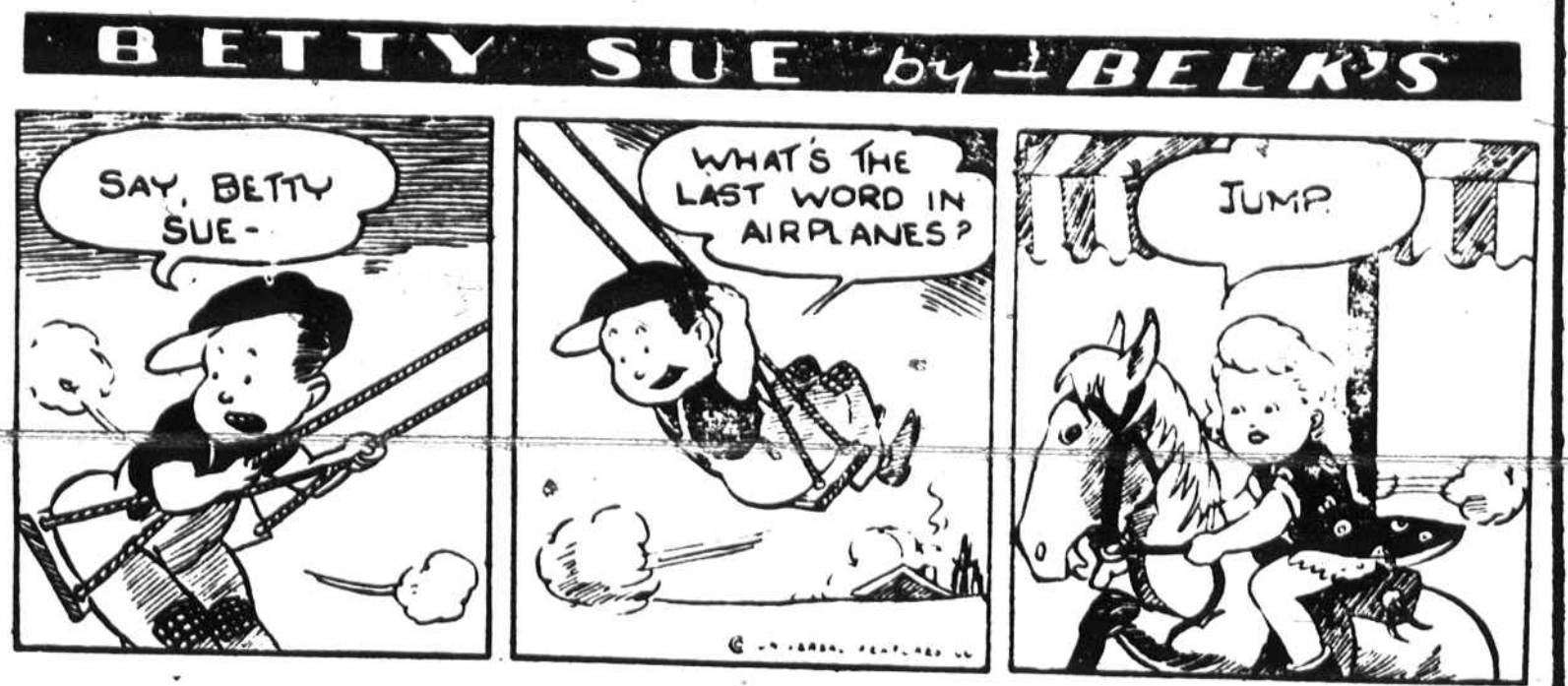
Mrs. Murray had been a member of the Buff Creek church for a number of years.

She is survived by two sons, D. A. and W. A. Murray of Addie, nine grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

Pallbearers were Bobbie Terrell,

Jack McClure, Roy McClure, Kenneth Terrell, Clarence McClure, and Charles Snyder. Members of the Young Woman's Sunday school class served as flower bearers.

Surplus United States potatoes will move to foreign markets through private processors and exporters under a new USDA subsidy program.



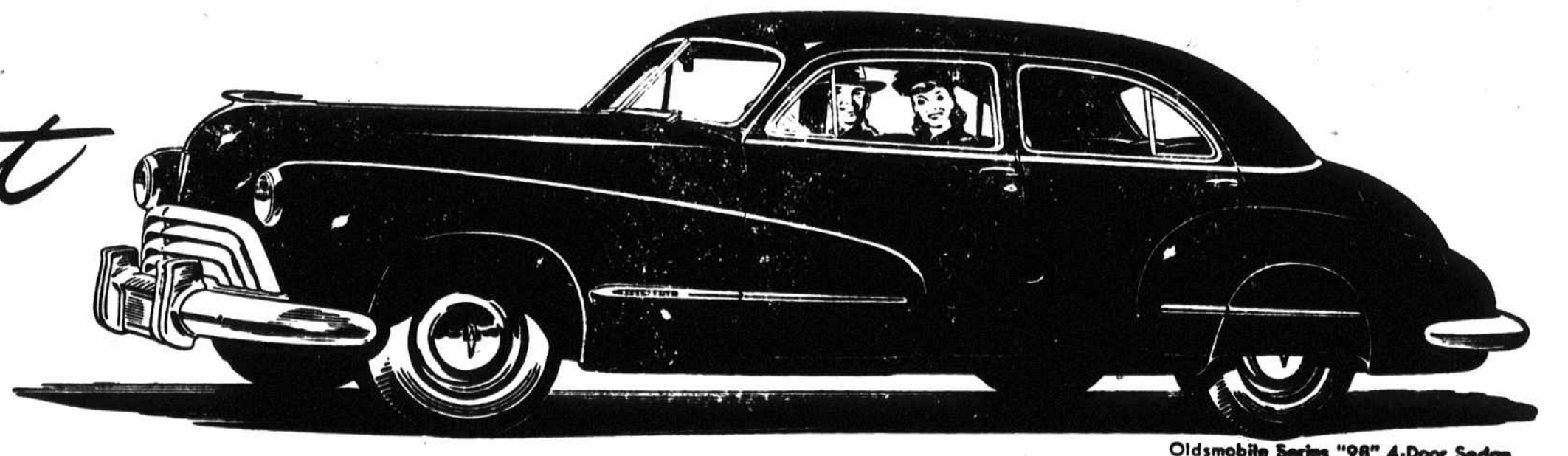
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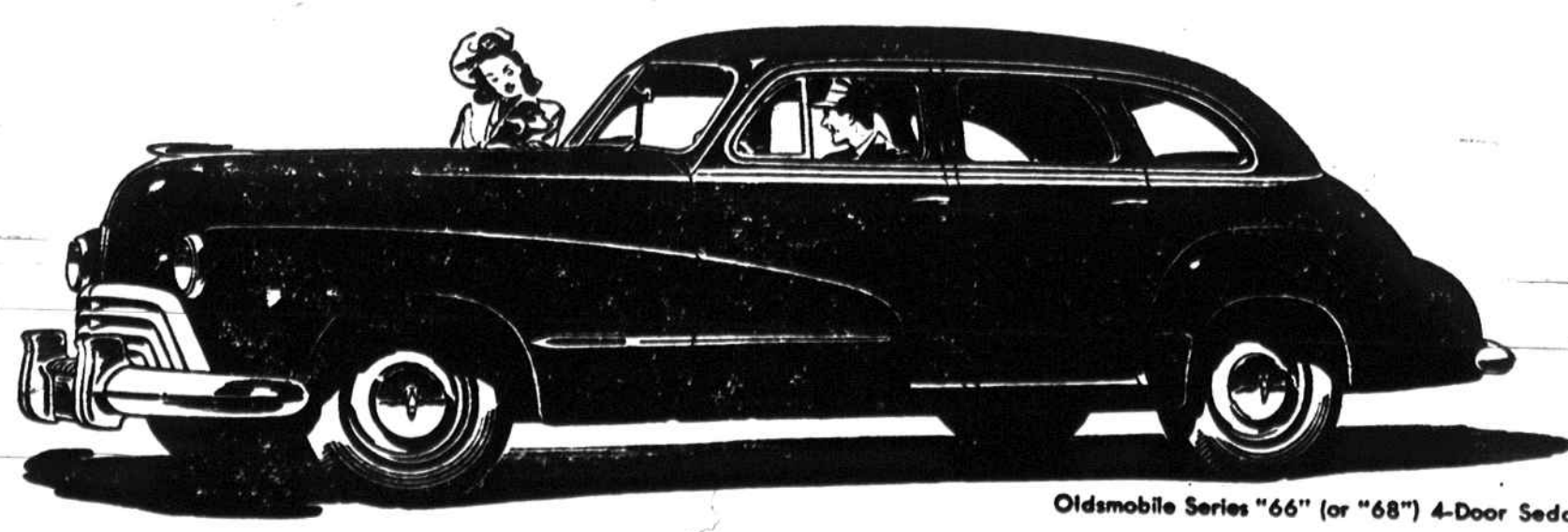
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