



## **THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...**

*By Ed Moran*

Let's spend a little time talking about the Model T's paint job. How many times have you had someone walk up to you and repeat the old quote that, "You can have any color you want as long as it's black." Of course, we Model T folks know that all Model T were not painted black.

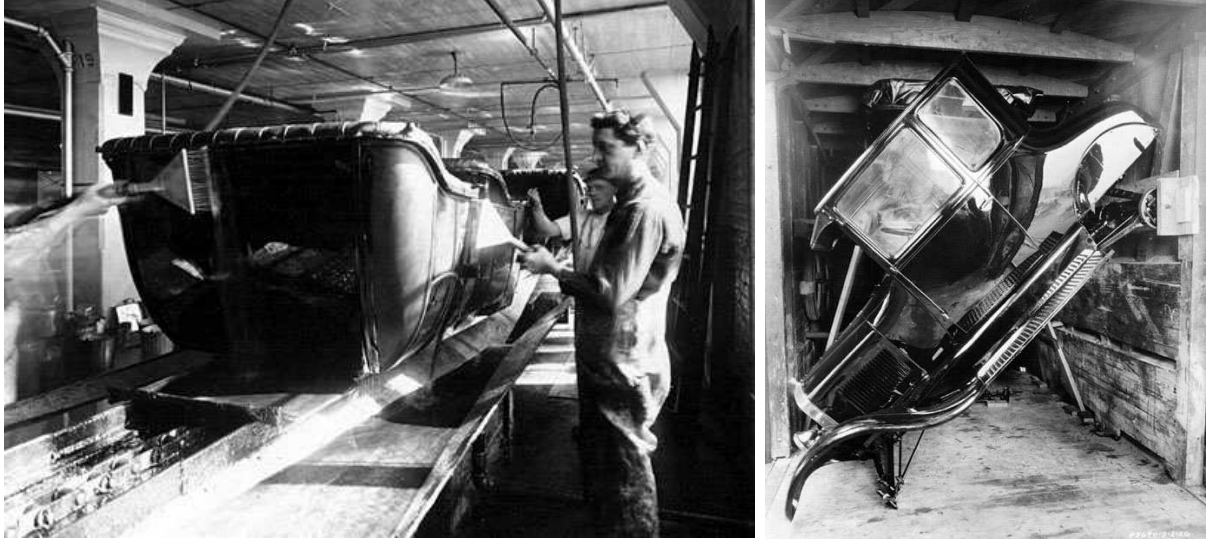
The 1909 models were carmine, 1910 models were a very dark green and about mid-way in 1911 Ford started using a very dark Midnight Blue which continued through 1912 and 1913. With the advent of the assembly line in late 1913 and early 1914, Ford finally switched to black until Dupont lacquer became available in the mid-twenties. Then, once again, the Model T came in several colors. Most common were Windsor Maroon and Channel Green. Both of these colors were very dark.

When Ford built the Highland Park plant, several floors were set aside just to hold bodies which had been varnished and were air-drying. This process could take over a week! It's easy to see that bodies could produce a real bottleneck when Ford was trying to produce more and more cars to meet the growing demand. If ways could be found to speed up the paint process, it would mean a tremendous boost in the number of cars Ford could produce.

The assembly line forced Ford to find a paint which dried rapidly. The paint that finally was used was a much faster drying black which could be flowed on and, after traveling 200 feet at 25 feet a minute, was sufficiently dry to be removed and stacked for drying for an additional 24 hours. Quite an improvement over the previous one week drying time!

Bodies would travel over three successive floors at Highland Park, at one point running 850 feet on an endless track before turning a right angle and going down-grade to the floor below.

Bodies were first primed with a rapidly drying brown primer which was sprayed on at high pressure (80 psi). The body was allowed to dry and then placed on the endless conveyor belt and was not removed again until it was stored for the 24 hour drying time. After the priming was completed, the body moved past two men who literally flowed the paint on from nozzles that looked much like vacuum cleaner nozzles (Photo 1).



Paint flowed, by gravity, from the floor above and through the hoses and nozzles and onto the body. About two gallons of paint were used on each body but most ran off and was filtered and pumped back to the tank for re-use. One gallon of paint would actually do 11 bodies. The gloss achieved was spectacular as shown by reflections in this coupe body being shipped in a railroad boxcar (Photo 2). With absolutely no orange peel it looked as good as □clear coat□!

Unfortunately the gloss didn□t last long and the varnish soon dulled considerably but the cars sure looked great, when new, in the showroom!

See you down the road□