

holding on to HISTORY

By Marcie Cipriani

Photos courtesy of Jay Wickham

We've Come a Long Way, Baby.



The Village Garage, future home of the Fleet Farm 1926 Model T



Big trucks, small trucks, work trucks, sport trucks...even high-powered, ground stomping, off-road supertrucks. Today, we have all grown so accustomed to the sight of Blue Oval haulers that they have nearly become part of the background of the automotive landscape. The trusted Ford F-150 has been one of the world's best selling vehicles for decades, but when you think back to where it all started you get a better appreciation of how far we've come in regards to design, power and function.

We at SVTOA charge ourselves with being the keepers of SVT history – it's even part of our club motto – and we appreciate when like-minded organizations do the same. Which brings us to a small historical society in New York that is paying tribute to a very special Ford vehicle.

The Cutchogue-New Suffolk Historical Council operates the Village Green, a quaint area that is a step into the past, featuring New York's earliest restored dwelling, the "Old House," circa 1649. While the Village Green boasts several historic buildings, the newest addition to the area will be a specially designed garage which will house a treasure of automotive history – a 1926 Model T pickup truck from the collection of J. Parker Wickham.

This humble little pickup lived many years of its life on the nearby Fleet Farm, where it hauled fresh farm products to the train depot to be delivered to urban markets. It was relieved of its farm duties by bigger and more modern means of transportation and luckily escaped scrap drives of WWII, eventually finding a home in the collection of Mr. Wickham, an area aviation entrepreneur and avid car collector.

Restored and housed alongside such other pre-WWII gems as a 1929 Ruxton and a 1910 Elmore, the Model T pickup remained in Mr. Wickham's collection until recently when it was donated to the Cutchogue-New Suffolk Historical Council and became the driving force behind the construction of the "Village Garage" a new building which will not only lodge this truck, but also related automobilia of the era.

With construction planned for early spring, and a grand opening this summer, the Council is currently accepting donations to help fund the project. They have also selected an SVTOA member's 1930 Model A to accompany the Model T pickup in the Village Garage for the summer. In the mean time, this Model A will be on display at Lucas Ford in Southold, NY under the care of fellow SVTOA member Howard Lucas.

So the next time you climb into your comfy F-150, take a second to remember all those that came before it, all the fallen scrapyard soldiers and the prized restorations, and give some appreciation to the museums and private collectors who help preserve these legendary vehicles for future generations to enjoy. ●

To make a tax-deductible donation to the construction of the Village Garage, please visit www.CutchogueNewSuffolkHistory.org or call Mike Malkush at 631-734-9463
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