

Photo of the Month

Hailey Motor Company



Hailey Motor Co., Rogers, Arkansas, late 1940s
Neg. # N019704

Since the early twentieth century cars and car dealers have been a part of Rogers. In 1909 Tom McNeil began the first dealership and offered Chevrolet vehicles for sale. Before opening his garage though, McNeil originally sold cars through his pharmacy as a side-line business. Ford dealerships, however, differed from other brands regarding sales principles in the early days of the industry. Henry Ford insisted only on full-time dealers and required dealerships to offer prompt repairs in an equipped shop, knowledgeable Ford-trained mechanics, clean facilities, and proper company affiliation signs. By 1913 the Ford Motor Company had 7,000 dealerships located across the country as well as an early presence in Rogers with the Fields Motor Company and the Davis Motor Company.

Hailey Motor Company became part of the Rogers downtown business community in 1935 as a Ford dealership when Newt Hailey purchased the Davis Motor Company. Hailey initially operated his dealership at 314 South First Street in the building occupied first by the Ozark Garage and then by the T.S. McNeil Auto Company. Hailey Ford quickly gained a reputation for an ability to “handle anything pertaining to automobile repair work and guarantee the customer the most positive satisfaction” according to the demanding requirements of production and sales developed by Ford.

Known as an exceptional auto and truck dealership in Arkansas, Hailey expanded his operations in 1947 with the construction of a new building located at 313 South Second Street. The striking curved glass showroom is illustrated in the photograph at right. This building must have been quite beautiful in the

evening with the glowing neon signs and the illuminated showroom featuring the newest models from Detroit. A customer only had to dial phone number 180 on the local telephone exchange to be connected to the modern, full-service dealership offering engine repair, body work, and sales. The Rogers Morning News expanded the building and today occupies the site, but the curved glass front is now gone.

Hailey also operated a Ford tractor, implement, and auto supply company at the old 314 South First Street location until it was lost to fire in 1967. During the 1940s Hailey's used car lot was at First and Cherry Streets, but he moved the lot to Highway 71 South next to the old Armory building in the 1950s. James D. Yates purchased the dealership from Hailey in 1961 and renamed it Benton County Motors. A short time later in 1965, Clyde Randall bought out Yates and the company became Randall-Sanders Ford-Mercury, which moved to the southwest corner of Highway 71 and New Hope Road in 1967. Still in business today, Bob Maloney has operated and expanded the dealership at this location under the banner of Bob Maloney Ford-Mercury since 1981.