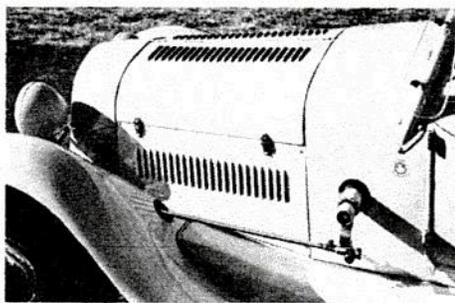




Bracy built and installed the nerfs; workmanship is tops. Tailights are stock '38 Ford. Notice the neat top boot.

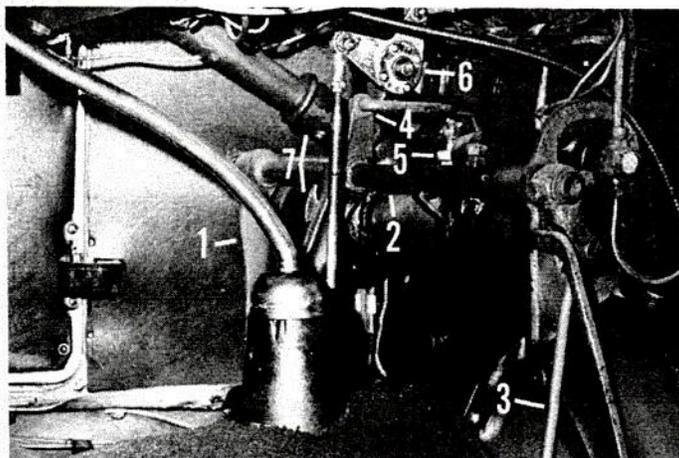


Lower hood panels were added by Bracy after he purchased the car from its third owner. Plexiglass wind wings are effective wind diverters.

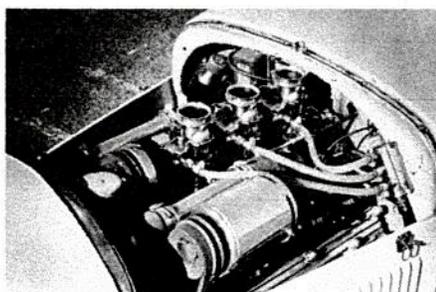
"I wonder where it is now?", concluded contributor Robert Hegge in his nostalgic 1952 article on Don Bracy's 1927 T, in *STREET ROD*, September 1972. Wonder no longer Bob, we've found it, and here's the story of the

reformed street rod rediscovered

by Bruce Craig



Here's the swing pedal assembly. Clutch arm (1), through pivot bar (2), pulls rod (3) which operates throwout lever (out of picture). Brake arm and rod (4) pivots on clutch pivot bar to pull bell crank (hidden) which pushes master cylinder rod (5). Throttle bellcrank is indicated by (6), Franklin steering by (7). Installation is innovative, compact, and efficient.



Engine now features a trio of Stromberg 97's on an Edelbrock manifold, the only engine change since '52. Dual coils rest above heads on either side of firewall. Ignition distributor casting was a special Blackburn item which used Studebaker innards; difficult to find parts for now.

Bracy's roadster is little changed from its 1952 form. Top is held in place by interference fit at windshield, has never come loose even at high speeds.

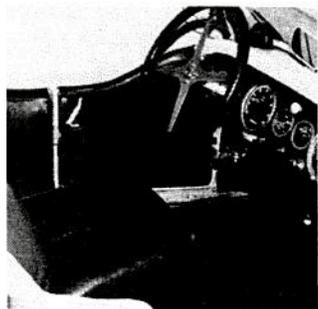
The advertisement in the July 29th Oregonian read "1927 T STREET roadster, flathead power, probably Portland's oldest and best known roadster, many features, must see . . ."

Publisher Miller put the paper down, dialed the phone number in the ad, and made an appointment to see the car (what street rod nut wouldn't want to see "Portland's oldest and best known roadster"!). Hours later, Bruce looked through the open garage door, spotted the roadster, and immediately knew he'd seen something about that car — recently! He returned to the company wagon, pulled out a copy of the September *STREET ROD* (an advance copy; it was due on the newsstands two days later) turned to page 54 and — suspicions confirmed!

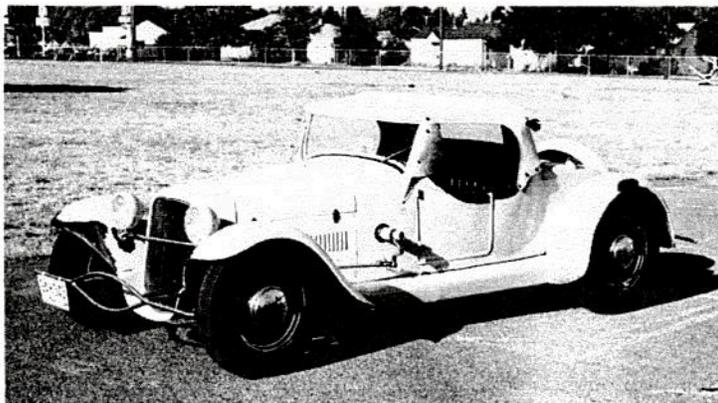
At this point, our flabbergasted publisher handed the opened magazine to the roadster's owner, whose turn it was to be flabbergasted; the story was about his car, and totally unexpected. But that's not all! Have you guessed yet? Don Bracy still owns the Reformed Street Rod! You can believe there were two surprised fellas that day!

We'll admit it's a little unusual to run a spread on a car featured only two months ago, but this little roadster has quite a history, and some interesting features we didn't know about. Then there is its longevity, a few detail changes, and we just had to tell you about the coincidental rediscovery.

The car was originally built by Blackie Blackburn and Tom Storey (we'll forgive Bob Hegge for his few slips — it has been 20 years since he did the photos on Don's

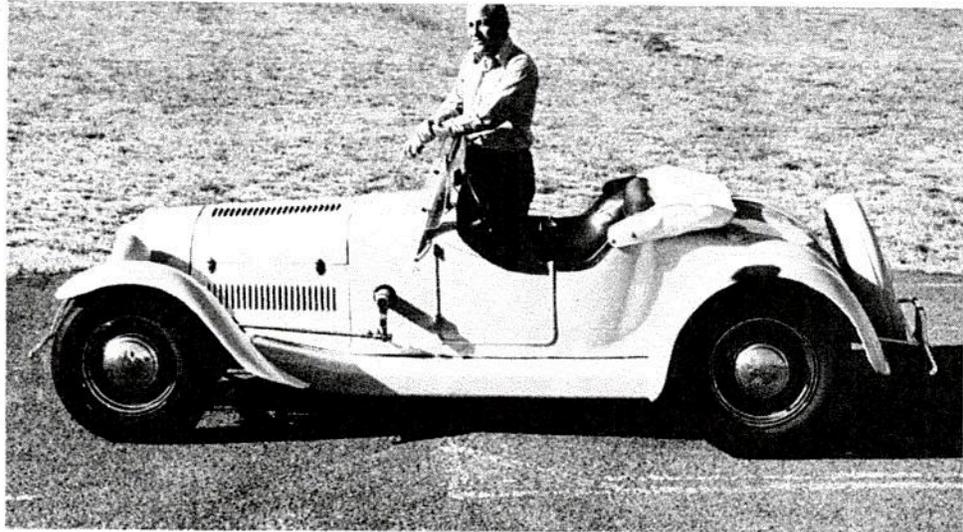


Red naugahyde interior is still in good condition 26 years after installation. Although not seen here, the '46 Chev clock in the



still low, must have seemed REALLY low when built in '46.

1953 Bonneville speed trials decal is still on passenger side cowl, is now as much a collectors item as the car it adorns.



Handling the custom work and Blackburn building the chassis. Both, as mentioned in Pete Sukalak's Turn Back the Clock (STREET ROD, September 1972), were innovators, and their handiwork on Bracy's car shows it.

As Hegge told us in the feature, the '36 Ford chassis has had a beefed crossmember added. Blackburn also stepped the frame, added square steel front and rear members, and mounted the '38 Ford front axle with a suicide perch.

Of more significance, perhaps, than the chassis is the cockpit control grouping. Tom's low body, plus the rearward-from-stock engine location resulted in a small, but not cramped, occupant compartment, and other construction features left little or no room for usual master cylinder and clutch linkage locations. The only remaining space was above the bell housing; because of engine location, this meant in the cramped area behind the firewall and under the dash. Blackie solved the problem by constructing a compact, concentric top pivot swing mount for both pedals. The brake pedal extension operates a bell crank, which in turn operates the master cylinder mounted crossways atop the bell housing. The clutch pivot bar runs across the bell housing, and a rod on the passenger side operates the throw out lever. To Don's knowledge, this is the first street rod, and possibly the first car, to feature swing pedals for brake and clutch.

Tom Storey shortened the '27 T roadster turtledeck six inches, channeled the bucket until it was nearly even with the turtle deck, then grafted the two. Tom cut the sides of the body down, and rolled the forward edge of the lowered doors into the cowl; the cowl was extended back over the dash to meet. The chopped and filled Deuce shell also has had a four inch sheet metal section added to extend it to meet the louvered hood. Don added the lower hood panels after he purchased the car in 1952.

Portland Top Shop upholstered the rod in red naugahyde, some of the first available. The material is still in good condition, so if you're concerned about how long naugahyde might last, here's some that is 26 years old and going strong. The Top Shop also stitched up the top, over Blackie's custom bows, and fitted a neat little boot which slips over the folded top like a sock. Of interest is the fact that the top is held to the windshield posts by an interference fit — no fasteners of any kind. Don told us the top has never worked loose, even at speed. Notice the plexiglass wind wings; they're similar in concept to the spoilers on the back of recent station wagons. Blackie put 'em on in '46 (one was broken and replaced by

Don) and they are very effective in diverting wind away from the occupants.

The rod was completed with two coats of canto creame enamel, and the paint is still there, with only a few primed spots where minor dings have been repaired.

When the car was completed, Blackie used it in his garage business for a delivery car, and also for transportation to various automotive events. In 1948, the car was used to tow Les Anderson's midget back to the Indianapolis area for circle track campaigning. Reportedly, the reformed rod received more attention than did the race car!

In '52, Bracy purchased the car from its third owner (who had let it get somewhat run down) and brought the car back to like-new condition. Don's only changes (other than the hood side panels) after he bought the car were the chromed nerfs which he fabricated, an electric fan, and the '46 Merc mill which was rebuilt by Bill Schnell in '52 now sports three Stromberg 97s on an Edlebrock intake manifold.

In the summer of 1953, Don and engine builder Bill Schnell drove the roadster to Bonneville. Although the car was not run, its many innovative features soon drew admiration from the Bonneville crowd, and, again, was a bigger hit than many of the race cars.

During the intervening years, Don has driven the rod about 1000 miles per year, and its had little work done to it other than simple care and keeping; no teardowns, no re-painting, no updating. The flathead will still tach an easy 6000, the archaic Ford suspension still provides a ride and handling which would give a Jag suspended rig fits (believe it — Don took us for some hairy spins and we know). Don told us the ride was uncanny, and closest in description, he felt, to a Porsche Super 90. We won't argue, because this writer for one hasn't ridden in an old-Ford suspended rig which rode as nicely as Bracy's. How did Blackie do it? Good question, but he did.

Presently, the roadster occupies one side of a double garage in Vancouver, Washington, a place it has occupied for some twenty years. And occasionally, now as in the past years, Don Bracy lowers himself into the 26 year old upholstery, hits the starter button, and the old Merc roars to life to power car and owner down familiar, but changed, streets.

Funny isn't it; the rediscovered rod was there all the time.

