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'53 Caddy: if that car could talk...

Dick Burdette

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DETROIT Late September, 1952 Mechanically, stylistically, there was nothing distinctive about the ‘53 Caddy four-door sedan when it came rolling off the assembly line. It was no different from scores of others emerging that day from the womb of the world’s largest automobile manufacturing company. Its wheels were enhanced with shiny chrome covers, in the center of which glistened a bright round red and gold Cadillac emblem. A gold Cadillac V emblem adorned both the nose of the hood and the center of the trunk lid. Alas, some majestic birds fly higher, some mountains, some stars, some rainbows, loom larger, brighter, more regal, more imposing than others. And so it was for the ‘53 Caddy four-door sedan. For in the rarified air of automobile aristocracy it occupied, both in prestige and in price, the bottom of the top of the line below the two-door 62 series coup, the Coupe DeVille the 62 series convertible, Coupe DeVille convertible , and far, far below the gem of all 1953 crown-jewel models, the revolutionary, limited-edition, wrap-around-windshield El Dorado convertible. And so, as familiarity sometimes breeds contempt, so it was for the relative snob-appeal stature of the ‘53 Caddy four-door sedan. It w was destined to be looked up to by some, down on by others. What follows is the partially, or possibly, or at least every 50 pages or so, true story of one of them, a meandering madcap journey that began in Detroit, proceeded at one time or another to such well known places as Toledo, Ohio, Orlando, Fla., Mobile, Ala., Kansas City, Mo., Lexington, Ky. and Denver, Colorado as well as intermittent stops in such lesser and little-known spots as Otterville, Ohio; Carey, Ohio; Findlay, Ohio; Possum Hollow, Ky.; Sandy Hook, Ky.; Wakefield, Ohio; Portsmouth ,Ohio; Liberty, Ky.; Corbin, Ky.; Hamilton, Ohio; Harlan County, Ky.; Calvary, Ga.; Crescent City, Fla.; Two Egg, Fla.; Hot Coffee, Miss.; Pine Ridge, Ark,, Peculiar, Mo.; Oakley, Kan ; Burlington, Colo.; Red Feather Lakes, Colo. and Wellington, Colo. But ‘53 Caddy isn’t so much the story about the car as it is that of those who adored, deplored, sold, purchased, pampered, traded, stole, wrecked, dismantled, repaired and ultimately tried to save it from the crusher; a tale of survival as well as a moveable smorgasbord of slapstick human passions, prejudices, beliefs, blunders, fears, fantasies follies, and foibles. And if that ‘53 Caddy could talk perhaps this is the story, or one reasonably similar, it would tell.

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