

## "The Road-Hog"

Carroll County Times Article for 15 October 2000

By Jay A. Graybeal

It seems hard to believe that local residents had problems with inconsiderate automobile drivers as early as the 1920s. The following article first appeared in the Ellicott City Times and was reprinted in the October 30, 1925 Democratic Advocate revealing that the term "Road-Hog" had already entered the American vocabulary:

"Courtesy, toleration, respect for the rights of others are virtues unknown to the animal known as the Road-Hog, a creature that came into existence with the automobile. But selfishness is one of the cardinals in his conduct.

In a comment on "Road-Hogism," the "Accelerator" pertinently says: "Courtesy of the road has been one of the big factors in building up the pleasure of motoring. Road-Hogs violate every rule of this courtesy and consequently are about as popular as a blow-out on the Sunday morning ride to church.

There are two classes of Road-Hogs. The first class is made up of folks who feel the highways have been paved and kept in condition for their use alone. They like to drive in the center of the road all the time. Turnouts require extra exertion on the steering wheel and exertion of any kind doesn't appeal to the dyed in the wool Road-Hog.

He buys a car for pleasure and he doesn't intend to let anything interfere with that pleasure. Let the fellow behind honk his head off. Who cares? That's the mental attitude of his royal highness Mr. Hog of the Road. At least that's his attitude when he leads the procession.

Once in a while brother meets brother and then a battle royal is on. The R-H, finds another of his kind holding up his progress and he becomes highly indignant. His mental attitude changes.

This time he is the fellow behind and it makes a lot of difference in his viewpoint.

It's then the irresistible force meets the immovable object and the strange part of it all is that as soon as they change positions, they change their line of thought at the same time.

The second class Road-Hog comprises those who think pedestrians should never cross the streets. That is, they think so until their car is in the garage. Then, like members of class one, they see through different kind of glass and feel that the man on the street should always have the right of way.

The queer part of Road-Hogism is that many men and women suffering from this disease are in every other way the finest kind of people. Their lives are filled with courteous and self-effacing actions until control of an automobile is placed in their hands. Then they seem to take on a new personality. Their eyes and ears are closed to the comforts of others. The disease holds them in its grip and they seem satisfied to remain there."

It is doubtful that the writer of the above article could have envisioned the explosive growth of automobile usage in the second half of the twentieth century. The automobile became an indispensable personal possession in a highly mobile society and a symbol of American industrial prowess.

Photo caption: An automobile speeds along a local road in the 1920s. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection, gift of the Boyle Family, 1979.