



Felix Graves and his reproduction Morton and Brett Model Tracing car

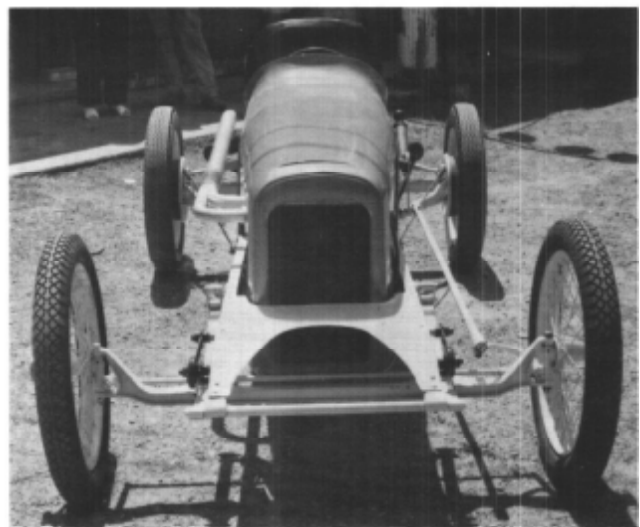
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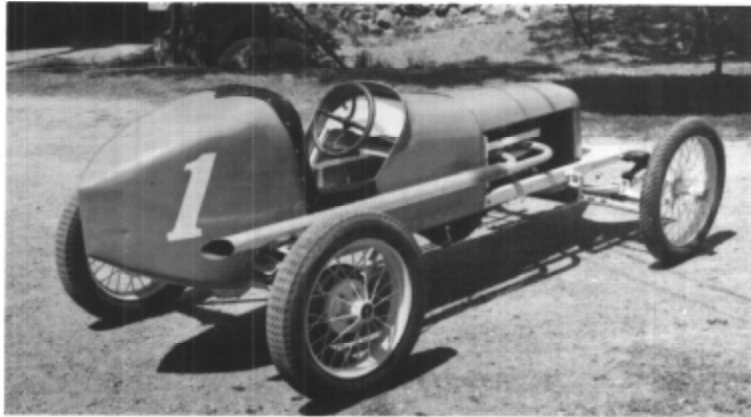
By BOB BOWARD

It is hard to know how to start this story. Yes, the automobile is interesting, no doubt about that. The pictures certainly so indicate. But as there is a great woman behind every great man, so, too, is there a great designer, mechanic - call him what you will - behind every great car. So, let's start the story with a word about the creator of this car, Felix Graves.

In Oklahoma, when you say "Ford," people don't think of the one named Henry, they think of Felix. Around here, if you need a Ford part or you need just old-fashioned help, Felix Graves is your man. If he doesn't have it in one of his many buildings, chances are it was never made.

Felix came to Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1907 and liked it so much he never left. Some years ago, tiring of city life, he moved out in the country. He decided it would be nice to have an old-time town to be a backdrop for his many antique cars and his lovely wife, Babe's, antiques.





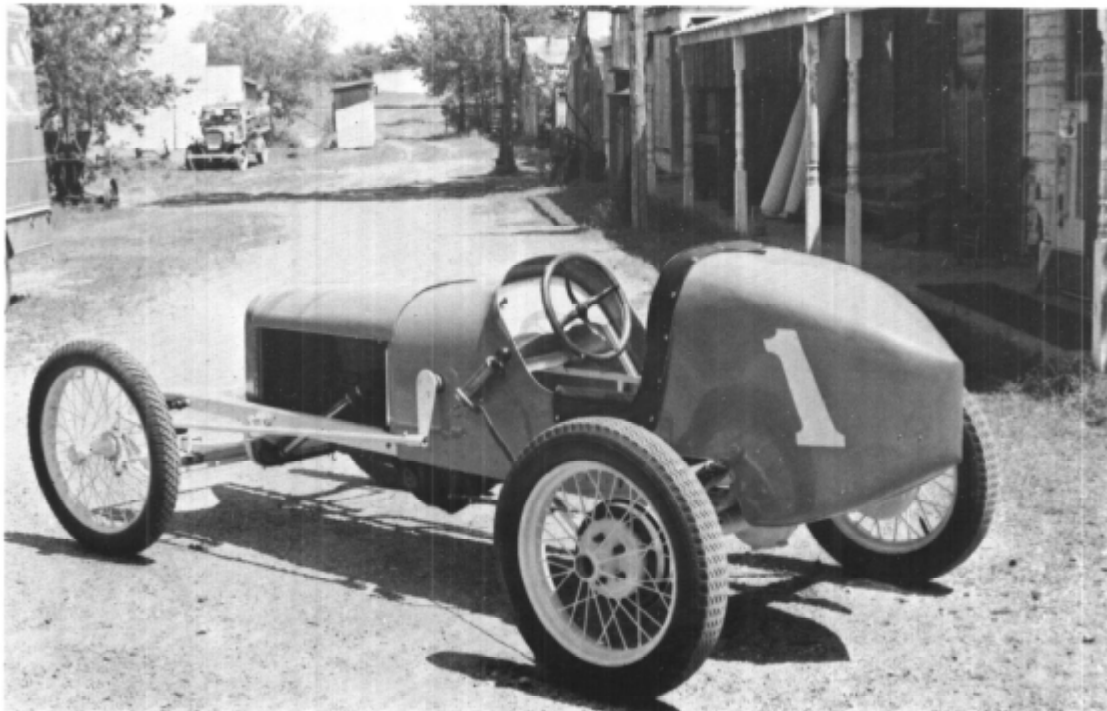
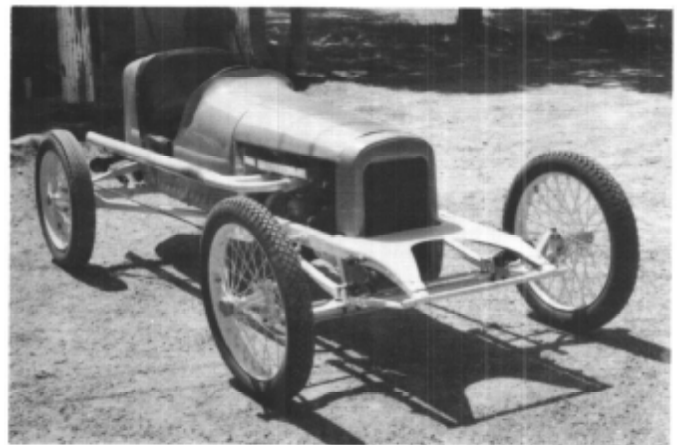
So he bought the entire downtown area of an old Oklahoma town and had it moved out to his place, and he rebuilt the whole thing. That s the kind of character Felix Graves is.

Though Felix is sixty-nine years old, he looks about fifty and can work harder than a twenty-year-old in search of a girl.

He has been a mechanic, bodyman, painter, machinist, designer, carpenter, bricklayer, etc., all his working life. Felix began building race cars in 1940 and built the second midget racer ever built in Tulsa. He s been going fast ever since.

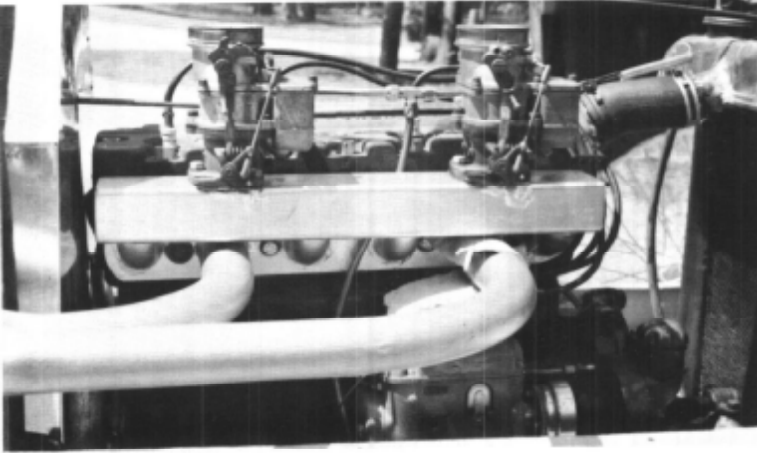
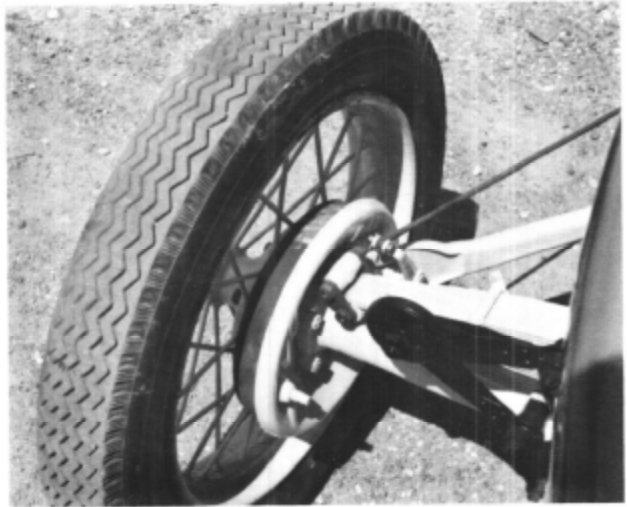
Now, let s look at what this founding member of the Model T Ford Club of Tulsa has come up with.

On a lazy day around the first of December, 1975, Felix was looking at an envelope dated 1929 from the



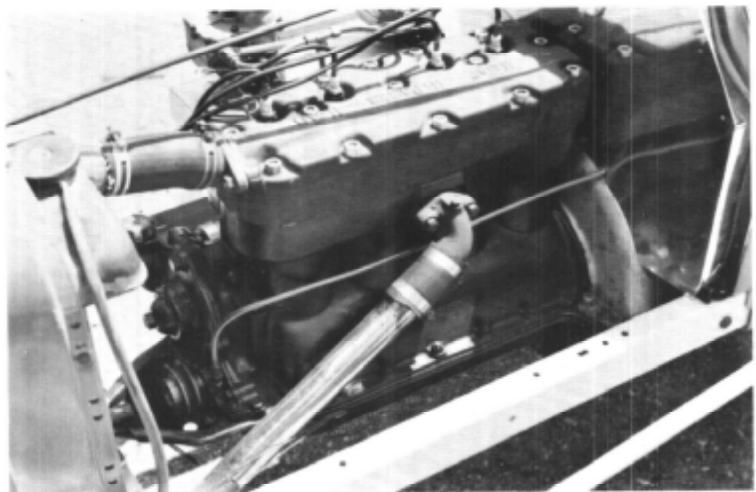
Morton and Brett speed equipment company in Indianapolis, Indiana. He decided right then that he would like to have one of their racing cars. Well, one doesn't just order one anymore but if you have the talents of this guy, you just go ahead and build it. And build it he did!

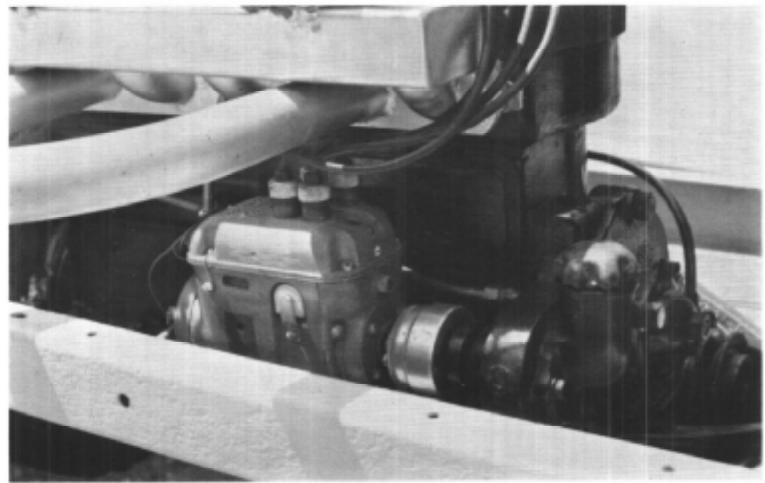
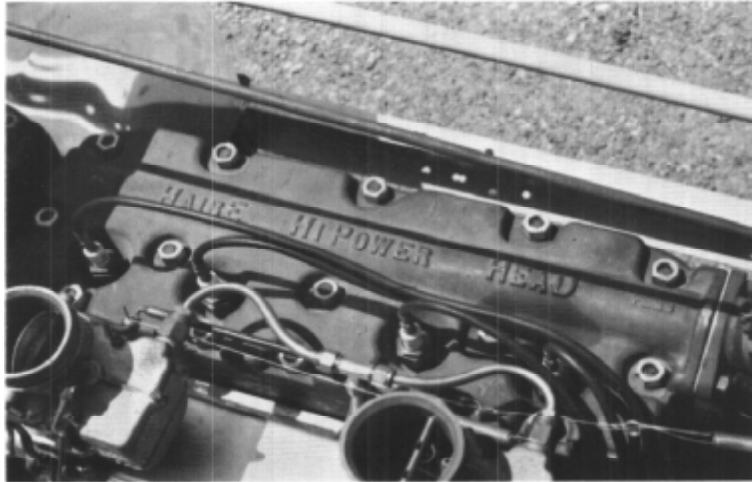
The car started with a Hup "20 frame. 1924 race car front wheels were used on a 1926 Chevrolet axle. Semi-elliptic springs were fabricated up front, with a 1914 Ford taper-leaf spring in the rear. Up front again, Model A radius rods were used. A 1924 Gema steering box is mated with a home-built steering shaft. A Model T (1924) rear end, with a four-to-one ratio, is used for "get up and go. Stock T wheels and drums are adapted to use Model A brakes in the rear. The rear end is connected to a standard, but balanced transmission. Of interest here, Caterpillar tractor steering gear lining has been bonded to the transmission bands and this does away with adjustments and wear.



Unusual four-port intake and two-port exhaust system is obtained by reversing the direction of engine rotation and by changing the firing order to J-3-4-2. The ring gear in the rear axle is moved to the left side in order to make the car move forward with the reversed engine direction.

Model A brake backing plates are adapted to the T rear axle assembly and wheels.





The balanced engine and transmission are from a 1926 Ford. Jahns racing pistons are used along with special rods. The engine is topped off with a Haibe Highpower 10 to 1 head. Two "81 Stromberg carburetors feed the beast through a home-built four-port manifold. Yes, you read that correctly, folks - a *four-port* manifold. You see, old ingenious Felix runs the engine counter-clockwise, or if you will, backwards! He gets the car to go forward by mounting the ring gear on the opposite side in the rear axle. In this manner, you get four intake ports and two exhausts, just the opposite of the usual T engine. And, of course, the two exhaust ports are machined out rather large.

The firing order is reversed, too, giving a 1, 3, 4, 2

order of fire. The spark is supplied by an Offenhauser magneto.

The engine is cooled by a 1936 Ford radiator cut down three inches so it will fit into a 1924 Baby Overland shell. It retains the stock system of water circulation.

The beautiful body you see was hand formed out of .064 aluminum by the builder to give him that Morton and Brett look. Jim Kirk, of Tulsa, did the upholstery in genuine leather. That was one job Felix wouldn't tackle. He just can't sew. Ask his wife.

The hammer-wielding "hot shoe" builder got his son, Tom, to spray his creation red. No doubt the color many competitors will see when Felix zips by.