

The first automobiles registered in Freedom, NH

In 2023 Noel Quinton found a photo of Harold I Towle and his wife in their Ford automobile. Noel ultimately discerned the license plate number as 1255. In 2024 Noel asked his friend Chris Cooper if he could research the New Hampshire automobile registration number 1255 which was issued to Mr. Towle in 1907. He sent back a great compilation detailing all of Freedom's earliest auto registrations. This information provides insight into who could afford an automobile, who may have needed an automobile for their occupation, who was intrepid enough to take on the challenges of owning, maintaining and driving an early auto, etc. The guys who did the research, Al Matthews and Chris Cooper, are both members of the [Automobile License Plate Collectors Association: ALPCA](#) and put lots of time into digging through early state records to come up with this info. We are grateful to Noel, Al and Chris for their careful research to help us determine early automobile ownership in Freedom. This information helps us piece together another part of the Freedom Story.

The first thing to note is that Harold I Towle had the first automobile registered in Freedom in 1907 and 1908. In 1909 he was joined by three others, including a husband and wife- the first two-car family in Freedom. By 1912 there were seven cars registered. Harold Towle's car appeared in the registry every year, but others apparently did not. Initially in the U.S., license plates were issued to last the life of the vehicle, but by the 1920s registration renewal became a thing.

We thought it would be educational to list the early owners and show photos of examples of these early automobiles. The actual year and model of each car is not identified in the registry but we thought it would be fun to show photos that represent the kind of models available in the year Freedom residents registered them

Harold J. Towle First registered an automobile in **1907**, License #1255; this was the first automobile in Freedom; he was only 20 years old at that time. Mr. Towle subsequently registered a vehicle with Plate #2708 in **1909, 1910, 1911**



Towle's Ford (Possibly a Runabout, Model N, \$600)

In **1912 Harold J. Towle** registered a 24 HP Chalmers automobile, Plate #536



Chalmers 1911 Model 30 (Unknown what model year Towle owned)

Frank Ferren registered an unidentified automobile in **1909**, Plate #3194. Frank was 38 at that time.

Annie O. Pascoe registered an unidentified automobile in **1909**, Plate # 2686, when she was 40 years old.

Note that it wasn't common for women to own cars until 1920 when the Model T became abundant and inexpensive. Also, Anne didn't need a license in 1909 because they were not instituted until 1910.

Incidentally, in **1909** 22-year-old Alice Hyler Ramsey (from NJ) and three female companions drove a Maxwell cross country, to be the first woman to do so. Only Alice knew how to drive. Considering there were no paved roads, highways or service facilities beyond town limits, this was quite a feat for Mrs. Ramsey and her Maxwell.

See <https://roadtrippers.com/magazine/alice-huyler-ramsey/>



Ms. Ramsey and her team in their Maxwell, 1909

Harry J. Pascoe, Anne's husband, also registered an unidentified automobile in **1909**, Plate #3537; he was 40. That made the Pascoe's a two-car family in 1909- that seems very unusual for that time!

William C. Brooks registered a 28 HP Maxwell in **1910, 1911 and 1912** Plate #2619; he was 50.



1910 Maxwell Model E (It is unknown what model or year Mr. Brooks owned)

Arthur Black (former Governor of NY State) registered a 20 HP Stanley in **1911**, Plate # 5551; Arthur was 31 at that time.



1911 Stanley 20 HP Model 63 Toy Tonneau (It is unknown which model and year Mr. Black owned)

Eugene M. Drake registered a 20 HP Ford in **1911** Plate #6783. In **1912** Mr. Drake registered a 22.5 HP Ford, Plate # 25.



1911 Ford Model T 20 HP

Charles M. Towle registered a 26.7 HP Hudson in **1911 and 1912**, Plate # 6621; he was 46.



1911 Hudson Model 33, (It is unknown what model and year Mr. Towle had, but Hudson didn't make this level of HP until 1911; they only started making Hudson cars in 1909)

Jesse E. Nason registered a 16.9 Hupmobile in **1912** with a Plate # 3044; he was 28.



1912 17-20 HP Hupmobile

Arthur A. Bennett registered a 25.6 HP Chalmers in **1912**; he was 28.



1912 30 HP Chalmers Model 9, Torpedo Roadster (It is unknown what model and year Mr. Bennett had)

B.P Judkins registered a 10 HP Cadillac, Plate #5078, in **1912**; he was 62 at the time.



Cadillac 1908 Model S Runabout

Since the single stroke, 10 HP engine was only made by Cadillac from 1903-1908, it is likely that Mr. Judkins bought a used car in 1912.

It is interesting to note that three of the owners were still in their 20's; that means they had the resources to own a car in the \$600-\$1,500-dollar range in the early 1900's. Should we speculate that family money may have been involved? You decide.

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Bill Stoops
Dick Birnie
Ed Boyer
Henry and Margaret Trail
Carrie Isabelle Rowe
Bernie and Jesse Nason
Scott Cunningham's 90th Birthday
Thank you.

Tribute Gift may be sent to: FHS, Box 548, Freedom NH 03836

2024 Membership renewal

Just a friendly reminder that 2024 membership dues are due. For those that already have, thank you so much!!

Reminder! Visit both **the Freedom and Effingham Historical Societies** to learn the history of the Village of Effingham Falls. There is much to be discovered! Wed's. 10-12; Sat's. 10-2.