



## **The Original Ride Share**

*One car in a family with five drivers.*

My father was born in December of 1911, one of the last of ten children, and graduated high school in the spring of 1929. Even as he was receiving his diploma the nation was tumbling into the maw of the Great Depression and jobs were disappearing at an alarming rate. Then in October of 1929, the stock market crashed, and the economy unraveled, and unemployment rose to 25%. The world of work devolved from “employment” to a daily hiring-hall practice where a hundred men would present themselves to an agent who might hire a dozen or two workers leaving the rest to mill around, smoking, chatting, playing cards or dice, waiting for the next call, probably not until mid-day. My father and most likely his brothers spent more than two years making the daily trek to the halls. It’s hard for us today to imagine a world where jobs in great number just seemingly vanished overnight. There was no such thing as Social Security, unemployment insurance, or food-stamps. Only the church, and they were hard put to be of much help. My father’s family didn’t own a car which made it even more difficult to find work.

This was a dark time, but it was also a period of indomitable human resilience. There was still the need for recreation, entertainment, laughter, and love. This was a period for courtship, dating, mating and marriage for my father and all of his sibling.

My mother was three years younger than my father, and no shrinking violet. She played on the women’s basketball team in high school and on a semi-professional team after graduation. She also had a job at the Planter’s Peanut store on the main street of town. She was “looker” and considered quite a catch.

In time, my father and his brothers were able to pool enough money to acquire a car, and at this point my story takes a brighter turn. Each of the six boys was given keys to the car, and the rule for use was *first-come, first served*. His parents didn’t drive, nor did his sisters. There was a comical twist to the rule in that if you found yourself wondering about town and spotted the car parked somewhere, it was fair game to take it. As you might expect, with five single young men, dating became quite an adventure. Parking the car in a place less likely to be discovered was a challenge. My mother told of many dates that began on foot and ended with the car, but also the other way around.

*Gene Ziegler, Chandler Arizona October 2019*