

Rare Dealer Sign Rescued From The Scrap Heap

By Don Shilling
Texarkana, Texas

Do you ever wonder, while driving down the road, what might be stored or abandoned in yonder barn? I know I have and based on some of the neat stuff I have come up with in various old barns, and sheds, it really knaws on me to wonder as the buildings recede in the rear view mirror. The stashes I have come across would have never been found without personal knowledge of their location.



Such is the case of this Star dealer sign stored behind a barn on County Road 50, just a couple of miles West of I-35 in Northern Oklahoma.

It was originally hung from the front of a brick building, purposely built in 1920 to house the Mills Durant Star Dealership in Billings, Ok. This building is still standing on 2606 Montana Ave.

The sign itself is a rather fancy version of the many different designs available at the time. It is all metal with an angle iron internal framework with numerous sockets for electric lighting to illuminate thru the lettering and center emblem. The letters were formed with a large punch press and a strip of tin was soldered along the outline of the letters to form a ½” flange to stiffen and highlight them. White glass was fastened on the inside to cover the letters and provide a diffused light to shine out. The center logo was constructed of glass showing either the Star shape of the Star crest depending on the year it was made. I’m sure this sign sported the Star shape itself. The external dimensions are 4 ft X 9 ½ ft and 9” thick. As there was no steel making machines capable of producing a sheet of steel 48-50” wide, the flat sides of these signs were formed with a horizontal crimped seam on the lower quarter of the panel on both sides.

Although this sign is somewhat rough and no glass remains, it should make a worthwhile effort for someone to restore as this sign is now in the possession of the DMAC organization.

For now, it will be safely stored in my spare garage next to a '23 Star touring project until someone wants to tackle its restoration.



Thanks to Will Moon for donating this sign, Frank Witkowski for the heads up, and to my buddy Butch James for assisting me on this rescue mission. Butch comes in handy when I have the opportunity to use the HOV lanes,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,