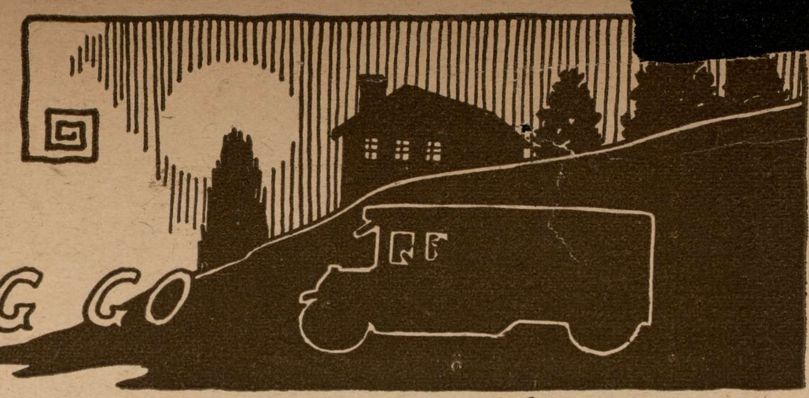
GROCERIES THAT A MOTORING GO



-By Nancy Hanks-

It was only a matter of time, of course, before grocery stores joined the motoring public in this automobilious age.

While the "flivver" of the meat and grocery man can be seen on almost any highway now in Baltimore county, up in Massachusetts and other New England States pretentious stores are roaming the countryside on huge motor truck chassis. A chain grocery store on wheels is said to be the latest development and the truck manufacturer who furnished the automobile part of the combination announces it is a great success.

There is being spent every day in the United States $49,000,000 for foodstuffs by the 35,000,000 women who provide the home meals. For every person in the family these shoppers spend 45 cents every day for each one of the 105,000,000 of us. If she does her shopping by 'phone she must add 5 per cent. to every dollar of money she spends. Then when the store delivers the order, that adds another 10 to 15 per cent. to the price the grocer must charge for this service or lose money on your business.

On the other hand, if the woman goes to the non-delivery or chain store she saves the 'phone and delivery items, but spends an hour or more, depending on the distance which she must go, to get the groceries and meats. Even though her time has never been valued in dollars and cents it is, nevertheless, an expense and often an inconvenience to her to spend an hour a day "at the store."

The average chain-stores sales in large cities is $475 per week, and the average net profit is between 2 and 3 per cent., and that 2 per cent. plus is hard to get; it requires scientific management to do it. More than this, few stores turn their stock more than thirteen times per year, and they have to turn it eight and one-half times per year to keep out of bankruptcy courts. You will wonder that any of them can make money when it is realized that there are 457,000 grocers and butchers for the 24,000,000 families in the country—or one tradesman for every fifty-four families. Only five grocers out of every hundred succeed in business. Fifteen out of every hundred stagger along the financial edge, barely making a living, and eighty grocers out of every hundred last only seven years or less.

Taking the store to the customers is not particularly a new idea in itself, but the store on wheels, called the Mototeria, is a long step toward solving many of these questions.

In the first place, the Mototeria is a serve-self store on wheels, capable of serving 400 families per day with a complete stock of groceries, breads and cakes, fruits green and staple vegetables, meats and drug sundries. It has but one clerk, who is also cashier as well as driver. His store is 22 feet long by 7½ feet wide, yet so conveniently are the commodities arranged, each with its own price tag, and so easy to operate is the overhead basket carrier device that ten or twelve customers can wait on themselves at

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