



Feature Article

Fall City Model Garage, since 1920

Murphy's Garage

Lee Murphy came to Fall City in 1903 and operated Murphy's Garage on River Street from about 1909 to 1920. The garage was located next to the current site of the Last Frontier Saloon. Lee and his wife lived in a large house to the west of the garage, on the corner across from the IOOF (Odd Fellows) Hall, visible in the photo at right.



Fall City Garage

Lud Peterson came to Fall City in 1919 from Seattle. His first job was in the machine shop at the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company. He'd always had a hankering to work on cars and offered to rent a corner of Pete Jorgensen's Blacksmith Shop, which was located at the north end of Mill Street, on the south bank of the Snoqualmie River. It wasn't long before Lud's car repair operation began to overwhelm the rest of the shop. A short time later, Lee Murphy closed his garage and left town due to ill health. Lud arranged to lease the garage building, signing the lease in the latter part of 1920. He named the business the Fall City Garage and began selling Union Oil products. The ad shown at right is from the 1921 *Fall City Spirit*.

*Suppose Mr. Jones is a Farmer?
That's his business*

But suppose his car needs repairing?

THAT'S OUR BUSINESS

FALL CITY GARAGE

L. A. Peterson

Repairing that is satisfactory on all cars

Fall City, Wash.

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Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum

This early 1920s photo shows the Model Garage (second from left). The building farthest to the left (east) was originally the Pioneer Saloon. When closed by prohibition, it became a series of confectionaries. The building was torn down in 1929 when Redmond-Fall City Road was widened. The Last Frontier Saloon now is on this site.

Model Garage

Sometime in early 1922, for reasons that have long been lost, Lud changed the name from “Fall City Garage” to “Model Garage.” The car repair business continued to grow and it wasn’t long before a larger shop was needed. Sometime prior to 1926, Lud was able to purchase the garage and the house on the corner opposite the IOOF Hall. The house was taken down, and that same year, he contracted Bill Blaisdell to build a much larger garage on the corner lot. The new building measured 40 by 60 feet and cost \$3,500 to build. On the front of the building was a large canopy that sheltered three gas pumps. By 1928 Lud had switched from Union Oil to General Petroleum, which is now Mobil, and gasoline was 20 cents a gallon. A grease job, required every 1,000 miles, was 75 cents. (see photo next page)

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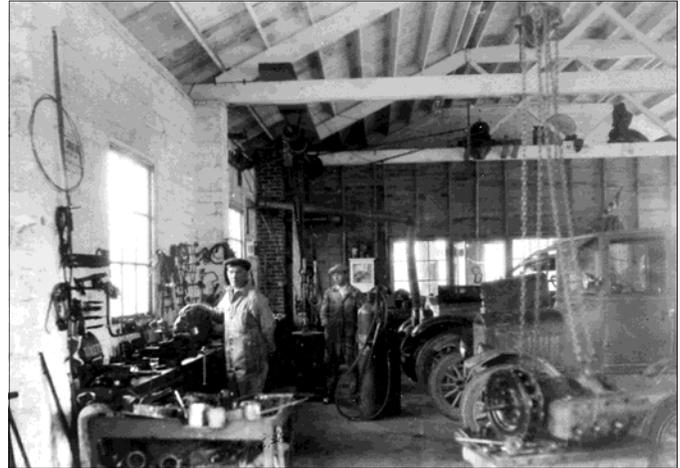
The new Model Garage building, 1928.

By 1929, the Redmond-Fall City Road had become a Washington State highway and the State began buying property in preparation for the widening and paving of the Redmond-Fall City Road. As a result, all the owners of lots along River Street were forced to sell the northernmost 50 feet of each parcel to the State. The buildings either had to be moved 50 feet south or demolished. Since the Model Garage was made of cinder blocks, moving the entire structure would be difficult, but a man named Slade from Snoqualmie did it without a hitch. Prior to the repaving of the Redmond-Fall City Road in 2003, the concrete apron for the original location of the Model Garage could be seen out in the street.

PETERSON'S
Model Garage
General Repairing
AUTO ACCESSORIES — LUBRICANTS
GASOLINE
Tele. 113 **Fall City**

*Model Garage ad from 1931
Fall City Telephone Directory.*

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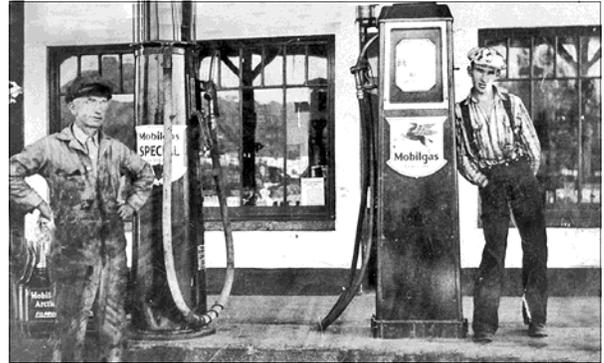
Early interior views at Model Garage
Left, office c. 1924 / Right, shop c. 1929

Tourist business began to boom in the late 1920s, and in 1931 Lud built a restroom to accommodate the traveling public. About the same time, two electric gas pumps were installed out front. No more pumping the gas by hand, just put the nozzle in the car's tank and watch the numbers go around. The remaining manual pump was used for 15 years.

Prior to the beginning of World War II, weekend tourist traffic was a major portion of the Model Garage's business. City folks drove out to see the Cascades, Snoqualmie Valley and the spectacular Snoqualmie Falls. As a result, the Garage stayed open seven days every week, from seven in the morning until six at night. Business at the Model Garage changed drastically following the country's entry into World War II in late 1941. Tires and gasoline were both rationed, and consequently, the tourist trade fell dramatically. The hours the doors were open for business changed from seven days a week to five days a week. New cars were not available, which increased the "fix-it" part of the business, but on the other hand, spare parts were in short supply.

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Three of Lud's sons, Lewis, Art and Floyd, who had been working in the garage since they were old enough to pump gas, were drafted into the Army and Lud had to hire additional help to keep the front door open. Fortunately, all the Peterson boys who had been drafted came home following the end of hostilities.



Lud Peterson and son Lewis, c. 1936

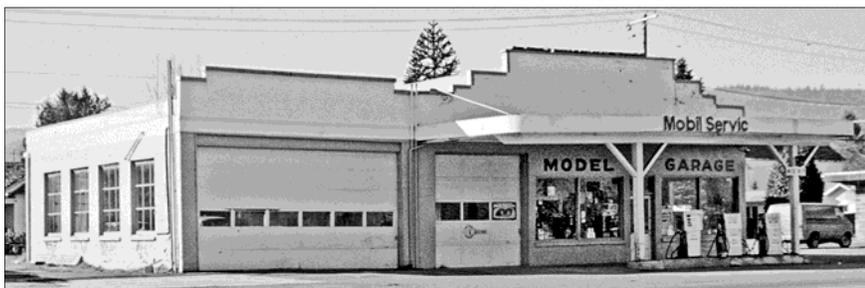
In 1957, Lewis Peterson was diagnosed with lung cancer and he died the following year. This was a terrible shock to the Petersons and Lud found himself working harder to keep the business afloat.

Lud Peterson took sick and died in the spring of 1971. The Model Garage had been his life for over 50 years. He loved working at the Garage, even though in the last few years his contribution had been cleaning up and talking with the many friends and customers he'd come to know.

Lud's son, Art, continued operating the business until 1977, when Lud's widow, Jennie, turned the entire facility over to him, lock, stock and barrel. There were a number of times when relatives volunteered to watch the store while Art went to North Bend for parts or on a fire call. Art's older sister, Edna Hamilton, and his cousin, Tom Divers, came to the rescue. Following his graduation from high school, Jeff Divers, the youngest of the Divers boys, went to work for Art.



Art Peterson with Model Garage wrecker, c1974.



Model Garage, 1980
Large service bay on left
Was added in the 1950s.

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After his mother's death in 1982, Art began looking for a buyer for the Garage. He'd been working there for over 50 years and it was time to retire. In 1985 he sold the business to Dennis Musga. Art passed away in 2004.

When Dennis Musga took over in 1985, other than Jeff Divers, who stayed with the business, the Model Garage continued with new faces behind the counter. Dennis had no desire to be a service station owner. He bought the Model Garage as a repair facility for cars, trucks and motor homes. It was a good thing he didn't want to sell gas because Mobil had decided not to deliver to the Snoqualmie Valley. As of this writing, the Model Garage continues to do a land office business, with faithful customers coming from as far as the San Juan Islands and Eastern Washington.



Dennis Musga's crew at the Model Garage, 2006. L-r, (back) Steve Horiuchi, Dean Patriquin, Steve Ramsey, Chris Currie, (front) Jeff Divers, Garrett Lindstrom, Dennis and Janice Musga.

(Materials excerpted from
Jack's History of Fall City, by Jack E. Kelley)