

# Kaiser Flyer # 9

## What, a "Front-Wheel Drive KAISER" ?

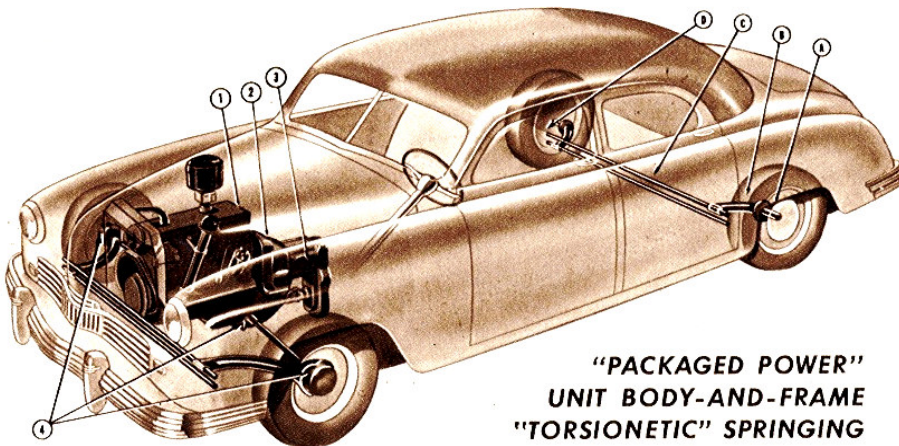
Yes, there were two running 1947 Front-Wheel Kaisers actually built. Henry J. Kaiser, himself, dictated the new Kaiser car was to be front-wheel drive. Kaiser wanted his new car to be revolutionary in its mechanical design. The excerpt below was taken from a 1946 multi-fold Brochure issued jointly by Kaiser-Frazer Corporation and Graham-Paige Motors Corporation. It clearly illustrates the "Amazing New" 1947 Kaiser was scheduled to be produced as a front-wheel drive automobile with a unit body and "Torsionetic" (torsion bar) suspension.

Presenting THE AMAZING NEW 1947

**KAISER**

KAISER-FRAZER PRODUCT

FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE...LOW PRICE...BIGNESS...BEAUTY

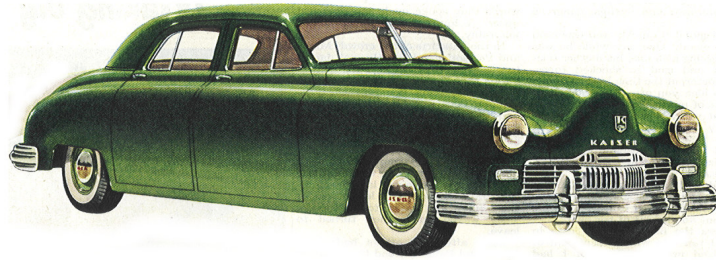


### "PACKAGED POWER" UNIT BODY-AND-FRAME "TORSIONETIC" SPRINGING

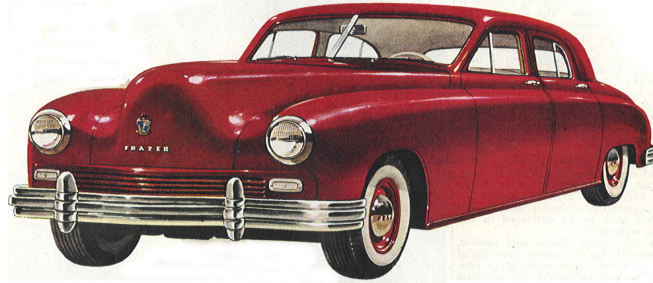
Shown above are two of the time-tested, war-perfected engineering features you will see for the first time in the amazing new KAISER. "Packaged Power" Front-Wheel Drive combines engine (1), clutch (2), transmission (3), and final drive assembly (4), all in a single unit which can be lifted clear of the integral body-and-frame for easy service.

In KAISER'S new "Torsionetic" Suspension, each wheel is given independent springing, accomplished through spindle (A), supporting arm (B) and torsion-bar spring (C), anchored at (D). Twisting action of steel bar supplies springing effect. Hydraulic shock-absorbers complete the assembly, giving new smoothness of ride at all passenger-loads.

In another announcement presented in the June 15, 1946 Saturday Evening Post Magazine (on next page) the new 1947 Kaiser "with Front-Wheel Drive" was promised to be in actual production later in that same year. Only two running prototypes were built. They were test driven both at Willow Run and at Kaiser's West Coast facility.



**THE 1947 KAISER AND FRAZER**



... *Now* in Production!

BODY STYLING BY *Darrin*

**Y**ES, the production line at Willow Run has started to move! FRAZER automobiles are *now* being built! And KAISERS will follow later in the year.

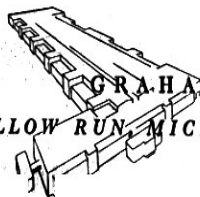
The giant body plant is operating, the specialized machine tools are marshalled in their seemingly endless rows—the great Willow Run bomber plant is now producing America’s most exciting new peacetime motor cars! Seasoned experts working around the clock have literally accomplished the “impossible.” America’s first 1947 automobiles are on their way. Wait and see them—before you buy *any* car. You will be glad you did! For their performance matches their breath-taking beauty.



**KAISER—With Front-Wheel Drive!** Plus war-proved Torsionetic Suspension, for all-load, all-road smoothness of ride! Wheelbase, 117 inches. Six-cylinder, 92 hp. engine. Widest seats in any volume-production car. Unexcelled driver-vision.

**FRAZER—World’s Smartest Car!** Exquisite beauty of line. Wheelbase, 123½ inches. Six-cylinder, 100 hp. engine. Rear-wheel drive. Unexcelled driver-vision. Deep, extra-wide, luxury-cushioned seats. Smart two-tone upholstery.

KAISER-FRAZER CORPORATION      GRAHAM-PAIGE MOTORS CORPORATION  
WILLOW RUN, MICHIGAN



*This June 15, 1946 advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post magazine stated that the production of the 1947 Kaiser - - with Front Wheel Drive “will follow later this year.” Of course, it never did. The unique car that Henry J. Kaiser wanted was never built.*

The Kaiser engineers never did perfect the Kaiser “**Front Wheel Drive**”, the “**Torsionetic Suspension**” (torsion bar suspension), the “**117 inch frame**”, the “**Independent Rear Suspension**” or the “**92 horse power Engine**” in time for regular production. This meant that the entire pre-production Kaiser was scrapped at the last minute and the 1947 Frazer car was also actually produced as the 1947 Kaiser with nothing more than minor trim changes. The two prototype front-wheel drive cars were later destroyed.

**The 1947 through 1950 Kaisers were not really Kaisers at all but re-badged Graham-Paige Frazers.** Read Bill’s “Kaiser Flyer” #8 for more in-depth information on the little-told story how Joe Frazer’s car became the Graham-Paige “Kaisers.”

It was true that the initial showing of the 1947 Kaiser and 1947 Frazer at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York did display a prototype front-wheel drive smaller Kaiser. Sadly again, however, the ingenious ideas of Henry J. Kaiser for his revolutionary front-wheel drive car with a “drop-in” motor and transmission unit never reached production as the fledgling company never had the resources to pursue those advanced ideas. The front-wheel drive car of course is common-place today, some 53 years later. Kaiser really did have the right idea for his smaller front-wheel drive car, as he did for many of his automotive concepts, but the technical advances were just not there yet and the Kaiser Corporation never had the money to pursue them adequately. Henry J. Kaiser was truly ahead of his time. Today his 1942 idea for a mass-production front-wheel drive car and his goal of producing the outer shell of a car out of plastic are both an every-day occurrence. Most cars being produced in the late 90's and 2000's have the “Unit” front-wheel drive and many exterior body components are made out of plastic. Have you checked your fenders lately??

*Major design feature differences between the prototype 1947 Kaiser and the 1947 Frazer*

	<u>Feature</u>	<u>Kaiser F.W.D.</u>	<u>Production Kaiser &amp; Prototype Frazer</u>
<b>Body</b>	Type of construction	Unit Body	Separate Body & Frame
	Overall length	197	203
<b>Engine</b>	Horsepower/Torque	92/140	100/180
	Bore and stroke	3-1/4 X 3-5/8	3-5/16 X 4-3/8
	Displacement	187	226.5
<b>Transmission</b>	Ratios 1st-2nd-3rd	2.605-1.603-1.000	2.571-1.550-1.000
	Location	Front	Rear
	Clutch size	Auburn 8-1/2	Auburn 9-1/4
<b>Chassis</b>	Type	Front stub (Unit Body)	Rail & Box
	Drive	Front wheel	Rear wheel
	Suspension type	Torsion bar	Front indep coil/Rear leaf spring
	Steering Ratio	18.2:1	22.0:1
	Turning Radius (Feet)	21	22
	Brakes	Bendix 10 X 1-3/4	Bendix 11 X 2
	Wheelbase	117	123 ½