

## The Kansas Clipper

*Story by Bob Wikkerink, originally published in MAFCA The Restorer, May/June 1995*

*Submitted by Kitsy Wikkerink and Jim Wikkerink*



### The Kansas Clipper

by Bob Wikkerink, Pleasanton, California

The Clipper is a 1929 Model A Ford Tudor Sedan that was built in Kansas City on August 28, 1929 and purchased in September of that year in Osage City, Kansas by Mr. Raymond Johnson of Topeka. He took the car home and he and his wife drove it for a few years before he sold it to a fellow he worked with. A few months later this fellow told Mr. Johnson the car quit running and he was going to junk it so Mr. Johnson bought it back, replaced the timing gear, and put it back on the road. The two Johnson daughters, Miriam and Carolyn, drove the car to Topeka High School and Washburn University. After they finished with it, Ron Johnson and I, who had been neighbors and friends all our lives, were old enough to get our drivers licenses. Ron and I sanded the car down, painted it metallic blue with a red engine compartment and wheel wells. We put 1933 DeSoto bumpers on it, a South Wind heater, radio, 1933 Ford wheels, and naugahyde upholstery. Boy was it sharp!!! The only problem with the paint job was we painted it one evening in August in the garage and left the lights on all night to help it dry. The next morning it was covered with June Bugs so we had to start over. Ron and I drove the car through high school and I have many happy memories of times in the car.

After graduation from school in 1956, I joined the Navy and Ron joined the Army. The Clipper was put in storage in a barn at Salina, Kansas where it sat as a neglected home for mice until 1976. In June of that year Ron was killed in a car accident in Russell, Kansas while on vacation with his family. I went home after that and my son and I went to see Ron's father. Mr. Johnson told me he had sold the farm and brought the car back to Topeka and would I like to see it. Of course I said yes and told him I had always wanted

the car. He said he had six grandchildren and couldn't split the car between them, so since it meant so much to me I could have it. I paid him \$1,000 and he later delivered the car to my mother's house. I later learned he had turned down \$3,000 for it. In October 1976 Gene Jens and I borrowed a trailer from Ed Rominger and drove to Topeka and brought the car to California where I got it running and drove it until 1984.

In 1984 after returning from the Carson City event, five quarts of oil, a shaky front end, and a burned out wheel bearing later, I decided to do some serious maintenance. As my son and I were tearing into the car we found a lot of dry rot, a rotted-out body, and just about everything that could wear out was, so we decided to take the car completely apart and do a ground up restoration. Many hours of scraping years of accumulated dirt and grease and hunting up the correct parts later, the car is now back on the road. It is painted its original Black once again with Orange pinstripe and wheels. I installed an overdrive, a balanced and counterweighted engine with a high compression head for touring. I entered the car in judging at San Diego and won a First Place in Tour Class. I also entered the Silverado Concours and won a Third Place in Closed Model A Class, so all our efforts have not been in vain.

All in all, I love the Kansas Clipper as it reminds me of Ron and the great times we had. I hope to pass it along to my son when I am through with it as he learned to drive in it and says it means as much to him as it does to me. For now, my wife, Kitsy, and I are enjoying driving the car and meeting new friends at our many outings.



## The Kansas Clipper

*Continued*

Jim Wikkerink (Bob's son, Kitsy's stepson) happened to be visiting Kitsy this year just in time to join Henry's Lady Business Meeting and Tour in April. After the Tour, a small group had lunch out, swapping Model A and gumball machine stories. Jim returned home to North Carolina with a restored gumball machine!

Here Jim shares the story his dad Bob wrote about the Kansas Clipper for MAFCA in 1995<sup>1</sup>. A decade later, Jim inherited the car—just as Bob said he would his the article from 1995—and Jim does some touring with it now and even wrote his own story of taking the car to his daughter's school<sup>2</sup>.



Bob (left) and Jim (right) on the day Bob transferred the car to Jim and they swapped plates.



The Kansas Clipper at home in North Carolina

<sup>1</sup> Wikkerink, Bob. "The Kansas Clipper" (1929 Tudor) photo, May-Jun 1995 (40-1) p 25

<sup>2</sup> Wikkerink, Jim. "High School Students Explore the Model A" May-Jun 2018 (63-1) p 25 photos