

The Family Pickup 50 Years Later

It was the summer of 1966 that my Dad rounded up my Grandpa and me to go look at a possible Model A Pickup truck that was offered to my Dad as a “thank you offering” for my Dad selling a good used car to the man’s daughter. My father worked as a used car salesman at the local Pontiac, GMC, and Rambler dealership in



1930 Pickup
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Placerville California. So we all piled into our family pickup a 1955 Ford F-100 and off we went down the back roads and turning on to Mosquito Road which heads down into the canyon to the American River across the swinging bridge and up the other side to Finnon Reservoir. I sat in the middle which at the time was a very large bench seat and as we went around the tight hairpin corners I would slide back and forth slamming into my Dad or Grandpa which

was quite fun till we got to the man’s very steep gravel driveway. As we attempted to head up the drive the rear tires would spin and the motor would race. Those sounds as a just turned six year old boy were new and frightening at the same time. So dad backed up, gunned the motor for more speed and up we went Hell bent for Election! Seat belts would have been a nice thing at that moment for me as we hopped and pitched our way up the steep hill. After a couple facial impacts with the steering wheel, shifter and dash my Grandpa grabbed and held me tight over for the rest of the ride to the top of the hill to the man’s house.

From what I can remember the house looked over the American River canyon and had a porch that hung over the edge. Under the porch were Model A parts galore and very organized with fenders, doors, hoods, wheels, and he also had complete Model A’s parked around in various states of disrepair that he had collected throughout El Dorado County. He took my Dad, Grandpa and me around behind his house, around several buried 55 gallon drums without lids that he used as Rattle Snake traps and they worked quite well. As a six year old I was amazed to see real live Rattle Snakes. So around the house up the hill through the bushes and there sat a 1930 Model A truck cab and frame. I remember my Dad looking back at us with a

strange look on his face which I thought was quite funny at the time but as years passed I learned it was his “what the hell is this” look on his face. He was hoping for something a little more together as the trees had grown through sections of the frame.



The man assured my Dad he had all the necessary parts to make a complete pickup and also a chain saw he and my Grandpa could use to cut down the necessary trees to get it out. It took several trips to collect all the necessary parts so as my Dad got better racing up the man's steep drive I got better at holding on to my Grandpa.

The last trip to the man's house was with a trailer in tow behind the '55 F-100 to load the now rolling chassis of the Model A truck. As we attempted the steep gravel drive about half way up the '55 would just spin out and

bounce and shudder from the added weight of the car trailer.



At that moment my Grandpa noticed a baby fawn deer caught up in the barbed wire fence next to the drive so we all got out to inspect the little critter and see what could be done. The fawn had gotten tangled up in some loose wire and was cut and bleeding and was coyote food for sure. The decision was made to bring it home. My older sisters took it in and nurtured it back to good health, and we were able to give it to the Folsom Zoo for it would never make it back in the wild.



My Dad and Grandpa got the Model A truck together and running later that summer and luckily my Mother had the family's Brownie camera and 8mm movie camera to document the great day the little truck came back to life. I remember riding in it with no floorboards, open top, horse blankets over the bare spring seats and the doors tied shut with horse lead ropes and getting the black residue from the steering wheel on my hands. I remember my cousin Ronny getting one of the coolest splinters in his hand from the bare roof bows and he didn't want his mom to pull it

out.



As time passed the little truck changed colors from primer gray with 19" wheels to brown primer with 16" wheels then to a light green with white 19" wheels. My two older sisters and I learned to drive and to operate the clutch and shift the ol' three speed crash box straight gear transmission. The same transmission is in it

today... just a little bit noisier from us learning to shift it. When I turned 16 I was able to drive it to high school and go on adventures where I was told only 4x4s could go. Needless to say Model A's could go where the 4x4s go and I received lots of "thumbs up" respect.

One day as I was refueling the little truck at the gas station a lady left her two small children in the car across the street and went into the Sears catalogue store to pick

up some packages and the kids knocked the 1968 Cadillac Fleetwood into neutral and off it went across the parking lot over the curbs through traffic and slammed into the poor Model A truck which then squished it against the gas pump assembly. I was able to drive it home and the next day I set out to get repair estimates for insurance repairs. As I was getting repair quotes from local body shops I was offered a job as a wash boy and I could work on the Model A after work and the owner would help. At that time I had no idea that auto body and paint repair was going to be my life long working career. That was 1976.



I disassembled it completely not knowing a thing I was doing. It took two years and the fall of 1978 it was back together with black fenders and dark green body. By that time I was driving '55 F-100 truck and the Model A truck was

parked in the garage. From that point my Dad and Mom, Rex and Cookie Waldron would help start and were founding members of the Hangtown A's Model A club and they took it on many adventures and hosted the Apple Hill Tours for many years.

Now that Mom and Dad are gone I'm in charge of taking care of our Model A pickup truck that has now been in the family for 50 years. There are so many more fond memories and stories that this little truck has this could keep going but in closing, Lisa and I look forward to many more years of making fond memories and meeting new people and places with this little Model A pickup truck.

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