

CENTER SPREAD STORY: TRAVELS WITH ROB AND CONNIE

By Rob Spofford



Rob and Connie embark on the Alaska Highway with their 1928 Ford Model A Woodie Station Wagon.

Our 1928 Ford Model A Station Wagon isn't your typical garage queen. A dedicated Idaho family restored this Vintage Era automobile to its former glory. They built it for adventure.

My journey into the world of Model As began in the 1950s when my father and I built one from junkyard parts. Since then, our passion (some might say obsession) has brought us endless joy and unforgettable memories. My wife Connie and I have

driven our woodie station wagon across the country, from Alaska's northernmost tip to Florida's southernmost point, experiencing unparalleled pleasure. Originally introduced in 1928, the Model A Station Wagon wasn't mass-produced on the Ford assembly line. Instead, it was crafted from a Ford standard wood kit, a common practice during that era. We believe that Ford built only five station wagons on the assembly line that year.



In 2016, Connie and I found the car in Kimberly, Idaho, in a state of disrepair and inoperable. After two years of patience, diligence, research, waiting for parts, and constant tinkering, we finally restored her to the road. We thank all the helpful people who assisted us, including friends, family, and a skilled wood contractor. While Connie and I own two other Model As, we prefer the station wagon body because it offers more space for additional parts and tools, a convenient entrance and exit, and a comfortable ride.

Rob and Connie's teardrop trailer is the perfect traveling accessory for their auto adventures.





We retained the original stock parts during our restoration but later added a Mitchell overdrive and transmission. In 2023, we replaced the stock engine (40 hp) with a Burtz motor and installed a Weber down draft carburetor (64.4 hp), significantly increasing the car's horsepower. This extra power is beneficial when we tow our restored teardrop trailer. We also installed a custom-built trailer hitch and converted the electrical system to 12-volt to accommodate electric trailer brakes. It can be a scary ride over mountains without trailer brakes.

Connie and I have taken this car on numerous long-distance trips, including journeys to Deadhorse, Alaska; Key West, Florida; and Newfoundland, Canada (among many others). We both drive it. Whenever possible, Connie and I steer clear of freeways and relish the experience of driving along the back roads. On flat terrain, we cruise at around 50-55 mph, take in the scenery, and immerse ourselves in the local culture. However, our speed drops significantly on every hill, allowing us to savor the scenery for a bit longer. Pulling the teardrop trailer over the Dawson Highway was particularly arduous due to the challenging road conditions and steep 12% grades. On average, we cover around 250 miles daily, frequently stopping to explore historical and novel sights, savor local cuisine, refuel, and indulge in ice cream. Our most cherished moment with the woodie was completing our 2022 coast-to-coast journey across Canada. Connie and I have covered an astonishing 14,479 miles in just 78 days without being towed home.

*Above: The Model A Station Wagon takes a break in the shade.
Below: Rob and Connie pull into the Round Barn's driveway in Biglerville, Pennsylvania, on the 2024 Revival AAA Glidden Tour®.*





Top to bottom:

At Discovery Yukon Lodgings near Koidern, Yukon Territory, Canada.

An encounter with snow in Wamsutter, Wyoming.

Connie stands with the Model A Station Wagon in City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho, on the 2018 Revival AAA Glidden Tour®.

Rob and Connie made it to the USA's Southernmost Point in Key West, Florida.





Leaving the crab boil at the AMVETS, in Frederick, Maryland, on the 2024 Revival AAA Glidden Tour®.

This summer, we have our sights set on embarking on a new adventure. Connie and I plan to drive the Dempster Highway in Northern Canada, an estimated 7,000-mile journey with approximately 1,100 miles of gravel roads. Additionally, we intend to drive to the 2025 Revival AAA Glidden Tour® in Kentucky, covering a distance of nearly 4,000 miles.

It's important to note that this woodie is not a show car; it's a reliable driver. We've taken it to six Revival AAA Glidden Tours® and have even won the furthest miles driven award five times. In the past seven years alone, we've driven the car over 75,000 miles.

As we all know, the experience of driving cars like a woodie or a Model A goes beyond the thrill of driving, renovating, and traveling. It's the camaraderie among fellow enthusiasts who share a passion for these vintage vehicles. The wonderment of meeting new friends and participating in meet-ups and gatherings that reflect our shared love for the open road is truly special. To us, the Model A is not just a preserved or restored car, it's an integral part of our family.



On Highway 89 southeast of Great Falls, Montana.

(Photos by Tracy Leshner and Rob Spofford)

