

THE EARLY FORD V-8 STATION WAGON

Prior to 1929, station wagons, literally wagons for use in shuttle service between railroad stations and hotels, lodges, estates, etc., had been produced by custom body shops utilizing chassis purchased from the automobile manufacturers. Ford's addition of the station wagon body style to their line in 1929 marked the first time an automobile manufacturer mass-produced this type on its own assembly lines.

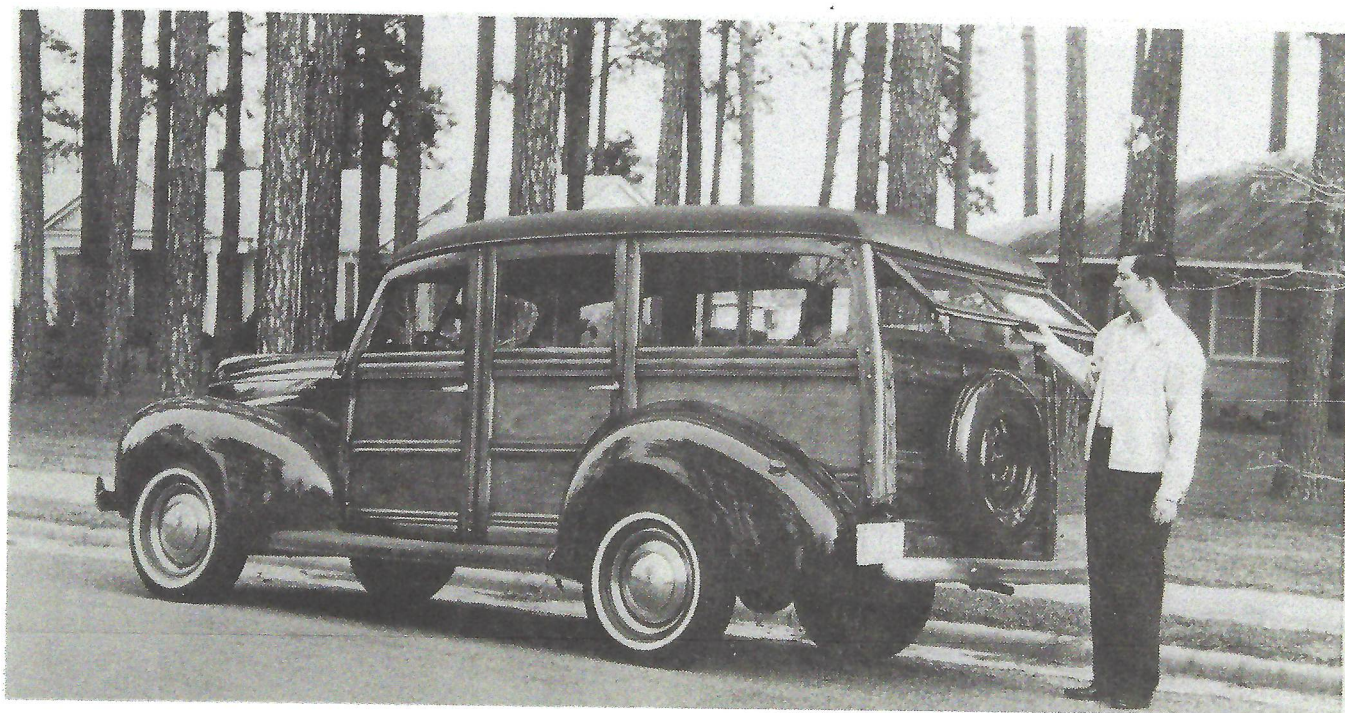
Ford station wagon bodies were assembled from subassembly components manufactured by Ford's Iron Mountain, Michigan, plant by the Murray Body Company, Detroit, and Baker-Rauling, Cleveland. In the case of Baker-Rauling, the bodies were assembled without sheet metal cowls as this vendor lacked the necessary facilities for sheet metal production. Bodies from Baker-Rauling were shipped to Ford assembly plants for installation of cowls and final assembly upon chassis with special dunnage to prevent body distortion.

The first Ford V-8 station wagon was produced at the Chester, Pennsylvania, as-plant in May, 1932. It was appropriate that this plant should build the first of this type as over two-thirds of the early V-8 station wagon production was accomplished at east coast assembly plants.

The specifications for the early Ford V-8 station wagon body were: framing and structure to be of hard maple with no knot hearts permitted and a moisture content not to exceed 12 per cent; paneling to be cross-grained exterior birch plywood, good on both sides; and, roof slats to be of good quality basswood.

The wood necessary for the production of the station wagon body components and wooden components in other body styles (floor boards, etc.) was cut from timber on Ford-owned acreage near the Iron Mountain facility. Both the timber acreage and the Iron Mountain, Michigan, woodworking facility were specifically developed for Ford's station wagon production and were utilized until the inception of the all-steel station wagon body in 1952.

*Courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum Archives.
D. G. Rehor, March 1, 1967*



1940 Ford Station Wagon with owner C.A. Jones of Nashville, Georgia.