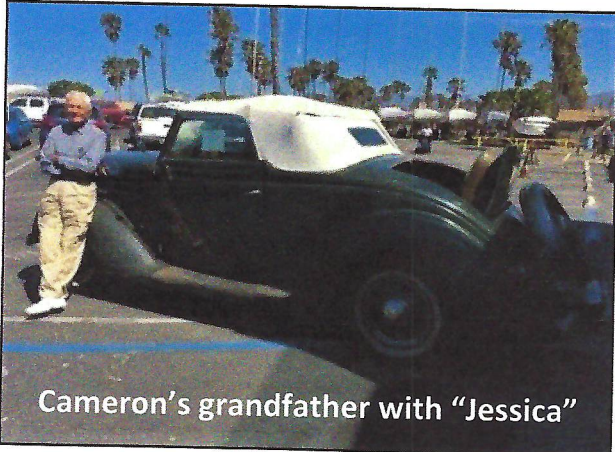


MEMBER CAR OF THE MONTH

1936 Ford Cabriolet

Cameron and Heather Ahler, Franklin, Tennessee



Cameron's grandfather with "Jessica"



Arriving in Nashville



"Jessica"...Cameron Ahler's 1936 Ford Cabriolet

By Cameron Ahler

Back in California in 1963, my grandparents were looking for a car their family with four daughters could enjoy as their "fun car". My grandmother had a special affection for 1936 Fords and wanted one. My Aunt Barbara remembers that they had a coin bank that they put their coins into to save up for one. She recalls that they paid \$800 for Jessica.

My mom recently asked her sisters about memories:

Aunt Tori: "It was the car I drove my senior year in high school. It certainly got me some attention!....I think we drove it in a parade at Ventura High School at a football game and I know Dad drove it in some parades and probably a car show or two."

Aunt Barbara: "We were really proud to have a car like that and got to be in parades, shows, etc.... Cute boys would stare as we drove by. Ha-ha!"

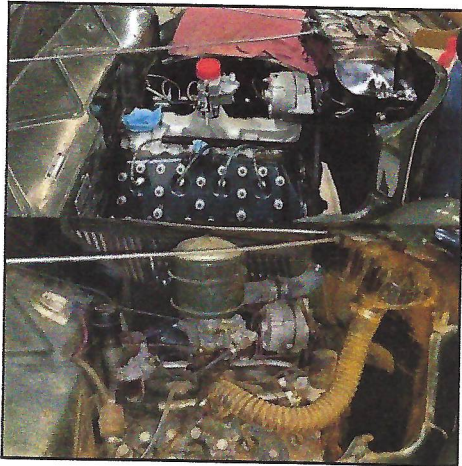
Mom: "I remember specifically driving up Seaward with friends in the rumble seat, feeling special to be driving and being seen in this cool car. We all felt blessed in that way. And after school, it warmed my heart to see her (yellow then) in the senior parking lot waiting to drive me home. Another memory is leaving the house in a huff after a disagreement with Mom and heading in Jessica on the freeway to Santa Paula to my boyfriend's house. Jessica broke down on the freeway and I had to walk home with my tail between my legs. Dad and Mom graciously told me soon after that they would buy me a reliable car for graduation. Driving a shift was fun and not difficult once I got the rhythm and precise movement down. There was a sense of cooperation between car and driver that I liked."

As a child, I would get to visit my grandparents in the summer. My grandfather had a couple of Cessnas in an airplane hanger, and there "Jessica" would sit. Every now and then on a nice day, my grandfather would let us pile in, and drive the car around the airport to look at airplanes and go eat lunch. I was always enamored with the style and



fun that the car brought as we felt the sun on our faces.

I remember one summer my stepfather tried to convince my grandfather that the car was just sitting, and that he would love to buy it and turn it into a beautiful hot rod. I believe my grandfather's response to having it chopped was something to the effect of "over my dead body". As a result, Jessica sat in the hanger as just another project to be done, with just enough maintenance to turn it over and drive around the block.



In 2017, my grandfather passed away. I had asked my family if I could buy it, and there was some initial hesitation. After the sisters discussed it, they decided that they would rather sell it to me for a good deal, rather than to someone who would do whatever they wanted. I was able to purchase Jessica for \$8,000, under the condition that 1. I wouldn't turn it into a hot rod, and 2. I wouldn't sell it any time soon.

The COVID project.

I finally got it shipped to Nashville in August of 2021. Pulling it into the driveway, it barely started, the brakes were non-existent, and the paint was in bad shape. Jessica came with a 59AB engine, rusted out dual exhaust, chrome dash, hydraulic brakes and turn signals. Very little of it worked at the time, and I even needed the kids to help push it into the driveway.



Having very little car knowledge, let alone on something 85-years-old, I started looking online for someone or someplace I could get some assistance. After finding an online forum on Facebook, I was introduced to the Driskell's...Danny, Sharon and Mike. Danny did what Danny does, and immediately brought my car and me to the Volunteer V8 Ford Club and Early Ford V8 Club of America fold.

We would work on it one weeknight, and then for about 5 hours every Saturday to take this thing apart and put it back together. We started with replacing the brakes, tires and wheels, then replaced the gas tank and sending unit. The radiator was "boiled" twice, and the engine block was pressure



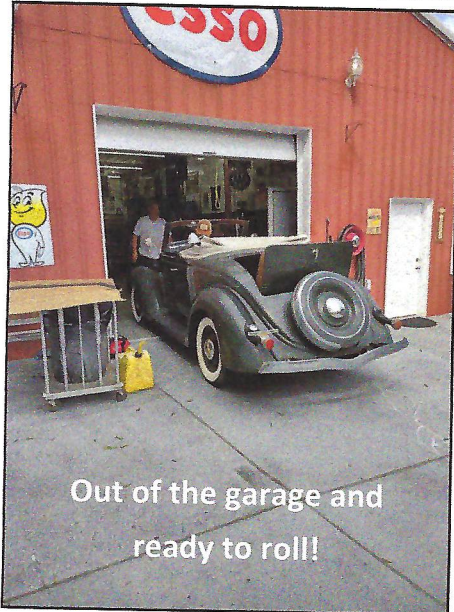
washed inside and out. We replaced the bumper, grill, heads, carburetor, wiring and flooring. We took the dash and interior back to original styling and color. Along the way we would find "creative engineering" that previous mechanics had performed over the years. Often, I'd take my daughter to Danny's garage, where she would hang out and watch as Danny,

Before and after pictures!



The Family Event

Cameron's mom, wife Heather and daughter Vivienne touching up the paint.



Out of the garage and ready to roll!

Mickey Holton, myself and countless others came by to work on her one piece at a time. I'd take my daughter, Vivienne, my neighbor Kenneth or other members of my family over to help at times. We even made it a family event to touch up the body paint by hand. When they say, "it takes a village," that's exactly what happened along the way.

Those 10 months were great; I met a whole new community of good people, with a passion to learn and teach about a period that was. It was such a blessing to have this project in the middle of the pandemic, and to be able to work on something that felt personally meaningful to me and my family.

After 10 months, Jessica had graduated and was able to fully come home. I was fortunate to be able to drive her to the 2022 Eastern National Meet here in Franklin, Tennessee, in June and have my mom come out to the event to drive with me, experience the action, and tell her childhood stories that came with the car. It was entered in the Open car division, where it took first place in the Touring Class.

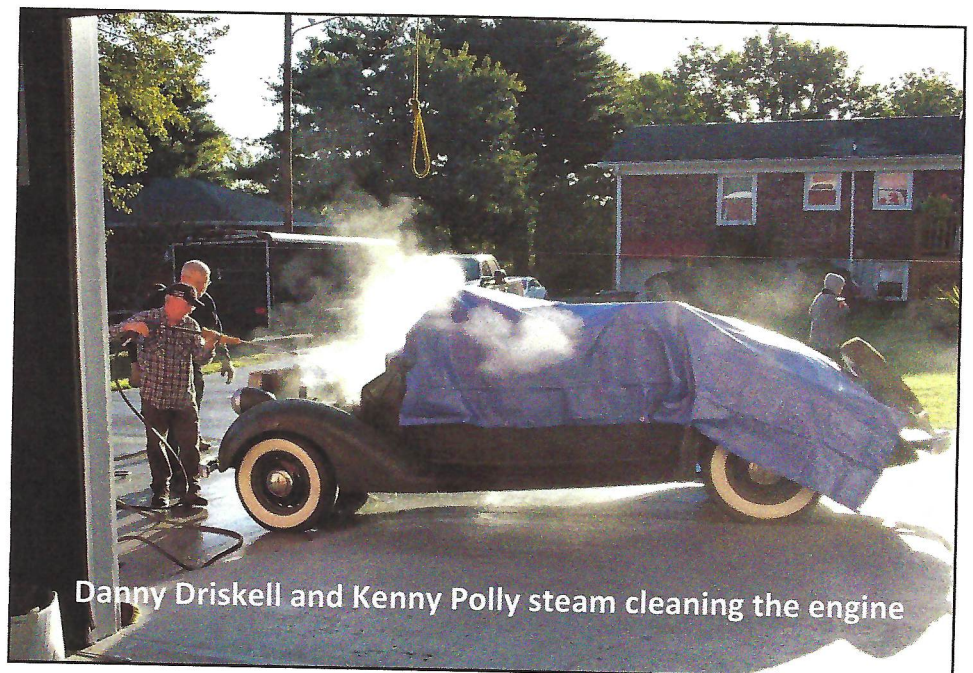
I still have some projects to complete (convertible top, tail pan, rear fender, a clock, and perhaps a new rear end), but she's become a staple for the family to take on ice cream trips or a drive around town. My children and the neighborhood kids LOVE going along on a nice day.



Cameron and Vivienne take "Jessica" on a test drive



"Jessica" at the 2022 Eastern National Meet



Danny Driskell and Kenny Polly steam cleaning the engine