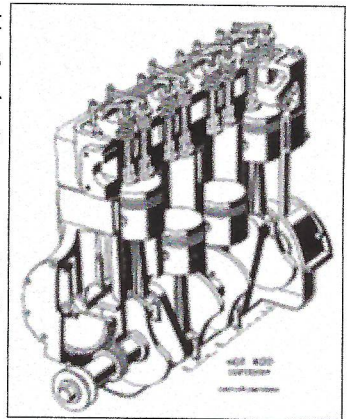


**Member Car of the Month
Curtis and Lynda Gibbs
Franklin, Tennessee
1932 Model B Ford Roadster**

This month's Member Car of the Month is the 1932 Model B Ford Roadster owned by Curtis and Lynda Gibbs of Franklin, Tennessee. Yes, it's not a V8...it's a four banger and it was available in Ford cars through 1934. Here's the information about this car that Curtis sent for this newsletter and is taken from "an autobiography," ...*Stories about the influence of cars in my life.*"

Henry Ford supplied 1928 through 1931 Ford cars with 4 cylinder engines with flat heads. In addition, although the V8 was introduced in 1932, 4 cylinder engines were still available through 1934 (and) speed equipment was developed and marketed to increase the performance of these engines. Perhaps the most aggressive modification for these engines was an overhead valve conversion.



The concept of these heads was to move valves out of the block and into a head that was "over", or on top of the block replacing the original "flat" head and providing better engine breathing and more power. These overhead conversions were designed and manufactured by enthusiasts and racers who proved their own designs. As demand increased, an aftermarket industry began to evolve and those with the best designs, manufacturing processes, financing, and marketing survived while others fell to the wayside. Some of the early producers include Alexander, Morton and Betts, Cragar/Miller, Roof, Riley and others. In addition to the restoration of original overhead units, several of these have recently been reproduced and reintroduced into the enthusiast world.

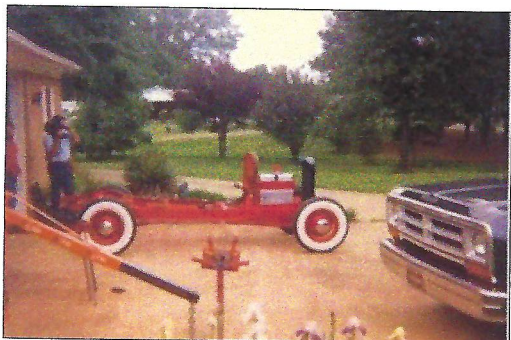
The 32B is a 1932 Ford Roadster. The 1932 Ford Roadster was the quintessential hot rod of the 40's and 50's. It was light and available at reasonable cost and easy to modify. Today, there are many reproduction roadster bodies produced in fiberglass and metal, however original "Henry Ford" roadster bodies are rare. The 32B is an original body on an original frame. Back in the early 1990's I began getting interested in driving my cars for longer distances than to the local parade or car show. I began studying magazines that centered around early Ford modified cars. One in particular, a now defunct magazine by the name of



American Rodder, seemed to focus primarily on early Fords with a focus on traditional style hot rods.

In the October 1991 issue, a particular car caught my attention. It was a red 1932 Ford Roadster that met my criteria for modifying a car. It was a hi boy (fenders removed) and its engine was an original 4 cylinder with a

Cragar Miller overhead conversion which would have been available in 1932. It belonged to George Poteet, a well known hot rod enthusiast.



I began developing the specs for a similar car and had acquired an original 1932 Ford frame and began collecting parts. At that time, I had recently met Paul, a veteran car builder in Memphis who was very familiar with these early Fords, and who rebuilt the rear end on my 1940 Ford with 3:54 gears to help increase speeds on the highway. In one of my phone calls with him, I mentioned that I had identified a car that would be very close to the car I was beginning to build. As I described the car to him and mentioned that there was an *American Rodder Magazine* article featuring the car. He told me

that *he* actually built that exact car. One can only imagine how surprised I was!

As the conversation progressed, he indicated that it might be able to be purchased as he is a friend of George Poteet and knew that he had not driven it in quite some time. Well, my immediate reaction was that I would never be able to afford such a car, and the probability that a car with this pedigree and quality would actually be for sale was most likely very low. Paul told me the history of the car and sent me pictures of the car in its various stages of build in his shop documenting the build back in 1988. He built it for Lyt and Mary Anne Glazner from Birmingham Alabama to run in the 1989 Great Race from Norfolk to Anaheim. The Glazners owned the Smiths Variety Store in Birmingham Alabama.

Paul worked full time on the car for a year, and then accompanied the Glazners on the Great Race as their mechanic. Sometime after the race, the car was sold to George Poteet and the car returned to Memphis, its "birthplace". Several months passed and I was consulting Paul on something I was working on. He mentioned that he did inquire about the car, and that George became "re-interested" in the car upon Paul's inquiry and it was not for sale. I continued with my projects and collecting parts to build a similar 1932 Ford hi boy roadster.



Years passed and I continued to work with Paul on a number of my projects and would talk to Paul once or twice a year. At some point in one of our conversations, Paul told me that George Poteet traded the car to a friend who was another high caliber private collector, also in Memphis. Time continued to pass, and I completed a couple cars and began serious touring. Continuing to have an interest in the car, Paul told me during a subsequent conversation that the current owner was going to replace the 4 cylinder engine with a V8 engine. At that point I was disappointed that the car would be changed from its configuration as built for the 1989 Great Race. I had never seriously thought I could acquire such a car and my interest at that point had disappeared.



One day in 2005, 11 years since I first knew about the car, I called Paul to get some information on a hydraulic brake conversion on one of my Model A's and Paul told me he was glad that I called because he had lost my phone number, and that the current owner was selling a couple cars. The 32B was one of them. When I told Paul that I was not interested because it had been converted to a V8, he told me that it never happened, and it was in still its original

configuration. He told me the price and that there was a sense of urgency as it had not yet been advertised. Paul suggested that I needed to decide within the next few days. I told him that I would sleep on it and get back with him in the morning.

Well, I never bought cars of this caliber, and this was definitely outside my wheelhouse and way beyond my hobby's budget. My mind raced for the balance of the day as I proceeded through the rationalization process one uses to justify these types of decisions. As I laid my head on my pillow that night, I decided that since this car had piqued my interest for over a decade, and I now had an opportunity to buy it, if missed this opportunity I would never have it again. I had no question that the car would sell quickly, and if I bought it and decided it was the wrong move, I could always resell it.

The next morning, I called Paul and told him that I would buy the car. He quickly told me that he would personally deliver the paperwork and the car the next day and that I should have my check ready to complete the transaction. He also told me that when I saw the car in person, if I did not like it, he would take it back to Memphis.

The following day Paul and his wife loaded the car in Memphis and made the 250-mile one way trip to my shop. We did the deal, unloaded the car, took a quick drive, and then went to lunch. Paul left, and my friendship with him continues to strengthen as he has helped me with several my cars over the years.

Being a bit naive, it was several years later that I realized what a favor Paul did for me to expedite the sale transaction of this car to me. I realized how important this car was to Paul as he spent 2 years of his life building it, taking it on the Great Race, and preparing it for several vintage races. I also really felt honored that Paul trusted me to be the next caretaker of this vehicle. When we unloaded the car from the trailer, Paul said "let's take it for a quick ride".

Being used to driving a stock Model A, I drove off and shifted as one does in a Model A with an unsynchronized transmission. Paul quickly told me to pull over and he would drive. When he took off, he told me that this car did not wake up until about 2500 rpm and that the internal components of the 1932 transmission had been converted to 1939 synchronized gears. I was elated and impressed that here was a car that could actually be driven with confidence. This car changed my relationship with the hobby. I would often jump in the car and drive 400 miles in a day. The sound of the exhaust travelling through the full length 3 ½ inch header with the top down is a not just a sound, it is a connection between the road, the vehicle, and the driver that is difficult to articulate and perhaps only understood through the experience of driving the car.

So, what was special about this car, and what caught my attention, was the fact it was essentially an authentic 1940's era hot rod. It was what the young folks did in the day to make their cars go faster and to socialize with other like-minded people. It became a lifestyle back then.

