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Joe Dunn builds a
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THE STORY OF EDITH

BY JOE DUNN, TENNESSEE



THE STORY OF EDITH



The 'Bonus Built' Ford F-5 is not a common vehicle for restoration but it does have a place in my own history. As a young teenager my oldest brother bought a 'stock car' and tried his hand at racing the local dirt tracks. That 'stock car' was



a 1939 Ford Coupe with a Mercury flat-head V8. The car was part of a package that included a 1948 Ford F-5 'hauler'. That was the first 'big truck' I ever drove, even if it was only moving it around in the driveway when big brother didn't know. So when I saw this truck on eBay, the same color red that the old hauler was, it struck a cord in my heart.

The truck sat in my yard over the winter, and come spring, my buddy Roger Faulkner and I cut all the u-bolts holding the flatbed on. I backed the truck up to one of the oak trees in the yard and wrapped a chain around the tree and secured the ends of the chain to the frame of the flatbed. A couple of minor tugs by the old F-5 and the steel flatbed



was sitting on the ground. The truck was loaded on my trailer and we headed for town. The truck would spend the next few months outside Roger's shop where he and I would begin work.

The original plan was to keep the truck red, but as Roger and I began doing minor body work and sanding, we soon discovered that it had multiple coats of paint and that the red was not the original color. I found the color charts for that era and none of the greens matched what we found behind the gas tank. After further investigation, I learned that Ford had replaced the Sea Island green in 1950 with the Palisade green but never changed the color charts. I decided that if I was going to change the color, it would be best to go with an original color. I also found that only Sherwin Williams and their Martin Senour brand (NAPA) were able to provide the exact color.

The plan was for Roger and me to do the body work and repaint the interior, but to find somebody to 'shoot' the exterior. Knowing how hard it would be to cover the red, we opted for Hunter green for the interior. We also felt that it would provide a good contrast with the lighter Palisade green on the outside.

The floor had some rusted out areas, so after removing the seat, new metal was used to patch the bad spots. The frame was solid but had lots of surface rust, so a lot of wire brushing was done followed by multiple coats of Rust-Oleum 'rust preventer' black. Next came metal patching of the cab corners and finishing and sanding of the entire cab and dog house. The hood was removed to scab in new steel in a few rusted through areas.

The wiring in the truck was so bad, it was decided to cut it all out and replace it. That made the decision to convert everything to 12V easy. A one wire 60 amp alternator and custom bracket assembly was ordered from Certified Auto Electric near Cleveland, OH. The installation of the alternator was very easy, thanks to the great design of the bracket. Being a simple system, with no modern gadgets, the wiring went fast. With the dash and interior stripped, the spray cans made quick work on the interior.

When the Esso guys sprayed red paint, they did everything, including the headliner. Among the numerous supplies obtained from Classic Haulers in Indiana, was the headliner kit. The install went a lot easier than Roger and I had anticipated and the new brown liner looked great. With some new door glass installed, and everything back in the dash, the interior was finished.

I had finally found a local body shop that was willing to do a scuff and shoot paint job for \$399, and after explaining the situation we came to a price of \$499 to include a primer sealer to





prevent bleed through of the red that was still visible on parts of the cab. Roger and I were heading to Bristol for a week in August 2010 for the NASACR races, so the schedule was set to do the paint while we were gone.

From the beginning I was aware of the problem with the 'widow maker' wheels on the truck and very limited options to replace them. I did Internet searches nearly everyday, and made countless trips looking at old Dodge motor homes without success. We found a 1984 junk motor home near Bristol, TN (150 miles way) with the right wheels but the owner wanted \$1000 and insisted we remove the whole thing. The local scarp yards there would not take the motor home as is, so the cost with towing this thing home escalated to almost \$2K. Finally, on the first Saturday morning of August, I located a guy in Omaha, Nebraska who had 6 wheels and tires. I called him and he sent me a couple of pictures on the cell phone. From the pictures I could tell that they were the correct 19.5" rims and the tires looked pretty good. After I confirmed that he would hold them for me and be available Sunday morning, I was headed down the road in my V10 F250. I spent Saturday night outside Kansas City and arrived in Omaha early Sunday morning. The rims were in great shape and the tires were like new. I happily handed the guy the \$150 and we loaded all six wheels and tires in the F250. I was out of Omaha by 9am and arrived back home about 1am. Between the cost of the wheels, a hotel room, and gas for the 1800 mile trip, I had \$560 invested and considered it a steal.

We picked up Edith on the Monday after Bristol and began reinstalling trim. Once the trim was in place, the new wheels and tires replaced the widow makers for good. That weekend, I drove Edith to Crossville for the monthly Cruise In on Main St. where we had a lot of lookers,

comments and questions.

After a couple weeks of tweaking things on the truck, I brought her back home to begin working on the bed. The lumber had already been in the barn for a several months drying and much of the bed frame wood had been planed and cut. As the truck sat outside during the fall, the barn was busy with cutting, sanding, staining and varnishing. By the time winter arrived all of the drying and planing had been completed and room was made to put the F-5 inside. By that time the main Beams were ready, so they were the first to be installed. The beams were attached with custom U bolts and then bolted through to heavy steel angle iron that had previously been welded to the frame rails behind the cab. Next came the cross beams to support the bed floor, they were attached to the main beams with angle iron.

A piece of 2"x12" oak was then cut to be attached as a rear bumper. The back side had recesses drilled in to go over the bolt heads in the last cross beam to facilitate attaching them together. With cold weather moving into the area, the finishing process was put on hold, so next came the routing of the pockets in the side beams to allow for the steel pockets to be installed. The last weekend of January brought a surprise with four days of temperatures in the mid 60's to low 70's. This allowed an opportunity to apply stain to the bumper and side beams, followed by the first three coats of varnish. As cold weather returned, the varnishing stopped and I moved on to planing and cutting the boards for the bed floor. A few warm days late in February and early in March provided the opportunity to apply the remaining five coats of varnish, and the bed sides and bumper were installed the first week of March.

Working around our spring rain, it took six weeks to finish the floorboards and install them. Next the planing and cutting began on the sides. I decided to build them in stages, so the first three sections, the bulkhead behind the cab and the first 4 foot section on each side were finished just in time for the F-100 Supernational in

Pigeon Forge, TN. During that same time, I had the carburetor rebuilt, degreased, cleaned and painted the engine and detailed the engine compartment.

Over the next month I spent nearly everyday in the barn working feverishly to finish the rest of the side sections along with the two tailgate sections. I got down to the wire, but on June 21st I applied the final coat of varnish to the remaining sides. The next day, the sides were installed and Edith was loaded up for another trip to Pigeon Forge. The Great Smoky Mountain F 100 Run proved to be a great event to present Edith in all her glory. Not only did the other Ford Owners at the Run give a nod of approval, but the locals and tourist in town did the same as we drove through Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, Townsend and the trip to Cades Cove.

On the return from Cades Cove the rear brakes began hanging up and dragging, so upon returning home the call went out to Joblot's in New York, for wheel cylinders and brake shoe linings. When I pulled the drums they were in need of turning, that's when I found that nobody within 100 miles would turn them. Out in my woods sat the remains of a '52 F-6 cabover, minus the body. The chassis came along with a trailer I had purchased the year before. As I pulled the rear drums I was amazed that they both looked like new. A day trip to a Clutch shop in Chattanooga got the linings riveted to the old shoes. Within another day, the brake job was complete and for the first time the brakes worked great.

After a few minor details to complete and some final debugging of the truck, we presented Edith at the Second Annual Fall Ford Truck Festival in Townsend, TN. A lot of folks remembered the truck from the 2010 show and gave their approval of the finished project.

I want to give a special thanks to Roger Faulkner who worked tirelessly on the truck during the entire process. And I would like to the members of Ford Truck Enthusiast at www.ford-trucks.com. This job could not have been done without all their advice and expertise. 





