

1946 Chevrolet Pick Up



I always liked pickup trucks. When I was in my early 20s, I bought a 1968 Forest Service ½ ton Chevy pickup. It was painted a green that only the Government would use. I fixed it up with chrome wheels and a metallic blue paint job with pin stripes. One day on my way home from work a man followed me home. He wanted to buy my truck. He said that it matched a Corvette that he raced, and that it would look great pulling his racecar. He worked on me until I gave in. He traded me a 1976 El Camino, shiny black and some cash to boot.

I had that for a few years and sold that, it just wasn't a truck. While I was driving around one day I noticed an old truck sitting in a yard. It had sunk up to its axles and looked like it had been sitting there a long time. I liked the big grill and the teardrop headlights. I hadn't seen anything like it before. It was kind of an odd looking thing that grows on you after awhile. After driving by it many times I finally got up the nerve to ask him if it was for sale. He said it was but he wanted \$300 for it! The man said it ran and he just put new brakes on it before he parked it in the yard. It sounded like a good deal to me at the time, so I bought it.

I picked up a new battery with hopes of throwing it in and being on my way, but it wasn't quite that simple. It is now winter in Appleton, Wisconsin and 0 degrees outside. The old six cylinder fired right up after some fresh gas, but I had to chip it out of the frozen ground. Not an easy task. After a day of digging I thought that I was ready to drive it home so I jumped in and fired it up, stepped on the brake and the pedal went right to the floor. I got out and looked under the truck to see what happened. The new brake lines had rusted through because they were in contact with the ground and didn't have any paint on them. Now I had to run new brake lines in the freezing cold. I eventually got it home.

I started the research on it and I found out it was a 1946 Chevy ½ ton. Looking at pictures of other trucks, something didn't look right. The box was from a Ford truck. That had to go first. I started the long task of looking for parts. There weren't a lot of swap meets back in the late 1970s for me to shop at. I found most of the parts in farmer's fields and that took years.

In 1980, Dot was transferred to Minneapolis MN. and the movers said that they wouldn't move it. The only way it was going to get there was to drive it. Its now July, 98 degrees and 98% humidity. I brought a case of oil and 5 gallons of water and talked a friend into following me back to Minneapolis in his car. Just in case something happened to my treasure I didn't want to be stranded in the middle of farm country. He had to stay close behind because I didn't have current plates. We made it with out much trouble but my friend felt the need to remind me how good he had it in his air conditioned car ever time we stopped.

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In Minneapolis I had a heated shop to work in and enough parts to get started. I took everything apart and had it dipped. That is the way to go. I went through everything and painted the frame and running gear in the driveway. Dot was transferred again in 1985, but this time to Seattle. I knew it couldn't be driven because all I had completed was the frame and running gear but our movers said that they would sneak it on the truck. Moving day arrives and I started to drive it on the moving van truck only to find out that I put the clutch plate in backwards and couldn't get it into gear without grinding the gears. We gathered up a bunch of guys and pushed it on. Dot was on the road a lot and the kids were babies so they want to bed early. I would go out in the garage and work until late in the night to get things done when they slept. Don't tell Dot she would kill me for leaving the babies alone. The goal was to have it done to go to the national Chevy meet in Nashville, Tennessee. The last few months were a scramble. My lovely wife, like any good Chevy lover's wife, had to put up with chromed grilles and fresh painted truck parts in her living room. My shiny new baby was done just in time to load it up on the trailer. We went with the Campbell's, had a great time and came back with a little trip souvenir. We stopped at every NAPA Auto Store from Seattle to Nashville but it wasn't for my 46 Chevy truck! That is a story for another time.

John and Dot