



Jeep ad appeared in Farm Journal in 1953.

Jeeps Tested For Farm Use In 1942

Millions of soldiers returning to U.S. farms after WWII brought pent-up demand for mechanical power. During the conflict, many had become experienced drivers of a peppy, nimble 4-WD 1/4-ton vehicle that handled mud, dust, snow and virtually any terrain. Soldiers bragged, "It'll do anything except climb a tree." Today we know that vehicle as a Jeep. More on the name later.

Back on U.S. soil, soldiers-turned-farmers wondered whether those trusty 4-WD vehicles could plant seeds, pull a plow or disc, cut and rake hay, and maybe even replace "horse power." Their thinking aligned with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, which began testing the military vehicles for potential farm use in 1942. The Farm Tillage Machinery Laboratory in Auburn, Ala., acquired

two of them, modified the 134-cu in. Willys "Go-Devil" engines to produce 63 hp, and connected them to mowers, discs, plows, cultivators and hay racks.

Testing showed the vehicles had plenty of power, but they also consumed 50% more fuel than a similarly powered tractor. Its wheelbase was fixed at 80 in., whereas some tractors had adjustable wheels. Engineers also thought the high-revving 2,000-rpm 4-cyl. engine would wear out sooner than a slower-revving Ford 9N or 2N, especially when used for plowing.

Those negative reviews, however, didn't deter Willys. The company launched a civilian Jeep, introducing the CJ name, and called it the CJ-1. One of the CJ models was an AgriJeep, marketed as a perfect combination

of mobile power and a 3-pt. hitch. It could haul farm supplies, drag logs, cut hay and dig post holes. Advertising boasted that it could do the work of two draft horses and operate at 4 mph for 10 hr a day.

Meanwhile, tractor production at many companies was ramping up, and competition was fierce. Only 70 farm-specific Jeeps were produced because Willys wasn't regarded as a tractor company.

However, Jeep's popularity was just beginning. The CJs soon became the go-to vehicle for open-air driving and off-roading. More than 215,000 were built before the CJ-3A replaced the CJ in 1949. The company produced the first all-steel station wagon in 1949 and eventually several truck models.

There's more to the vehicle's backstory and the history behind its name. When the U.S. entered WWII in 1941, the military recognized the need for a nimble 4-WD vehicle. More than 135 automakers were asked to produce a small, handy prototype in less than 3 mo, an astounding request.

Only three companies responded. The American Bantam Car Company produced a Reconnaissance Car, Willys-Overland contributed the Willys Quad (designated 4-WD). Ford produced the Pygmy. Military engineers were most impressed with the Willys Quad.

Features from all three prototypes were integrated into the Willys MB and the Ford GPW. Over 4 years, nearly 650,000 were produced for military use: 360,000 MBs and 270,000 GPWs. Their design, functionality, durability and ease of repair gave the Allies a leg up in mobility, communications and weapons deployment. Germany even credited the Jeep as the single most important vehicle in the Allied arsenal, ahead of tanks

and airplanes.

Now, Jeep is one of the world's most iconic brands. The name likely originated with the Popeye comic strip character "Eugene the Jeep." Popular in the 1930s, Eugene was a small, yellow animal with supernatural abilities who communicated by saying the word "jeep."

Soldiers first saw the Ford version of the vehicle, badged the GPW, and shortened the initials to the word jeep. The name became common among the general public when Irving "Red" Hausman, a Willys test driver, drove a Willys Quad vehicle up the steps of the U.S. Capitol in 1941, carrying several dignitaries. Katherine Hillyer, a Washington Daily News reporter, wrote about the event and captioned the vehicle a "Jeep." The legendary name and brand soon spread far and wide.

Collectors have restored hundreds of military Jeep models. Many have been converted into rescue vehicles, water pumps for firefighting, and even power sources for sawmills.

FARM SHOW has written about an inventor who installed a diesel engine in a CJ-5 (Vol. 45, No. 3); a farmer who "tractorized" a Jeep Wagoneer (Vol. 33, No. 4); a Washington farmer who pulled an 8-ft field harrow with his 1953 CJ-3 (Vol. 22, No. 1); and a Tennessee farmer who made his "Jeep" into a big round bale mover (Vol. 19, No. 5).

Inventive and mechanically minded farmers have turned Jeeps into practical farm helpers, even though the brand never became an ag tractor.

For more Jeep history, visit www.jeep.com, www.mikesresearch.com, or www.kaiserwilys.com.

Students shaped the arched wooden wagon bows the old fashioned way, using steam, as part of their sheep-wagon project.



Students Build Sheep Wagons For Class Project

Students at two high schools in Gillette, Wyo., learned and practiced a broad range of construction skills as they built two authentic sheep wagons for their woodworking class.

"I know the students learned at least two important life lessons building their wagon," says Pete Stocker, their instructor at Campbell County High. "The first was patience, and the second was doing things the right way the first time. There were several instances when I had to tell them to take it apart and start over."

The wagon-building project originated with a former Wyoming state legislator, and funding came from a state education cooperative. In addition to the wagon built by Stocker's high school class, a second wagon was built by Gillette's other high school, Thunder Basin. That project was supervised by shop instructor Nick Newman.

Sheep wagons are compact, mobile "cabins on wheels" invented in the 1880s for shepherds in the American West. They allowed shepherds to live on the open range for months at a time while tending their flocks. In 1910, Wyoming had more than 5 million sheep and was the second-largest wool-producing state in the U.S., after Texas,

so sheep wagons were popular then.

Stocker said most of the sheep wagon components were purchased from Wyoming businesses, and the running gears were ordered from Weaver Wagons, a custom

wagon company in Ohio.

Stocker says one of the most complicated steps during construction was forming the wagon bows. Those arched wooden frames support the canvas top of a sheep wagon. Although wagon bows can be purchased already formed, Stocker and the boys chose to shape them the old-fashioned way, using steam.

"Building the sheep wagon was a really good class project," Stocker says, "because it involved building and integrating a lot of different parts and procedures, like cabinets and the steamed wagon bows."

He says that even though it was his first sheep wagon, he was confident the project would be a success,

providing students planning to work in the trades after high school with an excellent hands-on building experience.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Campbell County High School, 1000 Camel Dr., Gillette, Wyo. 82716.



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