

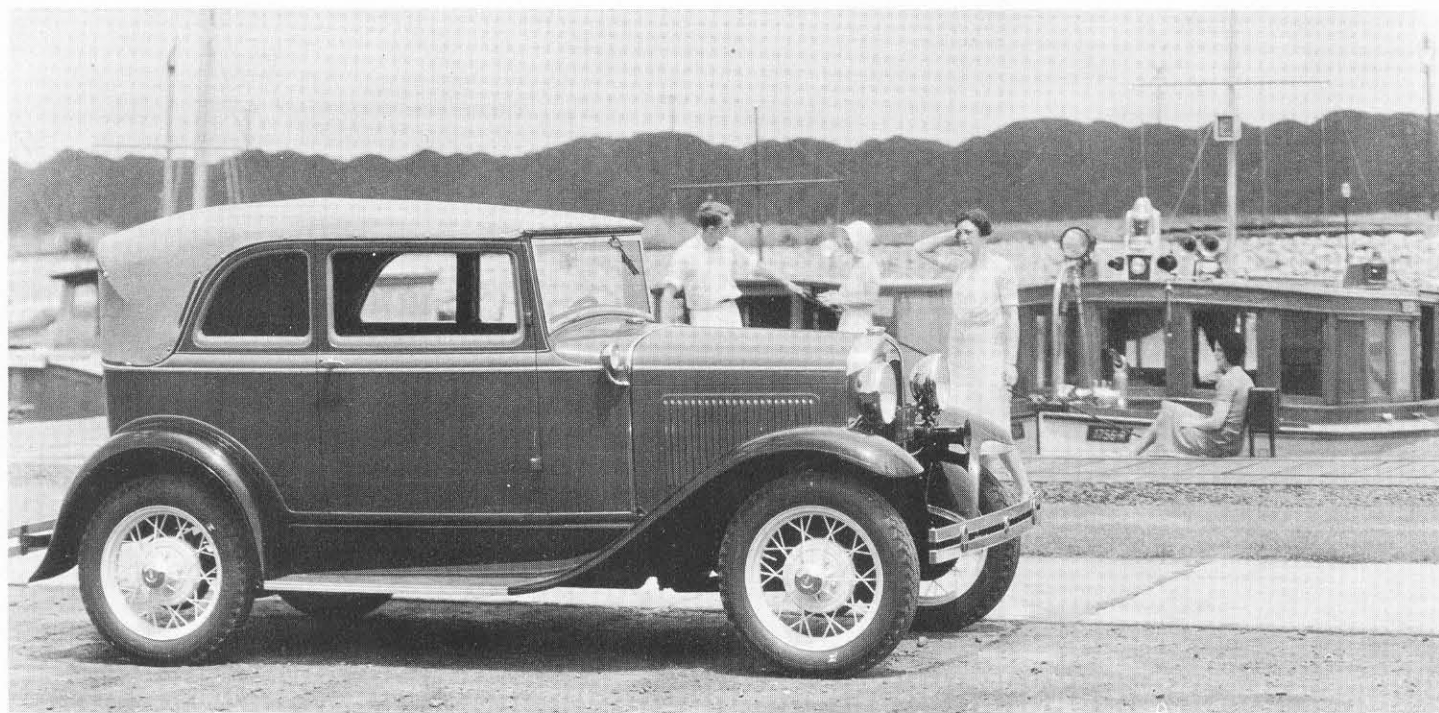
# *Authentically Speaking*

or  
As Mr. Ford Built the "A"

by Edward Francis and George DeAngelis

## THE CONVERTIBLE SEDAN—400A

*Photographs, courtesy Ford Archives*



With the introduction of the Convertible Sedan on May 22, 1931, a new unique design in the sporty deluxe line of cars. The sales department letter which was sent to all branches announced that the five passenger convertible sedan would include such standard equipment as cowl lamps, left well fender, top boot, chrome exterior windshield frame, chrome windshield wiper, genuine leather upholstery, arm rests for rear seat passengers, two ash trays, adjustable driver's seat and full length bumpers, front and rear.

The letter further stated:

"Standard colors will be the same as for all other deluxe closed types.

"The convertible sedan, with its slanting windshield, is extremely attractive in appearance and combines all of the advantages of the open cars with close car comfort. The top, which may be quickly lowered, folds flat, emphasizing the straight lines of the car. Both door windows and quarter windows are provided with regulators,

so they may be easily lowered or raised.

"The upper structure is a new development in convertible car construction. A rigid top rail extends from the front pillar over door and quarter windows, and down to the mouldings. This eliminates entirely all rattles and similar noises that have caused dissatisfaction with other convertible designs. The top is of rubberized material, exceptionally durable and of fast colors. Bows are of wood covered with bow drill cloth, similar to top material. Garnish mouldings, finish strips and front panel finish strip are in walnut grain.

"Two wide doors, one each side, permit easy entrance to the interior. The front passenger seat is of the folding type and the adjustable feature of the driver's seat is a ratchet arrangement, which permits the seat being moved forward or backward quickly and easily. A depression in the floor in the rear compartment adds to the comfort of passengers, giving ample legroom."

The production department also notified the branches that the first bodies would be shipped on May 25, 1931 (37 cars were built in May, 1931).

In June, 1931 a second letter of instruction was sent to the branches listing the standard colors for the convertible sedan. There were five, and all showed the body, belt and moulding to be one color and the reveals another. In addition the sales literature stated that the convertible sedan was available in all deluxe body colors. By putting all this information together, it appears that the convertible sedan was available in 17 different body color schemes, more than any other Model "A" except the commercial line.

Color on the top panel of the radiator shell was also introduced with this model. The area was painted body color so that the radiator shell was visually tied in with the body, thus increasing the harmony of the front end.

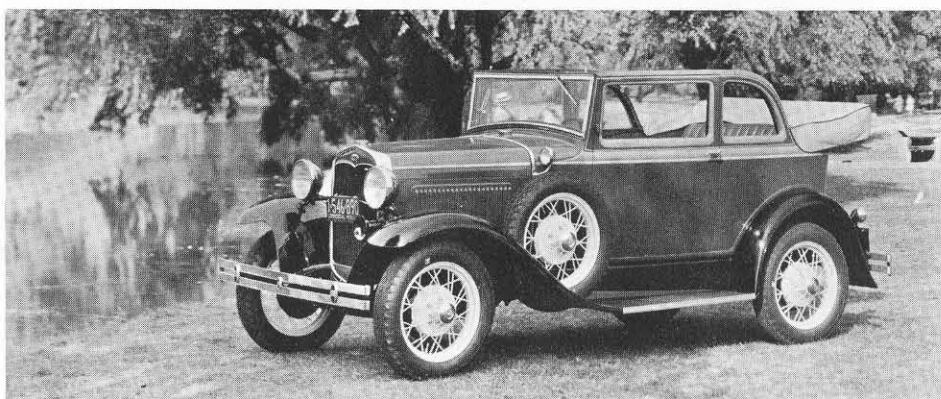
Two striping methods were used on the sedan. One was common to the pattern used on the Murray-built body and the other common to the Briggs-built body. On the Murray-built cars, a single stripe started at the front of the hood and followed the small moulding around the body to the opposite side of the hood. A second stripe started above the belt at the front pillar and completely encircled the windows. On the Briggs bodies the one stripe which started at the hood was the same as on the Murray body, but there was no stripe around the windows. Instead, a second stripe started at the cowl and went along the top edge of the belt and joined the moulding stripe, behind the quarter window.

The wheels were painted one of four colors, the standard practice incorporated in June of 1931. The colors were apple green, aurora red, tacoma cream and black.

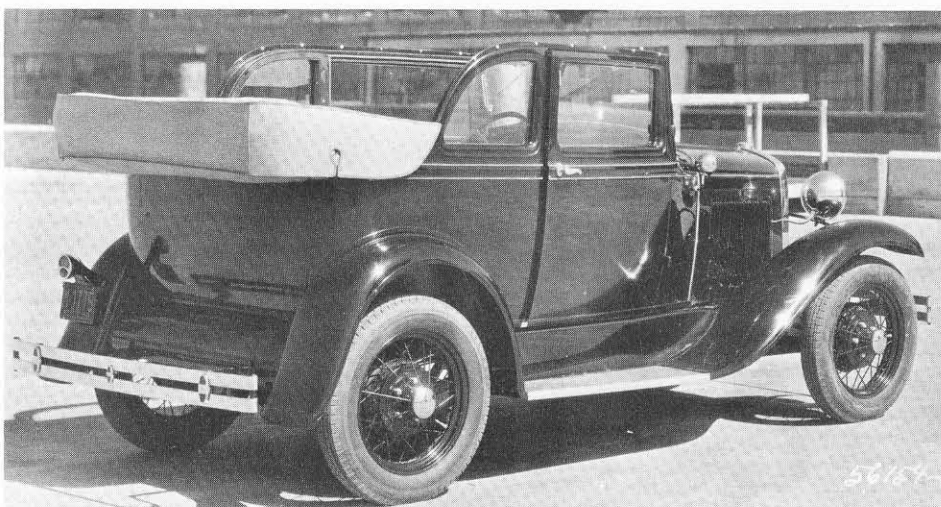
Only one trim scheme was available for the interior, genuine deep tan crush grain leather on the seats and a matching artificial leather on the panels. A brown carpet was used on the front and rear floor, sills and heel guard. The garnish mouldings around the windows, the finish strips and the dash panel were painted imitation walnut grain. The gas tank was painted exterior body color and trimmed with a stripe similar to other deluxe models.

The interior door handles and lock mechanism is the pull-type similar to the other slant windshield models.

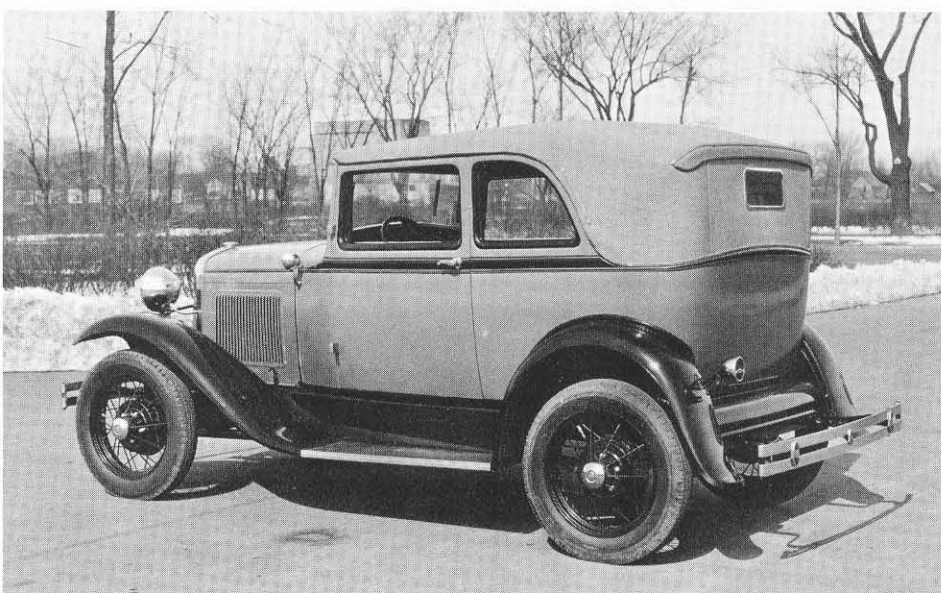
The interior hardware on the convertible sedan is bright nickel plate. This includes door handle, window regulator handle, spark and throttle control levers, horn ring and light switch, gear shift handle, brake lever, choke rod and top hardware. The convertible sedan was the only deluxe model with bright interior hardware. Except for the plating, the interior door handles and window regulators were interchangeable with the 1930-31 Cabriolet, 1931 slant window town sedan, slant window deluxe Fordor (2 window) and the Victoria. The outside door handles were the same as on the slant window Cabriolet, slant window Fordors and Victoria. The Victoria seats were interchangeable with the convertible sedan as of July 1931. The wood top bows No. 2



Photographs of convertible sedan used in advertising. Evident is the chrome windshield frame, body color on the upper and lower radiator panel and the two-tone treatment of the belt and window reveals. Neg. 56379.



Early production model showing top cover detail and full length rear bumper. Neg. 56154-8.



An early engineering prototype, built in March 1931, showing the stripe treatment and the two-tone color on the lower molding, belt and reveals. Note that the top fasteners are hidden. Neg. 8484.





Interior treatment showing cloth covered roof bows and the nickel plated folding mechanism.



Interior treatment showing the location of the ash tray and the design of the door pocket. Neg. 56380.

and 4 were covered with a material matching the top. Bows 1 and 3 were steel and painted tan (drab) to match the top.

The following note, on the assembly drawing, gives an idea of the practice used in assembling the body.

"Antisqueak to be used between wood and metal, wood and wood or metal to metal in all cases except where glue is specifically mentioned. All wood is to have one coat of body slush before applying panel.

All wood parts applied after body in white must also have one coat of body slush to insure black surface on all wood parts."

Domestic production of the convertible sedan was 4864 units from May through December 1931, with 85 units produced in Canada and 123 units produced overseas. In January 1932 one unit was produced at Edgewater and 5 units in Buenos Aires. In February 1932 one unit was built in Canada. In April 1932, 13 units were

built in Buenos Aires and in May 1932 one unit was built in Buenos Aires. This gives a grand total production of 5093 Model "A" convertible sedans.

A club of convertible sedan owners was started in 1963. Through correspondence, this group has authenticated many small details about this model. Anyone interested may write to: Ed Rossing, 870 Coolidge Street, Plainfield, New Jersey, 07062.

#### STANDARD EXTERIOR COLORS

Lower Body	Upper Body	Belt & Moulding	Reveals	Stripe	Wheels
Med. Ford Maroon	Med. Ford Maroon	Med. Ford Maroon	Tampa Red	Vermillion	Aurora Red
Med. Brewster Green	Med. Brewster Green	Med. Brewster Green	Black	Apple Green	Apple Green
Copra Drab	Copra Drab	Copra Drab	Chicle Drab	Straw	Tacoma Cream
Black	Black	Black	Kewanee Green	Apple Green	Apple Green
Washington Blue	Washington Blue	Washington Blue	Riviera Blue	Straw	Tacoma Cream

#### DELUXE CLOSED CAR COLORS

Ford Maroon	Black	Black	Ford Maroon	Vermillion	Aurora Red
Brewster Green	Black	Black	Brewster Green	Apple Green	Apple Green
Chicle Drab	Copra Drab	Copra Drab	Chicle Drab	Straw	Tacoma Cream
Kewanee Green	Elk Point Green	Elk Point Green	Kewanee Green	Apple Green	Apple Green
Black	Black	Black	Black	Apple Green	Apple Green

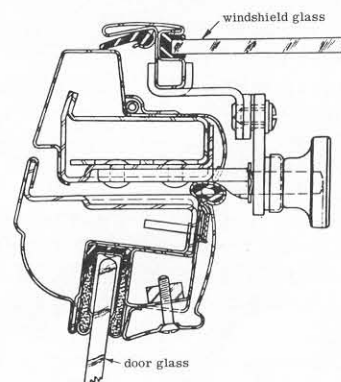
#### DELUXE OPEN CAR COLORS

Ford Maroon	Ford Maroon	Black	Black	Vermillion	Aurora Red
Brewster Green	Brewster Green	Black	Black	Apple Green	Apple Green
Washington Blue	Washington Blue	Riviera Blue	Riviera Blue	Tacoma Cream	Tacoma Cream
Stone Brown	Stone Brown	Black	Black	Tacoma Cream	Tacoma Cream
Black	Black	Black	Black	Apple Green	Apple Green
Bronson Yellow	Seal Brown	Seal Brown	Bronson Yellow	Orange	Aurora Red
Moleskin Brown	Moleskin Brown	Moleskin Brown	Moleskin Brown	French Gray	Black
Lombard Blue	Lombard Blue	Lombard Blue	Lombard Blue	Hessian Blue	Black

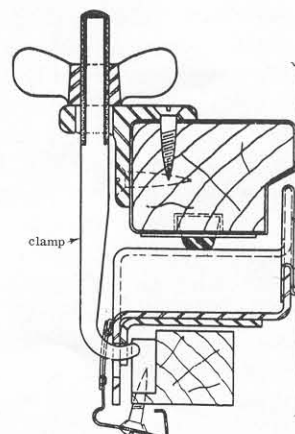
#### CONVERTIBLE SEDAN INTERIOR TRIM

Trim Scheme	Door, Rear Qtr., Cowl, & Seat Backs	Seats	Windlace	Front & Rear Floor, Sills & Heel Board	Garnish Mouldings (Dash Panel & Finish Strips)	Top & Wood Bows	Steel Bows	Top Mechanism & Interior Hardware
Deep Tan Crush Grain Leather	Deep Tan Crush Grain Art. Leather	Deep Tan Crush Grain Leather	To Match Deep Tan Crush Grain Leather	Brn. Carpet*	Painted Walnut Grain Finish	Tan (drab) Rubber Interlined Fabric	Painted to Match Top Material	Bright Nickel Plated

\* Carpet was trimmed with deep tan crush grain artificial leather binding.



Section thru windshield post and door showing construction and sealing



Section thru rear quarter pillar and bow showing top hold down clamp