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The opening pages of

1950 Ford F-1 Restoration Guide

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

1950 Ford F-1

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

RestorationEssentials single-year guide · Model year 1950 only · Bonus Built first-generation F-Series, F-1 half-ton

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- **Model year covered:** 1950 only — the F-1 half-ton of the 'Bonus Built' first-generation F-Series.
- **Series:** F-1 = 1/2-ton, 114-inch wheelbase, 4,700 lb GVWR, dedicated truck frame.
- **Engines (1950):** 226 cu in flathead six (H) — 95 hp at 3,300 rpm; 239 cu in flathead V8 (R) — 100 hp at 3,800 rpm.
- **Transmission (1950):** 3-speed manual — FLOOR shift on early 1950 production, COLUMN shift from mid-year (the change is a build-date question; heavy-duty options continue).
- **Rear axle (1950):** Spicer-Dana 41, 3.73:1 (final year).
- **Brakes:** Hydraulic drums, 11x2 in front, 11x1-3/4 in rear (1951 factory operator's-manual specification; common to the 1948–52 F-1).
- **Electrical:** 6-volt, POSITIVE ground.
- **Serial number (1950):** year digit '0'; H = 226 six; R = 239 V8.
- **Production (1950):** 179,693 F-1s out of 345,801 Ford trucks in total — the Korean-War-scare buying surge year (Consumer Guide series).

1. Manufacturer history: Ford

Ford Motor Company was incorporated on June 16, 1903. The truck line began with the Model TT one-ton (announced July 27, 1917), the first factory-built pickup bed followed in 1925, then the Model AA (1928), Model BB (1933), and the flathead-V8 Model 50 pickup (1935). By 1941 Ford had sold more than four million trucks. Civilian production stopped for the war; Henry Ford died in April 1947; and the company relaunched with trucks first: the all-new F-Series went into production on November 27, 1947 — ahead of the all-new 1949 cars — and was publicly unveiled on January 16, 1948.

The trucks were numbered by capacity — F-1 half-ton through the three-ton F-8 'Big Job' — and sold under one banner: 'Bonus Built', a promise of more truck than the money strictly bought. The centerpiece was the cab: reportedly \$1 million spent on its design and tooling, earning it the 'Million Dollar Cab' nickname — seven inches wider than before, with a seat marketed as easy-chair comfort and a one-piece windshield. The F-1 rode a dedicated truck frame (not adapted car hardware) on a 114-inch wheelbase at 4,700 lb GVWR. Chevrolet outsold Ford through these years, which is precisely why honest Bonus Built survivors spent decades undervalued — and why documented originality matters now.

2. Model history: the Bonus Built F-1, and where 1950 sits

The first-generation F-Series ran 1948–1952. The arc, year by year: the debut (1948) — wide 'Million Dollar Cab', floor shift, black wheels, grille bars chrome then argent with red pinstripe; the detail year (1949) — pinstripe off, wheels body color, defroster and second taillight arrive; the transition year (1950) — the shifter climbs to the column mid-year and the bed goes smooth-sided, on record production; the restyle (1951) — single-bar grille, larger rear window, Five Star cab trims, wood bed floor, Dana 44 axle; and the finale (1952) — Ford's first overhead-valve engine, in the truck before the cars. This guide covers 1950 only.

3. What is unique about the 1950 F-1

- The shifter moves — mid-year. The standard three-speed's lever relocates from the floor to the steering column partway through 1950 production. Early and late 1950 F-1s are BOTH correct with different shifters; the build date, not the model year alone, decides which belongs in a given truck. This is the single most-missed 1950 restoration fact.
- The pickup bed loses its structural indents and becomes smooth-sided mid-run, and the tailgate chain brackets are now welded to the roll instead of inside it (Wikipedia year-change record; the changes were kept through 1951–52).
- Marmon-Herrington begins offering its Ranger four-wheel-drive conversion for the F-1 — an outside conversion for buyers who needed all four wheels pulling, not a Ford factory model. A converted truck should be documented as a conversion.
- Peak production year of the generation: 179,693 F-1s, driven by Korean War scare buying.
- Final year of the Dana 41 rear axle.

Year-change register — 1950:

- MID-YEAR CHANGES: floor shift → column shift (standard 3-speed); bed sides lose structural indents → smooth; tailgate chain brackets welded to the roll.
- NEW AVAILABILITY: Marmon-Herrington Ranger 4x4 conversion (outside conversion).
- LAST YEAR: Dana 41 axle. UNCHANGED: engines, cab, grille (1949 pattern).

4. Technical restoration data — 1950 Ford F-1

4.1 Specification table (1950)

Item	1950 specification
Series / wheelbase / GVWR	F-1 1/2-ton / 114 in / 4,700 lb
Transmission	3-speed manual — FLOOR shift on early 1950 production, COLUMN shift from mid-year (the change is a build-date question; heavy-duty options continue)
Rear axle	Spicer-Dana 41, 3.73:1 (final year)
Brakes	Hydraulic drums: 11x2 in front, 11x1-3/4 in rear; 1-1/16 in master cylinder; 178 sq in lining
Electrical	6-volt, positive ground
Production	179,693 F-1s out of 345,801 Ford trucks in total — the Korean-War-scare buying surge year (Consumer Guide series).
Prices	Not printed — see the corrections file.

Engines (1950):

Engine	Rating	Notes
226 cu in flathead six (H)	95 hp at 3,300 rpm	Standard engine, carried over.
239 cu in flathead V8 (R)	100 hp at 3,800 rpm	Optional, carried over.

4.2 Serial-number decoding (1950)

The serial number is stamped on the frame and carried on the rating / builder's plate: series, engine, model year, assembly plant, and consecutive unit number, in that order. Decode the frame stamping, not just the plate — plates get swapped; the frame number is the truck's legal identity. The engine digit is the first correctness check: an 'H' truck wearing a V8 (or an 'R' truck wearing a six) has had an engine swap, and it should be documented as one.

Position	Meaning	This year's code
1–2	Series: F1 = F-1 1/2-ton	F1
3	Engine: H = 226 six; R = 239 V8 (1952 215 six: see this guide's serial note)	See spec table
4	Model year digit	See spec table
5–6	Assembly plant code	e.g. DL, KC on documented survivors
7+	Consecutive unit number	—