

# An unlikely hot rod

'57 Chevrolet station wagon recovered from pasture in OKC

By Doug Hill  
For The Transcript

Billy Overall's attractive cream-colored hot rod hasn't always looked like it does today. Its existence began as a 1957 Chevrolet model 210 station wagon rolling off a Detroit assembly line.

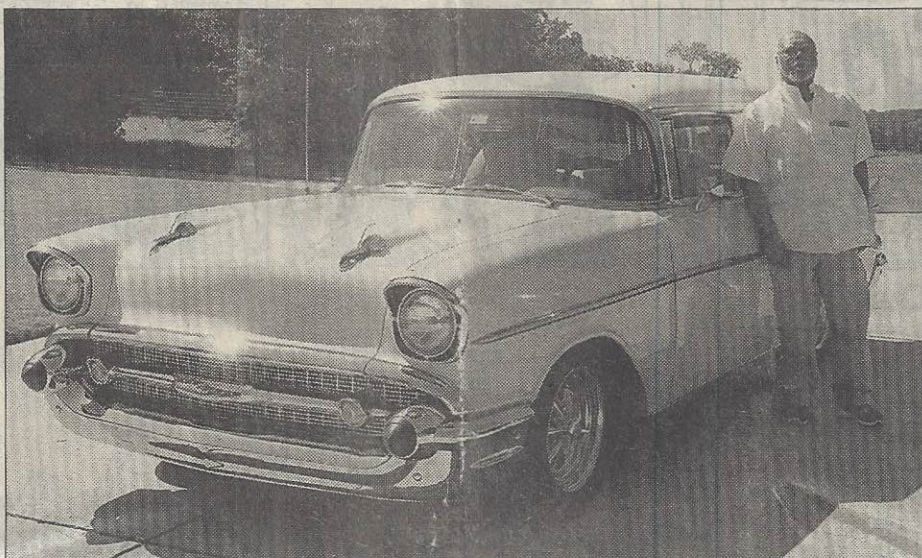
The car probably saw typical American family service until sometime in the 1980s. At that point, it ended up immobile and relegated to rusting away in a south Oklahoma City pasture. Overall's buddy, Jack Reeves, spotted the distinctively styled ride with its unmistakable fins and imagined more for it than target practice by teenage boys with .22 rifles.

"Reeves knew of this two-door car sitting in a field where it hadn't moved for 15 years," Overall said. "He bought it for \$1,500. The car, which was just a shell, had been stripped and had bullet holes in it."

In 1999, the old corroded Chevy was lifted out of the soil and taken to Reeves' shop. Overall contracted with Reeves to begin making it into the pretty and powerful automobile it is today. He sold a 1937 Chevy pickup and 1948 Chevy Coupe to offset the considerable cost of restoring the station wagon.

The wreck required a full frame-off renovation. Sandblasting the body revealed the steel to be fundamentally sound. One fender couldn't be hammered-out, and a genuine replacement was found at a Chickasha swap meet.

"My car has been operational since 2003, when it was also painted," Overall said. "The chrome window garnishes and entire interior was finished in 2008."



Doug Hill / For The Transcript

Billy Overall saved this 1957 Chevrolet station wagon from target practice in a field.

## DIG MY RIDE

homa license plate reads "CRMEPUP," and it certainly is a cream puff, gearhead slang for a sweet ride.

"I didn't want it to just jump out and grab you, but in a way, it does because it's so plain," Overall said. "I like the obvious difference from the more common colors."

The luxuriously updated interior seats, dash and steering wheel share a similar color scheme with cinnamon-colored carpet.

"It's fun to drive," Overall said. "We've taken it on the Fall Foliage tour with the Central Oklahoma Classic Chevy Club and trips to Bartlesville, Poteau, Branson, Missouri, and Denison, Texas."

He doesn't trailer it anywhere. The car has a 1990s era GM 350 engine, automatic transmission, power steering and power front disc brakes. It's essentially a modern car with a 1957 Chevrolet body. Overall had snazzy furniture-quality wooden slats installed in the wagon's rear interior storage deck.

"The rear seat back is stock, and the whole front end seating is from a 1989 Pontiac Bonneville found at the salvage yard because I wanted electric seats," he said.



Doug Hill / The Transcript

Billy Overall brought his '57 Chevy to Norman for a car show in July.

can remember," he said.

Overall retired from the aircraft regulations field with the Federal Aviation Administration. He graduated from high school in Vancouver, Washington. Military service brought him to Tinker AFB, and he met his wife here. Overall left the military in 1961. He has been in Oklahoma ever since.

"My dad taught me to drive in a standard shift, three-on-the-tree '48 Chevy pick-up on our 11-acre farm outside Vancouver," he said.

Few kids had really nice cars at his high school, except one whose father owned the Lincoln-Mercury dealership.

"A lot of times, his car would be sold out from under him and he'd get a different one," Overall said

the light and race across the bridge. When it turned green, we'd take off and speed the mile and a half over the Columbia River. There's a turnaround under the bridge and first one back to the bowling alley would win a milkshake."

Overall's race car, and also his first ride, was a fat-fender '48 Chevy Fleetline with fancy actuated door locks. The racing days are over, but he still does a lot of driving. A recent road trip in a large motor home with wife, adult children and a grandchild involved visiting relatives along the West Coast.

There's a friendly ongoing dispute within Overall's family about who should inherit the vehicle.

"I have three kids and they all want it," he said with a laugh. "I told them that the way we have it