



Preserving a 1948 Wee Wind

My 1948 Wee Wind ("just a little wind") is a prime candidate for preservation, being an early postwar model low-production trailer in excellent original condition. The 16' Wee Wind was Airstream's first postwar baby trailer. This one is serial number 3003, the third Wee Wind made.

Total Wee Wind production is unknown, but the highest Wee Wind serial number discovered to date is 3054, indicating at least 54 were manufactured. Less than ten Wee Winds are known to remain, of which only half appear to be in original condition. This one is an excellent example of Airstream's first postwar round-end trailers built from 1947 to 1951. These round-end trailers were called "Liners" but different models were named for various winds. They came in four lengths: the 16' Wee Wind, the 18' then 19' Trail Wind, the popular 22' trailer which had 7 different names (Breeze, Chinook, Sea Breeze, Southwind,

Tradewind, Westwind and Zephyr) depending on interior floor plan, and the 28' tandem axle "Whirlwind" Superliner.

Being the shortest example of an early postwar Liner, this Wee Wind compactly encapsulates history. The original beds, small chest, galley and wardrobe each demonstrate the manufacturing methods and techniques Wally Byam used in making his first postwar trailers. This trailer, as is with all faults, is industrial history on wheels. Nothing I do can improve upon it; my best gift is to preserve it.

Leading a mildly turbulent life awash in trailing edge technology, I am well suited to the suffering visited upon those who preserve and use very early Airstream trailers. My role is caretaker and my goal is to maintain this trailer in original condition for future generations. Other than gentle cleaning and necessary repairs and maintenance, the trailer will not be altered to suit my

needs. Instead, my camping style will be adapted to the trailer.

A trailer is only original once, and once altered it can never be returned to its original state of grace. An excellent original condition trailer, even though less than perfect, should either be preserved or passed along to someone who will preserve it. If your urge to redecorate is beyond control, find a trailer that needs help. Please don't destroy an excellent condition vintage Airstream.

This Wee Wind has been named "Ruby" in honor of Ruby Mann, her first co-owner from 1948 to 2002 along with husband Harry Mann, who passed away in 1960. The trailer rested in Las Vegas, Nevada for 47 years before being purchased in 2002. Just 16 feet long overall, the trailer has a 14 foot long body that is 8 feet, 2 inches high and 7 feet wide.

Weighing a svelte 1200 pounds fully furnished with 80 pounds on the hitch, Ruby never had any brakes. Her price was \$1,495.00 in 1948 dollars, expensive for that time. Nevertheless, the trailer is basically a hard sided tent on wheels with scary heat (an unvented Butane heater), 120-volt AC lights, and campground cold water. It has no toilet, shower, hot water, fans, battery or self containment features.

Harry and Ruby Mann were from the slipcover generation, and their thoughtfulness preserved Ruby's original fabric on both end beds and on the chaise. The chaise even has the original manufacturer's ribbon from J. Gruda Upholstery, Culver City, California. The materials tag on the front bed has the date "2-26-48" hand



"Ruby", a well-preserved 1948 Wee Wind, is one of fewer than ten examples known to remain.