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2008 Jeep® Liberty Product Heritage

Since 1941, the Jeep® name has symbolized a unique family of robust go-anywhere, do-anything vehicles, first developed for military use and, after 1945, continually adapted for a wide variety of civilian applications. The 2008 Jeep Liberty embodies the newest interpretation of the brand's character and the latest refinements of its product capabilities. But appreciating the strength of its lineage requires a journey back to the beginnings of Jeepdom.

In 1940, the United States Army, monitoring mounting tensions in Europe, determined that it had immediate need for a new type of reconnaissance vehicle. The subsequent Army "scout car" program would see the vehicle we now know as the Jeep 4x4 devised in just three months; to build the production vehicle, 135 manufacturers were invited to bid for an initial \$175,000 contract. But only three manufacturers participated in the program: Willys-Overland of Toledo, Ford Motor Company of Detroit and American Bantam of Butler, Pennsylvania. All three built prototype vehicles. The contract went to Willys-Overland, but the standardized MA and MB Jeep vehicles built by Willys for the Army under the initial 16,000-unit contract were considered "homogenized" vehicles containing the best features of all three prototypes.

As the war progressed and the capabilities of the Jeep became better known, Milwaukee-based industrial designer Brooks Stevens became sufficiently intrigued with its uniqueness to write a magazine article proposing a postwar line of Jeep-based passenger cars. Impressed, Willys-Overland chief engineer Delmar "Barney" Roos hired Stevens as a consultant, charging him with conceptualizing the basic forms of the Willys postwar product line. By 1943 Stevens was working on sketches for a new Willys passenger car.

Early in 1944, before the program had assumed formal structure, Roos summoned Stevens to Toledo for an emergency meeting. Manufacturing expert Charles Sorensen, known in the auto industry as "Cast-Iron Charlie," had been hired from Ford to serve as Willys-Overland's new president. Roos expected Sorensen to replace the Willys product development team, including himself and consultant Stevens, with Ford people. But, in their first meeting, Sorensen and Stevens quickly established a rapport that would evolve into a long friendship. Sorensen doubled the designer's retainer and asked if he could stay in Toledo a few days longer. Stevens, elated by his newfound fortune, said that if necessary he could stay until spring.

In the product team meetings that immediately followed, Sorensen scrapped all plans for new Willys passenger cars, seeing greater opportunity in creating not only "civilian" versions of the military-based Jeep but also additional car- and truck-like vehicles from the same platform, vehicles that would appeal to a greater number of buyers and create incremental production volumes for the company. Stevens began sketching again, starting with the now-famous slatted grille and accompanying bug-eye headlights that immediately bespoke "Jeep" to millions.

His first concepts – for the vehicle that would become the Jeep Station Wagon – were technically limited by the realities of automotive manufacturing in the 1940s. Many car bodies were produced by suppliers like Briggs and Murray, companies that would be fully engaged in producing bodies for the Big Three at the end of the war. Willys was forced to go to sheet-metal stampers outside the auto industry, suppliers who could only produce a "draw," the depth to which a press can push or fold a metal sheet, up to six inches. With this limitation, Stevens held the draw of his wagon's roof to just under six inches and the body draw to two-and-a-half inches. His slab-sided, cream-and-brown design visually simulated the ash framing and mahogany paneling of competitors' "woody" station wagons, but at a fraction of the cost. The all-steel construction eliminated the need for constant maintenance known to wood-framed wagons, including periodic revarnishing; the stamped indentations also stiffened the body structure, creating a sturdier and safer vehicle.

With the end of the war in sight, Willys-Overland began preparations for peacetime Jeep production. After testing a pilot model of the newly-refined military model (designated CJ-1, for "Civilian Jeep") and a test-bed prototype (CJ-2), the production version, the CJ-2A Universal Jeep, appeared in the summer of 1945. Close behind on the Toledo

assembly line came Brooks Stevens' all-new Jeep Station Wagon – the first all-steel wagon to be manufactured and sold in America.

When it appeared in dealers' showrooms in the summer of 1946, the Jeep Station Wagon was an immediate hit. Not only was it one of the first all-new postwar vehicles to be produced, it was attractive, affordable, and perhaps most importantly, utilitarian – a vehicle appealing to the eye and the pocketbook, yet useful for a wide variety of tasks. Its compact 104-inch wheelbase allowed it to be driven and parked almost anywhere, and yet its interior provided seating for seven, with all but the driver's seat made removable for cargo-hauling. In fact, with the rear seats removed, 96 cubic feet of cargo capacity became available, and the 50-inch interior height permitted transportation of especially tall items, something unthinkable in most cars of the era. For the first time the station wagon, previously considered by many a near-luxury vehicle, was being produced as a striking, low-cost family car – and quickly accepted.

The Jeep Station Wagon was also ruggedly dependable. Roos had provided a front suspension that resembled the "planar" suspension he developed for Studebaker in the Thirties; it utilized a seven-leaf transverse spring rather than conventional coil springs. The powertrain featured the Willys four-cylinder "Go-Devil" engine, augmented in the 1948 model year by a Roos-designed six-cylinder "Lightning" engine. Even more significant was the introduction of four-wheel drive models in 1949, beginning an association of that technology and cargo-carrying passenger vehicles that has been a hallmark of the Jeep brand ever since.

Correctly described as "One of the most influential automobiles ever built," the Jeep Station Wagon was produced through the early 1960s, then succeeded by the Jeep Wagoneer and subsequent Jeep sport-utility vehicles. Each of these Jeep vehicles has elevated the sport-utility concept to a higher level of comfort, performance and utility. But they all owe their success to the design of the slab-sided Jeep Station Wagon, first sketched by Brooks Stevens on a winter day in Toledo more than sixty years ago.

	<u>Then and Now</u>	
	<u>1949 Jeep Station Wagon</u>	<u>2008 Jeep Liberty</u>
<u>Wheelbase:</u>	104.5 in. (265 cm)	106.1 in. (269.5 cm)
<u>Length:</u>	174.75 in. (444cm)	176.9 in. (449.3 cm)
<u>Weight:</u>	3,150 lbs. (1,429 kg)	4,222 lbs. (1,905 cm)
<u>Engine</u> (one example):	Inline L-head four-cylinder	Single overhead cam V-6
<u>Horsepower:</u>	63 hp 47 kw	210 hp (157 kw)
<u>Displacement:</u>	34.2 cu. in. 2.2 L	225.8 cu. in. (3.7L)
<u>Bore/Stroke:</u>	3.125 in. x 4.375 in. (7.9 cm x 11.1 cm)	3.66 in. x 3.57 in. (9.3 cm x 9.1 cm)
<u>Compression ratio:</u>	6:5:1	9.7:1
<u>Transmission:</u>	Three-speed manual with two-speed Four-speed automatic overdrive transfer case	
<u>Suspension:</u>	Front and rear longitudinal leaf springs, live front axle	Front independent coil springs, rear coil springs, upper and lower trailing arms
<u>Brakes:</u>	Front and rear drum, hydraulic	Anti-lock four-wheel disc

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