

By Kathy M. Galovic

Elam and Sarah Fayard

GMC Coach Owners

Elam and Sarah Fayard are true Southern gentlepeople. Elam is a gentleman who chews on the butt of an old stogie or carries it in his hand as he gladly shows his coach to another interested soul. Sarah is quiet and reserved until she is spoken to, then she comes alive with enthusiasm. Of course, these are the first impressions of this writer and may only be my opinion. I truly feel they fit the description of Southern gentility.

They live in Atmore, Alabama which is located near the Gulf of Mexico on the Southern edge of the state. Although, they both started their career life as teachers they both moved on to broader horizons within a short period of time. Sarah taught school for 6 years in the beginning of their married life, then opened her own business. She ran her jewelry store for 16 years, then 10 years ago she sold the store and retired. Atmore is where Elam began his business and worked for 28 years as a building contractor. When he retired he took his tools with him so when he had time he could tinker with woodworking. Little did he know at the time what lay in store for him and his tools.

It was Sarah's initial interest in RV travel that first sparked their attention to the GMC motorhome. Knowing her interest, a friend of theirs, John, and

Sarah tried to talk Elam into purchasing an RV for fifteen years. Finally, he gave in. Vowing that he would not like it and to prove it to them, he bought a 17' camper van.

In the van that year, Elam and Sarah traveled the East coast of the United States up into Nova Scotia, Canada. Sarah loved it. As they were driving home to Atmore, Elam said to her, "If we're going to continue to travel this way, we will need to find something larger." He was hooked and Sarah was in heaven! She sat quietly and said nothing. Even though she never as much as cracked a grin to reveal her feelings, she was excited and bubbling over inside.

They saw GMC's all over the place and decided that was what they wanted to buy. Their search for a GMC Motorhome began! While their search for a GMC went on, they bought a brand new Class C. On the first trip out the cabinets rattled so much, Elam could not stand the rickety workmanship that had gone into the interior. When the RV was only a month old he tore out the interior and rebuilt it to his liking.

About 5 years ago, they finally found what they were looking for, a 1973 GMC coach. The coach had been repainted, so they didn't even know what model it was. Elam was enthusiastic about re-working it from top to bottom. He built



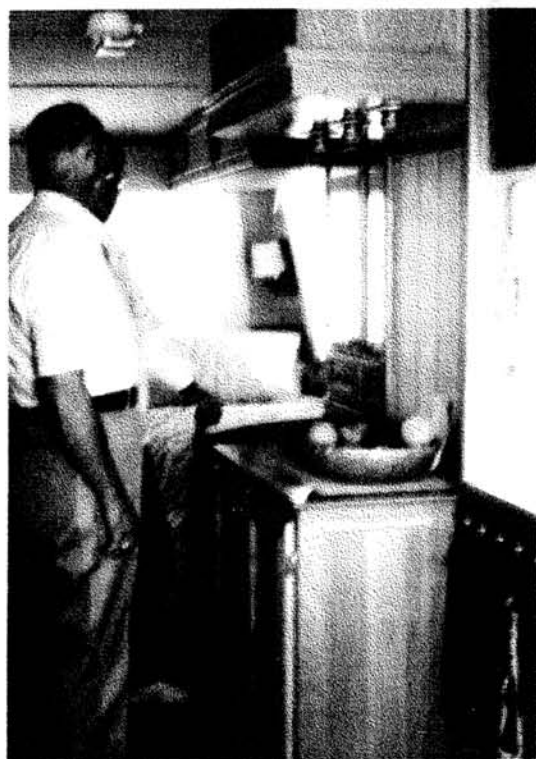
a two stall RV barn with a work pit in it so he could go to work on the coach. Then, he started disassembling the coach. He took it down to the ground cleaning and reworking everything. He restored the body to the chassis then started on the interior.

The custom-built interior is completely done in Oak from the top of the cabinets to the natural Oak flooring. Even the custom-built console in the cockpit was built in Oak.

The coach has an open concept from the front to the back. Behind the driver's side of the cockpit is a sofa. Directly behind that is the galley. Storage space is next, then twin beds are in the back. Coming forward from there is more storage space, the entrance door, then a small two person bench style dinette.

When you first enter the rig, you are awed by the beauty of Elam's craftsmanship and Sarah's personal touches. The one thing you seem to miss as you peruse the interior of the coach, though, is the bathroom.

Using a concept he picked up from looking at a LeSharro, Elam built in a hidden bath. A gorgeous hutch built on the driver's side of the hall just behind the galley unhitches and pulls away from the outside wall to reveal the hidden shower. In another ceiling high cabinet just beyond the hutch, a waist height drawer pulls out. In the drawer, which incidentally does not look like a drawer when pulled out, is a vanity and the bathroom sink. The marvelous thing about both of these is that they are fully equipped with running water and drains, using pliable



plastic plumbing and connector hoses. Above this drawer, is what appears to be a shirt closet with mirrors built into the outside surface of the doors. The only thing left to look for in this hidden bath is the toilet. At the foot of the bed, again on

the driver's side of the unit, is a short bench. It is built like the kind of benches used by Southern Ladies in Southern homes to store heirloom handmade quilts. At least, that's what it reminded me of, having come from a Southern family background, myself. After opening seat cover on the bench there sits the toilet.

On the opposite side of the coach, a closet is built with four drawers below. The turned spindle twin beds in the rear of the have a nightstand between them. Also, from front to back on both sides of the unit are hung overhead cabinets.

Sarah added a personal touch in the Oriental type rugs that adorn the floor. The rugs extend from the cockpit through the coach. At the steps to the cockpit, the rug is fastened to the floor using attractive brass rods.

To finish his work on the "new" coach, Elam gave it a new paint job. The bottom half is a silver grey while the top half is white. A dividing line of medium blue and brandywine accent stripes completes the design scheme. One last touch was given to the exterior of the coach, a new name; Custom 260.

Elam Fayard is now the President of the GMC Dixielanders, so if you're ever traveling through the South where the Dixielander's are having a rally, stop in and say, "Hey", that means "Hi" in Southern.

We hope to make this article a regular feature of our magazine. If you know of someone you would like to recommend for a future presentation, please drop us a note. With this in mind you may receive a letter or be approached by one of our editorial staff members at a rally or campsite. It is our hope that you will feel free to show your coach, and share your ideas, suggestions and adventures with other GMC coach owners. We have never found a GMC coach owner that was not interested in other GMC coaches, no matter in what stage its reconditioning or restoration might be.