

GRANDFATHER BEGAN IN 19TH CENTURY

Bob Lynch Reminisces About His Family's Long Association With The Farm Equipment Business

By Bill Wurzell, Editor

C. R. 'Bob' Lynch, Jr., has vivid memories of growing up in the Baltimore area and his family's long association in the farm equipment business. Specifically, the family's relationship with International Harvester Corporation.

Bob's grandfather, M. John Lynch was involved with 'I.H.' before the turn of the twentieth century. Bob's father, C. R. Lynch, Sr., went to work in the Baltimore district office in 1922. The senior Mr. Lynch eventually became manager of the district office and would often spend time on weekends at the office. When Bob Jr., was a youngster he would accompany his dad and occupy his time working on his bicycle or playing on a multitude of International Harvester equipment, including their extensive line of farm tractors and many other farm implements.

Household name...

All during Bob's early years, International-Harvester was a household name even if you weren't a 'farm' family. The company sold farm tractors and farm machinery all over the world. For years, the company also sold trucks; from pickups to 'tractors' for over the road heavy hauling. The company eventually constructed a new parts depot building on Washington Boulevard in Baltimore.

In June of 1950 Bob graduated from high school and went to work at the huge parts depot where his dad was manager. In November, Harvester decided to consolidate operations close the local district office and offered to move Bob's family to Memphis, Tennessee, a move the family did not want to make. Around this time and thanks to the district manager for Harvester, Bob Lynch, Sr., was able to secure an International Harvester dealer contract for the Reisterstown/Glyndon area of Baltimore County. Bob and his father were in business in November of 1950.



Part of the C. R. Lynch 'crew' in the early 1960's. From left to right, mechanic, Herman Wicklein, Mike Lynch, mechanic, Harvey Frederick, C. R. 'Bob' Lynch, Jr., and C. R. Lynch, Sr. Picture taken by the company's parts manager, Joe Wiley. Notice the 'new' International-Harvester, Farmall 404 Tractor.



Bob Lynch, former president of the C. R. Lynch Company, poses beside a 1968 International pickup model 1000-C with an MSRP of \$2,563! The picture was taken at an International-Harvester 'Roundup' in Springfield, Ohio in 1997.

The new venture obtained an appropriate facility, hired a mechanic and a short time later a salesman. Bob's younger brother 'Mike' joined the firm in 1956. Bob wore many hats at the small business doing everything except bookkeeping. During this time Bob tried to obtain a college degree but business demands were pressing. He was then drafted and spent two years as a guest of The United States Army.

In 1960, the C. R. Lynch Company constructed a new facility on Main Street in Reisterstown. In 1963 they received notice from the district manager asking the company to 'resign' their farm implement contract. The letter also stated that in any case they would not be offered a contract for 1964. A real kick in the teeth. All this because Harvester had plans for a 'company store' in the area when '695' was completed. This would eliminate many smaller dealers, including C. R. Lynch. Bob's dad rejected the offer and decided to find another company product line to sell. As luck would have it, the district office was closed, the 'company store' idea was scrapped and the Lynch's were awarded a contract for 1964 and beyond. The district manager that sent the letter telling them they were done, was never heard from again.

In the ensuing years, The Lynch Company thrived and in 1968 was incorporated with Bob as president, brother Mike, vice-president and their father as secretary-treasurer. They split the company stock three ways and became equal partners. The company was successful into the 1970's but was not able to overcome International-Harvester's downward spiral in the marketplace.

By the late '70's, I.H. did not have much of a product line to offer dealers. The last light duty truck was made in 1975. The Lynch Company tried selling other products including some foreign made tractors but that wasn't enough to survive long-term. In 1980, they had a substantial offer for the company's property. They had

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A Visit To Scott Schearer's Fire Truck Restoration Farm

By Bill Wurzell, Editor

During our travel time to and from membership and board meetings, Nick Prevas has been keeping Dan Materazzi, Ed Allen and me apprised of the exploits of Nick's friend and neighbor, Scott Schearer. Mr. Schearer is a heavy truck mechanic, farmer and fire truck enthusiast and restores them at his Hi-Land Farm in Howard County. Mr. Schearer is also Chesapeake Region President Gary Wilmer's nephew. Recently, Howard County Planning and Zoning officials have been nipping at Scott's heels regarding compliance and what is taking place on his property. The property was once a dairy farm with several out buildings. Mr. Schearer has done nothing but improve the property since he's owned it. Scott has lots of support from his friends and neighbors, including Nick and Linda. This is a very nice facility and its nearly impossible to see from Highland Road, regardless if the fence gate is open or not. On September 12, 2014, the judge agreed and ruled in Scott's favor, the fire trucks can stay at his farm. A big relief for Scott his friends and supporters.

Scott designated his property a 'museum.' This is a perfectly legal option. To comply with this designation, the museum must be available to

Bob Lynch, Jr., Reminiscences...

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an auction at the dealership, sold the property and closed the business in February of 1981.

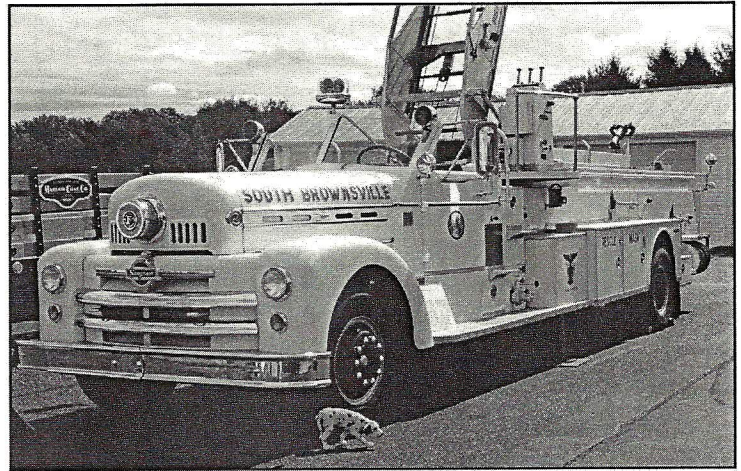
In 1981, International-Harvester's finances were at their lowest point due to a strike, the economy and corporate internal problems. In 1984, International Harvester Corporation, following long negotiations, agreed to sell its agricultural products division to Tenneco, Inc., in November of 1984. Tenneco's subsidiary, J. I. Case, manufactured farm tractors but lacked a full line of farm implements that I.H. produced. Following this merger, I.H. factories in Illinois and Tennessee were closed. However, the truck and engine divisions remained and in 1986 Harvester changed the corporate name to 'Navistar International Corporation' and continues to manufacture medium and heavy duty trucks, school buses and engines under the International brand name.

Mike Lynch took his share of the proceeds of the sale of C. R. Lynch Company and opened a lawn and garden business featuring Cub Cadet tractors. The business was successful; Mike sold the business in 1985; it continues in operation today under different ownership.

Bob Lynch, Jr., went to work for other well known companies and successfully sold golf course maintenance equipment in Maryland and Delaware for fifteen years. Bob retired in 1995 and still has fond memories of his dealings with International Harvester Corporation in spite of heavy handed treatment on occasion.

Craig & Mary Lynch Whitcraft

Small World, indeed, Bob Lynch's younger sister is Mary Lynch Whitcraft, wife of Craig Whitcraft, both dedicated members of Chesapeake Region. Craig Whitcraft purchased the property in Reisterstown that housed C. R. Lynch, Co. and turned it into a successful automatic transmission repair business. Mary Whitcraft is chairing Chesapeake Region's Sixtieth Anniversary Yearbook Committee. It was Bob Lynch that gave Craig Whitcraft a membership to Chesapeake Region for his birthday! *EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks to Bob Lynch for his inspiration and assistance with this article; thanks also to Mary Whitcraft for providing photos.*

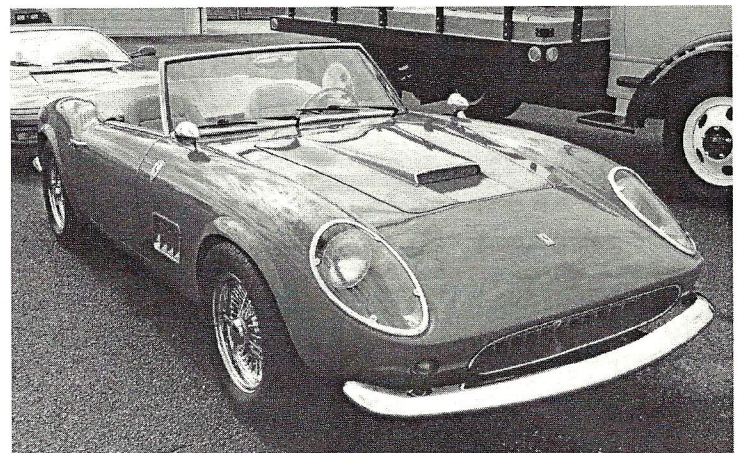


Scott Shearer's favorite 'white elephant' a 1954 Seagrave model 900 ladder truck. This unit is equipped with an 85 foot ladder along with a 906 cubic inch V-12 gas engine. Scott has others.

the public at least one day per year. Scott made the day, October 4th; in conjunction with the local 'Highland Days' Celebration. Nick sent me an email requesting I bring my antique car to the show and help support Scott Schearer and Highland Days.

Of course, there were fire trucks and related equipment on display. You get a sense of what it must be like to restore a firetruck. Restoring a car or pickup truck is probably kid's stuff compared to firetruck restoration. Just the sheer size of the components would be enough to scare me off. There was a diesel motor standing vertically next to one of the garages. You could see the pistons were the size of wastebaskets! Wheel lug nuts the size of your hand. There were about a dozen or so cars on hand including Dan Materazzi's 1956 Corvette and an eclectic group of other vehicles.

One unusual car was a 'fake' Ferrari roadster. This car has the distinction of being one of the three cars used in the very popular 1986 motion picture: 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off.' It's made up of an 'MG' trunk lid, VW taillights and a host of other parts that make it look like a Ferrari including the logo. For this reason, the builder of the cars (there were three) was sued by Ferrari for copyright infringement and went out of business. Ferrari also sued the movie producer. This particular vehicle was used as the 'stunt' car and all the movie scenes of the actors were filmed in this car. Greg Wildby, an automobile restorer, was showing the car for his client, the car's owner.



The vehicle above. 'stunt' car in the movie 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off'