

## My First Car...

As many of my fellow Chesapeake Region members know, my first car was a 1950 Plymouth, P19 two door sedan. They know because of my relentless repetition about my first car. The P19 model was rather rare and only came in the spartan 'Deluxe' series. The 'Special' Deluxe was the top-of-the-line model with chrome around the windows and a chrome 'horn' ring on the steering wheel and other mostly decorative items.

My 1950 Plymouth had a sloping back end and accommodated six passengers. This car was the entry level model for 1950 and strangely had a slightly shorter wheelbase than the standard two-door coupe and sedan.

The car had the long-in-the-tooth 217 c.i., 'flathead' six cylinder engine that developed 97 horsepower with 'three on the tree,' same as the 1948 Plymouth we had years earlier. The motor was adequate for the car and the times, but certainly no neck snapper on performance. I didn't care, I was so happy to have a car, so what if it was a slowdog. But, in most cases, my Plymouth would best the slower 'fluid drive' cars from Chrysler Corporation. The Plymouth, 'had eyes!' It looked very much like the car in the picture except it didn't have rear fender skirts. The picture below is the only one I could get permission to use. Unfortunately, I lost the pictures I had of the car over the years, not only of this car but others as well.

The P19 was a pretty, medium shade of gray with full 1949 Plymouth hubcaps and yellow wheels. Only the outside edge of the wheels 'peeked' through the full chrome hubcaps, the whiteside wall tires and yellow rim wheels really set it off. The Plymouth was nicely equipped, with key start, seven button AM radio, heater, electric wipers, factory turn signals and automatic choke.

How I came to acquire the Plymouth is probably every sixteen year old's dream, at least in the late 1950's. During my freshman and sophomore years in high school, yes, in those days a 9th grader was considered 'high school' age. This was in 1958 and 1959. Jeannette High School in Jeannette, Pa., 25 miles East of Pittsburgh was the same one my parents, brother and sister graduated from before and the school was showing its age. My dad was in the first class to graduate from this school in 1929! One of dad's classmates, Vaughn Monroe, became a popular singer and band leader. The

school was in fairly easy walking distance from home, roughly a mile and a half. My birthday was in March and in 1959 I turned *SIXTEEN!* For my birthday my parents said they would cover the extra car insurance cost and for my learner's permit to drive the family car. But, an even bigger surprise was in store.

A new high school was being constructed across town and it was not within walking distance of home, *AND*, there was no bussing! The school system was independent and did not have to provide bussing. Getting to and from school meant either schlepping me there and back, *OR*, buy me a car! My mother didn't drive, so they bought the Plymouth from a local garage/body shop for \$325, a hefty sum considering it sold new for about \$1,500; it was nine years old with no rust. It only had 49,000 miles on the odometer, and just had a brand new paint job.

One problem, I got the car at the end of February and I didn't turn sixteen until March 14, 1959! That two weeks dragged by; the car sat in the garage and I cleaned and polished it about ten times, I even installed a brand new set of seat covers with dad's help.

D-Day! March 14 was a Friday and on my way home from school I stopped in Myers Insurance and Notary Agency and ordered my learner's permit and paid a whopping 50 CENTS extra for fast service. I would have my permit on the 18th of March! At age sixteen, I was a fairly accomplished driver, thanks to dad's instructions beginning when I was twelve; dad knew I was a gearhead. On Sunday afternoons we would drive to a large parking lot and he would let me drive the old '48 around. I never got into high gear but after a couple tries, I never stalled the car.

Two of my best friends, Dave and Ed had their own cars and we would take turns driving to school. I only had to drive every third week. We picked up Dave's cousin Sue and her friend Diane along with another male student that had a bad limp due to a birth defect. At the end of every week the three passengers coughed up 50 cents each and gave it to the driver for portal to portal service all week long.

After I got the Plymouth, I also seemed to have much better luck with girls.--*Bill Wurzell*

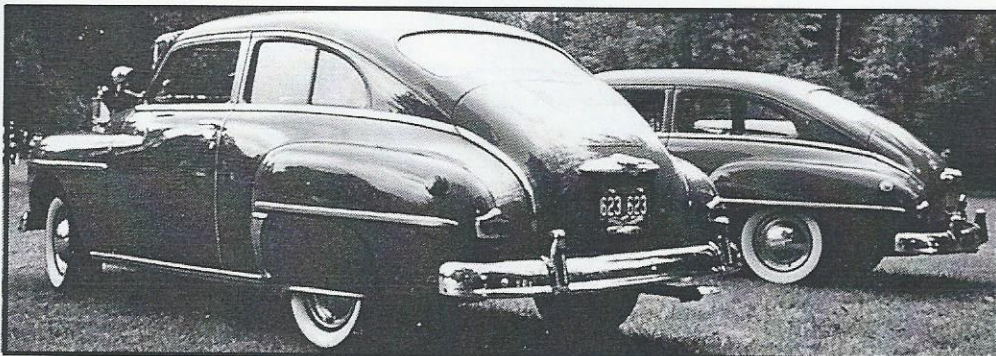


Photo courtesy of Jim Benjaminson

### 'Tech Talk' ...by Gary Ruby

Hi Everyone:

This weather is 'NUTS,' cold and more snow than I want. Now they're saying after this weekend it will be in the 50s. Never sure how to dress. Most of my cars are in the Garage and are dirty from the last time out. Its been too cold for me to get out there to clean them up. We just got back from the AACA Convention in Philadelphia. Weather there was cold, snowy and windy and we stayed in the hotel all weekend. The convention was very nice with a lot of good speakers and seminars. I attended two, the first was on the history of the automobile. It covered a lot more than Henry Ford, the second one was on 'automobile auctions' they are having all over the USA. It was given by a auctioneer, he provided good info. One thing he said was that 30% or more of the cars going across the block were already owned by the auction company. He said if a seller gives them a good price, a lot of times the company will buy the vehicle. He said if you go to the auction and see a car you're going to bid on, try to find the seller to ask questions about the car. If no one can be found, go to the office and ask to see the title, a lot of the time it's already been signed over to the auction company.

AACA had an auction to raise money for the library, Paula made up a Longaberger ladies purse filled with Bath and Body works items and some candy for the Ladies. That went pretty quickly. There wasn't a lot of 'good stuff' there, and what they had was not selling high. So I thought I would run the bids up some to help out the library. You know how that goes. I was the owner of a die cast car detailing kit before I knew it. A young man came up and said he really wanted that, but didn't have the money to bid, So Paula and I gave it to him. He was more then happy, next up was a really big AACA sign out of the Museum. Most people there wouldn't be able to get it home. Paula said it would look fine in our garage, so we bid that up and got it and now I have to go back up to Hershey with the truck to get it; should be fun trying to hang that sucker up on my 12' high roof trusses. More fun. They had a 1961 Plymouth 318 c.i., motor that was all rebuilt and had a reserve. Really slow bidding so I thought I would run it up to help the auctioneer get it going. Well, guess what; it had a LOW reserve, and I am now the owner of a '61 Plymouth 318 motor that I have no idea what I'm going to do with. Maybe a FLOWER POT! We also got a Corvette Poster that looks like Paula's Corvette. While were there we ran into a lot of friends from AACA and from the Early V-8 Ford Club. I was talking with Marty Roth from Louisiana who is a National Director, Marty is in charge of National Tours. He wants our region to host an AACA TOUR. I told him I would bring it up. He said even if its a small tour maybe 50 cars. I said it might be a little tough, he said they have all the info on how to do it and could send it to us.

I think I talked enough so we will see ya when the weather is better. **Gary**