

# CarStory

with Bill Sherk  
The Old Car Detective



## Having fun with a 1931 Dodge

The Dodge Charger is selling well these days, and the Dodge Challenger will soon be resurrected. These cars are designed for having fun. Long before the advent of muscle cars, the Dodge nameplate offered a different kind of fun.

The 1931 Dodge six-cylinder three-window coupe you see here was photographed around the summer of 1944 on the northeast side of Clarence Square near Spadina and King in downtown Toronto.

The young man on the roof is Louis Harris, owner of the car. His friend in the front seat is Jack Morton, who donated the photo. Louis and Jack had a lot of fun with this old Dodge.

After every big rainstorm, they and a couple of friends usually headed down to Unwin Avenue near Cherry Beach to do some "aquaplaning" in the old coupe.

Low-lying parts of Unwin Ave. regularly became flooded to a depth of 18 inches and the Dodge would plough through at full throttle with water blowing right over the fabric roof and onto the movers' blanket protecting the two passengers in the rumble seat who were kneeling on the seat cushions and looking back at the submerged tailpipe blowing water all over behind the car.

The old Dodge usually stalled just after the floor-



boards began floating around inside the passenger compartment. That's when the boys in the rumble seat climbed over the roof onto the front fenders to open the hood and dry off the spark plug wires.

Then they drove out of the water and went at it again and again and again... These fellows knew how to have fun.

The nameplate on Louie's 1931 Dodge, if it had not already fallen off after 13 years on the road, would read "Dodge Brothers."

John and Horace Dodge were born in Michigan in the 1860s, and as they grew up, they quickly learned the machinist trade in their father's shop.

In 1899, they moved to Windsor, Ont. and were soon manufacturing bicycles to cash in on the bicycle boom that began a decade earlier with the invention of the pneumatic tire. They also began to manufacture parts such as axles, crankcases and steering components for some of the early automobile makers, and they quickly earned a reputation

for quality workmanship.

In 1901, they moved to Detroit and were soon building engines exclusively for Henry Ford, who formed his company in 1903.

At first, the engines built by the Dodge brothers were transported to the Ford factory on wagons hauled by teams of horses. By 1914, the Dodge brothers were building cars bearing their name.

Both brothers died in 1920 during the influenza epidemic that swept around the world following the end of World War One. In 1928, Walter P. Chrysler bought the Dodge Company, and Dodge has been part of Chrysler ever since.

Do you have any car stories or photos to share with our readers? Email: [bill@carstory.com](mailto:bill@carstory.com).

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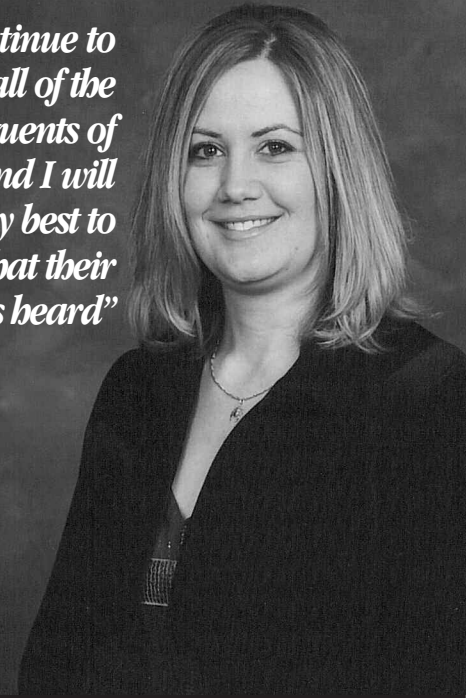


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