

CarStory

with *Bill Sherk*
The Old Car Detective



Bob Chapman's 1931 Chrysler Roadster

Bob Chapman was born in Toronto in 1923. At 17, he was hired as a "ramper" at Ontario Automobile, a large Chrysler-Plymouth dealership at 1001 Bay Street in downtown Toronto. He drove cars up and down the ramps in the multi-storey building.

Soon after starting there, Bob found his dream car: a 1931 Chrysler six-cylinder roadster with running boards, a rumble seat, spoke wheels, fold-down windshield, Cord-like grille, and classic styling that made it look far more



Pictured above, Bob Chapman sits in his '31 Chrysler roadster in 1941.

expensive than the \$200 asking price.

But he couldn't buy it

just yet. The owner had fallen behind in payments and the car had been repos-

sessed. But the car had to be held for 21 days before the dealer could resell it. That way, the owner had a chance to get it back.

Bob was told to drive the car to the terminal warehouse at the foot of York Street on Toronto's waterfront where Ontario Automobile stored its surplus cars and trucks.

Over the next three weeks, Bob drove many cars back and forth between the dealership and the warehouse, and whenever he delivered a car to the warehouse, he hopped into the Chrysler roadster and drove it around inside the building, hoping and praying that the owner would default on his payments.

His prayers were answered. "It was the only car I ever bought on time in my life," recalls Bob. "My father had to sign for me through a finance company. All the other kids were

driving Model As in 1940 and they thought I was crazy to spend \$200 on a car. I was making only ten a week."

To jazz up the car, Bob bought a can of white tire paint at Canadian Tire and brushed on a set of white-walls. The spare tire had to be painted as well because it was fully exposed at the rear. The white soon yellowed and cracked and the tires had to be repainted almost every week. "I should have bought that paint by the gallon."

By 1941 Bob was in the service and fighting the war in Europe. When he returned home, his car and his girl were waiting for him. Bob and Katie drove to New York City on their honeymoon in 1946 in their 1931 Chrysler roadster.

Bob sold the roadster in 1949 for twice what he paid nine years earlier. But he never forgot the car, and

nearly 50 years later found one in Cleveland, Ohio, fully restored. Bob bought it, and he and Katie, now in their 80s, drive around in a car identical to the one they dated in when they were 17.

Last winter their car was proudly displayed at the Canadian International Auto Show at the Metro Convention Centre in downtown Toronto, just a few blocks from where Bob bought his first 1931 Chrysler roadster 66 years earlier.

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Novice A Drs Hager/Kniaziew

The team hosted Tecumseh on Nov. 29 in Essex. Josh Scratch came up with a big stop midway through the first as Tecumseh finally got a shot on net. A closely played first period ended with Tecumseh up 1-0. The Ravens didn't give up and four seconds into a power play in the second period,

Brendan Jones found the back of the Tecumseh net to tie the game at one. This could have easily been a win for Essex as the third period exhibited many scoring opportunities for the home team. This was a well played game ending 1-1.

The team traveled to Fort Erie for a weekend tourna-

ment. On Friday morning they faced the Noble Kings.

Both teams came ready to play but at 4:23 of the first the Noble Kings drew first blood as they skated in to convert on an odd-man rush. Essex showed great pressure in the closing minutes of the first, but with 23 seconds left, the Noble Kings would strike again to go up 2-0. The Ravens were able to kill a penalty in the second but the score remained 2-0. Both teams skated well in the third and with a faceoff deep in the Noble Kings' zone the Essex goalie was pulled for an extra attacker. After a few great scoring chances, the Noble Kings would add

an empty netter for a final score of 3-0.

Friday afternoon the Ravens would face Port Perry. This was the Ravens' best game of the tournament. It would be odd-man rushes that would put Essex down 3-0 after the first period. At 5:00 of the second Carly Davison, Luke Mahon and Jake Watters would break in with Jake throwing a hard backhand just wide of the net. Brady Rickeard, Brendan Jones and Grant Quinlan would follow with lots of pressure around the Port Perry goal. At 2:51 Dylan Dent set up in the corner and took a shot from behind the net, off the goalie, and in, 3-1. At the

start of the third, Brett Schmidt, Dylan and Jared Fuerth looked good with many chances to score but were unable to beat the Port Perry netminder. With only four defensemen dressed for the tournament Nash Prieur, John Chittle, Joshua Amyotte and Jake Maisonneuve played hard to keep the games close. With only 1:19 left in the game, Dylan and Brendan would break into the Port Perry zone with Dylan flipping a pass over to Brendan who scored on a nice shot to pull the team within one. What looked like a game that was heading towards a blowout was now only one goal away from a tie. With

45 seconds left, after playing a strong game, Adam Amicarelli would leave the net for the extra attacker, but this would go down as a 3-2 defeat.

The team awoke early on Saturday and made their way to the rink in Ridgeway where the lines were switched up a bit. After a penalty right out of the gate, Aurora would score at 9:37. After two more Essex penalties, Brett would skate in alone beating the Aurora goalie on the short side. Essex would garner five penalties in this game and go on to lose 3-1. All games in the tournament showcased this team's improving skills and team play.

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