

# Lyle Rosburg's 1951 Chevrolet Styleline Deluxe

The story of this particular 1951 Chevrolet Styleline Deluxe starts in about 1978. I was 10 years old and my mother's relatives, Frank and Hugo Foeller and their sister, Selma, would drive up from Marthasville, Missouri to our farm in Wentzville, Missouri for periodic Sunday dinners.



I had always loved cars, amassing quite a collection of Matchbox, Hot Wheels, and Pocket Cars, that I “drove” daily. I always liked “old cars”.

Frank and Hugo, bachelor brothers, farmed the family farm in Marthasville and, in June 1951, bought a brand new car from Modern Auto across the Missouri River in Washington, Missouri. This was their daily driver, in addition to their 1954 Chevrolet stake-bed farm truck.

I always admired the 1951 with its swooping lines when the day's 1970's cars were square and boxy. Selma would sit in the back seat during the ride and use the rope handle attached to the rear of the front seat.

Many Sunday dinners had been eaten, many spring turkey seasons had passed, and 1987 rolled around. I was a Senior in high school when Frank and Hugo decided to have an auction, sell the farm, and move to a retirement home in Washington. Frank was 84 and Hugo was 82.

My dad (Fritz Rosburg) and I hunted turkey the first Saturday of the 1987 Spring Turkey Season at the Foeller Farm as the Foellers prepared the sale of the farm and started organizing for the auction.

We chatted with the Foellers about our morning hunt and I said that I would really like to buy our their car, but I probably could not afford it if it went to auction. Frank said they would think about and we went our our way.

We returned the next day for the Sunday morning turkey hunt and stopped by the

farmhouse to tell them about what we saw. As we were chatting, Frank said that Hugo and he had talked about it and that they remembered I had always admired their car and they would sell it to me for \$1000. I was very happy.

As the week progressed, I got pretty excited about my impending purchase. Dad and I had already talked about that I was going to spend my money on this old car when I had no intention of driving the 1951 as a daily driver. This was going to be the start of my collection, and was it wise to tie up \$1000 of potential college money for this collection?



Mom and dad understood my passion for cars and, with only 39,000 original miles on the car, dad knew this was an uncommon situation and, hopefully, since it was still being driven regularly, it would not require major repairs, so mom and dad agreed to pay \$500

of the \$1000 price tag as my high school graduation present.

As I drove my “new” car home from Marthasville, grinning ear to ear, not only had Frank and Hugo sold me a great old car, but they gave me the original bill of sale, owners manual, and instruction card that had been attached to the heater controls with little wires.

The bill of sale showed the negotiated price settled at \$1750 and included various options, including the \$31 dealer installed seat covers that worn, but are still on the car to this day. Frank said they stuck with the manual transmission as, “they did not trust that PowerGlide.” Frank also imparted some maintenance wisdom about them changing the oil every 300 miles or so (yes, three hundred). Frank

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<b>OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>GROUP</th> <th>DESCRIPTION</th> <th>PRICE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Factory Options</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dealer Options</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Heater &amp; Def.</td> <td>68.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Radio</td> <td>68.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>seat covers</td> <td>31.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Tire &amp; tube</td> <td>28.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Oil filter</td> <td>13.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Back-up lamps</td> <td>11.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Junction block</td> <td>2.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Tool Kit</td> <td>2.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>226.66</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						GROUP	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	Factory Options			Dealer Options				Heater & Def.	68.15		Radio	68.75		seat covers	31.00		Tire & tube	28.21		Oil filter	13.90		Back-up lamps	11.90		Junction block	2.00		Tool Kit	2.75			226.66	EXTRAS:		226.66	
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said, "it's easier to change the oil than it is to change an engine." Words to live by.

This was a time that only two door classics were cool and every cool car had 1980's Cragger wheels. Can you imagine, an 18 year old kid that wanted a classic, four door, 1951 Chevrolet to preserve and not sup up? Well, imagine it, as that was me.

I went to college and the 1951 held a prime spot covered up in the family barn. I washed and waxed it frequently and cruised a few miles.

After college, I moved to Jefferson City, Missouri and the car followed. It was part of my collection.

After a few years, I got married and the basement garage soon became a bedroom and the 1951 went to storage across town. Out of sight, out of mind, except for the monthly storage payment. I did a few things to the car and kept the tires inflated, but a car that sits tends to decline rapidly.

The Spring of 2016 brought a job change and some time off before the new job started, so a fellow Mid Missouri Old Car Club member, Billy Bonnot, suggested we get the 1951 started. Billy's first car, at age 15, was a 1953 Chevrolet, so he had old Chevy experience and his years of being a US Army mechanic in Vietnam and working for the Missouri Department of Transportation until his retirement, came in handy for this CPA with some, but not enough, mechanical experience.

I had removed the carburetor a few years prior, but I was not confident enough to complete all of the carburetor rebuild. That was the first phase of the project and it started on Billy's basement workbench.

After that, we reinstalled the carburetor at the storage shed and got the car started, but not running well. If it ran, it needed to stop, so we started with the brakes. New lines, master cylinder, and wheel cylinder kits from National Chevy Association was the next project. After fighting with the frozen brake adjuster on the only wheel drum that was missing that little rubber plug, the brakes were completed. That frozen adjuster later became part of an appreciation award that I presented to Billy at one of our Mid Missouri Old Car Club meetings.

New points, condenser, rotor, and rotor cap were next. New water pump, with a slight delay to return the pump for one with the correct pulley, new antifreeze, and things kept improving.

A few months had passed since we did the carburetor rebuild and it was running, with a lot of manual help, but never great. As the sediment bulb filled with rust, we could see

the old gas tank was showing its age. I drained, flushed, and added some clean fuel.

We decided to drive it to my house as our confidence in our mechanical abilities increased.

After about two miles, our confidence was shaken as I coasted to the shoulder with Billy pulling in behind. Billy's trailer came to the rescue and we did get the car to my house that night, just not under its own power.

The sediment bulb was not getting any clearer and a new National Chevy Association gas tank was ordered.

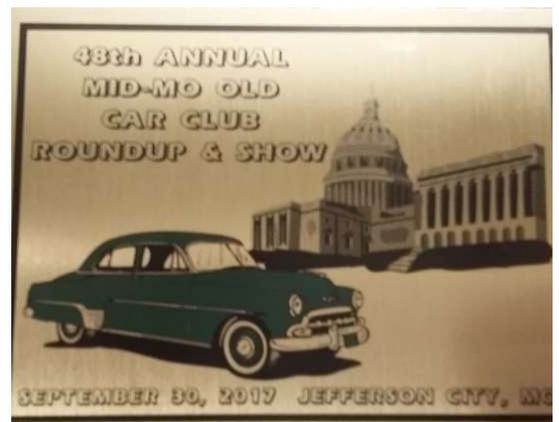
Billy decided a small fuel cell he had, would temporarily provide some clean petrol while we continued our fine tuning. After the fuel cell installation, we had clean gas, but not a great running engine.

I installed new plugs and did a crappy job of checking the gap. Billy proved my incompetence by checking the gaps himself, along with the compression. Who knows when I dropped plug number three and made the gap 0", but the spark plug gap evidence was clear, and that problem was corrected. Figuring I had further lost my mind, I double checked the firing order and lo and behold, two of the plug wires were switched. I will blame it on my installation of new plugs about five years ago, but it could have been earlier in the week. Anyway, oddly enough, running on six cylinders works much better than four.

After some timing adjustments, success!

While the fuel tank was back ordered (which National Chevy Association graciously upgraded to a stainless steel tank), I kept the little fuel cell topped off.

Our Mid Missouri Old Car Club's annual show is the last weekend on September, held in conjunction with the Jefferson City Octoberfest. As part of the promotion of that event, the Club gets the local newspaper to run a feature about a club member and car and promote the car show.



Billy and I had talked to each other a lot about cars and such during our evening and weekend work on the 1951 and Billy liked story about the acquisition of the car. Billy

suggested the 1951 be the featured car and the Club agreed. On September 22, 2016, the 1951 Chevrolet, now with 43,000 original miles, took a prominent place within the Jefferson City News Tribune.



Since then, the 1951 made its appearance at that car show, has been to many cruise nights at the local mall, and driven to several Club events. Times have changed and now the old four door finally gets the respect it has earned with lots of thumbs up and many positive comments.

It has been even more fun today than it was in 1987 and some day, I might be driving a 100 year old car.

