

A Story of my 1955 Pontiac Convertibles *By Robert Lindberg*



This story began in 1957. I wanted a new car and tried to buy a white 1957 Chevrolet convertible. When I couldn't qualify for a new car loan, I went down the street and bought a 1955 Pontiac Convertible. I owned that car for a number of years and had a lot of fun driving it. I made 2 trips back home to Minnesota in it from Calif.

Then, in 1981, I spotted a 1955 Pontiac Convertible for sale in the San Francisco Chronicle. *Wow!* Nostalgia set in.

It turned out the seller had made a deal with his wife. They were moving and *he* had too many cars. The deal she made was he'd advertise it for 3 days and *IF* no one bought it he could keep it.

The ad ran on a Mon., Tue., & Wed; when I phoned on Wednesday, his wife answered and told me the car hadn't been sold yet. "I'll be right over," I said, ignoring the fact that they lived 40 miles away. The lady met me at the door and told me that I was the only person who had phoned about the convertible.

It was easy to understand that her husband was not a happy camper! He had owned the Pontiac for only 3 weeks and had just got it running. Apparently, the car had been parked for 9 years; with its top rotted out, it appeared to be in rough shape. Still, the price was right.

I ignored the cold evening air and drove the car home that evening. The friend who followed me home that night said I wore an ear-to-ear grin over the entire 40-mile drive in spite of the frigid temperature.

I didn't have a place to work on the car, but a friend had just started an automobile repair and painting business. He agreed to repair and paint the convertible for a good "package" price if I would let him use the car in his advertising.

The folks I'd bought the car from hadn't done any transfer of paper work, so the title contained the previous owner's name. After the repairs were complete (not a frame off), I went to the former owner's address only to find she had moved. Luckily, she still owned the house. A next door neighbor suggested that I leave a note in the mail box and the renter would forward it with his rent check.

All I had for stationery was a paper napkin, but I wrote that the old Pontiac looked like new and asked if they would like to see it. A couple of years passed and I had forgotten all about that note until one day I got a nice letter from the daughter of the old owner. My "napkin" note had been forwarded by the renter to the landlord.



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The daughter (Deanna) said her mother, the landlord, resided in Texas and, since Deanna still lived in Sacramento, her mother had forwarded (finally) the note to her.

When I explained to Deanna that I would drive the car to a show in Stockton in a couple of weeks, she decided to come for a look. One look at the car and she started to cry. She had driven it to her high school prom and used it to commute to junior college. After a nice visit and a lot of picture taking we parted company. That was in 1986.

--Fast foreword to Aug 1st 2009--

I applied and was accepted as a participant in the 1st Calif. Automobile Museum (former Towe Museum) show and cruise. 3 days before I was to depart my home near Grants Pass, OR I wondered if Deanna was still located in Sacramento.

I sorted through a huge stack of ancient paperwork (I save way to much stuff!!) and found her number. I phoned to explain that I was taking the Pontiac convertible to a show in Sacramento and asked if she wanted to come and see the old "Poncho." She said "yes," and we set up a meeting place.

My daughter also lives in Sacramento; when she and my granddaughter learned about my car being in the show, they decided to attend the show and ride along on the cruise.

At the show while I was perusing and photographing cars, my daughter and granddaughter waited by the convertible. I found out later that Deanna had stopped at the car and asked where the Pontiac's owner might be found. That's when Deanna and my daughter looked at each other and asked each other, "What are you doing here?"

The tears really started to flowing then and were still going when I got back to the car. It turned out that Deanna was the receptionist for the pediatrician who had cared for my grandchildren over the past 20 years.

Deanna had saved the napkin I had used for that long ago note to her landlord mother as well as the letter I had sent to her. She also shared a bunch of old pictures with us and gave me a letter to explain how her family happened to buy the 1955 Pontiac on Thanksgiving Day, 1954, in Eureka, CA. She also included a brief history about the car from that time on until it ended up belonging to the folks I bought it from.

