

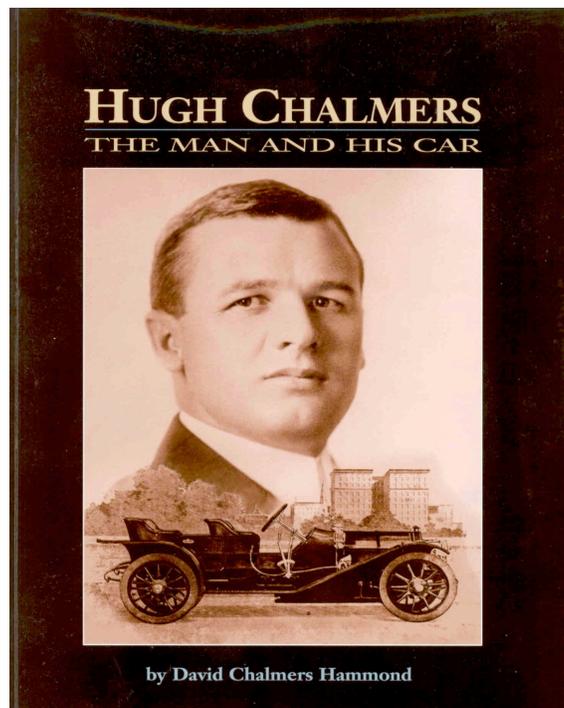


CHALMERS AUTOMOBILE REGISTRY

April 2006 Volume 11 Issue 2

Published by the Chalmers Automobile Registry, Copyright 2006

“Hugh Chalmers: The Man and His Car”



The story of Hugh Chalmers is a unique American success story. Rising from an office boy at National Cash Register to founding the Chalmers Motor Company, Hugh Chalmers was a self-made man who personified the can-do spirit of early 20th century American manufacturing.

“Hugh Chalmers: The Man and His Car” chronicles the life of Hugh Chalmers and the history of the Chalmers Motor Company as told by his grandson, David Chalmers Hammond. A product of years of research and a lifetime of stories, this book is part biography and part technical manual. It will be enjoyed by history buffs and car enthusiasts alike.

David S. Hammond (Dave’s son)

Hi To All

As you saw on page one Dave's book is now available. Dave, Ruth, Mike and family put a lot of time in putting the book together. It has 152 pages of valuable Chalmers information. See page eight for information on how you can buy your very own copy.

Dues are still due. Thanks to all that paid and sent extra. Dues for everyone are \$5.00 for 2006, please make the check out to "Joe Alackness", the bank does not like cashing checks made out to Chalmers Registry. Mail dues to 908 2nd Ave, Royersford, Pa. 19468.

Just a reminder about the web site www.chalmersregistry.com I still need someone to take charge of the site. If you would like take over the web site contact me at Chalmersregistry@aol.com We have a brand new copy of Microsoft FrontPage to use.

On the front page of our web site is a link to the AACA Forum, a good way to ask a question or just post something. Post it on the Chalmers Registry thread; scroll down near the bottom to Other Automobiles and Clubs; then Chalmers Registry. I need good e-mail addresses. Because of the web site I have people contacting me with things for sale or with a question which can not wait for the next newsletter. I can do a mass e-mail with whatever to everyone.

This newsletter includes a new membership list. Remember the list is intended for the private use of Chalmers Automobile Registry members and is not to be used for commercial use. We also need to have correct information, check the Membership List to see if your information is correct.

New members are Marc Nelson from Brownsville, Oregon. Marc is Tommy Nelson's (#4) son. Brian Harlamoff Santa Cruz, California has a 1911 Model 30 Touring.

We are working on a Chalmers Meet and maybe a tour in California and the Detroit Area for summer of 2007. If you have a suggestion please contact me.

The story on the next page is amazing and has to be a world record for a restoration. Congratulations to Ted Saugstad on your AACA Senior and a great looking AUTOMOBILE.

Were are you going and where will I be?

If you are going to be at a car show or on a tour this summer let us know were you will be. I will be in Georgia, South Carolina in mid July and in Meredith, New Hampshire September 10-14th 2006 on AACA Reliability Tour. I plan on trying to meet some members that live in those areas.

Does anyone have Hershey Spaces with room to host a 2006 Chalmers get together?

THE CHALMERS RESTORATION

In the mid 1950s my good friend, Robert Erickson, owned and partially restored several model A Ford cars. I helped him attach new tops, fabricate wooden parts and advise him on the restoration of sheet metal parts. We spent many weekends scouring the rural area of Vernon County, Wisconsin for old cars (preferably Model A Fords) and old car parts. He urged me many times to take up the hobby. Having attained some skill in woodworking and sheet metal fabrication where I was employed he was certain that I would enjoy the challenge of restoring and driving antique automobiles.

I resisted for some time. Partially because of the lack of funds for the purpose, but also because the old Fords just didn't excite me. However, on this one occasion he had heard of two old cars that were found on a farm near the Cashton, Wisconsin area and that they were for sale. So, off we went on the search.

We located the farm and were given directions through their barnyard and into a cow pasture about a quarter mile away. There, indeed, were the two autos. One was an old Model T Ford. It was almost totally decayed with the wood frame completely rotted away and the metal body on the ground filled with the remains of the seats, upholstery and top. The other was more interesting. While the top supports (bows) were up and in position the top was no longer there. The seats, likewise, no longer had any leather or fabric left. The seat springs showed bare and rusted and the touring body was a quarter full of rotten wood and tree leaves. The body still held its shape and when we turned the crank which was inserted in the front of the engine it turned freely. The wheels were buried hub deep in dirt and the rims and tires were gone. But, this was "interesting".

The car was identified as a Chalmers model 35C. The present owners, who were the survivors of the old farmer that had owned it, believed it to be a 1919 model year. Because so many old car fanciers had already found their way to the farm for a look at the remains they felt that the only fair way to dispose of these hulks was to ask for sealed bids from any interested parties. I was fascinated with the idea of taking this old car apart and putting it back together. So, after some consultation with Robert, I put in a bid of \$40.00 which we surmised we could get from a junk yard for metal scrap if I failed to follow through on a restoration. About a week or so after submitting the bid I received a letter accepting the bid and the car would be mine as soon as I could return with the money and carry off the car. We later learned that no else was dumb enough to bid on the car at all.

A week or so later I borrowed a suitable auto trailer, attached a bumper hitch to my car and, again with the help of my friend Robert, we returned to the farm. Through the barnyard and into the pasture. Robert was able to persuade the farmer to let him drive their John Deere tractor up to the car so that we could pull it free and push it onto the trailer. Having done so and fastened it carefully, down from the pasture we came and into the rain slicked barnyard. Another assist from the tractor and we were finally on the road home.

From the fall of 1959 to the spring of 1962 I completely disassembled the car. The only part not removed from the chassis was the engine block. The entire wood frame from about 3 inches up from the steel frame was total "mush" but, the rest was at least

suitable for pattern work. The sheet metal was all there even though it was evident that some of it would have to be refabricated.

The engine was in remarkable shape internally having been preserved by the high wax content motor oil in use at the time. Bearing surfaces were bright and shiny. I felt that the piston pins were a mite loose so I took them to Lacrosse Auto Supply that provided machine shop service and we found replacement pins intended for a Plymouth to insert. The connecting rod and main bearings needed a little adjustment with shims and it was then reassembled.

The gear box and clutch assembly needed only a cleanup and reassembly. The starter gear and front bearing needed some machine work that another machinist friend provided. The universal joints, however, were another story. They were badly worn and almost falling apart. I was referred to a retired machinist who was glad to rebuild them expertly. In the differential I found that one of the roller bearings was chipped, but the auto supply house quickly found replacement.

Robert Erickson and I made a trip to a man near New Lisbon Wisconsin who was reported to have some old car parts. We located him on a small farm that he devoted exclusively to his hobby. In addition to several antique cars he had a barn full of parts. It seemed that every year he would get in his truck and drive into Minnesota, the Dakotas and all over and buy whole truckloads of "junk". The result was a building unimaginably full of old car parts. From him I purchased three 32 x 4 wooden spoke wheels, a wooden steering wheel, 6 old 32 x 4 tires, 6 32 x 4 demountable rims and some other small parts.

The Tool Maker at the company where I worked was recruited to fit the original wheel hubs to the replacement wheels. The brake drums were reground by the Auto Supply store to an almost smooth finish again. My retired machinist fabricated a new spring shackle bolt that was badly worn. I purchased new tubes and flaps for the tires, mounted them on the rims and reassembled every thing else to the wire brushed and repainted frame.

Not long after this my friend, Norman Kohlmeyer, and I spent a Saturday afternoon tinkering until at last the old motor turned over and started for the first time since sometime in the 1930s. I attached a wooden stool to the frame and we rode around the neighborhood many times just for fun after that.

From the spring of 1962 until we moved from the different home in February of 1965 I was able to construct the wooden body frame from seasoned white oak donated by my wife's Father. With help from the Sheet metal Foreman at work we made new splash pans, patches to other metal parts and some other small parts. I located a replacement left rear fender through Hemmings Motor News from a source in Golden Colorado. I mounted this abbreviated body on the chassis. All work stopped on the car at this point and did not resume until about 1974. At that time I began to construct the wood frames for the doors and attempted to add the sheet metal to them. Work stopped again in January of 1976 when I moved to Pennsylvania. The Chalmers and all the parts went with me. Without a garage and workshop facility, however, nothing major happened. I was only able to take many of the small parts and prime and finish paint them in anticipation of a future final assembly.

In the meantime, after several interim moves I ended up in the Atlanta, Georgia area and the small suburb of Woodstock. The main chassis, body and all the parts remained

in storage in Gettysburg, PA until 1990 when I was able to arrange to pick up the car and all the parts and bring it to Georgia.

As I return to work on the Chalmers' door assemblies I realize that something is not correct about the body alignment. I remove the body from the chassis and it is evident that the entire body is skewed. I remove the sheet metal from the frame, disassemble the frame as necessary and refabricate the incorrect wooden parts. With the frame now corrected and complete I begin to replace the sheet metal. It was now early 1993.

As each sheet metal part is filled, sanded and primed I assemble it to the chassis. This allows me to be sure each part fits properly to the whole and that the fenders can be attached. I am now sure that the body is as straight and aligned correctly on the chassis as I can make it.

When this is accomplished I now construct the door frames to fit the opening one by one. As each frame is completed I attach the metal, hinges and latch assembly and put it in place. It now begins to resemble the car it as it was originally made. This is November 23, 1997.

The flexible metal conduits for the wiring are finished and placed as are the vacuum and gasoline lines. All the body parts have now been installed and checked for fit. I have fabricated necessary replacement parts for the windshield frame. All molded rubber parts have been recreated and fitted in place. It is now February 1998.

I now completely disassemble the body from the chassis so as to clean and repaint it and the motor and drive train components. This will involve cleaning out the gas tank, repainting the wheels and filling a lot of places on the frame not done during the early restoration process. While I do remove the cylinder head, oil pan and timing chain cover I leave the pistons and crankshaft in place. Valves need to be removed and reground as some have rusted.

August 10, 1999. The chassis has been completed. Rust pits filled, repainted and reassembled with new tires in place.

August 28, 1999. A temporary dash board arrangement with oil gauge, ammeter, and vacuum fuel pump is attached. A new battery is hooked up and the engine is started. A lawn chair completes the rig and we go down the driveway for the first test drive since 1962.

I was now ready to find a shop or individual that would be willing and able to fine tune the body work and paint all of the body parts in a disassembled condition. In addition we had to select the appropriate color.

The National Fall Meet of the Antique Automobile Club of America, Eastern Division, is held yearly in Hershey, Pennsylvania. For the first time, ever, my wife and I drive to Hershey to attend. For two days we walk the flea market area and still do not cover it all. Still missing for the final assembly were some small parts and a rear window for the top. I found a suitable beveled plate glass with nickel plated frame as well as a few other parts that were needed.

I wanted to find some examples of cars of the teens or 20s with a paint job similar to what I believed was the same as the original. I found a car at the meet of the same approximate vintage as the Chalmers with a color very similar to what I believed to be the original color on the car. Vestiges of a blue were found on parts of the Chalmers that had been hidden from the weather. Also, the original sales literature and owner's manual

referred to a "Chalmers Blue" as a color option. Further, an original advertisement from the National Geographic for 1920 shows a Chalmers in blue.

We visited the national headquarters building of the AACA during the trip to research the records of their library for all available material on the car. I double checked their records to determine exactly when the car was manufactured and discovered that according to the serial number it was made in 1920, not 1919 as previously thought.

By late January of 2000 I located an auto restoration shop near Jasper, Georgia about 40 miles North of Woodstock. We visited his shop one day and found a transplanted New Jerseyite running a well equipped one-man shop that included a professional type paint facility. After explaining my situation, he was persuaded to tackle the job even though he had reservations about doing individual pieces instead a whole assembled car. So, on February 18 & 19, with help of neighbor and a professional towing service to carry the main body, all the parts were delivered to him.

By late July, 2000, all the parts were painted and back in the basement of our new home purchased in February. Assembly starts. All of the bright work (nickel plated) needed to be done as assembly progressed. Except for the headlight rims this was accomplished with the use of material and equipment purchased by me for the purpose.

August 2000. Body, fenders, radiator, and splash pans in place. The windshield is mounted and the running boards are constructed and attached. The interior floor boards are crafted and inserted. Work begins on the wiring harness. August 20, 2000. Wiring complete. Hood fitted. Instruments installed. October 11, 2000. Assembly is complete. The engine is ready to be started again, so I drive it out of the garage to the driveway. After a little tune-up we can't resist driving around the neighborhood on a test drive.

The car was now ready for the final touch. I began a search for a shop to do the interior upholstery, top boot, top and side curtains. Not wanting to transport the car a long distance to have this done I started with the local Yellow Pages and saw an advertisement for a B K & D Auto Upholstery located near the Dobbins Air Reserve Base by Marietta just a few miles away. After visiting with Mr. Bob Stewart, the owner, I felt that he was up to the job if he was willing. While cars like the Chalmers certainly were not usually worked on here his experience included work early in his career at an auto museum in New York and on cars of this vintage. With some reservations but with high hopes I started the car and DROVE it to his shop about the first week in February, 2001.

I believed the project would take about 3 months or, at the most, 6 months. Such was not the case as you will soon note. At long last, on July 10, 2002, after almost a year and a half the interior and top were finished. Still to be done were the side curtains and the top boot, but in order to display the car for friends and family we brought it home. I had hoped to drive it from the shop as I had driven it there, but due to my not having properly drained the fuel system prior to leaving it I only got a few blocks before it stalled. No amount of effort could restart it. I am now stalled in the turn lane of one of the busiest roads in the area with an intimidating, but understanding and friendly Cobb County police officer behind me. With his help a tow truck was summoned and we were shortly safely home.

The Chalmers was again delivered to the upholstery shop to complete the side curtains, top boot and the robe rail on September 4, 2002.

On December 18, 2002 the Chalmers is complete. From August 1959 to December 2002. Forty-three years to restore. It was only 39 years old when I dragged it from oblivion. It had only been driven 10 years. The last license plate (still on the car) was 1930. The odometer showed 9842 miles or about a thousand miles a year. Probably about right for a farmer only 5 miles from the nearest community.

With the encouragement of Park Waldrop and Harlan Dahl, both of whom are AACA members and meet judges, I registered the car to show at the AACA Southeastern Division National Meet at Greenville, South Carolina. On April 10, 2003 we loaded the Chalmers onto Park's closed trailer pulled by his powerful pickup and headed for Greenville.

The car is judged to be worthy of a First Junior award and gets a trophy and medallion to attach to the car. With the First Junior award in place the car is now eligible for the Senior trophy. With the help, again, of Park Waldrop and Harlan Dahl we travel to Tallahassee, Florida for the Southeastern Fall AACA meet held in November of 2003.

Good news again! The car receives the Senior award.

When I first began the project I had only intended to one day drive it to our local old car club and to enjoy showing it off at the many local parades. I never hoped that it would receive awards for its restoration. The lesson to be learned, I guess, is just to do the best you can one piece at a time and who knows what might happen.



Ted Saugstad #76 with his 1920 Model

Classified

The Chalmers Automobile Registry Classified listing is intended as a service for members to advertise Chalmers cars and parts that are for sale and /or wanted. Non members contact Registry for rates. Listing will be for 6 months and can be extended by contacting the Registry. Please contact the Registry regarding items that should no longer be listed. ChalmersRegistry@aol.com or Joe Alackness 908 2nd Ave Royersford, Pa. 19468

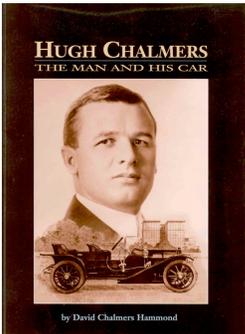
For Sale



For Sale

White Chalmers Golf Shirts, Stedman by Hanes with Chalmers Emblem on pocket.

Sizes XLarge (46-48), Large (42-44). \$20 includes shipping in US. Make check payable to Joe Alackness and mail to Joe Alackness 908 2nd Ave. Royersford, Pa 19468



“Hugh Chalmers: The Man and His Car” the book by Dave Hammond \$25 plus \$7.00 Priority Mail or \$3.50 Media Mail shipping and handling. Make check payable to Ruth Hammond and mail to 110 Sourwood Dr. Hatboro, Pa 19040

Wanted

Wanted Windshield assembly for 1920/1921 Touring Bob Du Bois #9



This little spinner top is an advertisement for the Chalmers six, Snyder's Garage