

a Tale of Two Cars



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NOTE TO THE READER

Special thanks to Mr. Buddy Atkins Without his help and caring neither the '57 Chevrolet or the '65 Chevelle would have had the experiences described in this book.

An unfamiliar reader may have difficulty sorting out the people in this book. No effort was made to identify these people because the main subject of the book is the two cars. The people are incidental.

L.M.

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INTRODUCTION: The Beginning

The automobile has become an essential part of everyday life. In America this involvement has developed to a degree not equalled anywhere in the world. The automobile (or rather, car, in more colloquial language) has also become an extension of individual personality. In some instances, it is a prominent factor in a person's life style.

High performance cars present an image of action and excitement. The term, high performance car, in this book does not refer to a car which is modified for racing. It denotes a car which is equipped exactly or almost exactly the way it was when it left the factory. A high performance car with loud mufflers or a non-stock paint scheme has lost a lot of its purity and class.

The appeal of such cars cannot be described easily. It is a combination of sleek beauty and awesome power. In 1962, no car could match the Impala with the 409 cu in/409 horsepower engine and a four speed for these qualities. The car could be driven docilely to work or cruising at night. If called upon, the engine could propel the car from a standing start to over 100 miles per hour in less than 14 seconds. To someone not accustomed to such power, the acceleration was almost painful as it pressed you back in the seat. Once experienced, however, the feeling of brute power and torque is addictive. Such power should not be used recklessly so as to potentially harm others.

This book is a description of the experiences concerning two cars; a '57 Chevrolet BelAir (283 cu in/220 horsepower engine) and '65 Chevelle (327 cu in/350 horsepower engine). The experiences were often exciting, sometimes discouraging, but always interesting. These events are not portrayed as being especially remarkable or glorifying. Certainly, other cars have led more notable lives. The purpose of this book is to prevent the history of these two from being completely forgotten. Their successes and failures deserve more than that.

First, however, I am going to describe how my interest in cars began because I was involved in the experiences of the two cars. I was child of middle class parents who gave me the desire to read and learn. My uncle was a civil engineer who cultivated my interest in astronomy, space travel, and physics. At 18 years of age I knew essentially nothing about cars. I did not know where the carburetor was located or other components either, and I learned to drive a car with an automatic transmission when I was 18. I went to Mississippi State University for the first time in August 1961 and was allowed to use a '55 Ford. At college I came in contact with people who were interested in cars. The first car to really take my heart was a red '61 Chevrolet convertible. The car was owned by a student from Arlington, Virginia. It was equipped with a 348 (maybe an early 409), three two barrel carburetors four speed, and a 4.11 read end. The car was showroom perfect with a white top. I rode in it once. I was not expecting the acceleration as he (slowly at first, then more powerfully) accelerated through the gears. The acceleration forced me back in the seat so much that movement was difficult. I had never experienced anything like that. From that point my interest grew. I began reading high-performance car magazines and dreaming.

Introduction

I returned from Mississippi State University in May 1962. My father gave me a job as a ticket clerk at the Continental Trailways Bus Station and I helped at other jobs when needed. I did not earn enough money to buy anything, but I was still interested in high-performance cars. Buddy's Frisby's '62 red Chevrolet, SS convertible with a 409 and 4 speed seemed almost too fantastic for me to ever own. Jimmy Dale Walker's coupe (about a 1929 Ford) with a 327, 6-two barrel carburetors, roller cam, etc., was something day dreams were made of. These cars were more than just machines made of metal, rubber, and glass. The only word which describes this is synergistic which something that is greater than the sum of its parts. These cars were alive with their own personality. One very important point is that no one owned one of these cars, the car owned that person. Its personality was greater than the owners'. To someone unfamiliar with this, it may be difficult to understand or believe. Probably, the best phrase which describes this best is "bigger than life". I began saving money slowly. I did not make much money, but I didn't care how long it would take. I saved nickels and dimes. On many days I would not buy a Coke or anything because I could not spend anything. I would even check the change slots in vending machines. I was determined to have a car that fitted my dreams.

These encounters with sleek, beautiful cars (Chevrolets only) with awesome, brute horsepower changed the direction of my life. My engineering background allowed me to understand and appreciate the working principles of these cars.

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Figure 1: '57 Chevrolet

This picture was made a few days after the car was purchased. The hubcaps were removed and rims painted black.

CHAPTER ONE: The '57 Chevrolet

About April 1964, I went to the VW dealer in El Dorado with \$800 cash to look at two cars that they had just gotten in. One was a 1957 Chevy 283 (power pack), 3 speed transmission, 2 door hardtop, black with a white top; the other a 1962 409 2 door hardtop, 409 hp, 2 fours, and a 4 speed. The salesman was Miller (of Miller's Cleaners). For the '62 maybe \$1300 and for the '57, \$775, so I bought the '57, but I wanted the 409. A woman school teacher had owned the '57 (3.70 rear end, single track), but I doubted that story, though (later I found out it was true). For a while I didn't know how to drive the standard transmission very well, but I gradually got better (Figures 1 and 2). Not long after I got the car I went to NAD (Naval Ammunition Depot) and ran another '57-283 and beat him about three car lengths. I also ran Sonny Young in a 1956 Mercury (312+, cam, 4.10 gears). The '57 won by about a length.

The NAD drag strip was a two lane road on a military storage reservation. The road was located about 18 miles east of Camden, Arkansas on Highway 274, 7 miles northwest of Hampton, or 40 miles north of El Dorado (whichever reference point is desired). This was not an organized or officially operated drag strip. The people there behaved reasonably well and trouble rarely occurred. The police tolerated this activity in the past, but since 1977 they have ticketed anyone involved in such activity. The road was rarely used by people for normal driving. Every Sunday afternoon the place was a center of activity. Figure 3 shows the surrounding area at the drag strip. This figure is provided at the beginning because many of the events described in this book occurred here.



Figure 2: '57 Chevrolet Interior
The interior was in excellent condition.

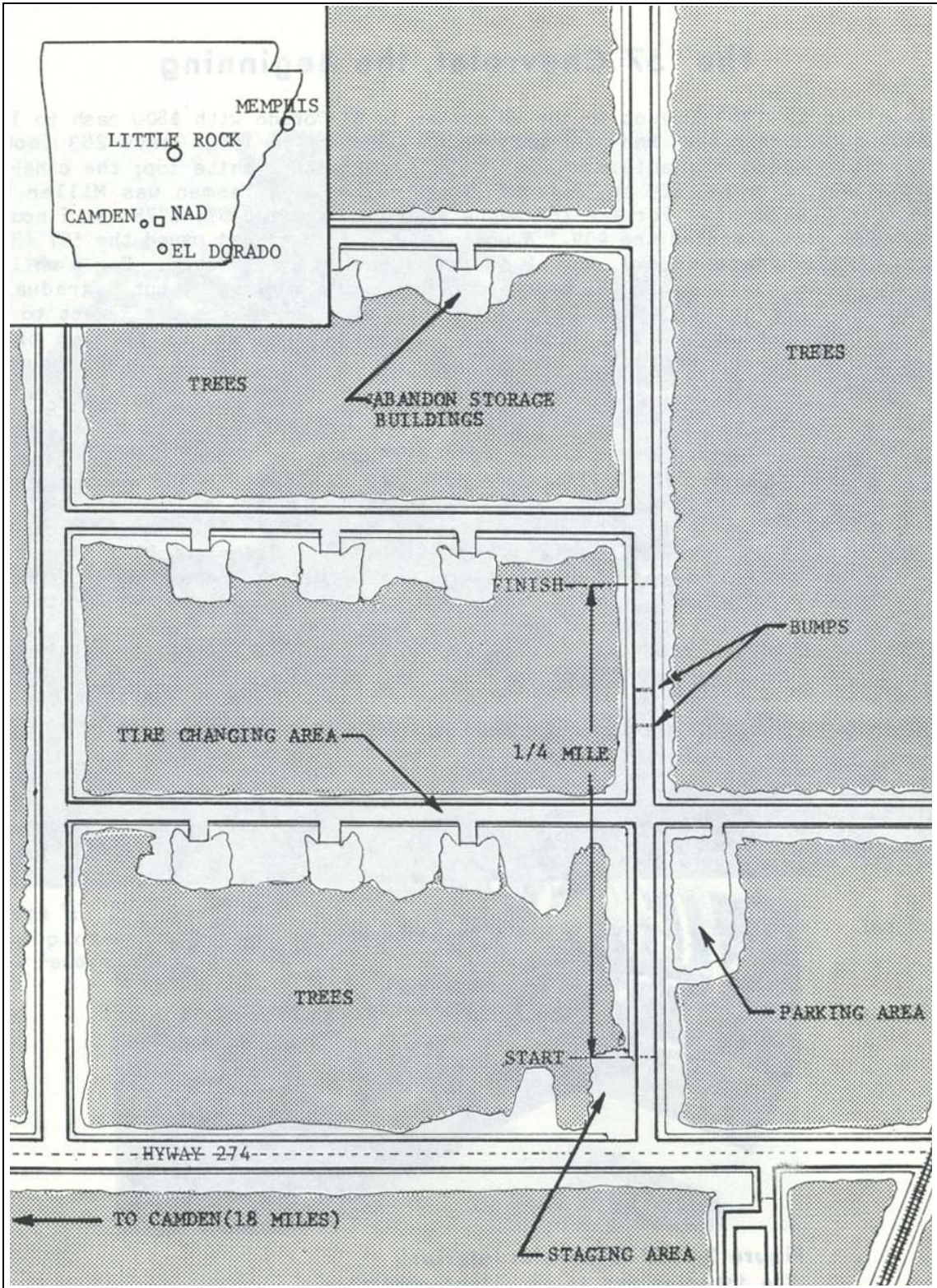


Figure 3: NAD (Naval Ammunition Depot) Area Map

Next, I bought a Duntov cam, a Hurst gear shifter, and got a valve job. I didn't get the intake manifold back on very well because it had an oil leak at the back of the engine. One night, three weeks later, I was driving on the bypass and the engine began knocking. I checked the oil. It had only half a quart.

The engine trouble occurred about May or June. I needed a new engine, but I didn't want a stock, low horsepower engine. The part of the engine I really needed was the short block, so I set my goal for a 327 cu in/365 hp Corvette model. I could use my heads and the rest of my old parts. It would still be considerably more powerful even though it didn't have the rest of the 365 hp engine parts.

I talked to Jimmy Dale Walker (from Urbana) about a short block. He said he could get one for about \$280. I introduced him to my father who agreed to buy the short block. I was happy! My father, however, thought the short block was just an ordinary stock model.

After we had bought the short block, I convinced my father to buy the 365 hp heads. My father did not know the heads were special racing heads. This was beyond my all hopes, so now I got about \$130 together and bought the 365 hp aluminum intake and Holley carburetor. Now I had a complete 327 cu in /365 hp engine, new!

The engine was put in the car at Theo Sawyer's Garage. My father wanted a garage to do it, and not me. Theo didn't like me, the car, or anything related. He thought I was a spoiled kid. He soon discovered what kind of engine it was. The engine was a real status symbol. No one had a stock 327 cu in/365 hp Corvette engine anywhere around. Every day crowds would go to the garage and look at the parts (very exotic) and also to see how the engine was going together. Theo didn't like that. He finally got it running. The engine idled like the racing engine that it was. My dad was really upset about all that money for a racing engine.

The day I went to the garage to get the car, Sawyer asked me if I was going to do anything else to the engine. I said that I was going to get a set of headers for it. He told me (later, my dad) that the car was deadly. The way the engine ran he knew it would go 150 miles per hour. The police even heard about the '57 Chevy. It changed from just a mildly running car to a super star. I ran it once at NAD but the bugs weren't out of yet and it was beaten by a white 1964, 327 cu in/250 hp Chevelle.

August (1964) came and I left for Mississippi State University (MSU). Between Greenville and Greenwood, Mississippi, I came up (at 9:00 PM) behind two guys in a '58 Chevy. This is a long, flat straight highway. I was doing 60 mph and they, about 55. I passed them slowly and was going on. I guess they saw the '57 with black rims and thought, here is a kid with a 283 compared to their 348. The '57 looked completely stock (stock mufflers) except for the black rims. They flew back around me and slowed down to 55. I passed them again. All this time, my speed had not changed from 60 and I was driving smoothly. They came around again, they were going 80 by the time got near my rear bumper and that is when I called on most of those 365 horses. They managed to get even with me before the '57 really started to pull and their headlights slowly grew dim as the speedometer swung past 125. After a little way, I slowed down to 90 and held it for about 10 miles. Those guys were flashing their lights for me to stop as they vanished from sight. I guess they were wondering about a stock looking '57-283? They disappeared, however.

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Figure 4 shows the surrounding area. Starkville is the left and Columbus is on the right. Artesia was where my two friends, Russell Pool and Smith Wilburn, lived (Figure 5). Russell was a large, big mouth but when it got down to it, chicken; Smith was a studious type, but with Russell, he was a little devil. They complimented each other. When I got into MSU and settled, I cruised down to Artesia to visit. They checked over my car and Russell, who was in the 12th grade (six years younger than I), made plans to fool guys around there with the '57-283. The engine was painted blue, yes, Ford blue, and had old valve covers. The air cleaner was so big you had to look under it to see the carburetor. The only thing that looked suspicious were the headers which were rusty brown and didn't look too ominous plus a 3 speed gear shifter. A 265 with a cam.



Figure 5: Russell Poole and Smith Wilburn

Russell and Smith are shown here on their only visit to El Dorado after I returned to Arkansas in 1965. They came in late April 1965 and stayed the weekend at the Garrett Hotel (no longer in existence). The '55 Chevrolet belonged to Russell. His father bought it and he probably had it a little over a year before he totaled it.

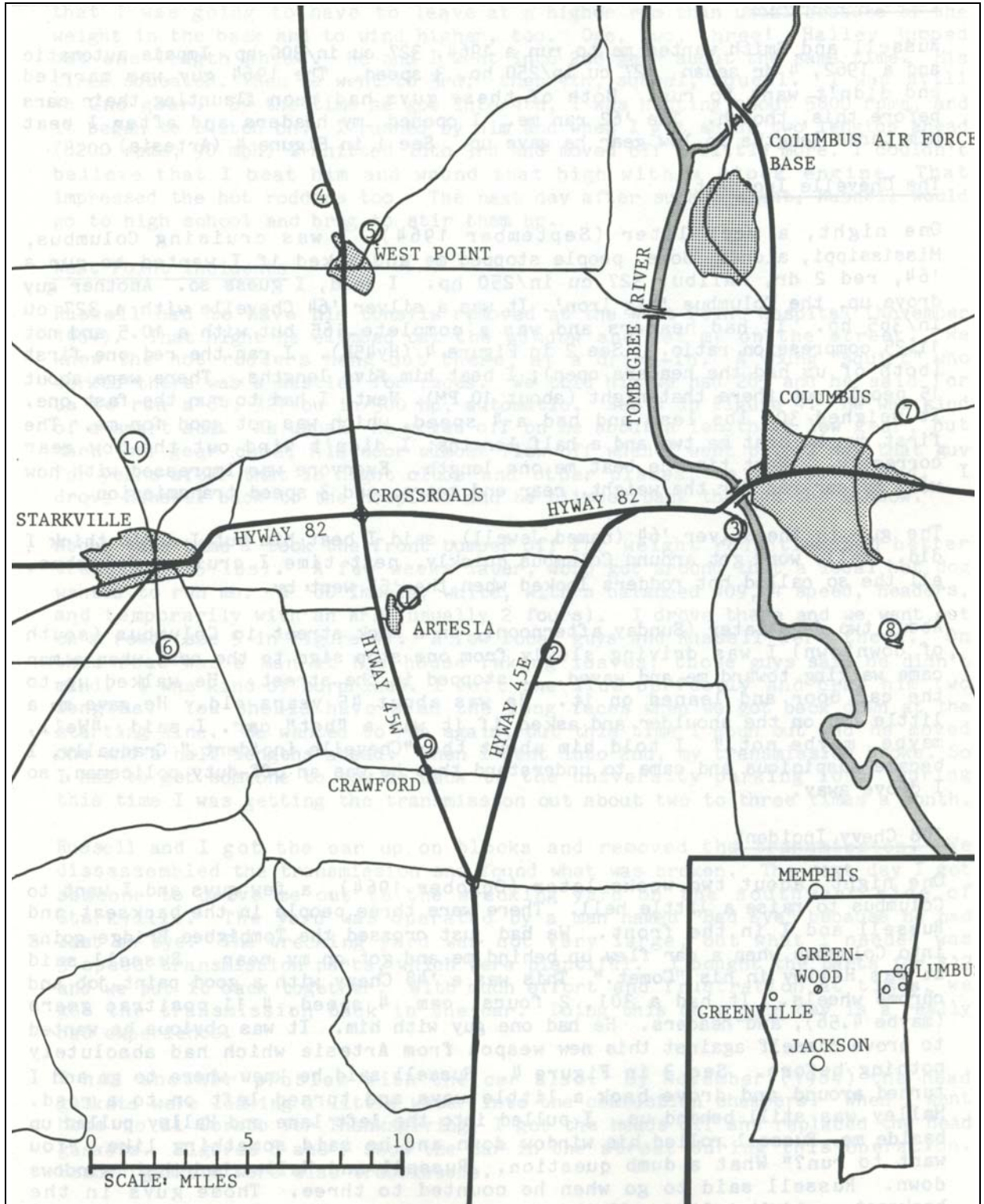


Figure 4: Starkville-Columbus, Mississippi Area Map
The map shows the theater of operations for the area.
The numbered locations are referred in the text.

First Encounters

Russell and Smith wanted me to run a 1964, 327 cu in/300 hp, Impala automatic and a 1962, 4 dr sedan, 327 cu in/250 hp, 3 speed. The 1964 guy was married and didn't want to run. Both of these guys had been flaunting their cars before this though. The '62 ran me. I opened my headers and after I beat him three lengths in low gear he gave up. See 1 in Figure 4 (near Artesia).

The Chevelle Incident

One night a week later (September 1964), I was cruising Columbus alone. Some people stopped me asked if I wanted to run a '64, red 2 dr, Malibu, 327 cu in/250 hp. I said, "I guess so". Another guy drove up, the Columbus "big iron". It was a silver '64 Chevelle with a 327 cu in/365 hp engine. It had headers and was a complete 365 but with 10.5 and not 11.25 compression ratio. See 2 in Figure 4 (Highway 45E). The actual site is shown in Figure 6. I ran the red one first (both of us had headers open); I beat him five lengths. There were about 15 people out there that night (about 10 PM). Next, I had to run the fast one. It weighed 300 pounds less and had a 4 speed. which was not good for me. The first run he beat me two and a half car lengths; I didn't wind out enough in low gear. Next time he beat me one length. Everyone was impressed with how well my car ran for the weight, rear end gears, and 3 speed transmission.

The guy in the silver '64 (named Jewell) said that I had beaten him, but I didn't think I did. Anyway, word got around Columbus quickly, and the next time I cruised Columbus, all the "hot rodders" looked when the '57 went by.

About two days later (Sunday afternoon), on a back street in Columbus (south of downtown) I was driving slowly from one stop sign to the next when a man came walking toward me and waved. I stopped in the street. He walked up to the car door and leaned on it. He was about 45 years old. He gave me a little tap on the shoulder and asked if it was a "hot" car. I said, "Well, maybe, maybe not." I told him about the "Chevelle incident". Gradually, I became suspicious and came to understand that he was an off-duty policemen, so I drove away.



Figure 6: Hyway 45 Race Site

The small dirt road at lower part of picture is where I opened the headers. The starting line was just ahead of the white car. The finish line was about the approaching car with headlights on.

'48 Chevy Incident

One night, about two weeks later (October 1964), a few guys and I went to Columbus to raise a little hell. There were three people in the backseat and Russell and I in the front. We had just crossed the Tombigbee Bridge going into Columbus when a car flew up behind me and got on my rear. Russell said it was Halley in his "Comet". This was a '48 Chevy with a good paint job and chrome wheels. It had a 301, 2 fours, cam, 4 speed, 4.11 positrac gears (maybe 4.56), and headers. He had one guy with him. It was obvious he wanted to prove himself against this new weapon from Artesia which had absolutely nothing before. See 3 in Figure 4. Russell said he knew where to go and I turned around and drove back a little ways and turned left on to a road. Halley was still behind us. I pulled into the left lane and Halley pulled up beside me. Russell rolled his window down and he said something like, "You want to run?" What a dumb question. Russell and Halley had their windows down. Russell said to go when he counted to three. Those guys in the backseat couldn't believe all this was happening with them in the car. I knew that I was going to have to leave at a higher rpm than usual because of the weight in the back and to wind higher, too. One, two, three! Halley jumped out one length ahead.

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He and I went into 2nd gear about the same time. Then he went to 3rd; then 4th, squeal, squeal. I was still in 2nd gear. By the time he got into 4th, I was hitting about 5800 rpms, and it began to switch on. I rushed by him and when I got about two lengths ahead (8200 rpms, 90 mph) I shifted into 3rd and moved off a little more. I couldn't believe that I beat him and wound that high with a stock engine. That impressed the hot rodders too. The next day after such a night, Russell would go to high school and brag to stir them up.

West Point Incident

Russell had to have his tonsils removed at the West Point Hospital (November 1964). That night he climbed out the window and met me on the street. We knew the hot rodders hang out there, at a drive-in. A young "squirt" who worked there was a hustler for races. We told him we had a 265 and he said for us to run a '64 Impala, 327 cu in/300 hp, automatic. See 4 in Figure 4. He was kind of a smart-ass. As usual, he moved off on me about a length in low gear, but when 2nd gear came, his door almost flew off when I by. I saw that guy for years after that in night clubs and other places, he was still mad. I drove Russell back to the hospital and he climbed back through the window.

About this time I took the front bumper off for weight reduction and better transfer (75 pounds). A few weeks later, word got around that a local hot dog in West Point wanted to run me. A '60 Impala, white, with a balanced 409, 4 speed, headers, and temporally with an AFB (usually 2 fours). I drove there and we went out on a road (see 5 in Figure 4). A few local guys and Russell were there. Along the road a man was working in his yard racking leaves; those guys said he didn't mind. I was kind of surprised. I left the line perfectly and beat him two lengths. You should have seen the long faces when we got back to the starting line. He wanted to run again, but this time I spun out and he moved one and half lengths ahead. When I went into 2nd, the transmission broke. So I had to get someone to tow me back to the university parking lot. After this time I was getting the transmission out about two to three times a month.

Russell and I got the car up on blocks and removed the transmission. We disassembled the transmission and found what was broken. The next day I got someone to drive me out to the wrecking yard on the southwest side of Starkville. The yard was operated by a man named "Bad Eye" because he had lost an eye. The wrecking yard was not very large, but what I needed was for 3 speed transmission parts, which were plentiful. I bought the parts for \$12 and we put it back together. With much effort and frustration at time, we got the transmission back in the car. Doing this on a cold day is a really bad experience.

I had another problem with the car also. By November (1964) the head gaskets were leaking a little water into the combustion chambers. When I went home to El Dorado for Thanksgiving, I got the heads off and replaced the head gaskets. Figures 7 and 8 show the car in the street during this operation. Header gaskets were also troublesome.



Figure 7: '57 Chevrolet Head Gasket Replacement
The '57 is shown at my home in El Dorado on Ripley Avenue. The steel shim head gaskets were prone to leak probably because the heads and the block should have been surfaced. The hood was removed to make it easier to get to the engine.

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Another guy, the real hot dog of the general area, heard about all this and wanted to run the '57. It was a '55 Chevy, 4 speed, 5.13 gears, roller cam, large Holley, 327 cu in out to 370, and headers. He drove it 20 miles with the 5.13 gears to Starkville to run me. I knew that I was going to lose, but I wanted a good showing. See 6 in Figure 4. Both of us had our headers closed in three runs. The best he could do was to beat me three or four lengths. He couldn't believe a 3 speed, stock engine could run that good. On the last run, I broke the distributor rotor and he had to tow me to MSU. I thought I had blown the engine, but the next day I found the problem and was relieved!



Figure 8: '57 Chevrolet Head
One of the removed 2.02 is shown. Note quench area of early 2.02 head.

Last Columbus Incident

There is an Air Force Base near Columbus and plenty of cars. The fastest of which was a '57, 2 dr sedan, 327, 4 tube headers, 2 fours, 4.11 positrac. One night Russell hustled him to run for \$5. We drove out on a road (10 PM) and opened the headers; I did one thing that really messed me up. I put a screw in the carburetor secondary linkage to make the back barrels open mechanically instead of by vacuum. This caused a massive bog; it almost died. He was three lengths ahead before the black '57 started pulling. I moved up on him one and half lengths but couldn't catch him. He thought I didn't have anything and he was surprised at how it ran, but he wouldn't run again. It really upset me because I knew I could beat him. See 7 in Figure 4.

Return to Arkansas

After not making the grades again at MSU, I went back to Arkansas. I got a job at Industrial Tool and Die about January 1965 and changed a Muncie 4-speed (close ratio) at the Chevy dealer. Because of the gear ratios of this transmission, low gear was about as high as my 2nd gear had been with 3 speed. After a few weeks of this situation, I bought a 4.56 positraction 3rd member. This made a great difference, but still low gear was not as strong as with the 3 speed. I had some traction bars welded on. This cured spring windup. I had broken some springs earlier because of this problem.

About this time, the drag strip in Farmerville opened and they had the drags on Saturday night. I went there the first time with Sandra. I was late there (4.56 didn't help on the highway). I got there about 15 minutes before my class was going to run (modified production). In small numbers on the sides of my front fenders I had "301 cu in" and the guy said, "301, OK C/MP." I opened my headers and using the street tires I had on (all I had) and moved to line. On the first run, I was to run a '55 Ford, 2 dr sedan, from El Dorado. It was gray and may have had a "hot" cam with dumps or headers. Well, the last I saw of him was at the start. I wound the "301" out pretty hard. It was one of those 15 car length things. Going into high gear I noticed my clutch slipping badly. I had a rebuilt pressure plate and clutch disk. They would break pretty often but I didn't have the money for a good setup. On the next run I had to run Paul Evans in his purple '56. He was a local hard runner from Camden, who ran at NAD often. The '56 was pretty strong. I started not to run because of the way my clutch was slipping. I think that I saw Sonny and he was trying to hurry me out to run. I went on out there and didn't do hardly anything, he beat me 5 lengths. After the race, Jip (Dennis Hammonds) came up to me and said, "What happened to you?" I later learned that he and a lot of other Camden guys were surprised and shocked to see how fast '57 ran against the '55 Ford. It had to have run pretty good with the 327 cu in, 11-1 pistons, 2.02 heads, headers, aluminum high rise intake, 600 cfm Holley, dual point distributor, fairly hot cam, close ratio 4 speed, and 4.56 positrac.

I realized that I had to cure the clutch problem, so I ordered an aluminum flywheel, special clutch disk, and a Weber 3 finger, strong pressure plate. After three days use, I got it out because it was too strong. It was difficult to drive around town. The higher pressure broke the clutch lever arm off. Later, I sold the pressure plate to Paul Evans. I think that I bought a Corvette clutch disk.

One day we had a little snow and I was driving toward downtown about noon. Near the Razorback Market an old man was going very slow ahead of me. I thought I could go faster so I passed him. At the time I had Volkswagen tires on the front which didn't help steering on snow, and as a result, I slide into a light pole on the front right fender. It made me feel very dumb. The car wasn't hurt much, but I thought that it would be a good time to buy some fiberglass parts so I bought a hood and right front fender through someone (Johnny) who lived near the Lion Oil Refinery. He worked on outboard engines and lived on South College Street. I used spray car paint to paint the hood and fender which was a mistake. The hood needed to be braced in the middle and closing of it was a problem (Figures 9 and 10).

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One night, after being uptown, I was driving home when someone in a white 1962 Oldsmobile tried to race me. He came up behind me and was speeding up and slowing on my rear. I wasn't going to let something like that beat me so I floored it. We were by the Skyview Drive In. By the time we got to the turnoff, we were going too fast so headed out and turned at the old road to Junction City; we must have made that turn at 80 mph. Heading south on the highway and gradually I pulled away from him. Just as I passed the American Legion, the hood flew off, straight up. I was doing about 110 and didn't slow up. It was quite a surprise. At one instant I was driving down the highway (with the hood). An instant later, no hood and a large gap where the hood had been. I drove about two miles or so farther down the road. I far enough ahead to stop, turn around and get back up to 50 mph before I met him going the other way. I stopped, picked up the hood and put it on the car, and drove home. I patched up the hood, but it was never like new again.



Figure 9: '57 Chevrolet with Fiberglas Hood and Fender
The fiberglas hood and fender soon after installation. The chrome strip had not been installed yet. Note the "265" on the front fender behind the front wheel.



Figure 10: '57 Chevrolet Showing Volkswagen Tires and Traction Bars
The Volkswagen tires were used for a while in the front. They did not aid traction because the front end was down lower. The traction bars were made by Mr. Woolsey and helped protect the rear springs. Note how the hood was held up.

About two years later he went to work where I worked. I didn't know he was one until about six months later he and I were talking about cars. He (Donald Jani) described the event (he didn't know it was me, either). We laughed about it. He said the hood came flying down and almost hit another car. He and I became good friends and also went to drag races and on one long trip to Alabama to see Paul Revere and Raiders. He had a '65 Ford LTD with dumps and used octane booster.

CHAPTER TWO: The '65 Chevelle

The first Chevelle I saw was a yellow '64 SS, a 327, 4 speed, owned by Stopper Hudson. I had read about this model coming out but I didn't like it because it was supposed to make up for dropping the 396 in 1963. I had my '57 at the time and was battling against its weight to make it run. The Chevelles weighed 300 to 400 pounds less than the '57 Chevy.

My first run on the 327 cu in/365 hp engine in the '57 (3-70, 3 speed) was at NAD against a well known Chevelle ('64 white, 327 cu in/250 hp, 3.70) from Camden. He left the line at 6000, no spin, just go. The '64 Chevelle beat the '57 by a few lengths. My car was missing, had more weight, a 3-speed, 3.70 single track, what else could happen? As described earlier, I quickly had some run in's with Chevelles in Mississippi.

My first active Chevelle experience was with Richard's '65 - 350 hp. I remember him cruising the streets in his '54 white Ford and saying that he was ordering a 350 hp, '65 Chevelle. He had just gotten a job at Gibson's where Sandra worked in the afternoons. I would go up to get her and he would talk to me about cars. I think one good thing was that he didn't know much about cars. He drove them hard and didn't expect anything to break.

He asked me to go to the drag races with him to help work on his car (about August 1966). The car was a natural. With the characteristics of the engine, the weight, gear ratio, weight transfer, the car ran fast for the horsepower that it had. I couldn't believe it, but his car dominated the drag races at Farmerville, Louisiana.

I remember one time I went with him. A young couple said, "We worked on our car all week, put in a new cam and 4.10 gears. Let's see how it comes out this time." They had a red '66 Chevelle, 396, headers, slicks, 4.10, and now, a 360 hp engine. They were proud of it and it was kind of a family thing. Richard and I walked over to his car and he was quietly laughing to me about how he had beaten it two weeks earlier. I rode with him on that run. I was wondering if "old yellow" would win or not now. I jumped in the back seat to aid traction; I didn't really think that it was good to have me in the car, but Richard said that it didn't make any difference. The only time I saw the other Chevelle was on the starting line and when I started looking for it about three-quarter of the way down the track, I saw it out of the back window, five lengths back. The couple didn't seem too happy about it. As usual, Richard would go somewhere else, and die laughing. The car was a real terror in 1st and 2nd gear.

At this time, there was also a black '62 Pontiac which was running really strong at Farmerville. It was usually between Richard and him for top eliminator. One weekend he had a 4-speed (doesn't sound stock does it?) and Richard beat it a length; the next time he had a hydromatic. Because of the automatic transmission Richard had to spot the Pontiac a length. I think he beat Richard a length. The Pontiac had 2 four barrels. The guy had some kind of a piece of paper that looked like a Pontiac technical bulletin. Anyway, he and I got into an argument about if the 2 four barrels were stock on that model car. I bet him \$5 and he produced that paper; it looked official, I paid him and the track officials heard about the bet and they threw him out. I could never understand exactly why, though.

Richard and I would usually get to the strip, class in, get the sticks on, open the headers, and run it through a few times, then close the headers and say we were going to town to get gas. We would drive down the road and stop and add octane booster to the gas and then go back to the strip. As far as working on the '65, there was not much to do. At most, adjust the valves, change plugs and points. Mostly, it was fine tuning the car, carburetor, air pressure, timing, spacers, etc.

Richard and I never raced his '65 against my '57 (327 cu in/365 hp, headers, 4-speed, 4.56). He was scared I would beat him and I thought that he might beat me. He would probably beat me through 1st and 2nd, but it would be close at the end.

Richard would run anything, anytime. If he was in the car, he was running it hard. There were those legendary trips between El Dorado and Smackover (supposedly in eight or so minutes, passing everything on curves and elsewhere). One time, driving down Northwest Avenue, someone shot out the middle of his windshield; he must have had some people thinking about him. One time he was having some work done on it at Daniel's Chevrolet and they left it out front that night. Someone stole the air cleaner and oil cap.

Philip Butler began his construction of a hot rod about this time. He took some channel iron and welded a kind of frame together. What was left of a Model A Ford cab was welded in place. Piece by crude piece was put on it. Lights even. When he was through it was quite a sight. It had a 283, two barrel and a 3-speed. His goal was to beat Richard. If you don't know Philip and Barry (his brother) then you miss some of the flavor of this. He lived a block up the street and I used to go up there to look and help as little as possible.

I heard about the race between him and Richard out on the highway one night; I wasn't there, however. Richard had three girls in the car with him. Richard destroyed him off the line and disappeared. Philip said the girls laughed at him and that he didn't care what it took, he was going to beat Richard. Well, that never happened. The "rod" was on the streets for about a year. The headers were about the best part. He took some pipe and welded it into a set of headers (water pipe, that is).

At Mr. Carnes' Amoco Gas Station (see Figure 28), Richard left his trophies (about 100+ in a year). He couldn't carry them home because he lived with his aunt, who co-signed for the car. Mr. Carnes said that sometimes Richard filled up twice a night.

At the Hope Drag Strip, he had his best time of 13.7 seconds, not bad for a stock 327 with 3.70 gears. He always drove it hard, but only broke two transmissions. The car ran well and was, to say the least, well known.

Richard was going to have to go into the Army, so he decided to sell the car. He had paid \$3600 for it. I heard from Sonny that it was for sale. Sandra was getting about \$3000 from the Social Security when she became 18, because of her father. She wanted a half-way nice car and that one was OK. It was a remarkably quiet, smooth running car to be so fast. The car was about one and a half years old, had 24,000 miles on it, and was clean. I took it one night to show my father and had him drive it. Of course, anything that was not a 4-door sedan, automatic, was a race car. He said it wouldn't go 20 miles per hour in high gear. It would, unbelievably and pretty smoothly, but he said, not smooth enough for him. He wouldn't co-sign. Some way we got the car.

In February 1967, I drove over to our house on Murphy Street (El Dorado). I turned on the porch light and it looked so clean and fresh sitting there. The next night we drove to Warren, Arkansas, and back without the screw in the back barrels and it got 15 miles per gallon driving 60 miles per hour (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Car Collection

Left to right; the '57 Chevrolet, '65 Chevelle, and another '57 Chevrolet. The right-hand '57 has not been mentioned. I bought the car for \$150. It was just like my other '57, black with a white top. The engine had a thrown rod and the car had a three speed transmission. I had planned on having twin cars but after a few months, I decided to sell it.

I knew that I finally had the car that fulfilled what I wanted in a car. I liked everything about the car. Sandra wouldn't let me race the car or do anything to modify it, but I can't blame her for feeling like that. It was a nice, clean car, why mess it up?

At that time I had four cars,

- 1) '57 Chevy
(fiberglass hood and fender, 327 + .060, Z-50 cam, ported and polished 2.02 heads, a 365 hp 585 Holley, a 365 hp intake, close ratio 4-speed, 4.56 positraction, and headers.
- 2) '57 Chevy
Just like the other '57, but no engine or transmission
- 3) 1954 Ford 4-door sedan (3-speed, 239 V-8)
- 4) 1965 Chevelle
(327 cuin/350 hp)

All ran. Sandra didn't like the Ford at all. I thought that she and I could trade days taking it to work, but I learned that it didn't work like that. I might get the car one day a week. However, at this time, I was concentrating on the '57.

I managed to go alone in the '65 to Mississippi (March '67) to visit my old friends and show my new toy. I sneaked my cheater slicks into the trunk and took off. Russell said, that there was a '66 Chevelle, 396 cu in/360 hp, 4.10, no headers, that was beating everything in the area. So Saturday morning we drove down to see him. We stopped off and got Larry Maxy. We drove ten miles further to the other guy's house. Russell got out and went in and talked to him. He said he would run the '65.

I had my slicks (narrow cheater slicks) on. I asked the guy if he minded if I opened my headers, he said that he didn't. I knew there was no way that a stock 396 with street tires was going to beat that '65, headers and slicks. We drove out to the highway (see 9 in Figure 4). Maxy stayed in the '65 but Russell got into the '66 Chevelle to equalize the weight. I was playing like I didn't stand a chance anyway, you know 327 vs. 396, so I asked him if he would spot me a length, he said, OK! I couldn't believe it! Russell was in the passenger seat and counted to three on his fingers. I lost it in the grass on the edge of the road. I was in the right lane and he beat me a length! I was unhappy with myself, even though the road was narrow. The next run (no traffic), no spot, I was really down to business. I beat him about one and a half lengths. The '65 Chevelle did its magic in 1st and 2nd gear and the 396 couldn't move up in high gear. We had slowed down a little, then he tried to outrun me, which he didn't do.

When I bought the car I knew that it had a cracked head. Finally, I bought a new one and got both heads off. I decided to port them up a little. I learned the hard way that you could not grind too much near the intake valve in the combustion chamber on these early heads, because another one cracked. So I bought another one. Grinding it more carefully and it worked OK.

I had two minor accidents which hurt the looks of the '65 a little. One day, while driving on Northwest Avenue near the TAC House, I was moving along about five mph in stop-and-go traffic. I looked away for a split second and hit a guy in the rear. Not much, but it bent my bumper slightly. It didn't look too good. A few months later, I was in Strong looking for some parts for my '57 and was at a grocery store there. I was backing out when I noticed another car backing out that would hit my back, left fender if I didn't stop. I stopped and the old man in the other car stopped and moved forward a little. I thought he was going to stop there so I backed on back. Then this guy rolled back into me. I was really mad. He claimed that he was stopped and that I backed into him. I called the police, but it didn't do any good.

Also, I had the front end lifted up a little for better weight transfer but the tops of the tires went in a little. In general, it didn't look as good as it had before.

In July, I made a trip over to Mississippi with the '57 in tow. The Chevelle made a great tow car. Plenty of power and torque. Cruised about 70 mph, all the way. They were having the drags at Columbus, Mississippi, that weekend. The drag strip was located at an abandoned Air Force emergency landing strip about ten miles southeast of Columbus (see 8 in Figure 4). I was dying to run the '65, as it could have cleaned house, but Sandra would not let me. So I only had the '57 to run. It was equipped in the same way as described earlier.

327 cu in + 060"	2.02" intake heads, ported
12-1 Jahns forged	327 cu in/350 hp intake manifold
Z-50 Isky cam	4-speed, 4.56 positrac
585 cfm Holley	Fiberglas hood and fender

The drag strip was dominated by a group as many are. One of the "in" ones was the guy that I had to run. He had a stock bodied '57, 2-door with a 396 (or larger) and 2 four barrels. They said he and I were in the same class. The starting lights consisted of four lights mounted on a board between the lanes. There was a blue light and a green light for each lane. The blue light was for staging and the green for starting. The lights were just light bulbs. You had no idea when the lights were going to go on. The problem was to watch the rpms and the light at the same time. They were not in the same direction. The other '57 ran an old Ford coupe which was spotted a length by the '57 (convenient, eh?). That was the way it was at the end, too (Figure 12). The old coupe was fuel injected and other stuff. My turn was next. The worst happened, I was looking at the tach when the light went on and then I had a massive bog which gave the guy two and a half lengths before got started. I guess they thought the guy was going to run away from me, but he didn't gain any on me (I may have gained on him) till the very end when he may have gained a length. I just wished we could have run again. I ran it so hard that I floated the valves in 3rd gear (it must have been doing 8500 rpms). The engine was running good and I ran it hard. The announcer said when I was driving back, "I don't know what kind of engine Mr. Mims has, but it sure is something." Nothing to do then, but hook it up and go home to Arkansas.



Figure 12: Columbus, Mississippi Drag Strip
The left car is the '57 Chevrolet with the 396 and the other car is the older Ford. Note the board attached to the pole in the center of the track. There are four lights on the board, a blue light and a green light for each lane. The Ford was spotted one length and that was the way it was at the finish.

Sandra and I moved to the Marrable Hill area (east of El Dorado) on 111 Pacific Street. The house had a two car carport and a supply (storage) room. I heard from Sonny Young that Donald Moore of Camden (the owner of a yellow '55 Chevy, THUNDERBALL) had an Edlebrock crossram for sale. It included two AFB carburetors and linkage. I called Donald about it; he said he wanted \$130 for the setup. The next evening I drove up and got it.

I put in the setup on the '57 but the carburetors would not operate correctly. I called Donald again to ask what was wrong with them. He gave me a meaningless--answer which led me to understand about the "good" deal on the setup. The only thing to do was to order two new 550 cfm Holleys. These ran beautifully (Figure 13). The instrumentation on the '57 at this time is shown in Figure 14 on next page.

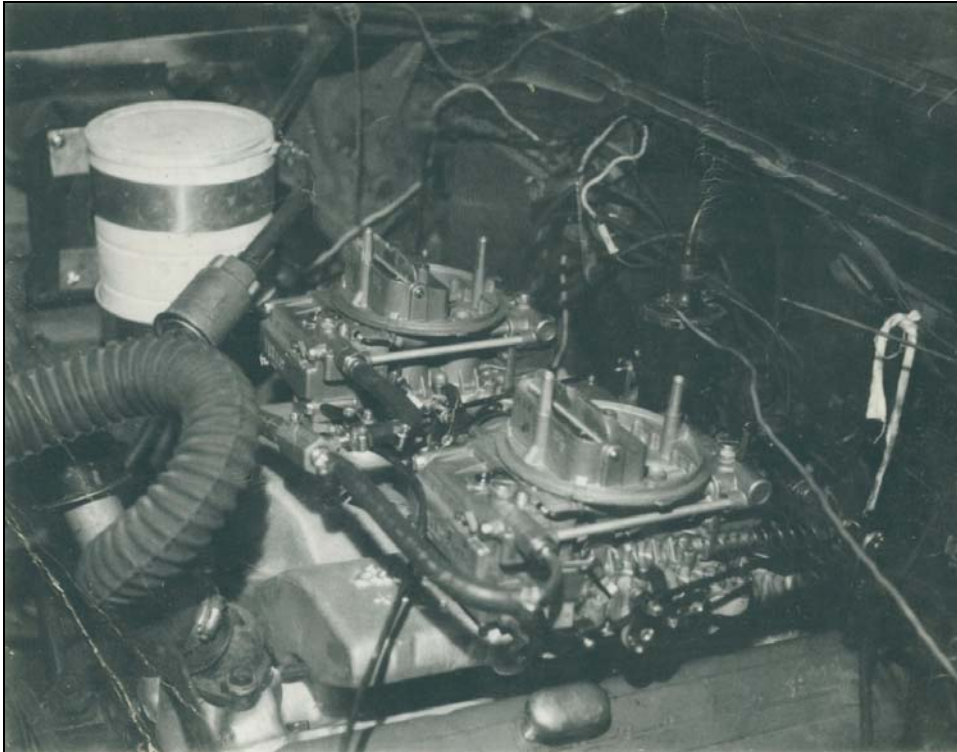


Figure 13: Edlebrock Crossram Intake Manifold.
Note the cool can and old style valve covers

Further information about Donald Moore. He was a mechanic at the Chevy dealer in Camden. My first memories of him were seeing him at the NAD drag strip 20 miles east of Camden. He had his '55 Chevy, 2 door sedan, with a gray primer paint job (I think gray). The engine was a 327 which ran like the other "hot" cars there (like Paul Evans, etc.) Donald would usually go there with either his cousin or brother-in-law (I'm not sure which one). Once he also had an early Ford there, too. It was maybe a '39 or a '40 model with a Chevy engine. He ran his '55 against the Ford. His wife drove the '55 and he, the Ford. His wife was almost as good a driver as Donald. He wanted a spot, but she would not give him one. She beat him.

Gradually he got more and more into the '55. He would build (or have built) secret engines. The car got stronger. One day he showed up at NAD with a new yellow paint job on the car.



Figure 14: '57 Chevrolet Instrumentation

The three gauges mounted in -the dash near the radio are (left to right) oil temperature, oil pressure, and water temperature. This picture was made on a relatively hot day. The water temperature shows 100°.

Soon after the drag strip at the El Dorado downtown airport opened. A car of interest showed up; HAWAIIAN PUNCH. This was a '62 Chevy, Impala, Super Sport, 409 cu in/409 hp, 4 speed. I saw the car run at NAD and also at Hope Drag Strip a few times. It didn't seem to run too amazingly fast then. A '63-409 (black) beat it (a guy from Magnolia, Arkansas). One weekend, at the El Dorado Drag Strip there was a special radio advertised match race between HAWAIIAN PUNCH and THUNDERBALL. I didn't expect a close race; I didn't expect THUNDERBALL to stand a chance. They ran three times. HAWAIIAN PUNCH won each race, I think. Both ran well. The '62 only beat the '55 a little each time. I was particularly impressed with HAWAIIAN PUNCH. When he left the line the car seemed to rise up and leap three car lengths before settling down. Once he left the line and the engine was so powerful the car body quivered as if it was made of plastic. I heard rumors that he was running a 513 inch engine. Both cars had something extra in their fuel because one could smell it. The owner of HAWAIIAN PUNCH also had another car which was called LOW CALORIE HAWAIIAN PUNCH. This was a '55 Chevrolet with a 327. It did not run spectacularly well.

About this time I was concerned about removing weight from the '57. The only major items left to remove were the doors. To see how much potential weight saving there was, I removed a door and weighed it. The door weighed about 100 pounds which I considered too much. My plan of action was to make a plaster mold of the original door, lay it horizontal, pour fiberglass in the mold along with fiberglass cloth, and finally to construct as best I could the inside of the door. Figures 15 and 16 show the door at different stages of construction. Figure 17 shows the door on a trial fitting.

The car at this time weighed about 2800 pounds which was down from the original 3600 pounds. The engine ran beautifully. The new Isky .540" lift 330° cam performed well. Coupled with the crossram intake, the engine began to pull a little about 3800 rpm but did not produce real power until 5500 rpms. The power range seemed to be from 6200 to 9000+ rpms. When the secondaries on the Holleys kicked in, the engine changed its tone completely (about 5000). The sound up to that point was like a car engine, above that it sounded more like an airplane. The cheap slicks hurt the performance of the car. If I left above 3500, they would spin too much. After they caught though, the acceleration was tremendous. The low weight caused the quickness in 1st and 2nd gear.

I didn't have a lot of money to make the engine more powerful. I was reading in some hot rod magazines about straight front axles. I thought that I could do this to make the car considerably quicker because of the less weight and the engine moved back. I asked Mr. Woolsey (Bruce Woolsey's dad) if he could do the work. I towed the car over to my house (300 ft from his house). He had helped me often in the past by doing welding. This was a much bigger job, however, he didn't say no, but he didn't say yes. I took that to mean no.



Figure 15: Fiberglass Door Plaster Mold
The steel door has just been removed from the mold



Figure 16: Fiberglas Door after Removal from Mold
The outer side of the fiberglas door is shown.
At this time, the door side weighs only two pounds.



Figure 17: Fiberglas Door during Installation
The door was trial fitted to the car. The vent window had not been installed yet.

So I decided to do the job myself. Sandra's stepfather, James Haskins, was partner in an oil well cementing company, H&N Oil Well Cementing Co. They would use big trucks to haul equipment to the wells. Then they would, I guess, cement any leaks in the drill pipe. The company's buildings and offices were located five miles west of El Dorado on Highway 82. Among the equipment, there was an electric and a gas welder, an A frame, jacks, etc. He said that I could do it out there. I towed the car out there and began on it.

I removed the fenders, hood, and other front end parts. I bought a length of 4 x 2 inch channel iron. Also, I ordered a straight axle tube from Honest Charley for \$35. I still needed wheel spindles, steering, and new springs. I knew a man at work (Industrial Tool and Die) who had a '53 Chevy, eight miles out of town, in the woods. He said that I could have the parts off of it. So I drove out there one afternoon with a gas cutting torch and cut off the spindles I needed for the axle. The steering parts were off of it, too. The springs were leaf 'springs that had to be made special. I had them made at Spring and Axle Company on Industrial Road for \$22 each. I measured the dimensions of the front end; location of the engine, front wheels, radiator, etc. After a period of building up my nerve, I cut off the front frame.

About this time, Mr. Atkins was doing some welding for H&N. He is the father of Butch Atkins. He was nice enough to help me weld the parts together to make the new front end. I moved the engine back 11 inches for better weight transfer (Figure 18). The engine mounts were welded on the frame and the other parts were slowly assembled. The steering system was a little difficult. When I lowered the car onto the ground with the front tires on, the front axle bent (Figure 19). For a few weeks I tried different strengthening methods, but each time, the axle bent in the middle. Finally, I had a brace welded along the bottom of the bar which solved the bending problem. With the new front end, the car did not turn as sharply or stop as quickly but it did go straight. I bought 4.88 gears to replace the 4.56 gears. Even with the engine back, traction was not good. The slicks I had were Marsh recapped slicks which were very low quality. They were about nine inches wide. Figure 20 shows the position of the radiator.



Figure 18: '57 Chevrolet during Construction of Front Axle
Note the engine moved back 11 inches and new frame.



Figure 19: Completed Straight Axle Assembly Except for Axle Brace
The front springs and gap behind the grille are shown.

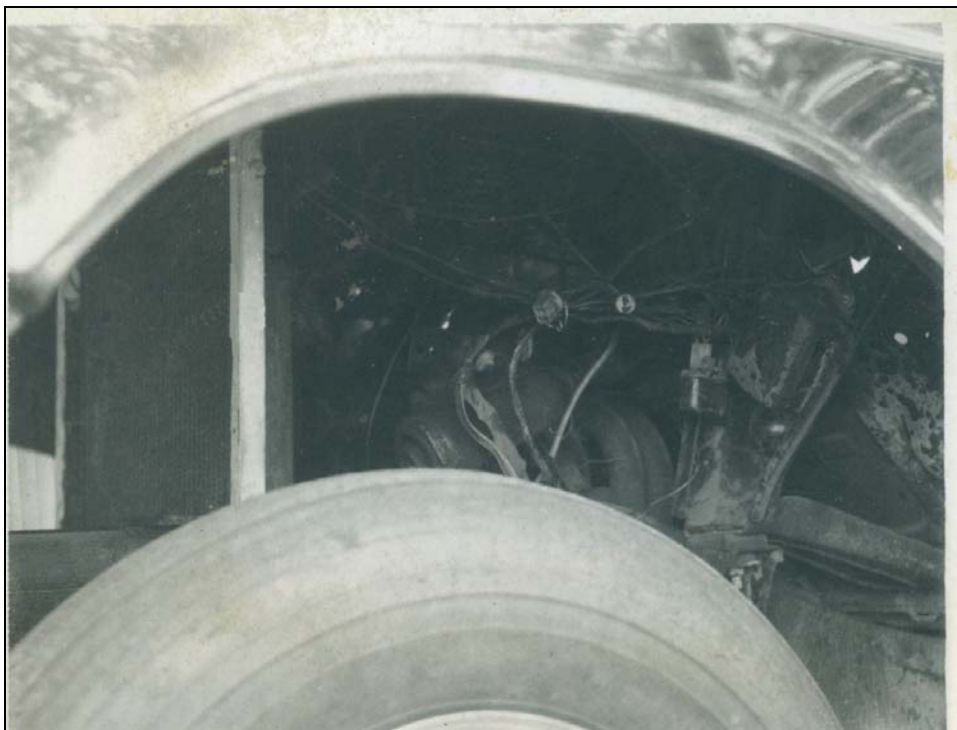


Figure 20: Location of Radiator
Headers are also visible.

Getting the bugs out of the new setup was not quick or easy. After the front axle was braced, the rest was easier. Because the engine was beneath the dash it had to have a new enclosure. I got aluminum sheet metal from where I worked and fabricated it. It looked pretty good. The front spark plugs were changed beneath the hood, while the rear plugs had to be changed from the inside of the car. The enclosure had to be removed to do this. The air drag was greater now because of the open space in the front. I got some more aluminum sheet metal and fabricated an air dam behind the grill and beneath the grill. This seemed to help. The radiator still got plenty of air. My source of aluminum was the shift foreman at Industrial Tool and Die Co. He (his name was Bobby Parks) had owned a blue '55 Chevy earlier.

I took the car to NAD for a trial run. One application of the brakes caused the weld to break on the front spring mounts. The axle spun and I barely managed to get it home (42 miles). I towed it behind either the '65 Chevelle or the '54 Ford. After correcting this, I went back to NAD a few weeks later. I got there in the late evening. Donald Moore was there with his '55, THUNDERBALL. They were laughing about my car (a piece of junk). There was still a small crowd there. The '55 was loaded on the trailer, but word was passed to me that he wanted to run me for laughs. I knew even my engine was not a match for his.' He was reported to be running a 375 to 400 inch small block and who knows what else.

He unloaded the car and got in the right lane. My gear shift was more beside me than near my knees. It had been moved back 11 inches also. I pulled to the line. We were flagged off. About 30 feet from the line, the '57 pulled three-quarter length ahead! Second gear, the '57 didn't give up anything. I could hear the '55's engine being wound to shriller and more desperate rpms.

Third gear, the '57 still did not give anything to the '55. Fourth gear, the '55 began to pull up gradually. About 150 feet from the end he was right beside me! He gradually moved half a length ahead. I let off slightly and he pulled three-quarter length ahead. I didn't want to be too close beside him on the road.

The guys at the starting line thought the '57 had won. Their mouths were still open and they had a shocked look on their face. I told them the '55 had won; Donald was just getting back to the starting line. Donald's cousin (the one who had laughed the most at my car) said the '57 was a running son-of-a-bitch. They never did laugh at the '57 ever again.

Figures 21 and 22 show the '57 at NAD. These pictures were made in the late afternoon, about March 1968. The aluminum behind the grille can be seen in Figure 21. I wish these pictures had been lighter. I turned the gear shifter handle around and bent it forward which helped.



Figure 21: '57 Chevrolet at NAD



Figure 22: '57 Chevrolet at NAD

One weekend, I took the '57 to Farmerville and ran C/G class. The other car in my class was a '55 Chevy, red, named THE COLLECTOR. The car was professionally prepared. It had fuel injection, 5.38 gears, 12 inch slicks, and all steel body parts. My car was ragged compared to his. We came to the line. He did four burnouts; I did none. The flagman flagged us off. He jumped two lengths ahead of me off the line because of the slicks and gears. I could hear the crowd cheer. It had been a threat to the favorite from Monroe, Louisiana. After low gear, the '57 actually was beginning to move up on the '55 (half a length) when I missed 3rd gear just slightly, but enough to make a try useless. I just eased through the rest of the quarter mile. Near the end of the quarter, the right fiberglass door blew off. This caused an amazing amount of humor. The door was not actually damaged, however I repaired it and made sure that it would not happen again. I still hear about that day from time to time. That made the '57 a joke to many people. With just slicks and gears the '57 would have beaten the '55, but the '57 was portrayed as being junk. The '57 was definitely gaining on the '55 after we left the line but that did not seem to make any difference at all. I knew the potential it had if no one else did. I was using rebuilt clutch discs at the time which lasted only a short while (10 runs or less). I was beginning to get discouraged on the '57. It would take so much money to get it going which I did not have. I also missed driving it on the street. I wanted a more streetable car. The straight front axle hurt its everyday usage.

Soon after I got the straight front axle on the '57, I made another trip to Mississippi. This time, no Sandra along, but the drag strip (same as in Figure 12) was not organized and it was just a bunch of guys out there, but no car was very strong. At this time, the '57 had,

327, .060"	4.88
2 four barrels (550 cfm)	4 speed
Cross-ram, Edlebrock	Engine moved back 11"
330°, .540" Isky Cam	Fiberglass seats and- other parts
(550 Super Le Guerr)	Straight front axle

I towed it there and back, and it towed perfectly, at about 70 mph. I carried Russell out to that strip. I ran the '57 a few times, bent a few push rods as usual. I asked Russell to drive the '65 against the '57. The trouble was that I only had one set of slicks, so the '57 got them. I spotted him three lengths and beat him five or six as he lost traction pretty bad. I let Russell run a '62 Ford 390 which he beat. He was beginning to like it. I may have run someone else in the '65 but I don't remember.

Return of '65 Chevelle to High Performance:

Not too long afterwards Sandra decided that she wanted to sell the '65 Chevelle because it was beginning to look bad. The rear left quarter panel had black chips over it (the minor accident in Strong, Arkansas). The front bumper was bent up a little (the minor collision on Northwest Avenue). The car was sitting up in the front which made the top of the front tires tilt in a little at the top. All these things together caused the bad appearance but I knew these defects were only skin deep. The true value of the car had not changed to me.

Sandra continued to complain about the car. Finally, I told her it was either me and the car or else. She chose else. She left me on Christmas eve 1967 and returned to her mother. She took the '65 Chevelle and I was left with the '57 Chevrolet (not streetable) and the '54 Ford (depressing). I set my goals at that time to return my true love (the '65 Chevelle). I decided to sell the '57 Chevrolet. I had had it for about three years. I really liked it, but I had effectively destroyed its cruising street use which, of course, is the primary purpose of any sporty car. The '65 Chevelle had much better appearance, appeal, and high performance potential. After a depressing search for buyers, I found one, Bevis Roberts. I impressed upon him that the engine needed rebuilding and could not be used on the street at all. He gave me \$600 for it. Not bad; it was worth twice or more than that amount.

Luckily, Sandra had agreed not to sell the '65 Chevelle and to wait for me to buy it. A very important agreement. I gave her the \$600 plus, I believe, \$400 to \$600 from my parents. With relief, the car was returned to its protector and servant. She used the money to purchase a brand new, sparkling, '67 Mustang, yellow, with a six cylinder automatic. I straightened up the body of the '65 Chevelle to last until I could have it done properly.

The El Dorado Drag Strip opened about this time and Richard had returned and bought a new car, a '68 Chevelle, 396 cu in/375 hp, 4.10, headers, and slicks. He was there that day, so we ran three times. The first run, he missed a gear and I beat him. There was a big crowd out that day at the drags and everybody just howled when the '65 beat the "super" '68. Richard was kind of upset, he had missed a gear, but still he had lost the race. He wanted to run again. So we ran again; this time he didn't do anything wrong, and he beat the '65 about one and a half lengths later. Later, Richard won his class and I, as usual, won mine. So in the elimination we ran each other. He had to try some traction compound and had a guy pour it in front of his slicks. When the race began, I didn't look around or anything, I just concentrated on driving as hard as I could. At the end I looked for him and saw him way back there. His compound had just let him sit there and spin. I had won two out of three against his new car. I asked him if he wanted it back. I knew that it was going to be pretty close between the '65 and '68.

There were other races out there at this time between the '65 and others but I don't really remember them too much. There was a '66 GTO (green) that came in one weekend that was in my class and he was running a little faster than the '65. On the class run, I blew out a spark plug. I had just put in new plugs, but on one side they were just in finger tight and one came out. I thought that I had blown the engine. I was about halfway down the track when it happened. I killed the engine and rolled to stop off the side of the strip. I just left it and walked back up at the starting line. I thought it was gone. About half an hour later I walked down to it and saw that only a spark plug had blown out. I put in another one, started it, and it was fine.

Figures 23 to 30 show the '65 at various locations and times. Figure 31 shows '65 during maintenance inspection.



Figure 23: '65 Chevelle Resting

This picture was actually made a few years later at Eddie's house. The picture is one of the better ones of the car. The car has "283" numbers on the front fenders.



Figure 24: '65 Chevelle Thinking



Figure 25: '65 Chevelle Cruising



Figure 26: '65 Chevelle Waiting for Something to Happen



Figure 27: '65 Chevelle at Southern State College



Figure 28: '65 Chevelle Refueling at Mr. Carnes Amoco Station



Figure 29: '65 Chevelle Engine (Upper view)

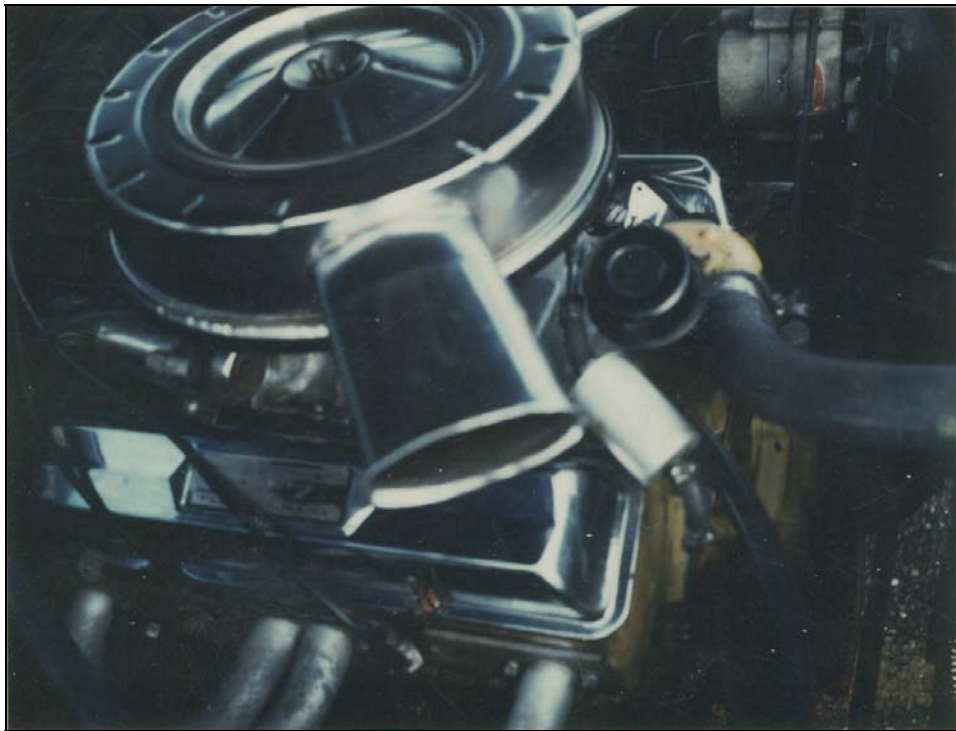


Figure 30: '65 Chevelle Engine (Lower View)



Figure 31: '65 Chevelle Maintenance Inspection
Many Areas on the car had to be checked often.

Stage I (327 to 350)

About this time I began to think about doing something to the engine. It had 60,000 miles on it, and the newer cars were badly out classing my little 327. I stayed out of school for about six months and worked and saved enough money to redo the engine. I thought about what I might do to the engine and read my magazines. I decided on the following:

- 11-1 Jahns Cast Pistons, .060" over (350 cu in out to 361 cu in)
- 350 Crankshaft (turned down to 327 spec)
- 310° -.480" Crower Hydraulic Camshaft
- 10.5" Weber Diaphragm Pressure Plate
- Ramco Single Moly Rings
- 327 Truck Rods (Mr. Gasket rod bolts)
- 4 quart Oil Pan (Stock)
- High Volume Oil Pump
- Vacuum Distributor Converted to Dual Points
- Balanced Engine
- Minor Head Porting (Helpful, though. The ridges near valves).

I bought the 350 crankshaft from Jamie Hammond. It was out of his '56 Chevy. One morning, they started the engine and it spun a bearing. No damage done to it much. I bought it for \$20. I asked around about grinding down the crankshaft. The only place I found that would grind .100" off rods and .150" off the mains was Lynn Brothers' Wrecking Yard. Topsy Lynn said he would do it for \$40. I found out later that he must have ground it for a while, gotten it out, and put it back in because the mains were not all ground straight. This costs me many quarts of oil and clutch discs.

The cost for these modifications came to about \$800 (minimum). The rods would not fit on the crankshaft during assembly, so I had to take the rods and crankshaft back to Evans in Little Rock to have him grind enough clearance. Lynn had not ground the crankshaft wide enough on the rods. I sold the stock 350 hp short block that was in the '65 to Dan Thomson to go in his '65 black Impala. It ran fine for years. After I got the engine back from Evans again, I put it in. About January 1, 1969, the engine was ready to start at Mr. Atkins. There was a little crowd there to watch the birth. All the Hammonds were there and maybe someone else (Sonny?). I started it and there was a knocking. Jamie said, "I'm really sorry about this, Butch, real sorry." I was pretty disgusted, tired, etc. All the planning, saving, Little Rock trips, working, and now this. I got the engine out that night and couldn't find anything wrong, so I put it in again and drove it about 100 miles, enough so that if there was something wrong, it would be visible. About noon one day I started on it alone and by noon the next day, I was driving it. Nonstop. I still could not find anything that was making the knocking noise. I decided that it must be a wrist pin. I drove it like that for a year. Above 3300 rpms you could not hear it, but at an idle (1200 rpms) you could not hear the engine run for the knocking noise.

I was driving it to Southern State College (33 miles) every day, and for 1100 miles I didn't really run it or strain it. The engine did not seem to have the power that it should. At that time the car had small tube headers (1.5" diameter). I knew someone, who knew Rem Walker. He had a new Olds 442 with a 4-30 rear end, high hp 455 engine. I borrowed a set of slicks for him. I used my slicks and opened the headers for the first time. With my 3.70 gears, the '65 ran away from him. He was supposed to be pretty bad and the way the '65 had been running, I thought that he would beat me. There was not a time that he stayed with the '65.

I moved off,

1st .5 length
2nd 1 length
3rd 1 length
4th 1 length
3.5 lengths total

Driving back to the starting line at about 40 mph, we both got on it and I ran away from him. We ran twice, same result each time. I was pleased with this because I had been unhappy with the way it had been running. Word started to spread about the '65.

In April, Jimmy Marrable and I went down to the Bob Harman Drag Strip at Monroe, Louisiana. It was a nice warm Sunday afternoon. I classed in with no problems. The only car I remember running was a new looking blue '69 SS Chevelle, 4 speed. I believe he had a 4.56 rear end, too. I think that he was the only car in my class. I guess he thought that he was going to beat me because he was pretty disturbed afterward. I told him, "Your car runs pretty good, I thought for a minute there, that you were going to actually beat me." That didn't help his mood either. I really meant it, he did almost beat me. In 1st gear I left the line and moved off on him (as usual) by about a length. I was watching for him, but I didn't expect him to move up on me. He did though, up to my door by 3rd gear. But going into 4th, he may have slightly missed the shift because he lost half a length, dropping back to my back bumper, never moving up much afterward. He walked over later and threateningly examined my engine. I said, "just a 327." The car ran a 13.51 ET (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Bob Harmon Time Slip

I remember driving down there and back at about 80 mph. It seemed strange to be able to drive a car 80 effortlessly on the highway and for it to be able to do well at the drags. Jimmy liked the way the "327" handled itself down there.

The races were at Bob Harmon Raceway at night in July 1969. I had just met Eddie on the 4th of July at the old Dairy Queen. He had a '66 yellow Chevelle. We got there just before dark and classed in. I was in stock class, I think, but I may have been in Gas or Modified, because of too much competition in the stock class that I "belonged" in. I ran maybe four times in all; one time, I believe, against a blue '66 Chevelle and again against a '66 GTO, blue. I may have ran the GTO twice. Anyway, I must have won my class because I had to run against RICHARD'S FORD Fairlane, the one with a really high performance 427; he had only 8.50 x 15 M&Hs, but he ran in the mid 11's. The car was carried up to Monroe from Baton Rouge on a truck. He won almost every weekend the top eliminator (when they didn't catch him cheating). He spotted me one length of the lights (about .2 sec). I expected him to beat me, but not like he did. When I had moved off one length, his light turned green, almost at that instant he was beside me and then disappeared ahead, in beating me an unbelievable eight lengths. A few weeks later (about April 20, 1969) a guy who had a '66 Chevelle with a 427 wanted to run the '65 Chevelle. He was also going to school at Southern State College (Magnolia, Arkansas) I had been introduced to him and the run was supposed to be the next day. About noon the day before, I went out to the Bypass Route alone at Magnolia to see how the '65 was running. I started off and shifted into 2nd gear when the rear gears broke. It was a 3.70 positrac (10 bolt style). Somehow I got back to the school and asked David Love to tow me all the way back to El Dorado with his blue '66 Chevelle.

After a few days, my father bought a 3.31 positrac (12 bolt) from Reed's Wrecking Yard. I went by Reed's and asked for a 12 bolt. The 3.31 gears effectively reduced the acceleration of the car. It would go very fast, however. Once I got it up to 135 mph for a few seconds.

By August I had enough of the 3.31 gears, so I ordered a set of 4.10 gears. I went out to Herman Murray's house one night and his father put the gears in for me. I had to use a spacer ring to make the gears fit. Driving away from his house the gear reduction was very obvious. I thought that 4.10 may have been too low. I got used to it, however.

The next weekend I borrowed Herman's trailer so I could take the '65 Chevelle to the Haynesville Drag Strip. For a description of this event, see the individual drag racing events, page 4-2.

Stage II (11-1 Pistons to 12-1 Pistons):

In December 1969 I got the engine out for several reasons. The engine was beginning to smoke and foul the spark plugs, also the knocking was still there. I bought a set of 12.5 Jahns cast pistons from Rod Brown for \$50 (this was less than half price). He had started dating Pam Duck, whom he later married. The engine was taken out at Mr. Atkins' house. The new pistons required the engine to be rebalanced again in Little Rock. I also deepened the oil pan 2.5 inches to increase its capacity. I did the cutting and welding myself. The oil capacity was about eight quarts as a result. New, larger headers were purchased. They were 1 5/8" Hedman headers which were much, much better than the old style 2 into 2, 1 1/2" headers. The car seemed to run better with new parts. The headers seemed to help above 5500 rpms. The compression checked out at 250 psi which is very high. The combination of the 327 heads and 350+.060" engine must have boosted the compression above 13-1. The heads were ported more this time, especially on exhaust ports and inside combustion chamber.

Christmas, 1969, I went with my parents to Starkville, Mississippi. Across the street from the house was a drug store where two young boys (about 18 years old) worked. I would go over there with Tony to buy a magazine from time to time. I would hear them talking about cars which interested me. I told them that I had a '65 Chevelle with a 350 engine which ran fairly well. They wanted me to bring it over. These were some nice kids interested in cars. They were not troublemakers.

About two months later I made a trip to Starkville in the '65 (Figure 33). It had the 4.10 gears and unfortunately a continuous clutch problem. The engine leaked considerable oil out of the rear main seal. This would gradually soak the clutch disk which would slip. The 250 mile trip soaked the disk but I didn't know it.

I got there and drove over to the drug store with the car. They were really excited about it. They were wanting me to run some local cars. I put the slicks on directly across the street at the Barber Shop car lot. I was to run a '67 Dodge Swinger with a 340 engine. A crowd followed us to a remote stretch of highway, about four miles north of Starkville (See 10 in Figure 4). We lined up and started off. Almost immediately, because of the added load of the slicks and the increased torque due to the open headers, the clutch slipped terribly. I still won but I was disgusted. I had driven all the way over there and I could not use the power the car had because of the clutch. They were still enthused about the '65, but my remaining day there was spent just driving around. About a month later I received these two letters from the two boys (see Figures 34 and 35). They wanted me to return but I didn't. On my next trip to Starkville they had left the drug store to attend college.



Figure 33: '65 Chevelle Posing in Starkville, Mississippi

The '65 Chevelle had been broken into three times, once at Southern State College during the summer of 1970 and two other times at my home in El Dorado. At Southern State they broke the vent window and stole 8-track tapes. The 8-track tape player was left swinging by a few wires. They must have been scared off. In El Dorado some young boys opened the door and stole some 8-track tapes out of the car. After that I kept a close eye on the car at night. Then one night, about 11 p.m., I saw a little light near the car. I ran outside and almost caught them. I ran one of them down (he was on a bicycle). He jumped off the bicycle and ran between some houses. I grabbed the bicycle thinking it was a good trade. The police came out and investigated. Later I learned the bicycle was stolen but they had caught the boys. That still didn't help me a lot, I wanted my hands on them. My mother bought two auto alarms after that for \$9.95 each (in 1981 I paid about \$50 for the same components). The alarm consisted of three relays, key switch, and trigger switches. The on/off switch was a key lock beneath the left tail light. When either the doors, hood, or trunk were opened the horn would start beeping. Even if it was closed the horn would not stop until the switch was turned off. The only time the alarm was triggered was in Nacogdoches at the dormitory. The security personnel asked me to switch it off. Someone had raised the hood. I slept much better with it on the car. The wheels also had locks on them.

One morning I was at Sonny Young's home east of El Dorado. He was impressed at how his red '65 Chevelle was running since he had replaced the 3.36 gears with 4.11 gears. The engine was a 327-275 hp (1.94 intakes), wide ratio four speed, and no headers. He and I were leaving about the same time to go to town so he asked if we could "try them out" to see how close they were running to each other (the yellow '65 also had 4.10 gears). There is about a half a mile straight stretch of highway going toward town. We stopped, the red Chevelle in the left lane and the yellow one in the right. We started off (he could choose his time to start); the yellow '65 moved off about one and a half lengths in each gear. We stopped and I gave him a length spot and again, he started when he wanted to. There was just no comparison between the two cars. Later, he said every time he looked up, the yellow '65 was going by him.

Butch,*
How are things in Arkansas?
Everything is fine here. When do you think
you will be coming back? The Drag Strip
in Columbus opens in about 2 weeks.
Reggie & I think you have a good chance
to win top money in your class. The
only cars that may give you any competition
are the ones from the Air Base. Reggie &
me went to one of our friends wedding
last Friday night and after that a
bunch of us went out & drank wine.
Tommy Coy is back from Summer Camp so
I guess he'll have his Chevelle running
very soon. School is starting over here soon
so I guess some people from Columbus &
State will be coming to Columbus to run.
Wish you could have stayed longer, Reggie &
I would have taken you to the Strip
that Sunday, but that waint much
run there that Day. Will I guess that's
all for now, so I'll go. Write soon
and come back

Bobby

Figure 34: Letter from a Friend of the '65 Chevelle

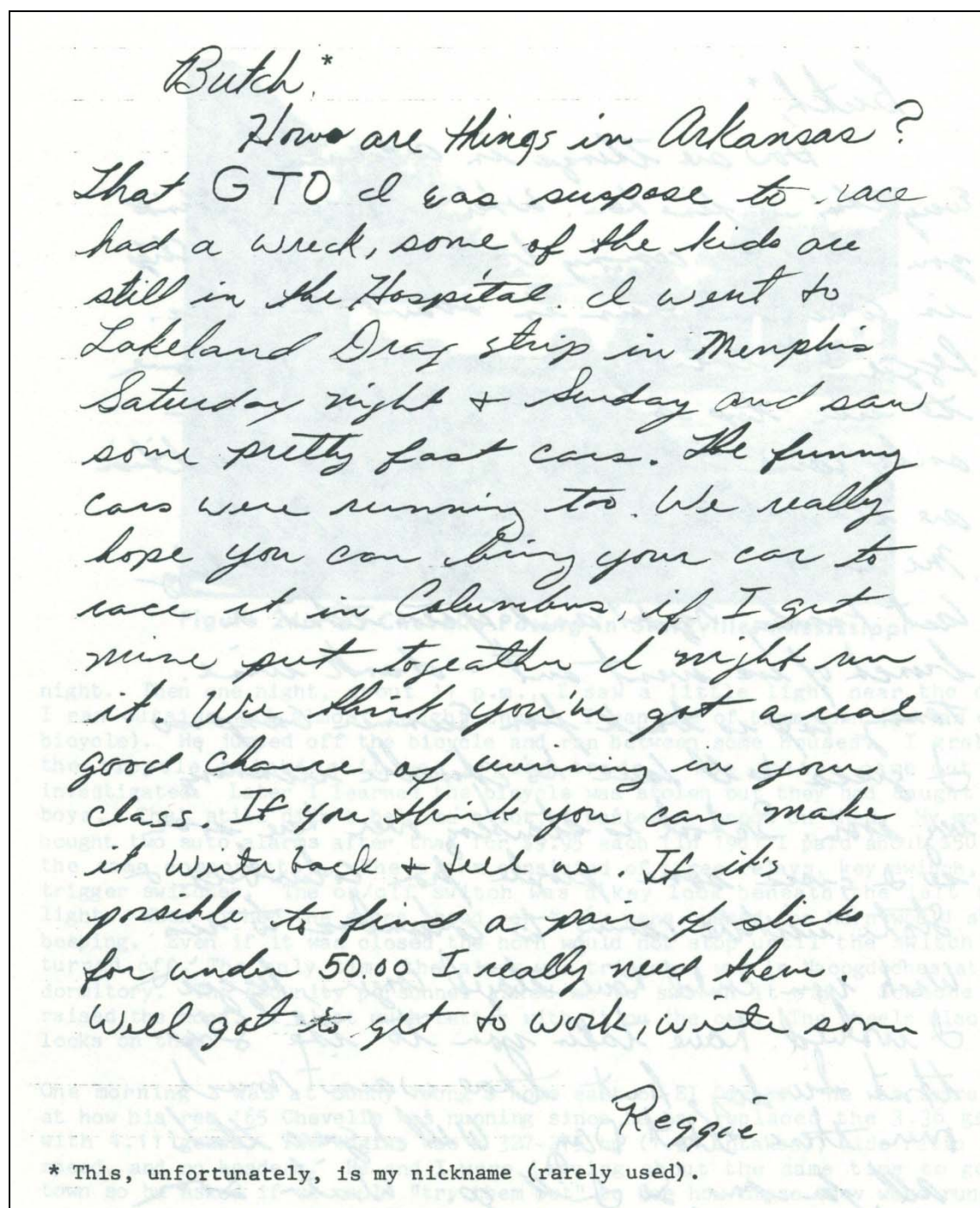


Figure 35: Letter from a Friend of the '65 Chevelle

A few more words about the '57 Chevrolet. Bevis Roberts sold the car after a while to Mr. Atkins. He put the 396 engine they had into it and ran the car a few times at the El Dorado Drag Strip. The suspension was not operating very well so it did not get good traction. Later, he sold it to someone and from time to time I heard about the car being in Camden and then in Calion (a small town 12 miles north of El Dorado). This was 10 years after I put the straight axle on it.

In April of 1972 I drove the '65 Chevelle to Fayetteville to visit Bud Russell at the University of Arkansas. The distance, 303 miles one way, and with 4.10 gears is a long trip (about five hours). The car loved the hills and mountains of northern Arkansas. There are some areas where the highway is one lane in the mountains and traffic sometimes builds up. Several times I used the tremendous acceleration of the car to pass six cars or trucks at once in a very short distance between sharp curves.

In June 1972 I went to Europe with my mother and father. While I was gone I had the car in Laney's Body Shop (El Dorado) for complete body and paint work. When I got back, the car looked beautiful. New chrome and bumpers were also put on.

In July of 1972 I got the engine out for a rebuild. It had been one and a half years since the engine had been rebuilt. While it was out, the crankshaft was checked and found to not be ground straight. This had caused the engine to leak oil badly out the rear main seal. New rings and bearings were installed. Now the car had a new paint job and a fresh engine. It was ready for me to leave for Nacogdoches in late August.

Move to Nacogdoches, Texas (August 1972):

I looked forward to attending Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA). I would be a physics graduate student. The first semester I realized that it was going to be difficult. I lived in a dormitory with David Scott (Figure 36). He had a dark green '65 Mustang Fastback. Sharon moved to Nacogdoches to be with me. She had attended a college in Monroe, Louisiana, for a masters degree in English. She had been there a year and did not graduate. She still had the silver '64 Chevelle, 2 door, hardtop, 4 speed. She lived in a house near Lane Drive. She worked at the Kettle Restaurant and later Beall's Department store.



Figure 36: '65 Chevelle On Parking Lot at Wisely Hall

There were a few places to run my car in or near Nacogdoches. The highways were not really flat for long enough distances and had curves, too. I would run it through from time to time but no races. There were a few exceptions, though. A white '55 Chevy asked me to race him (this is described on page 64). A blue Chevelle 396 had made a few challenging actions toward the '65. One night I put him down after he challenged the 65. A '66-396 Chevelle was fair game for the '65.

One night, a '65 Corvette attempted to challenge the '65 Chevelle. We were driving north on a four lane highway, Just north of the cemetery. I was driving at a smooth, steady speed (45) in the left lane and I was slowly passing him. He floored it and the '65 Chevelle responded immediately. I didn't have time to downshift to third gear as he did. We had been even and he moved half a length ahead. About that time the '65 Chevelle came into its power range (because of the 4.10 gears) and accelerated past the Corvette. The '65 Chevelle never challenged anyone but it was always ready when its status was affronted (see Mini-Races, Minden).

In October, David Scott and I drove to an abandoned drag strip about 12 miles southeast of Lufkin, Texas (Figure 37). I had been there once before and seen some cars running. This time there was no one there but us. We ran the '65 through a few times and on one run damaged the radiator. David called Sharon in Nacogdoches (about 30 miles away). She drove her '64 Chevelle down and towed the '65 back to Nacogdoches.



Figure 37: Just Before the Radiator was Damaged at Lufkin Drag Strip

Stage III

In November 1972 I began thinking about a little wilder cam. I read about the Crane, Crower, and Isky cams. I decided on an Isky Z-40 (310°-.511") cam with solid lifters. This would be better than my Crower (310°-.480") hydraulic cam. I ordered it from Midwest Auto Specialities in Ohio and at Christmas I installed it. For a few days I drove it relatively easy. One night I was driving to Sharon's house in Fordyce and the '65 was challenged while leaving town. I opened it up from about 35 miles per hour. There was no difference between the Crower cam and the Isky up to 6000 rpms. Above that, however, the Isky was still increasing in power while the Crower power curve flattened out.

About March 1973 I bought an Edlebrock Torker intake manifold for the '65. The engine had been on the verge of detonating since the gasoline octane began to drop about a year earlier. The '65 had 12.5-1 pistons and probably a 13-1 effective compression. The heads were for a 327 engine. This type of manifold created a demand for more octane from any engine. As a result, the engine would not perform as well as with 365/350 intake (this intake had been modified for greater flow). Also, the Torker power curve was effectively going down at 6000 rpms where the power should peak at about 6800 rpms. I also tried a 700 double-pumper Holley. This setup did not work, but I had sold my 350 hp intake. I located a Z28 intake which was even better than the modified 365 hp intake. The 585 cfm Holley was returned to the car. It ran fine. The car ran 12.7's with the headers open and 8.00 x 14 M&H slicks.

At the end of March I started going with Carol Stazo. She was a student in one of my astronomy laboratory classes and was from Houston. We went to Houston and Galveston often (Figures 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43). It was 150 miles to her house and the '65 Chevelle could make it on one tank of gasoline. Amazing!

The performance of the '65 as a system was excellent. The carburetor, intake manifold, heads, camshaft, and headers worked together perfectly. The engine began pulling at 4000 rpms with peak power at about 7000 rpms. The maximum rpms was about 8200 rpms. The 4.10 rear end allowed immediate response and also highway use. The weight transfer of the car was excellent. The height of the car-can be seen in Figure 38. The front end of the car was set up loose and was ill higher in the front than the rear. The H70 x 15- tires (front and rear) provided excellent traction. At 60 mph the engine was at 3000 rpms.



Figure 38: '65 Chevelle Visiting NASA (Houston, Texas)



Figure 39: '65 Chevelle Visiting NASA



Figure 40: '65 Chevelle at Galveston Beach Wall



Figure 41: '65 Chevelle on Galveston Beach



Figure 42: '65 Chevelle Posing with Carol on the Beach



Figure 43: '65 Chevelle Getting Front Tires Wet

The '65 Chevelle encountered fewer and fewer challenges. It spent most of its energy going on little trips and other things which did not use its potential. In order to maintain its instant ready condition it required changing the spark plugs every month or less, changing the oil every 1200 miles, and the points (and condenser) every one and a half month. Other duties required were checking valve adjustment, inspecting valve springs, wheel alignment, etc. This was necessary to maintain the car in perfect condition. I longed for a car that I didn't have to do all these things for so often. With the '65 I had to always listen for any new noises or strange behavior. The gas crisis of late 1973 had an effect, too. Higher gasoline prices and lower octane. The octane rating had steadily dropped since 1971 or 1972. With 13-1 compression, detonation was approaching my distributor advance. As a matter of fact, I set the distributor by the octane rating. I began to think that I didn't need the '65 Chevelle. Sonny Young had a red '65 Chevelle (SS, 4 speed, air conditioned, power steering) that I thought would be nice to have. It would be like driving the yellow '65 Chevelle except improved mileage and reduced maintenance. The engine was a 327 cu in/275 hp and the car had a 3.36 rear end.

On New Year Is Eve, December 31, 1973, I was driving from El Dorado to Houston (330 miles). About ten miles outside of Minden, Louisiana, I noticed a knocking noise. I had been driving 60 miles/hour. It was not loud and was not the noise a rod bearing makes. When I got into Minden (about 3 PM), the knocking got louder. It was about 37°F and cloudy. I could not identify the noise, but it was coming from the lower rear of the engine. I drove on to Dixie Inn (about five miles west of Minden) where I stopped. The noise was getting louder and I knew that it must be serious. I called home on a payphone. My father said to go to the Chevrolet dealer in Minden and have them look at it. I drove it back to Minden and the noise got louder. I didn't drive it over 40 miles per hour. The Chevrolet shop was closing for New Year's and was not interested in such a job or even looking at it.

I drove to a Dairy Queen parking lot on the west side of Minden. I was not leaving the car out anywhere. At the rear of the lot I changed into my work clothes. I listened some more to the engine and still could not identify the noise. I thought maybe a pressure plate bolt had backed out, so I got the transmission out and removed the bell housing. It was OK. Then I knew it had to be something strange in the engine (the engine still had normal oil pressure). I called home and asked them to come and get the car and me.

The next day I took the car to Mr. Atkins and got the engine out. With the engine on an engine stand and upside down, I removed the main caps. I had thought the problem was that a main bearing had spun. They were perfect. Next, I got off a few rod caps; they were OK, too. I was standing there looking at the engine when the guy who had towed me in came by. He stood with his hand resting on the flywheel end of the crankshaft. He wiggled his hand back and forth. One end of the crankshaft wiggled while the other end didn't. It hit me then. I saw where the movement ended and removed the two rod caps on the second crankshaft throw from the rear. The crankshaft had broken diagonally through where the two rods bolted on! The bearings on the two rod ends were in good enough shape to reuse. I had driven it like that for about 15 miles! I never heard of anyone driving 15 miles on a broken crankshaft. The rods had held the crankshaft together.

I borrowed my dad's Buick to drive to school in Nacogdoches. After a few weeks I traded the '65 yellow Chevelle (with the broken engine) for Sonny's red '65 Chevelle. I thought that I would not mind too much. So in January of 1974 I sold the yellow '65 after having it since February 1967. I kept the four speed and front seats.

Sonny put a 283 in the car and drove it to Columbus, Ohio. About four months later he sold the car to Ruben for \$900. I was beginning to miss the car and was planning on buying it back (how, I didn't know). The car was not returned until August 1978. During those years the car had been wrecked several times and generally abused. The front end and frame had been replaced. When returned, the car was blue and had no engine or transmission. I traded the '65 red Chevelle body for the yellow (blue) '65 Chevelle. Again, I kept the seats so that the seats that I had had in the car were returned. This is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: The Return of the '65 Chevelle

From time to time I had seen the '65 on the streets. I still missed the car. I had nightmares about losing it (and I didn't even have it anymore). These were the predominate dreams that I had. I heard about the accidents that the guy who had the car had. The '65 Chevelle was blue with a red primed right fender. The frame had been replaced because of an accident he had had. The hood, both fenders, and right door had been replaced.

I had been living in Nacogdoches, Texas and had a job at the Nacogdoches Computer Service as a check sorter. The job paid \$3.00/hr. and was at night from 8:30 P.m. to 2-5 a.m. I averaged about 30 hours/week. In May 1977 I bought a '69 Chevelle SS 396 body from Randy Bomar of Nacogdoches for \$400. My plan was to take the engine and transmission out of the red '65 and put them in the '69 Chevelle. Remember, the red '65 had a 327 cu in/275 hp engine with a 4 speed Muncie transmission (originally in the yellow '65 Chevelle). Eddie had someone drive him down to Nacogdoches to help me tow the '69 to El Dorado.

The car was behind Ronnie Shiver's home on Durst Street. I hooked the green '69 behind the red '65. Eddie was in the '69 and I drove the red '65. I had been up late because of my job at NCS and had gotten up early (9 a.m.) to get the car. Bomar also included a new battery. Nearing Shreveport I was beginning to get tired. On the edge of Shreveport I went to sleep and drifted to the left. I woke up in time to make the '65 miss a metal reflector, but the left door of the '69 hit the Dole. It dented the door a little, scratched some paint, and broke the rear view mirror. About a mile down the road the new Die Hard battery fell to the pavement and was ruined. I finally got the car up to El Dorado and out to Mr. Atkins I house. That day and night I changed the engine and transmission into the '69 Chevelle. The Chevelle had a 3.31 single track rear end.

The '65 Chevelle (red) was left in El Dorado. I gave the body to Eddie because the black 164 Nova was in such bad condition. He had this Nova for about one and a half years . He took the engine and transmission out of the Nova and put it in the '65 red Chevelle. We put the 4.56 gears in it also. We used this setup for about a year. In January 1978 we took the '65 Chevelle to Nacogdoches where I took the heads off and began to work on them. I ported them to the maximum. I also matched the Tarantula intake to the heads. I had to go to the eye doctor twice because I got metal in my eyes from grinding.

I spent two months on the heads and intake. These heads were the straight plug variety with 2.02" intakes. After I was through I had Kittler in Bossier City install larger springs, competition valve job and valve seals. The heads were never used until August 1980 on the black '67 Chevelle that Eddie and I had. They seemed to work well.

In August 1978 Eddie asked the guy about swapping the red '65 (with no engine and transmission) for the yellow/blue '65 (with no engine or transmission). We would also swap rear ends. He agreed. Eddie called me in Nacogdoches and told me about the deal. The next day, Saturday, after Eddie called, I brought the red '65 up to El Dorado. We drove out to the guy's house and began swapping cars. I gave the guy eighty dollars so I could keep the interior from the red '65 to go into yellow '65. This interior was the interior that I had in the yellow '65 originally. I towed the '65 to Nacogdoches where I began to remove the blue paint. I bought a little sander to help. Most of it came off. About two weeks later, August 12, 1978, I towed it back to Arkansas because I was moving to Dallas.

I did some work for Jr Poskey. This included putting a 396 in a Corvette, another engine in a Monte Carlo, and an engine in a Camaro. He bought me a flat tappet cam (Competition Cam; 324°, .590") for that work. I bought the springs and retainers.

From August 1978 until September 1979 I saved and bought parts for the yellow '65 Chevelle. The engine and drive train were designed to be for street-strip usage.

September 1979

350-.030" over
12 to 1 TRW, Ramco rings
Rods: Steel,
Shot peened
SPS rod bolts
Polished
Crankshaft: Steel
Block: 4 bolt
Heads: Turbo, CC'd
Ported, Competition Valve job
Cam: Crower 310° .524"
Solid Lifters
Intake: Holley Strip Dominator
Flywheel: 10.5 - 40 lb.
Pressure Plate: 10.5" Rev-Loc
Clutch Disk: Corvette 10.5"
Trans: Muncie 4 speed
Wide ratio
Rear End: Moroso Carrier
5.13 rear end
Tires: 9 inch Firestone slicks

The engine was started on September 26, 1979.

Gradually, demands from local competition caused further modifications to be made; these were:

- Cam Competition Cam (In. 320°- .578", Ex. 324°- .588")
- Clutch Hayes Mark XII, flywheel and pressure plate.
- Transmission Dough Nash Race 5 speed
- Rear end 5.57
- Moroso Carrier, Summers axles

With this setup (including 10" slicks) the car ran an 11.91 at Prescott Drag Strip on October 26, 1980. In March of 1981, the body work was begun. In June, the work was completed. The rear fenders were flared. The quality of work left something to be desired but the car was at least painted the original '65 yellow (Figure 44). The engine is shown in Figure 45 (without carburetor).



Figure 44: '65 Chevelle Return to Life

Future plans are to build another engine with aluminum rods, roller cam, 5.86 gears , and 12 inch slicks. The car should run 11.00's. After a few visits to the drag strip, the car will be restored to its condition as of 1972 except with 9 to 1 pistons.

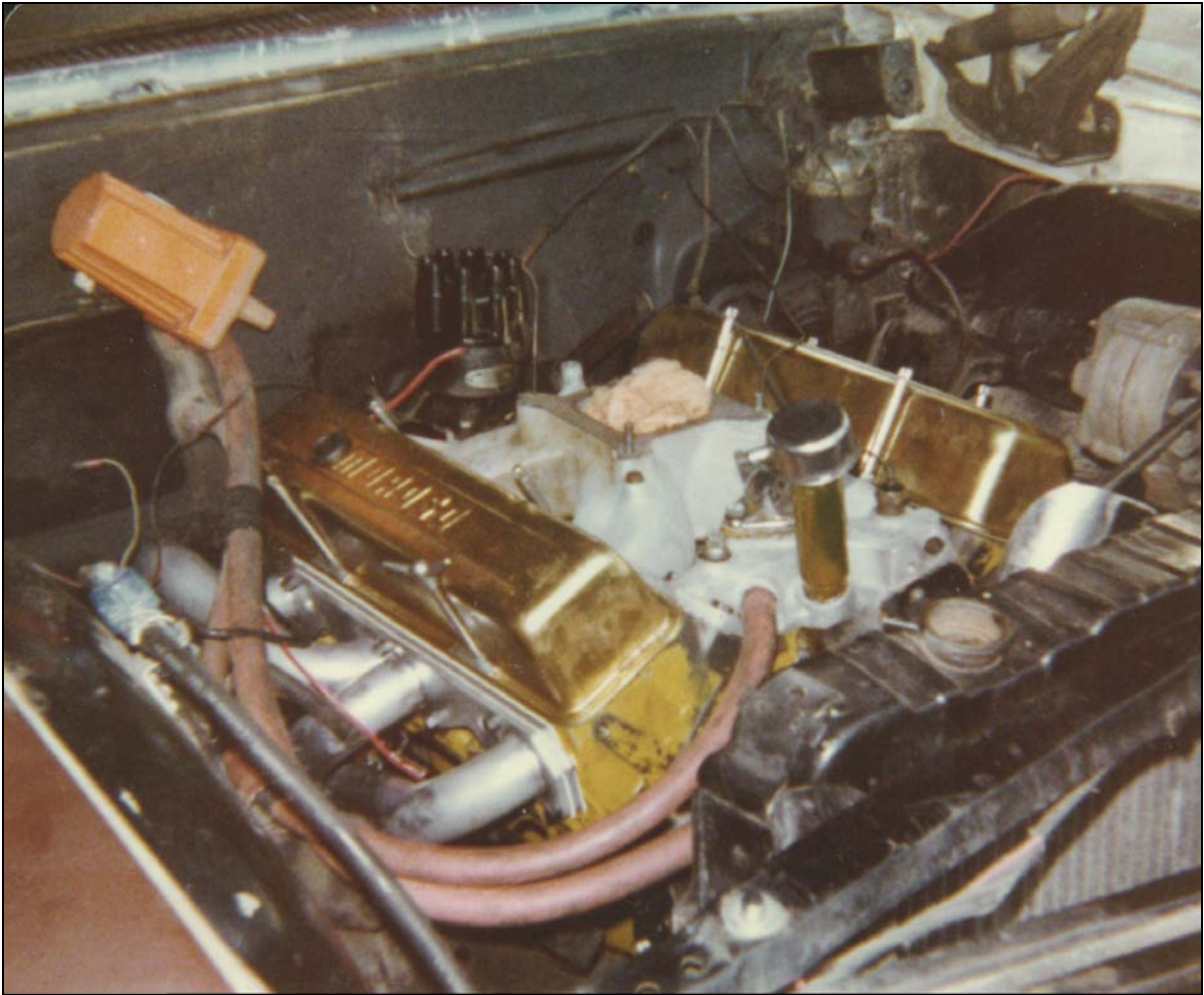


Figure 45: '65 Chevelle Engine (Without Carburetor)

CHAPTER FOUR: Individual Events

The following individual events are included in this chapter:

- (a) Race, Haynesville (August 1969)
- (b) Race, Haynesville Drag Strip (October 1969)
- (e) Race, El Dorado Drag Strip (June 1969)
- (d) Race, El Dorado Bypass (1970)
- (e) Race, Springhill, Louisiana (December 1971)
- (f) Race, NAD (Naval Ammunition Depot) (April 1972)
- (g) Race, NAD (May to August 1972)
- (h) Race, NAD (August 1972)
- (i) Race, NAD (October 1972)
- (j) Race, Nacogdoches, Texas (November 1972)
- (k) Race, Standard Upstead (November 1988)
- (l) Mini Races

(a) Race, Haynesville Drag Strip (August 1969):

One Sunday I went to the drags at Haynesville with the '65 Chevelle. Herman Murray went with me and we used his trailer.

I had spent about three days getting the car ready. The valves were adjusted, new plugs, new points, oil, and filter, etc. We put the slicks on and loaded it on the trailer, and carried it down to the race with the '54 Ford.

It was a busy day there with many cars. I entered in my class; I believe in D/S (D stock). This was claiming a stock 327 cu in/350 hp engine. My first run was against Paul Campbell in his '67 Firebird, 400, 4 speed, and headers. I just used 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and then put it in neutral. I was already five lengths ahead. He almost caught me at the end. It was close before I knew it, a matter of inches. For a second I saw all the trouble of going down there, gone because I didn't try. The flagman said I won.

After some other people ran, it was my turn to run someone else in my class. It was a 390, '68 Mustang, 4 speed. I thought that it would be good to run one hard run, because all my others had not been all out. The only time I saw the guy was on the starting line and six lengths behind me at the end. After the run, that guy and a friend of his came over to see my car. He was kind of upset. He said that he never had been beaten like that before and that he didn't think that my engine was stock. Luckily, Herman was there because this guy was mad enough to start something. I had won my class, however.

When the eliminations came, I was to run a '69 Torino, 429 automatic. I had to spot him a length. My starting technique had been to be getting about three lengths from the starting line, then to rev to 5000 and spin to the starting line (Figures 46, 47, 48). Besides, cleaning the tires it had an unnerving effect on the driver next to you. The '65 sounded kind of mean and loud. It made them more prone to make mistakes. I beat the Torino about half a length. I ran an easy one this time.

My next run was a '69 Chevrolet Biscayne, 2 dr sedan, 427 cu in/425 hp (Figure 49). Strictly a race car carried to the track on a truck. He had to spot me about a length. My usual burn through, then to the line. We started off and I was surprised when he didn't gain on me. Then he missed 3rd gear and just quit. It was lucky that I won, because I had felt like that he would beat me on the other end.

Next, they said that I needed to run the Torino again because it had been a tie. It hadn't been. I believe they thought that I was cheating. I beat him this time about one and a half lengths to make sure.

Next, came the last run. The \$100 run for Stock Eliminator was between me and a guy from Monroe in a 340 Duster automatic that was strictly a race car. It was a red convertible. I had to spot him three lengths. I could never catch him with that kind of spot, I thought. So the light turned green and we started off. I gained on him slightly in 1st, and was beginning to think that maybe I might stand a chance when I had just a split second of trouble going into 2nd gear when I didn't need it. It was just enough for me to lose the gaining I had on him. So, I lost the last one, the \$100 run, but I hadn't done so badly.



Figure 46: '65 Chevelle at Haynesville, Louisiana Drag Strip Cleaning Slicks



Figure 47: '65 Chevelle at Haynesville, Going to the Starting Line



Figure 48: '65 Chevelle at Haynesville, Leaving the Line

The car ran 13.0's with the Crower cam and 12.7's with the Isky Z-40 cam (310°- .511"). Not bad for a street and highway driven car. The '65 got a maximum of 12 mpg on the highway at 55 miles per hour.



Figure 49: '69 Chevrolet Biscayne, 2 dr sedan, 427 cu in/425 hp

(b) Race, Haynesville Drag Strip (October 1969):

Eddie and I went to the Haynesville, Louisiana Races one Sunday in October. We drove the car down there slowly. There was a fair size crowd that day and I could not decide which class to run in because of too much competition in the stock class, so I chose M/P. There were several cars in that class and I didn't think too much about them. When it became my time to run, I had to run a 340 purple Swinger. I was in the right lane when the light turned green; I jumped half a length ahead (Figure 50). Figure 51 shows a close up. In 2nd gear I held it, but in the last two gears he moved up even or slightly (one ft) ahead. They called it a tie. This is one of those times that I must have thought about it too hard. I was thinking that I had to jump out ahead even more but not too much to get a red light. We ran again. We left the line together, then I knew that I had lost. I was sick about the whole thing. I thought so hard about it that I didn't jump off the line faster. In other words, I had failed to act correctly under pressure. There was nothing left to do, but go back to El Dorado, and we did. I didn't like the '65 getting beat and getting beat like that. I was still using the 310° hydraulic camshaft. If the '65 had the later installed Isky Z40 cam (310°-.511"), it would have won.



Figure 50: '65 Chevelle vs Swinger

The '65 Chevelle can be seen leaping 'out ahead on the first run (the '65 is on the other side of the Swinger).



Figure 51: '65 Chevelle vs Swinger Close-Up

The '65 Chevelle can be seen leaping 'out ahead on the first run (the '65 is on the other side of the Swinger).

(c) Race, El Dorado Drag Strip (June 1970):

Probably in June 1970 I went to the races one Sunday in El- Dorado. I Just put on the slicks at my house and drove there (about three miles). Sonny Young was managing the races and he asked me if I would let Ricky (Downs) drive ' my car and if I would flag at the finish line. I don't remember much about who was there, and in my class, but there was a '65 Plymouth Satellite brought in on a trailer with a 383 that was supposed to be the fastest thing out there by far.

Well, it got down to between the '65 Chevelle (Old Yellow) and the Satellite. Ricky had to spot him two lengths. I had the job of judging who the winner was! Well, when they got at the end, the Satellite was half a length ahead. I should have said that it was a draw and they could have run again.

Ricky had ran the car through once or twice before that run. He said that he expected the car (Chevelle) to run good and was on the line with the other car given a two length spot. The race started and he looked around a moment later and he was a length ahead! The other car managed to pull half a length ahead at the end. Ricky said that he had never seen a running son-of-a-bitch like that Chevelle. He said it was magic. The guy in the other car asked what was in the Chevelle and I think Sonny said that it was just a 327 that was driven 100 miles everyday to school. He couldn't believe it.

(d) Race, El Dorado Bypass (About 1970):

One night, Eddie and I were cruising through El Dorado and we met a guy and his wife in a green '68 Duster, automatic, 340. He was interested in drag racing and had done something to his car. He had put on a 6-pack intake system, maybe a mild cam, medium gears (3.90) and headers.

He asked me if I wanted to run him. I told him what I had in the '65, and was he sure that he wanted to. His wife said that he had probably hustled the wrong drag this time. He said that he knew the Hammonds. It didn't sound too threatening to me so I didn't take it too seriously. We went out to the bypass near the bridge and I told him that he could move up a length and start whenever he wanted to give him a chance to make it interesting.

Well, he started off and I didn't plan to strain the '65 because there was no reason to. To my surprise, I didn't gain on him in low gear. Eddie and I had kind of laughed about this guy on the way out; you couldn't find many of these suckers around often.

I went to a medium (under these conditions) low rpm and shifted into 2nd. I still didn't see any need to strain it. In 2nd gear he moved off half a length on me. I think I said something to Eddie and he said something to me. I could see him staring at the Duster with his mouth open and seeing "Old Yellow" about to go down to defeat. I gave it all in 2nd gear, still no change; all in 3rd gear, no change! I couldn't even move up on him and he was one and a half lengths ahead. In 4th gear, I still didn't move up on him! I thought, "Oh no, being beat by a family car!"

Near the end of the quarter mile, I finally started to move up on him. Slowly at first, then more quickly, I just drove past him and moved off three more lengths to make it definite. He didn't know it, but I was beyond the finish line when I passed him. He didn't know how close he came to beating me. The next day he told the Hammonds that I had beaten him. That was a very close one!

(e) Race, Springhill, Louisiana (December 1971):

In November 1971 I was still going to Southern State (Magnolia, Arkansas) (Figure 52). Often students would go across the state line to buy beer because 18 was the minimum age in Louisiana. It is about 35 miles from Magnolia to Springhill. There were many small beer stores and two semi-bars in Springhill; (Trudy's and the Friendly Bar). Trudy's was the nicer place. On Chuck's (a student I know) birthday about 11 of us crowded into his Volkswagen van and went to Springhill to celebrate. Springhill is a paper mill and farming community. The students who went to Springhill for entertainment were considered almost hippies. The two groups didn't get along very well, and they came in pretty close contact in those bars.



Figure 52: '65 Chevelle and Servant

The '65 Chevelle body was never altered. The car always had stock, quiet mufflers. The 1400 rpm idle of a wild solid lifter cam was ominous enough to discourage most challenges.

First, we went to the Friendly Bar and had a few beers. As we were leaving (we had all gotten in the van to go to Trudy's) two rednecks in an old pickup truck yelled something at Chuck. He stopped and we stopped, and 11 of us piled out and crowded around the truck. He thought that there was only one or two guys in the van because it was the enclosed model. He was surprised. After a few minutes, his friend suggested to the other one that they had better go. They did and we did.

At Trudy's we drank a few more beers and had a good time (as good a time you could have there). After a while, we decided to head back to Magnolia and as we were all walking out to the van, one in our group said something to two guys who drove up in a red '67, 2 door, Nova. I was already inside the van when I heard something from the outside about a race. They talked to me a minute and - asked me if I thought that my '65 could beat that Nova and was I sure enough for a \$100 bet. I got out and looked the car over half way. The two guys were redneck greaser types and the car was not too good looking. It had 396 emblems on the side and when I asked them to start it, it didn't sound like it had near enough to beat the '65. I said OK that I would run, but I told the guys with me that I didn't have \$100 or \$10. They said that they would get the money together. They told those guys that I had a stock 327 in a '65 Chevelle.

It was already 11 p.m. so we told them that we would meet them at a gas station at 1 a.m. We drove back up to Magnolia and got my car. We picked up maybe four or five more people and lost one or two. We woke up people asking them if they wanted to go and borrowing money.

We drove back there in two cars. We got to the meeting first and waited. The police drove up and asked us what we were doing there. We said something and they drove on. After a while, those guys drove up and there was about seven of them in all. We followed them about two miles down a road. I thought that I knew what had taken them so long; I think that they had cut off their exhaust and mufflers with a hacksaw. They didn't even have headers on it! I felt sorry for them in a way because they were so dumb. They looked over the '65 and said that it looked OK. I asked them if they wanted to run for sure seeing that the '65 was a 327 cu in/350 hp, stock engine. They said sure that there was no way that a stock 327 could beat that Nova.

I was in the left lane. Headers closed, no slicks. I was mentally set for this run. I knew that I had to win because there was a lot of people's money and trust in me. We were flagged off and the '65 left the line perfectly for no slicks. I ran it through as hard as I could without being careless. I think that he gave up after my 2nd gear (I was maybe five lengths ahead); he slowed down and stopped at the finish line. I continued on through, stopped, drove back to the starting line, thinking the job was done and everything was over. When I stopped at the finish line (one of our guys and one of the other guys were there so see who won), and I saw the driver of the other car and the line watcher trying to beat our line watcher. I stopped in the road with the engine running, got out, and started toward those guys. One of them ran over to me and said, "Where are you going?" With just one of the other guys on our guy, he could more than handle himself. One guy ran back toward the other two guys, then our line watcher ran to the '65. We got in and drove to the starting line where the crowd was. Everyone didn't know what was going on up at the finish line. When those other two got back to the starting line, the argument resumed between one of the other guys and our line watcher. They stood, squared off, for about 20 minutes arguing whether the '65 was stock or not. It was about that time we noticed one of the other guys had a pistol. It was a dark night, with just stars for light. I wanted to go; I never liked hanging around after a race like that anyway and especially not under those conditions. I laid down on the road for a while waiting for everything to be settled. Then the other guy swung at our line watcher but before he hit him, our guy hit him and knocked him out and he fell to the road. The other guys said that it was a beautiful Chevelle and it ran great but they didn't believe it was stock.

Soon everyone left. As I was driving off I kept expecting to hear bullets hitting the back of the car. I was glad it was over. I didn't have any money in the deal but we didn't get our money. They didn't pay.

Waves from this lasted a few months. When members of our group went to Springhill, they always had to look out for those other guys. About a month later, those two guys got into it again and the same thing happened but worse. Anyway, it gave us something to talk about for a while.

(f) Race, NAD (Naval Ammunition Depot) (April 1972):

There were many trips to the NAD (Figure 3) and this was one of them. This particular day, there were two Road Runners; one with a 440 (green, headers, slicks) and a street hemi (blue, headers, slicks, and possibly low gears).

I drove about one road down, mounted the slick and opened the headers. I did not like to be around crowds when I was doing all this. I drove back up to the starting line and Old Yellow was talking to them. It was tough and it acted and sounded like it, idling at about 1400 rpms. It was kind of hot that day and I ran it through once or twice. It seemed OK, except that the gear shifter may have hung up once (in 2nd). There was no excuse for this because I knew that the gearshifter bushings should be checked when this happened.

I was set up to run the 440 first. We started off and I was two lengths ahead going into 2nd gear and moving off when the transmission hung up. I stopped and I believe he stopped then, too. We ran again, but I don't know if the shifter hung up again or not. His engine was too hot to run again.

Next, the street hemi wanted to run me. His car had an automatic transmission. I think that he thought my car was just another Chevelle as he was kind of laughing at it. I was in the left lane and he in the right. We started off and for the first time in several years I was beaten off the line! (By about half a length). I couldn't gain any and neither could he until the last 150 ft when he moved off another car length to make one and a half lengths. I wanted to run again; I couldn't get over being beaten, off the line especially. The guy with the 440 and the hemi guy were good friends and enjoyed the run.

We ran again and I was in the left lane again. We started off and I beat him half a length off the line. I knew that I had a chance then and he was going to have to strain to catch me. In 2nd gear, "Old Yellow" said, "Hell no, you ain't getting by." It was mad, 3rd gear, no change. 4th gear, no change. Still, Old Yellow was ahead. But in the last 150 feet the hemi pulled ahead and managed to move half a length ahead. Everyone had thought the Chevelle had won, it was a matter of maybe three or four feet. The hemi guy said, "You even beat me off line!" I started to tell him something, but I didn't say anything.

One of his dual four barrels was bigger than my little 585 cfm Holley. I had a little hydraulic cam and he had a solid lifter cam. The hemi head was a lot better than my heads not even considering 426 vs 350 inches. With a little better slick (better than the 7" I had) and little better cam, Old Yellow would have shown him the way home easily.

(g) Race, NAD (May to August 1972):

Between May of 1972 and August of 1972 when I would go to NAD there would be a 1966, red, 396 Chevelle, 4-speed that ran very well. It was supposed to be a 396 (I don't know about that) 375 horses. They towed their car there and back and I believe it had either a 4.56 or a 4 .88 rear end. It was al-ways very close between the '65 and the '66, usually three feet either way. I think that it was not used much on the street and that they were from the direction of Warren. There was usually three guys together, and they were a likable sort and not trying to give anyone any trouble. There was one lane that was about three to eight feet faster than the other and whoever was in that lane won by three to eight feet. That was the way you knew who was going to win, by the lane.

In July, I rebuilt the engine again. I had the crankshaft checked by Evans in Little Rock. He found that it was not ground straight and that it was .009" bent or off ground. That was the reason I had been using so much oil out the rear main. Lynn Brothers had performed the grinding three years before. I had new rings and bearing for it. The body had just been completely repainted and new chrome and front bumper which all came to \$800. The car was in good shape at the end of July.

When those guys at the NAD heard that I had just gone through the engine they thought that it was going to run a lot better, but I couldn't really tell any difference. Everybody up there had been waiting on it to return because it had been May since I was up there. I was glad to be back, too, as it felt good. I had just gotten back from my trip to Europe.

A guy there asked me how much I wanted for it. I told him that I couldn't see how I could sell it. He offered me \$2000. I said that you find bodies like this around but he said he didn't care about how it looked, that he thought it was worth \$2000 for the way it ran. This was about the best the car had ever looked.

(h) Race, NAD (August 1972):

In August of 1972 I went to the NAD with Eddie and met Sharon there. There was an unusually big crowd that day, cars and people crowded along the starting line.

As Old Yellow came in you could see the betting going on and the eyes on it. At first, a '67 GTO wanted to run me and I beat him about four lengths.

There was a 750 Kawasaki that had just run the GTO before and beat him pretty badly. Then the guy on the 750 asked me if I wanted to run, I said, "I didn't see any sense in running him because that thing looked like it was all engine". The guy was being a real smart-alec. I let Sharon ride with me on a warm up run.

Finally, I told the guy on the 750 I would run him. The '65 was in the right lane. He moved off one length in low gear and held it all the way. He was real smarty about it afterwards and said that he missed every gear and still beat me. I told him if he would spot me three lengths, I would run him for \$20. I knew that he could never beat me with that spot. He must have been crazy because he said OK. He rode down to the first road where his wife was and she gave him the money.

During this time, I was cleaning my slicks with gasoline and a rag. I rolled the car to where I would start and as I did I wiped all the rocks off the tires and out of the way of the tires. I lined the car up angled slightly to the right because starting off it tended to swerve to the left. I checked the engine and got mentally ready. I looked in the mirror and the three lengths didn't look very far. We started off and I never looked for him at all. I just drove as hard as I could. Near the end, I looked and he was five lengths behind, which meant I moved off two lengths. I heard people say when I got back to the line that something happened to him. I don't really know but I do know that I was running at least one and a half lengths ahead of my first run.

That guy came up to me saying that he had missed a gear and that he wanted to run again. I said I won and didn't see how it would change anything. He got pretty mad and argued for a little while more and gave up. Then he decided to run his bike through alone. He started off too hard and the bike went straight up in the air and fell back on his left foot, which was broken, I think.

After that I ran several cars. First, an early Ford Falcon, red. It had the exhaust coming out through the fenders in two tubes on each side behind the front tires. It was beaten four or five lengths. Next, a '69 Chevelle 396 automatic, same distance.

(I) Race, NAD (October 1972):

I had just bought some new M&H slicks that were about 8" inches wide. I had bought them at 9-till-9 Auto Parts for \$125. I brought them up to El Dorado and Eddie and I went to the NAD on Sunday (Figure 53). We towed the '65 up there behind Eddie's car with a chain. We got there and everyone saw the new slicks and someone said, "Where is the hemi?" (See Event [f] on page 4-12.) They had remembered that close race and knew that those tires would probably do it. I drove it down to the other end and ran it back. Going into second gear, the fan hit the radiator and busted it at the top. Eddie drove down and we hooked it up and towed it to Monk's Radiator. He was either there or I called and he came down and fixed it. I left for school that night (Nacogdoches). This was one of those four flue radiators that were used in a '66 Chevrolet 396 Impala.



Figure 53: '65 Chevelle At NAD

This picture was made just before the radiator was damaged.

(j) Race, Nacogdoches, Texas (November 1972):

One night I was driving Sharon to her house near Lane Drive when a '55, white Chevrolet followed me there. He and his friend asked me what I had in the '65 and I told them a 327 cu in/350 hp. They asked me to run them and I told them that I would if they would let me change my spark plugs as they were really in bad shape. They said that they didn't have time for that, but they would run me right then. They kind of smiled and asked if they could look under my hood. I said OK. They didn't want me to sneak anything on them. They asked if I wanted to look at their engine and I said I did not care what they had.

We drove over to the tracks near the International Paper Co. They said the quarter mile was to the other side of the second bridge. I didn't like it out there because there was too much traffic but I went ahead. I was in the right lane and the guy in the other car rolled his window down and counted to three. As usual, I beat him off the line and gained maybe one and a half lengths through the quarter. We stopped ahead, at a side street and they couldn't get over how well the '65 ran. I think they thought they were sucking me in. If I had changed the spark plugs it might have really surprised them.

(k) Race, Standard Upstead (November 1988):

About November of 1988 there was a meeting at Standard Upstead of the several guys with cars. Eddie had put a 350 with 4.10 gears in '65. Several cars were run. Cranfield with his 65 Nova, Mike Goryer in his Camaro, and the '67 Chevelle of Andy Parker. The '65 beat them all. Its strongest point was off the line. Figures 54, 55, 56, and 57.



Figure 54: '65 Chevelle at Standard Upstead Against '65 Nova



Figure 55: 'The Finish; '65 Ahead



Figure 56: '65 Chevelle at Standard Upstead Against '82 Camaro



Figure 57: '65 Chevelle at Standard Upstead Against '67 Chevelle

(I) Mini RacesMinden (November 1972):

I was driving down to Nacogdoches from El Dorado. When I got to Minden, three guys in a 1966 Chevelle, red with 396 flags asked me if I wanted to run. I was just driving down the street and they were driving beside me. I said I guess so. I had 283 emblems on the '65 at that time. We drove to the street about quarter a mile west of the Dairy Queen. I got in the left lane and then we started off. I had left a little high and almost started spinning sideways. I straightened up and took off and left them about eight lengths behind. I was stopped, turned around by the time they got there. They asked me what I had in it. I told them a 350, they only had a 283. I never would have run them if I had know that their car was not a 396. I left the area quickly and continued driving to Texas.

Minden (December 1972):

I was driving up from Nacogdoches to El Dorado and I had a girl with me who was going to school there (from El Dorado). I was giving her a ride home. Just north of Minden (about 9 PM, Friday night) these guys came up behind me in a 1970 Nova. I passed a few cars and they came up behind me again. Anyway, it got to be a race. For about 12 miles they tried to pass me. There were two things about this that surprised me. First, when we were behind some cars and I would pass them using the gears, 2nd to 3rd to 4th, they could stay right behind me. I couldn't move off on them. When we got up to 100 and 110 mph could move off on them. That seemed kind of backward seeing that I had the 4.10 gears. I stopped a few miles from Homer, because they flashed their lights for me to stop. I didn't know if I ought to or not. I did, though, and they were pretty nice. They were just laughing about all the cars we had passed.

El Dorado (1971):

One night I was driving back from Magnolia and I was passing some guys in an Oldsmobile and when I got beside them, floored it. I ran away from them up to 125 mph (with 4.10 gears). This was about a mile west of Cairo.

Farmerville (1971):

I was driving back from seeing Sharon in Monroe about 2 a.m. Saturday night and as I was leaving Farmerville I passed (60 mph) a red '65 Chevelle. After a little bit he speeded up and got behind me and was going to pass and in a racy manner. So I speeded up to about 115 quickly (if not more) and moved off about one third of a mile and slowed down. He came up and flashed his lights to stop. I did for a minute or so. He asked me what I had in there (the '69) and I said a 350. At this time there was a valve or spring messed up because it had been clicking a little bit for days, but it did not seem to be very bad.

CHAPTER FIVE: Calendar of Events**1963**

August Began saving \$100 a month for a car.

1964

April Bought 1957 Chevrolet from O'Neal Motors, El Dorado, Arkansas.

January

May Put Corvette 097 cam in engine and had valve job. I did work at Gulf gas station which became the Torch; later the Embers night club. J. B. Pigg operated gas station.

June Engine (283) had rod problem.

August Got 327 cu in/365 hp engine in car. A few weeks later, Hedman headers.

September Left for Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi. Chevelle races, West Point races, and others.

December Returned to Arkansas.

1965

January Bought Muncie four speed from Griffin Chevrolet.

March Started to work at Industrial Tool & Die Co.

April Met Sandra.

May Bought 4.56 positrac for '57. Also aluminum flywheel, Weber Borg and Beck pressure plate, and Weber clutch disc. Richard White received new, yellow, '65 Chevelle.

December

1966

January

February Married Sandra.

March Accident in '57 Chevy. Damaged front right fender. Purchased fiberglass hood and right front fender.

May Removed engine from '57. Purchased 12-1 pistons, Z50 cam, ported heads, etc.

1966 (Cont'd)

August Installed engine in '57 at parents' home. Wrist pin slid out of place and ruined block.

December

1967

January Reinstalled engine.

February Bought '65 Chevelle from Richard White.

April Bought Edlebrock Crossram intake manifold.

May Bought Isky Super LeGuerre Cam.

July Began removing engine for straight front axle.

August Completed front axle work.

September Ran Donald Moore at NAD.

October Went to drags at Farmerville with '57.

December Quit Industrial Tool & Die Co. Sandra left on Christmas eve.

1968

January Began at Southern State College. Commuted five days a week.

February Sold '57 to Bevis Roberts.

April

May Semester ends at South State College.

May Sandra came back. Ran Richard's '68 Chevelle.

June Began work at High Capacity Products.

July Bevis destroys engine in '57.

November Sandra left again.

1969

- January Rebuilt engine in '65 Chevelle at Mr. Atkins' house (Stage I).
- March Met Sharon.
- April Ran Rem Walker at Standard Upstead.
- May 3.70 Rear end broke in Chevelle (went to 3.31).
- September Installed 4.10 rear end (went to Haynesville with Herman).
- October Haynesville Drag Strip with Eddie.
- December Rebuilt 350 (Stage II) (used Rod Brown's 12.5 to 1 pistons).

1970

- January
- June El Dorado Drag Strip.
- December Rebuilt 350.

1971

- January
- May
- August Sharon goes to Monroe (graduate school in English).
- November Trip to Blytheville, Arkansas.
- December Springhill drag race.

1972

- January
- April Trip to Fayetteville.
- May Sharon gets back from Monroe.
Graduated from Southern State College (B.S. Physics).

1972 (Cont'd)

June Went to Europe. Car painted.
July Rebuilt engine.
August Races at NAD.
September Moved to Nacogdoches.
November Drag Race in Nacogdoches, Texas.
December Installed Z40 Isky Cam (310° , .511")

1973

January
March Bought Z28 intake manifold.
April Began trips to Houston, Galveston (Carol).
June Ran car at El Dorado Drag Strip. Pressure plate (Weber) hung on floor during shifts.
December Engine broke at Minden

1974

January Sold yellow '65 Chevelle to Sonny Young, I got red '65 Chevelle.
May Sonny sold car to Ruben.
December Graduated SFA (M.S. Physics).

1975

January Began work on black '64 Nova.
October Broke with Carol.
December

1976

January '64 Nova running.
December Got job at Nacogdoches Computer Service.

1977

May Bought '69 Chevelle.

December

1978

January

August Traded the red '65 Chevelle for yellow '65 Chevelle.
Yellow '65 Chevelle stored at Eddie's house.

December

1979

January Rear end installed under '65 Chevelle.

March

September 350 engine built and installed in car.

December

1980

January

March Bought Doug Nash Race five speed transmission.

May Installed 324° .589", camshaft.

June Tried car at Standard Upstead.

July Ran car at Prescott. Clutch slipping (12.50 with 4.10 gears).

October Ran 11.91 with 5.57 gears at Prescott.

December Got engine out to inspect it.

1981

January Bought trailer from Jr.

March Began body work on '65 Chevelle.

July '65 body painted.

August Ran car at Standard Upstead. Timing chain broke.

1981 (Cont'd)

December Engine installed in car with milder cam, 4.88 gears. Ported straight plug heads.

1982

January

May Bought '67 Corvette Coupe (327 cu in/350 hp, 4 speed)

October Bought 1973 Camaro Race Car.

November Installed 427 cu in/425 hp engine in '69 Chevelle. Built and installed 350 cu in in '65 with turbo heads, Z-40 Isky, 10.5-1, Z-28 intake, 780 Holley, ST-10 transmission, and 4.88 positraction. The '65 story to be continued.

December

1983

January

March Hope to have '73 Camaro running in 10.5 second range. Will have 350 cu in engine, Doug Nash 5 speed, 6.14 Dana rear end, 14" Firestones.

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