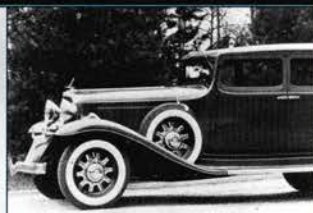




THE **Studebaker** STORY

1 7 3 6 - T O D A Y



A History By
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Studebaker & Automotive Historian

The Studebaker Story

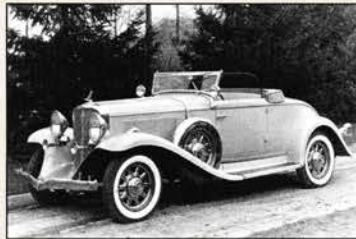
The Story: 1736 - 1929

1736 - 1750: Members of the Studebaker family came to America from Solingen, Germany, in 1736. For generations, Studebakers, or Stutenbeckers as they were called in Germany, had been involved in the blacksmithing trade. Many were producers of fine cutlery. The members of the family who came to America brought with them their metal working craft. The ability to form metal was essential in the construction of early Conestoga wagons. One of the immigrants, Clement Studebaker, reportedly built his first wagon in America around 1750.

1852: In February 1852, two of Clement's great grandchildren, Henry and Clement, opened the H&C Studebaker blacksmith shop in South Bend, Indiana. During their first year of operation, they built two horse-drawn farm wagons.

1853: In 1853, with the help of younger brother John M., they constructed a sturdy wagon, which John provided to a wagon train as his payment for overland passage to the California gold fields.

The Story: 1930 - 1951



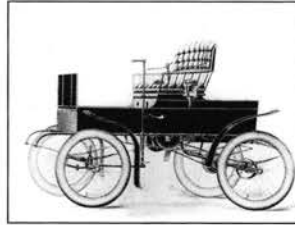
1932 Roadster

The Great Depression: Underestimating the impact of the Great Depression, Studebaker's president, Albert Erskine, inadvertently led the corporation into receivership in 1933. Paul Hoffman and Harold Vance saved the company, but much of Studebaker's momentum

had been lost. Studebaker would never completely regain the solid footing it had in 1929. Because of the Depression, Studebaker had to sell Pierce-Arrow in 1933. In the same year, they dropped the Rockne, another small car that Studebaker had launched in 1932. The Rockne was named in honor of famed Notre Dame football coach, Knute Rockne, and in many ways was a better car than the Erskine, which was discontinued in 1930.

For the 1934 model year, Studebaker introduced several advanced body designs, including the streamlined Land Cruiser, a car that was styled after the famous Pierce-Arrow Silver Arrow show cars. The Land Cruiser and Cruiser names were used off and on by Studebaker from 1934 to 1966.

1853 - 1858: From 1853 to 1858, John earned a small fortune in "Hangtown," Placerville, California, making wheelbarrows and other tools for the gold miners. In 1858, John returned to South Bend with his earnings and invested them in his brothers' business. The Studebaker brothers built hundreds of wagons for the North during the Civil War and by the time the United States was 100 years old, the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was the largest producer of horse-drawn vehicles in the world. By then, brothers Peter and Jacob were also involved in the company.



1902 Studebaker Electric

1902 and 1904: Studebaker entered the automobile business in 1902, when they introduced an electric car. Two years later, they brought out their first gasoline automobile, a two-cylinder, 16-horsepower touring car.

Commercial Trucks: During the thirties, Studebaker made a concerted effort to gain a foothold in the commercial truck field. In 1936, they introduced a line of cabover-engine trucks, and in 1937 the smoothly contoured Coupe-Express pickup premiered.



1937 Coupe-Express

Studebaker built quality trucks continuously from 1929 to December 1963. The Champ pickup, Transtar gas jobs, medium-duty Diesels and Postal Zip-Vans were their last commercial products. Studebaker also

built bus and fire engine chassis. Studebaker, off and on, assembled postwar military trucks until March 1964.

1939 The Champion is Introduced: The Champion, a very advanced small car, was introduced by Studebaker in 1939. The six-cylinder Champion proved to be an instant success. It was sold along with the larger eight-cylinder President and six-cylinder Commander. The Dictator name, for obvious reasons, was dropped at the end of the 1937 model year. Popular Studebaker options during this period were overdrive and the Hill Holder.

1911: In 1911, the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company combined with Everitt-Metzger-Flanders Company of Detroit to form the Studebaker Corporation. The Corporation marketed the EMF "30", the Flanders "20", the Studebaker-Garford "40", and Studebaker Electrics.

1913: By 1913, all of the above models had been discontinued, being replaced by four and six cylinder automobiles, all of which bore just the Studebaker name. During 1913, Studebaker became the third largest producer of automobiles in America, after Ford and Overland. Starting in 1913, all Studebaker Corporation automobile assembly was carried on in Detroit, but after the discontinuation of horse-drawn vehicle manufacturing in 1920, automobile production was gradually shifted to South Bend.

The 'Teens through the '20s: Studebakers marketed during the late 'teens and early twenties used names like Big Six, Special Six, Light Six and Standard Six, but for the 1927 model year, these "generic" names were discontinued and the President, Commander and Dictator model names were introduced. Also introduced in 1927 was a new quality small car called the Erskine. In 1928, Studebaker purchased Pierce-Arrow, a Buffalo, New York company that produced luxury automobiles.



General Douglas MacArthur (left facing Weasel) with his "4-star" amphibious Weasel.

Studebaker and The War Effort:

During World War II, Studebaker produced military trucks, aircraft engines and the Weasel, a tracked personnel and cargo carrier that was designed by Studebaker engineers. One version of the Weasel was amphibious.

Peace and a Postwar Economy: After the war, Studebaker was the first established automobile company to come out with all-new styling. The 1947 Studebakers were nicknamed the "Which-Way-Are-They-Going" cars for their similar front and rear stylings. Convertibles were again available in 1947, having been last marketed in 1939. Postwar convertibles were sold from 1947 to 1952 and from 1960 to 1964. The postwar design was revamped in 1950 with the addition of a bullet-nosed front end. This styling was continued through 1951. Studebaker's Automatic Drive was brought out in mid-1950, and a new modern overhead valve V8 engine was introduced in 1951 for the Commander models.

The Story: 1952 - 2007

1952: 100 Years of Studebaker: The Studebaker company celebrated its 100th anniversary as a road vehicle producer in 1952. Cadillac, currently America's oldest automobile make, did not reach its 100th birthday until 2002.

The "Loewy Coupes": In 1953, Studebaker brought out the beautiful low-slung "Loewy Coupes." They were produced in Starliner hardtop and Starlight pillared coupe form, and have many times been listed among the most beautiful cars in the world. Raymond Loewy, who had directed Studebaker styling since the 1938 models, oversaw the development of the Starliner/Starlight design, although the actual styling was created by Robert Bourke. In 1955, a sporty version of the "Loewy Coupe," called the Speedster, was produced. The Speedster concept was continued in 1956 with the introduction of the Hawk line of "family sports cars." During 1956-58, the Golden Hawk topped the line.



In 2005, the US Postal Service honored the 1953 Starliner with a postage stamp.



Again, in 2008, the USPS honored Studebaker, this time with a 1957 Golden Hawk postage stamp.

Studebaker-Packard Corporation:

In 1954, Packard, a highly respected automobile company that produced its first car in 1899, joined forces with Studebaker. The resulting Studebaker-Packard Corporation had a hard time competing with the Big Three (GM, Ford and Chrysler). From 1954 to 1958, Studebaker-Packard never had a profitable year. Because of this, the Packard line ended in 1958. The 1957 and 1958 Packards were actually Studebakers with special interiors and Packard trim.

New Models Introduced: In addition to the Hawks, Studebaker introduced several new models during the 1950s. In 1954, the Conestoga station wagon premiered. In 1955, the President line returned, having been marketed last in 1942. In 1957, a new economy series called the Scotsman was unveiled, and was fairly successful in 1957 and 1958.

1959 Lark . . . an All-New Compact Line: Due to the Scotsman's success and growing demand for practical transportation, in late 1958, Studebaker dropped all of its existing automobile models except the Silver Hawk and introduced an all-new compact line called the Lark. The Lark project was directed by Studebaker's president, Harold Churchill. The 1959 Lark was extremely successful, producing the highest one-year profit Studebaker had ever had up to that time.

1962 and 1963 . . . Speed and Sport:

In 1960, the Big Three countered with their own compacts and Studebaker again found itself struggling for survival. In an attempt to create a sportier image, Studebaker brought out the Gran Turismo Hawk in 1962 and introduced the dynamic Avanti for the 1963 model year. The fiberglass-bodied Avanti, when fitted with an optional supercharged



1963 Avanti

R3 engine, was capable of a true 170 miles per hour. It was the fastest production car that had ever been built in America. The Avanti also sported a wind cheating aerodynamic design, a built-in roll bar and caliper disc brakes, the first brakes of this type used on a full-sized American production car. The Avanti was instigated by Studebaker's new president, Sherwood Egbert, and styled by a team, under the direction of Raymond Loewy. The team included John Ebstein, Robert Andrews, and Thomas Kellogg. Final details were handled by Robert Doehler.

New Lark Models: The Lark line was given a flashier image with the introduction of the Cruiser in 1961, the Daytona in 1962 and the unique sliding-roof Wagonaire station wagon in 1963. A Lark Commander and Challenger were introduced for the 1964 model year. The 1962-64 Lark stylings and the GT Hawk were designed by in-



1963 Wagonaire

dustrial designer Brooks Stevens, the creator of the Excalibur motor car. Early Excaliburs used Studebaker frames and suspension. The original prototype had an Avanti engine.

Production in South Bend Discontinued: Unfortunately, the GT Hawk, the Avanti and the new Lark models did not improve Studebaker's economic position. Because of this, the board of directors voted to close down most of the South Bend plant in December 1963, and concentrate production in their small assembly plant in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Studebakers had also been assembled in other plants outside North America, and in Los Angeles from 1936 to 1956.

Production Continued in Canada: In 1964, only Lark-type vehicles were assembled in the Canadian plant, which meant the discontinuance of Avanti, Hawk and truck production after De-

ember 1963. Engines for 1964 Canadian Studebakers were built in South Bend, but beginning with the 1965 model year, GM engines, which were assembled in the McKinnon engine plant in St. Catharines, Ontario, were used by Studebaker. Profits from the Hamilton plant were minimal, so it was decided to close it down in March 1966. The last Studebaker was produced on March 17, 1966.

Studebaker Subsidiaries: The production of the last Studebaker did not mark a definite end of the company or its products. The Studebaker Corporation (the Packard name was officially dropped from the corporate title in 1962) had acquired numerous subsidiaries, such as STP, Gravely, Clarke and Onan. In mid-1967 Studebaker purchased the Wagner Electric Corporation and in November 1967 it combined with the Worthington Corporation to form the Studebaker-Worthington Corporation. In the fall 1979, the Studebaker-Worthington Corporation was absorbed by the McGraw-Edison Company. In April 1985, McGraw-Edison was acquired by Cooper Industries of Houston, Texas.



Post Studebaker Avanti: In 1965, Nathan Altman and Leo Newman formed the Avanti Motor Corporation and started producing the Avanti II in South Bend. The Avanti II was not a replica, but a continuation of the original Studebaker model. Since Studebaker had stopped building engines, the Avanti Motor Corporation used Corvette engines, but the frame, suspension and fiberglass body panels were essentially the same as before. From 1982 to 2007, Avanti assembly went through several changes of ownership and production location. During this period many new body styles were introduced, and more modern chassis were adopted. Post Studebaker Avanti production ended in 2007.

See Them at The Studebaker National Museum
www.studebakermuseum.org





Founded in 1962 by Harry Barnes, the Studebaker Drivers Club (SDC) is an international organization dedicated to the preservation and use of Studebaker vehicles. It is one of the largest single-marque old car clubs in the world.

The annual Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet attracts hundreds of members from around the world. Many drive their Studebakers thousands of miles to attend these meets. Zone Meets are also held each year in various parts of the U.S. and Canada. SDC members own everything from horse-drawn Studebaker wagons to late model Avanti sports cars.

The Studebaker Drivers Club has more than 100 chapters around the world with substantial memberships in Australia, New Zealand, South America, South Africa, and many European countries. Most of the chapters have monthly events, sponsor meets, publish newsletters and provide assistance in obtaining parts, service and technical assistance in the local area.

Turning Wheels® - Official Publication of SDC

The Studebaker Drivers Club publishes *Turning Wheels*, an award-winning monthly full color magazine that includes photos, feature articles, technical tips, meet reports, dozens of classified ads for Studebaker vehicles, parts and literature, and display ads by Studebaker vendors for parts and services.

Visit the Studebaker Drivers Club Website

At www.studebakerdriversclub.com there are complete listings of SDC chapters and Studebaker events and one of the most active discussion forums in the old car hobby. It's where Studebaker is spoken 24/7.

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