

FAIRBANKS

Vernon L. Nash

ALASKA



Antique Automobile Club of America

## BIOGRAPHY OF A 1952 PLYMOUTH

By Bill Chace

I was asked by the editor of the Plymouth Club to write a story about the incident that led to the recent restoration efforts of our 1952 Plymouth. This story, by the way, will not be the first one published about this Plymouth. The facts will appear in the January 2006 Plymouth Bulletin. In the mean time our club editor asked me for a sneak preview. We decided together to publish this in two parts. The first part is a history of the Plymouth. The second will be the story of the incident which forced me to pay a great deal of attention to the old girl.

1952 Plymouth Cranbrook Memories



In 1929 when Clarence Chace graduated from Coyne Electrical College in Chicago the stock market crashed, Clarence lost his job with the electrical division of United Delco, and jobs became non existent. After hopping freights and working with steam threshing crews in the Midwest, my father found a job with Motorola in St. Louis. The onset of the Great Depression contributed to this job

drying up. He, on his 1920 Indian, and with 2 biker buddies, took off on a tour of the West to California. He returned to find no work in Iowa. He worked part time electrical jobs at the Chicago World's Fair in 1934. The fair introduced this farm boy to unknown things previously only read about.

Dad always said he'd be returning to California. He liked this area, and his favorite Aunt lived in Santa Monica. Jobs were still not available, and in 1935 he again went to California. Finding no jobs he enlisted in the Marines. WW2 happened along, and during the war he fell in love with the Long Beach area. After discharge from the Marine Corps at the end of WW2, my parents moved to Southern California where my sister and I were born and raised.

At 18, I decided on a college in the mountains of Northern California, and was all set to buy a 32 Ford rumble seat coupe for the massive amount of \$400.00. This car had been recently rebuilt and upgraded with juice brakes and seal beams. My Dad and Mom said they could remember 30's cars and they weren't reliable so "I should take the old family car, It wasn't anything special, I wouldn't need to worry about hurting it, it never would let me down and after all the License Plate (BAM 399) told it all". I knew what he meant as I had heard that before; he was a Marine and he referred to the Plymouth as "her." What else could BAM stand for but a Broad Assed Marine? This was true, and I never worried about it one bit. This decision was probably the reason why I never had any antique Fords.

The car was 12 years old, covered with surface rust, and had only been driven 78,000 rugged miles. Dad and I sanded out the rust and took it to Earl Scheib for a \$29.95 paint job.

I grew up camping in a WW 2 green wall tent, and rock hunting in the deserts. Many times in the fall, winter or spring we would be crunching or sliding, fording flash streams, getting stuck or high centered in a mountain creek bed, in the Mojave desert or in areas like Quartzite, AZ before it became a snowbird capital.

Once when high-centered on a boulder, water came running under the door, across the floor boards filling above the driveling hump, and out the other door. My sister and I lifted our feet to the sounds of Mom screaming "we were going to drown" and Dad saying "calm down woman" and all the while we were getting ever closer to the mother lode of agate or crystal diggings.

Once I remember Dad plugging the oil pan with pieces of cork from the water jug, driving the car up on a pile of rocks, and an old timer helping take off the oil pan. Heating the pan in the camp fire and with bellows and a hammer he forged the punctures closed.

Five different brands of oil were added to the crankcase because our friends carried a spare quart each. After one of these trips the gas tank carried 5 gallons less and I learned to differentiate between a squeal from a smashed flywheel housing, a knock from the crank throw against the crushed oil pan or the rip of the side mold trim. "No big deal we'd fix that later." He always wanted a Jeep and the only other 4X4 made was a Dodge Power wagon.

The Plymouth never let us down in spite of abuse. It was the first new car Dad ever owned. He selected the car while driving an old 1938 Pontiac beater. He jotted on a notepad in his shirt pocket all the vehicles and their breakdowns. When the Pontiac died he ordered the Plymouth.

Being our family car, it was really the first regular car I drove. I worked on farms pulling wagons with tractors and trucks and I followed the summer racing circuit with my cousin in the late 50's early 60's. I drove all sorts of race cars to the track, but my cousin did all the racing while I helped with the greasy grunt work in the pits. There was no minimum work age back then.

To keep warm while in college, I and my buddy Dave would take the back seat out, drive to the mill after the 4pm whistle, load the trunk and seats to the ceiling with mill ends, and drive up town to our house with Dave riding the fender, holding onto the ship hood ornament. This ongoing rough treatment destroyed the headliner and upholstery.

I skied regularly with the National Ski Patrol and was on the college ski team. The Plymouth was no stranger to snow and was frequently in the ditch. Snow chains were the norm.

On one of our many skiing trips to Mt. Shasta I discovered this well built car could be driven into a snow bank to the sun visor and back out with only slight dents.

The car was my regular driver through college, dating and marriage to Joyce. We dated in the Plymouth, and a prerequisite was Joyce had to like my car, so we kept it. In 1970 we finished graduate school and I entered the Viet Nam conflict via the Air Force. We put the car in storage until 1975 when I was assigned to March AFB in Riverside Ca. Joyce and I completed restoring the interior and after 2 years in California I was assigned to Eielson AFB. We stored the car again. I was discharged in 1980, both had jobs with the school district, and that summer we drove the Plymouth to Alaska. We Joined the Club that year at the urging of Vern Nash.



I met Vern Nash in April, 1977. He had one of his T's on display in the brand new Bentley Mall. We talked, he reached out to a G.I. and invited me along on the McKinley tour. I stayed at the old Lodge and observed the fun and games with the Fairbanks Horseless Carriage Club (HCCA) and the Anchorage (HCCA) Antique Auto Mushers club. I met Gary, and when the rest of my family came to Alaska in July we were determined to bring the Plymouth. Back then the club was small enough to meet in individual homes.

The Plymouth had many war wounds and I put off body work because I know how hard it is. I was always saying I'd get around to fixing the dings and kinks. Every dent, scratch, and gouge held a memory as Garry Farnham and I discovered last year.

Circumstances caused me to pay more attention to the Plymouth this past year but that part of the story will appear at a later date. With all these memories available who could part with the family reliable.

#### HISTORIC CAR FOR SALE IN DAWSON

Here is a rare opportunity to own a piece of Dawson history. Bob Cartwright of Dawson City is selling his prize 1931 Model A Phaeton. The car has been in the Dawson area since new and was owned by some prominent miners in the area during its past life. It was converted into a pickup at one time for hauling mining supplies. The car was rescued as a charming but tried old rusty hulk and received a quality frame-off restoration.





As you can see in the next photo the car is very sharp and will make someone a very proud owner



Loran Benham has some restoration process photos of the car and can provide information about the car's history and how to contact Bob Cartwright. Loran (Squeaky) can be reached at 474-4966. NADA information indicated the car is valued at between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday December 11, 2005 Christmas Party at the Elks Club. Doors open at 4:00 PM. Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM. The menu includes prime rib, deep fried prawns, red potatoes and green salad. Dinner prices are \$8.00 for members and \$23.00 for guests. There will be a Chinese auction for the gift exchange. If you wish to participate, bring a gift worth between \$15 and \$20 marked for either a male or female. If you do not wish to participate in the gift exchange, you can stay and watch the fun while others open the gifts. Club dues should be paid at the Christmas Party along with dinner costs. Single dues - \$45. Couples dues - \$60.



#### Classified Ads

\* **1929 Chrysler two door sedan.** 96% restored. Asking \$16,000. Call Susan Carney at 474-8260.

\* Looking for **1960-61 Chevy Apache Pickup** side molding. Greg Oslund 488-1354 cell 378-0615

\* **1941 Dodge 1/2 Military 4x4 Carry All-** \$7,800, and a **1952 Chevy Tin Woody Station wagon**, \$6,500, both in good shape. 479-2082

Place your ad here at no charge.

**The Club needs your pictures!!** If you have pictures from events in 2001-2004, please share them with the club. We do not have photo albums from these years. For more information, please contact Bill Chace at 488-3805



#### BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

##### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 05 Ron Dane
- 05 Glenn Shaw
- 17 Shawn Rogers
- 20 Clinton Chace
- 23 Furman Datson
- 27 Corbett Upton
- 30 Laurel McLaughlin

##### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 03 Gene & Tena Yurkovich
- 04 Bill & Samornrat Wright
- 15 Willy & Wilma Vinton
- 18 George & Nila Lyle
- 19 Terry & Sharon Whitledge
- 22 Don & Angie Oines
- 26 Carl & Connie Jeglum
- 26 Ken & Wendy Uzzell
- 29 Sam & Bonnie Scott

#### CLUB JACKETS

Marion Benham will be putting together an order of Club Jackets. If you want a jacket please call her at 474-4966. We need to get an order for 20 jackets to get a price break. She will re-confirm your order and give you a price when she has received/gotten enough orders.

#### VLNAAC OFFICER ELECTIONS

All incumbent officers were reelected at the November meeting. Also elected for director positions (member-at-large) were Loran Benham, Paul Camarata, and Don Oines. Loran subsequently declined the position. Marion Benham was recognized as the "vice" treasurer (Yikes!) for filling in for Ruth when in Hawaii for the winter. We are all very thankful that all of these individuals have committed their time and effort to continuing the operation of our great club.

Check out our website at:  
[www.fairbanksoldcars.org](http://www.fairbanksoldcars.org)

## OFFICERS

President	Willy Vinton	<a href="mailto:Willy@ntc.fairbanks.ak.us">Willy@ntc.fairbanks.ak.us</a>	474-0939 day 456-2261 evn
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Secretary	Laurel McLaughlin	<a href="mailto:mcbug@gci.net">mcbug@gci.net</a>	452-5234
Treasurer	Ruth Hill		452-4510
Newsletter	Ron Allen	<a href="mailto:ronandnancy@gci.net">ronandnancy@gci.net</a>	488-3965
Webmaster	Wilma Vinton	<a href="mailto:wvinton@acsalaska.net">wvinton@acsalaska.net</a>	456-2261
Events Coordinator	Sherry Camarata	<a href="mailto:psccamarata@acsalaska.net">psccamarata@acsalaska.net</a>	488-4293
Roster/Membership	Marion Benham	<a href="mailto:Mvbenham1@yahoo.com">Mvbenham1@yahoo.com</a>	474-4966

### Next Meeting-Sunday

December 11 Christmas Party  
 at the Elks Club. Doors open at  
 4:00 pm. Dinner is at 5:30 pm.  
 See the upcoming events section  
 for details.

### Newsletter Deadline

All materials for the newsletter must be in by typically  
 the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for being included in the following  
 month. This date does change depending on time and  
 occasional memory constraints, so please forgive (or  
 fire) the editor if he misses your request.

Email [ronandnancy@gci.net](mailto:ronandnancy@gci.net) or  
 Mail to return address on this newsletter

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