



*Bob and Florence's 64 Corvette*

It was 1956 and I was just out of high School and still living at home. I was going to the U of W and had been saving money to buy a car. I had looked at Jaguars, Austin Healeys and MGs, but I couldn't afford them. Not even a MG let a lone an Austin Healey, which is the one I had my eye on. So, I had been looking for a 1951 Chevrolet Sport Coupe, a more practicable car for a student. No?

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## Bob's 1964 Corvette Fixer Upper

My cousin, who was staying at my folk's place, had a friend who repossessed cars. One day he came over driving a 1956 red corvette. I can still see that car. Red with white coves, automatic, 225-hp V-8, white walls with full chrome wheel covers and red interior. The top, what top, all I know was it didn't have a top.

As the excitement of looking the car over settled down, I heard a voice, "Take it for a ride." How long was I gone? Who knows? I can't even remember where I went? It was like the commercial where the father tells his son to take his Vette and fill it with gas. Two hours later he is back and his father is standing in bewilderment when the son tell him. "You didn't want me to put the new gas with the old gas?" "Did you?"

I was hooked. The fact that I was going to school didn't stop me from finding out that I couldn't afford a car like that, but I could dream. So, you guessed it, I bought a 1951 Chevrolet Sport Coupe. But I was hooked on Corvettes.

As the years went by I found myself married, with two daughters almost out of College but not married - more money. During those years I got close to buying a Corvette. It was a 1952 MG TD. If I was going to have a Corvette I had to find a way. It wasn't long before I realized that I had to get one I could restore. Of course my first choice was a 1956 or 1957 but I soon realized I had to broaden my options too include the years 1963 through 1967 which I liked almost as much. There seemed to be fewer 56 and 57s available and at a higher cost. So I started looking for that fixer upper and a way to get in to a corvette.

With no exceptions, it had to be a convertible. With the expansion to include the years 63 through 67 the coupes came in to play. There seem to be more coupes needing repair then Convertibles and more 63 through 67s, which was ok. Over the course of several months I found a fixer upper. A 1964 red convertible with four speed Transmission and a 327ci 300 hp engine.

The seller started to restore the car but was getting a divorce and needed to liquidate his assets. The car had been in a front-end collision. He had put on new front fenders, a used grill and front bumpers. The headlight assemble did not rotate and open up and I could see he had put them in place just to sell the car. There was no soft-top but it had a new windshield, a rebuilt engine plus it had been painted. Not a great paint job, but ok at about ten feet. The front-end collision did not seem to damage the frame. I really didn't know, but I would find out later that it did cause a slight problem with the 4-way alignment.

The interior was trashed, old seats, no carpet, no weather stripping on doors etc., and the Doors sagged. A Hurst shifter had damaged the console beyond repair. The only thing on the Instrumentation panel that worked was the oil gauge.

The dash had been painted and some lenses almost totally painted black. As someone once told me this paint condition is a "Slightly Modify Condition" so don't worry about it. The wiring was also bad to say the least and it needed replacing. The main fuse box was a rusted mess and there was no heater. The rear axle ratio was such that at highway speeds the engine rpm was just under 4000 rpm. Or it sure sounded like it. But its acceleration was great. There was no doubt this was a fixer upper. But the car looked good at -maybe 10 feet, or maybe 15 feet. Yes, from my visual assessment topside I could just about assure myself that the running gears were just as bad. Who knew how many miles or how many drag races it had on it. The car was in need of total repair. The only good thing I saw was it had the makings of a Corvette. What more did I want, I had my "Corvette Fixer Upper".

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Now I had a plan. My daughters were always asking what they could get me for my birthday, father's day, Christmas, or just being nice to good old dad. They could now buy me corvette parts. I needed a lot of parts. That plan didn't go over to well. Women just can't relate to car parts as gifts.

Over the next several years and after two big weddings it was time for me to get the corvette roadworthy. So the last two winters I was replacing or repairing the front and rear suspension. Which included new springs forward and aft, new trailing arm assemblies with spindles, the brake system, transmission, clutch assembly, and rebuilt the rear end plus changed the gear ratio. The only thing left to replace was the exhaust system and the radiator.

Engine compartment needed wiring, a new carburetor and ignition shielding hardware, which is needed if the car has a radio, windshield wiper assemble repair, belts, hoses, and you name it.

Then came the interior. New dash pads and a complete redo of the instrumentation panel and wiring. New flooring, upholstery, and interior lighting assemblies, a new convertible top and new tires. Last was the headlight assembly and the exterior trim and Molding

Now it was a time for a shake down cruse to work out the bugs. One mile down the road the car stops and two hours later I am home. Still not knowing exactly what I was doing to keep the car running for little spurts and then stopping. But I got the car home. I heard a clunk every time I shifted, the clutch needed adjusting, and the engine would back fire through the carburetor. Is this normal for a backyard hobbyist that loves Chevrolets?

Well, I fixed the clunk by tightening the rear transmission support bolts that were only hand tightened, adjusted the clutch and fixed the engine vacuum leak. And after several days I discovered the main connector to the engine harness was loosely connected.

Then on my next outing after filling up with gas I noticed at the bottom of the radiator a large steady stream of fluid. That was an easy fix. It only cost money.

And I wanted a fixer upper