

Finally Appreciated

By Bob Schmeichel

In the summer of 2013 Ken and Vickie Levene decided to venture out to see their daughter and granddaughter in Emporia, Kansas with their 1959 Edsel Corsair convertible. Ken and Vickie being car people, love the excitement and fun of a road trip with an older car as long as there are no problems. As Ken was telling me this story, there was no mention of any issues to or from their destination. Early one day while cruising around Emporia with the Edsel, they passed by a car show that was going on. Being curious and excited at the same time, they turned around to go check it out. After parking and walking into the car show, Ken and his granddaughter went off looking in one direction for awhile, while Vickie and her daughter went in another. With Vicky having an agenda she found Ken about

ten minutes later and informed him she had entered the Edsel in the show, so he needed to get the bugs washed off. Twenty minutes later with all helping the car was finally clean giving everyone a chance to sit down and enjoy the car show scene around them. Even with lots of cars, a lot of times a car show becomes more of a fun social event than anything else. As they sat visiting, a bright yellow and white 1955 Ford Crown Victoria idled in with a "For Sale" sign on it. They all watched where it was driven to and later walked over to check it out. It was a gorgeously finished car that had a total restoration just completed. With everything about the car rebuilt or looking new Ken wanted to know more about the car which pretty much underlines the title of this story. As the present owner was telling Ken about the car and what he knew of it, I really didn't know what to think of the picture as it unfolded, so you'll have to pay attention to the story here. The present owner had moved from California to a little town outside of Emporia, Kansas with a restoration business he had restoring only 1955-1957 T-Birds. Neither Ken nor I understood why this guy moved to Kansas, but I guess land and buildings are cheaper in the middle of the country compared to any place in California. The present owner went on to say he had just gotten the car as a trade in for one of his T-Birds and today was the first time he had driven the car. He then went on to tell about the previous owner who had been pushing him for a few years to take this 55 Victoria as a trade in even though it was unfinished and had been in a body shop torn apart for the last twenty years. Apparently the previous owner had a lot of money, lots of old cars, and no real hurry to get this car done. That same previous owner had stopped into the present owners shop a number of times over the last few years demanding a trade for one of the T-Birds. Finally the previous owner told him he would push the body shop where the car had been for the last twenty years, to get it back together, done and drivable so a trade could be made. Reluctantly the present owner made the trade a couple days earlier before the car show allowing a certain dollar amount for the 55 Victoria for one of his T-Birds to get the guy off his back. And because the present owner was specialized in the T-Birds only and had no real interest in this 55 Victoria, his asking price for the car was exactly what he allowed the previous owner for a trade in value. Ken wrote down the guys name and information about the car even though he thought it would never be agreeable to Vicky, his wife, to buy. They enjoyed the rest of their trip and time with the daughter and granddaughter while seeing much of the area in the Edsel with the top down. Then a strange thing happened on the way home back to South Dakota. Vicky started talking about this 1955 Victoria with reasoning that made Ken smile. She said she just loved the car, its colors, and the way it looked inside. It was made in 1955, same as her birthday, it had the same first name "Victoria" as she had, and that they should buy the car. Ken said smiling if she was up for it, he was game for it too. "Who doesn't want another old car," he said smiling?? After they got home, Ken called the guy back to see if he would bend a bit on the price only to get a no not really, and was still firm on what he allowed as a trade value. So Ken agreed to the price and drove back down that way the next weekend to retrieve the car to bring it home. Once the car was at home Ken got to really see the value of what they had bought with no disappointments. Everything was touched in one way shape or form. The car did have some small starting and running issues for awhile that took time to figure out. Apparently after sitting for twenty years, someone at the body shop hooked up the coil wires backwards and also used 12 volt solenoid instead of a 6 volt one. This could be a very easily made mistake from that era if you don't know the difference. 1955 Fords were 6 volt and 1956 had 12 volt systems. Another thing that people may not

realize is that Fords were positive ground then too instead of negative ground which can add to the confusion. I asked Ken about converting it to 12 volt which might make it start and run even better, but he said he likes it the way it is now because everything works just as it should. Even the original 6 volt power seat and windows still work like new. Why would he want to change anything? I think the overall styling with the extra trim on this model along with the way the interior glows in the sun and the factory continental kit on the back, this 1955 Crown Victoria really has an ever so appealing look that will stand the test of time against any car from the 1950's.



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