

1931 STUDEBAKER COUPE

1931 Studebaker Sport Coupe, Model 54, 2-door, 4 passenger

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$895.00

Number made: 23,917 (Model 54's)

Engine, etc.: L-head in-line 6 cyl; 205.2 cu. in. 70 hp, 3 speed; 114" wheelbase; 2,840 lbs.

Options on the Model 54 included front bumper, power tire pump, heater, trunk rack, trunk.

The Dutch name of Studebaker is one of the oldest in the automotive industry, with roots that date back to 1852 when the company manufactured wagons. The business expanded to equip the Union Army with wagons during the Civil War. By 1875, they could claim to be the "largest vehicle house in the world".

Twenty years later, at the dawn of the automobile age, the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company was making 75,000 horse-drawn vehicles a year. New auto tycoons asked them to supply chassis for their vehicles which eventually led to true Studebaker cars. Twenty electric Studebaker cars were made in 1902, officially the company's first cars.

The type and numbers of cars manufactured increased through the years. Studebaker modernized to meet new demands with cars that were intended for the mid-market, offering luxury, comfort and style at a reasonable price. The name stood for moderate prices, light and economical engineering design, adventurous styling and persistent financial trouble.

In 1926 Studebaker became the first automobile manufacturer in the U. S. to open a controlled outdoor proving ground. In 1928 Studebaker bought Pierce-Arrow.

It increased its sales list to 50 models by 1929 and business was so good that 90% of earnings were being paid out as dividends to shareholders in a highly competitive environment. By the end of that year however, the Great Depression began, resulting in many layoffs and massive unemployment.

By 1933 the company entered temporary receivership but came back in 1934 with new financing. It originated many style and engineering milestones and after World War II returned to building automobiles that appealed to average Americans. It registered several years of sales success with more than 200,000 cars sold in both 1950 and 1951.

Studebaker Corporation didn't go out of business in 1966 – it simply quit making cars then. The Studebaker name disappeared for good from the American business scene in 1979. It never quite mastered the art of consistently earning money in the making and selling of automobiles.

Sources: <https://www.studebakermuseum.org/archives-and-education/the-studebaker-history/> (Archives, photos, etc.)

<https://www.motorcities.org/story-of-the-week/2021/a-brief-history-of-studebaker> (History with pictures)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studebaker>

<http://classicrodatabase.com/specs.php?series=759&year=1931&model=20740>