

DODGE PASSENGER AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

This year Dodge cars and trucks are the feature vehicles at Power of the Past. The make is sure to be well represented as there have been many Dodges at previous events. The club even owns a Dodge truck but it is far from *concoirs d'elegance* condition! It spent its working days on Jack Muller's orchard and could probably tell a few wild tales if given the opportunity.

It is hoped that club member John Illingworth will be able to bring a 1917 Dodge Tourer to POP. He is currently custodian of the vehicle which is owned by the Sporting Car Club of SA, and could well be the oldest representative at POP 2014.

Brief Company and Vehicle History (abridged from www.conceptcarz.com)

1901-1914: Brothers John and Horace Dodge rose from humble beginnings to become giants in the early American automobile industry. In the first 12 years of Henry Ford output, all of the engines and other mechanicals were built by the Dodge brothers firm.



Figure 1 John and Horace Dodge, expert machinists, astute business men, founders of Dodge Brothers

In 1914, the brothers formed a new company, Dodge Brothers, Inc. and began building their own vehicles — the world's first mass-produced all-steel touring cars.

Capitalizing on their products' quickly established reputation for reliability and value, the Dodge Brothers firm began using the word 'dependability' in advertising. Customers responded, and by 1925, one million Dodge cars had been manufactured and sold.

With their early passenger cars earning recognition for durability and value, the Dodge brothers soon began considering ways to convert their successful car platform to truck applications. During

1917, their firm began producing 'commercial cars,' including military ambulances and screen-sided business trucks. Panel delivery trucks, fire trucks, pickups, chassis-cabs and other models were soon offered.

During 1920, the company lost its founding fathers. John Dodge died in January and his younger brother Horace succumbed the following December.



World War 1 Dodge Brother Army Truck

In 1921, Dodge Brothers agreed to market Graham Brothers medium-duty trucks through its dealerships; in turn, every Graham vehicle utilized a Dodge engine. This partnership provided Dodge dealers with a full line of trucks to sell in addition to the highly regarded Dodge passenger cars, and the resulting sales increases prompted Dodge to buy the Graham Brothers firm.

A New York investment banking firm paid the brothers' widows, in a single cash payment, \$146 million for the Dodge Brothers firm. Within three years, the

bankers initiated negotiations with Walter Chrysler to buy Dodge. When the \$170 million transaction was completed on July 31, 1928, Chrysler Corporation had grown fivefold overnight to be-

come the third of Detroit's 'Big Three' automakers.

In 1930, 'Dodge Brothers' became simply 'Dodge,' and the brand's first eight-cylinder engine was completed. The distinctive ram's head hood ornament first appeared in 1932.

Through the 1930s, Dodge continued to expand its passenger car line, adding contemporary options like radios and straight-eight engines. A four-door sedan built in 1935 was the brand's three-millionth car. But other vehicles in the Dodge lineup were gaining in popularity; the purchase of Graham Brothers had made Dodge one of the leading single-brand producers of light- and medium-duty trucks.

During World War II, Dodge-made war materials appeared in weapons, tanks, ships, aircraft and air raid sirens. Particularly notable among Dodge's contributions were more than 500,000 military trucks and over 18,000 aircraft engines.

New developments after the War included the 1953 Coronet with new Red Ram 'HEMI-Head' engine, the first Dodge V-8 in 20 years and first of the soon-to-be-legendary HEMI® engines that would equate the words 'Dodge' and 'speed' for generations. With this care and others, Dodge began to establish its reputation as Chrysler's performance brand.

In the mid 60's Dodge entered the small-car (or 'compact') field for the first time with the Lancer, a uniquely styled car that was almost two feet shorter than a full-size Dodge. This platform provided the basis for a series of Chrysler cars that were to capture 40 percent of the total American compact market in the early 1970s.

Even so, full-size cars were still very much in demand throughout the 1960s. The 1965 Dodge large-car lineup contained 13 models, including the sporty Polara and the plush new Monaco with bucket seats front and back. A remarkable array of optional convenience, trim and powertrain choices, including no fewer than 10 different engines, kept car shoppers busy.

America's fondness for fast cars was effusively addressed by Dodge during the 'muscle car' era of the late '60s and early 1970s. Placing large V-8 engines in intermediate-size cars with optional levels of accessorizing brought drag strip-style performance to street racers and distinctive collector cars to thousands of other buyers.

The effects of the 1973 oil crisis, which spawned skyrocketing prices for both crude oil and retail gasoline, were new government emissions regulations and rising insurance rates that combined to bring the muscle-car era to a close and generate new interest in smaller, more fuel-efficient cars. Dodge responded with the subcompact Omni, one of the first American-made cars with front-wheel drive.

On the occasion of the Dodge brand's 90th anniversary in 2004, it could be said that the brothers' vision for their enterprise had been fulfilled. Millions of customers still appreciated the dependable Dodge difference in passenger cars. Dodge remained a leader in the modern-day truck market, producing a variety of models with numerous powertrain options.

