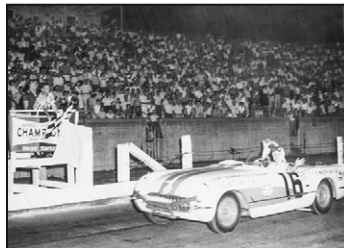
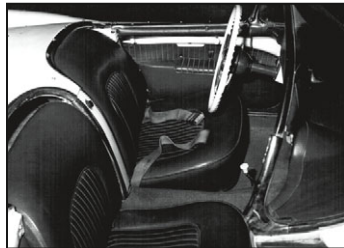
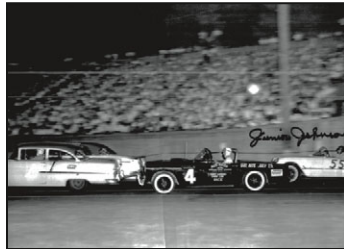


1953 Corvette NASCAR Unit VIN #E53F001211 (A.K.A. 211) "The Untold Story"



"The oldest known
Corvette Race Car"





1953 Corvette NASCAR Unit
VIN #E53F001211 (A.K.A. 211)
“The Untold Story”

**The earliest known Corvette Race Car.
Built by Chevrolet Engineering
Experimental Shop for stock car
racing in late November 1955 and
shipped to Smokey Yunick in time
for the 1956 Daytona Beach Classics
(Speed Week).**

**“The oldest known
Corvette Race Car”**

19 CHEVROLET 53
NASCAR Corvette
VIN #211
Chevrolet Engineering

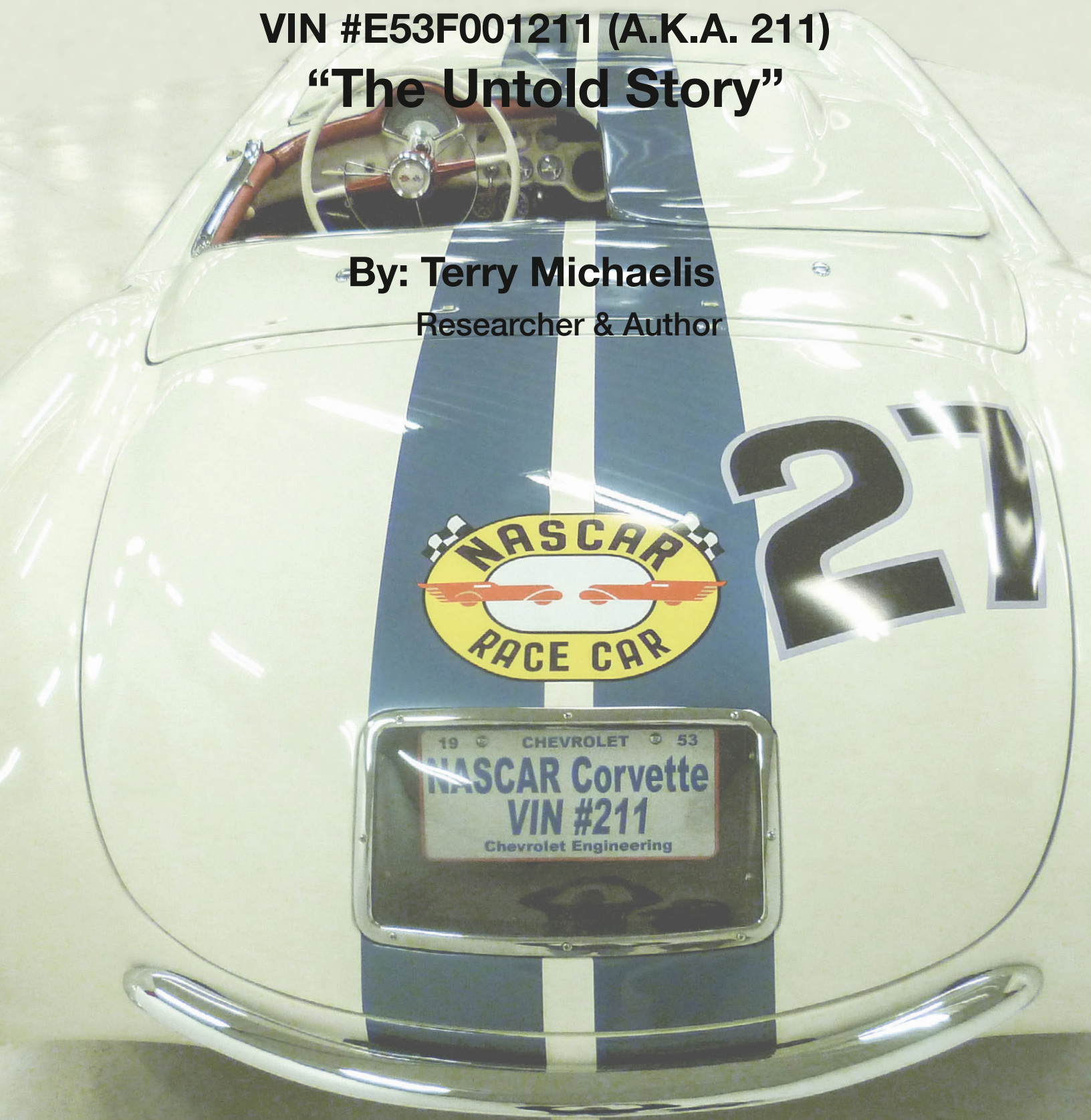
1953 Corvette NASCAR Unit

VIN #E53F001211 (A.K.A. 211)

“The Untold Story”

By: Terry Michaelis

Researcher & Author



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This publication and story of #211 has been produced by the car's owner to solidify the past history of a 1953 Corvette #E53F001211 owned by ProTeam Corvette Sales of Napoleon, Ohio

This publication has been produced for peer review, additions, and/or corrections.

This publication is not for sale or re-sale.

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email: terry@proteamcorvette.com or visit NASCARCorvette.com.

Printed in the United States of America

Introduction

I purchased a 1953 Chevrolet Corvette, VIN #E53F001211, a few years ago as part of a fourteen car collection. I will refer to this very special 1953 Corvette as #211 because it is the 211th Corvette produced in Chevrolet's first year of Corvette production of only 300 Corvettes.

I was unaware at the time of purchase that there was any significant history so I advertised #211 for sale in Hemmings Motor News and several internet outlets, until I was approached by Loren Lundberg a Corvette historian, enthusiast, collector, and friend who noted “#211 had Chevrolet engineering roots.”

I began a 3-1/2 year research project that has become one of the most challenging and most rewarding projects I have undertaken and I found that my 1953 Corvette #211 and a 1955 Corvette #399 had very deep early NASCAR roots (1955-1957) and were both probably owned by NASCAR and Bill France.

I have been to the NASCAR archives in Daytona, the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, and made and received hundreds of phone calls and emails. Interestingly, I found that 99.5% of the three million Corvette enthusiasts and 99.5% of the over thirty million NASCAR enthusiasts had no knowledge that two early Corvettes raced in NASCAR sanctioned sports car races at famous tracks like Bowman Gray Stadium, Martinsville Speedway, Raleigh Speedway, and Daytona Beach with legendary drivers like Johnny Dodson, Junior Johnson, Pee Wee Jones, Ralph Liguori, Jimmy Massey, Bobby Myers, Gwyn Staley, and Don and Herb Thomas.

Even more interesting there was a Paul Whiteman connection. Paul was appointed as National Director of NASCAR's Sports Car Division by Bill France, who was still trying to define NASCAR's scope. Whiteman was revered by biographers as “The King of Jazz” for commissioning and debuting Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, the original hit recording of Japanese Sandman, and almost two dozen other big band hits.

Junior Johnson drove the white 1955 Corvette VIN #399 for Mr. Whiteman in 1955 and confirmed it with this author on October 15th, 2014.

I am a novice researcher learning on the fly and have little desire to write a book but the unearthed story of the shared Corvette/NASCAR history is compelling. Both brands came of age in the fifties and have left an indelible mark on the American psyche. Both faced a quiet fade to black had it not been for strong personalities like Chevrolet's Ed Cole and NASCAR's Bill France. Had it not been for the NASCAR/Chevrolet Engineering experiment, the Corvette may have gone the way of the Edsel or suffered the same fate as other sports cars; imagine adding two more doors and a backseat, ie, the T-Bird!!.

One final note, as I prepped and readied the #211 history, the team at ProTeam stretched itself putting sound research to practice and produced a Concourse level automobile true to its storied past and is simply pure art.

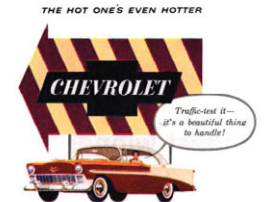
Please enjoy my research, which is available for peer review, additions, and/or corrections.

Author/researcher: Terry Michaelis, email: terry@proteamcorvette.com

What's Missing in this Ad?



THE BEL AIR SPORT SEDAN—One of Chevrolet's ten new 4-door hardtops. Body by Fisher, of course.



19 sure cures for Spring Fever ... all easy to take !

Those fresh and frisky '56 Chevrolets

Are you feeling slightly day-dreamy these days? Find yourself thinking of far-away places where tall trees hem in the highway and sunlight skips merrily along a chuckling mountain stream? That's spring fever, friend!

It's curable, though—and we don't mean with sulphur and molasses. You just pick out a frisky new Chevrolet and go find that mountain stream. Or, if you can't get away for the trip, just owning a new Chevrolet will do the trick.

Sunday sightseeing around town and afternoon jaunts in the countryside are shiny new adventures when you're driving one of these fun-loving new Chevies.

In all, Chevrolet offers 19 sure cures for spring fever—all with Body by Fisher and horsepower ranging up to 225 for safer, happier traveling. Your Chevrolet dealer will be happy to fill the prescription. . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.



THE BEL AIR SPORT COUPE—Another hardtop honey! With windows down, it's wide open for fun!



THE BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE—Loves to go—and looks it. Horsepower ranges clear up to 225!



THE BEL AIR NOMAD—Sweet and low. This 6-passenger beauty is Chevrolet's last word in wagons!



THE BEL AIR 4-DOOR SEDAN—Chevrolet brings you the security of safety door latches in all models!



THE BEL AIR 2-DOOR SEDAN—A beautiful thing to handle! Ball-rod steering makes turning easier.



THE BEL AIR BEAUVILLE—Seats nine passengers, or converts quickly to roomy cargo carrier.



THE "TWO-TEN" SPORT SEDAN—Four doors and no sidepoets in this stylish new Chevy.



THE "TWO-TEN" BEAUVILLE—This 4-door wagon holds a whole baseball team, or 1 1/2 tons of cargo.



THE "TWO-TEN" SPORT COUPE—Made to have fun with—and it's Chevrolet's lowest priced hardtop!



THE "TWO-TEN" 4-DOOR SEDAN—As you can see, the "Two-Ten" series has its own sunny new styling.



THE "TWO-TEN" TOWNSMAN—Plenty of room for six—plus big load space in this 4-door wagon.



THE "TWO-TEN" 2-DOOR SEDAN—Direction signals are standard in all new Chevrolets.



THE "TWO-TEN" HANDYMAN—Looking for a 2-door station wagon that seats six and handles big loads?



THE "TWO-TEN" DELRAY CLUB COUPE—Its all-steel interior bristles on hard use. Washes clean.



THE "ONE-FIFTY" 4-DOOR SEDAN—Notice the tasteful chrome trim on Chevrolet's latest priced sedan!



THE "ONE-FIFTY" 2-DOOR SEDAN—Your choice of V8 or 4 power to enjoy new Chevrolet.



THE "ONE-FIFTY" UTILITY SEDAN—The entire rear compartment is load space.



THE "ONE-FIFTY" HANDYMAN—Rear seat folds flat for extra carrying capacity in this 2-door wagon.

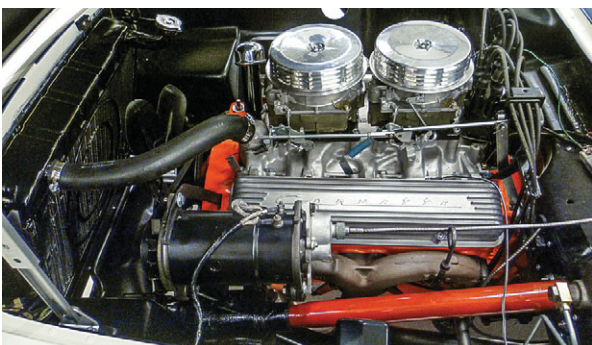
Corvette History - What's Missing in this Ad?

By Rick Tavel

If you look closely at this advertisement that ran just after the new 1956 models were introduced in the fall of 1955 you might notice something missing. That would be the 1956 Corvette.

More than one reason has been put forth as to why; the most common excuse offered up is there was not a 1956 Corvette available at the time. And though technically that is correct there is a lot more to the story. If you look closely the pictures of all the various Chevrolet models are not photographs they are illustrations and as such there was no need to have an actual model of any of the models available; it was one reason for using illustrations. The actual reason that there is no 1956 Corvette depicted in the Chevrolet lineup is that when the ad was created there was not going to be a 1956 Corvette; the decision had not been made to continue the two seat sports car for the 1956 model year. Though Chevrolet never officially revealed their decision to the public, following the dismal 1954 sales where a third of the 3640 Corvette production was unsold at the end of the year, the top executives at GM had decided to cancel the car.

Though the 1953 Corvette was the star of the Motorama when introduced, quality and performance issues disappointed both dealers and potential customers. Zora Arkus-Duntov's initial opinion was the Corvette was "visually superb" but it "mechanically stunk." Several factors intervened that helped save the Corvette. Salvation took the relentless focus of Ed Cole, Chevrolet's chief engineer, a team of more than a hundred talented engineers, Cole's revolutionary lightweight V8 engine, several innovative and talented advertising and public relations men and women, the competitive pressure brought to bear by the Ford Thunderbird, as well as legendary race car drivers and races on a local and international scale.



1953 Corvette NASCAR Unit

VIN # E53F001211

"THE EARLIEST KNOWN CORVETTE RACE CAR"

This Daytona Beach "NASCAR Unit" was created by Chevrolet Engineering for NASCAR stock car racing, and was probably a dual branding effort between Chevrolet's Ed Cole and NASCAR's Bill France. This effort was part of Ed Cole's push to save the Corvette from extinction (700 sales in 1955) and Chevrolet's first effort in creating a brand image of speed and performance lasting through seven generations of Corvettes.

This Daytona Beach NASCAR 1953 Corvette Convertible, VIN # E53F001211, is one of two, a 1953 and a 1955, that were built/rebuilt by Chevrolet Engineering to be equipped with dual four high output 1956 engines, 3 speed close ratio transmissions, heavy duty rear end assemblies, plastic tonneau covers, small racing windshields and relocated gauges per Mauri Rose. Work was done by Chevrolet Experimental Shop and Garage, subject title: "REBUILDING OF NASCAR CORVETTES FOR STOCK CAR RACING", dated November 3, 1955. This project was under the direction of Ed Cole and the conversion was under the supervision of 3-time Indy 500 Winner, Mauri Rose.

Delivered to Smokey Yunick, Daytona Beach, Florida in early February 1956 in time for promotional NASCAR photos with Bill France Jr. and Joe Hawkins and the subsequent February 12 -26, 1956 Annual Winter Daytona Beach Classics which included the 7th Annual International Safety and Speed Trials and Stock Car Races (race number 27).

Prior to rebuild by Chevrolet Engineering, this 1953 VIN #211 and a 1955 Corvette VIN #399 were raced by NASCAR's legendary Thomas Brothers (Herb & Don), Junior Johnson, Jimmy Massey, Ralph Liguori, Johnny Dodson, and Gwyn Staley at the Bowman Gray Stadium, Martinsville Speedway and Raleigh Speedway in 1955 (race numbers 55, 62 & 92).

After the February 1956 Daytona Beach races, the two cars returned to the grit and grime of the legendary North Carolina NASCAR race tracks, primarily Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston Salem, where they were driven by Pee Wee Jones, Bobby Myers, Gwyn Staley, Junior Johnson, Ralph Liguori and Jimmy Massey with race numbers 3, 16, 27 & 116.

In 1958, Mr. Leslie Gray Tuttle purchased #211 from NASCAR and received the GM - MSO and became the first titled owner of #211, and over fifty years later, Mr. Tuttle provided conclusive evidence that helped identify #211 as the original NASCAR Daytona Beach and Carolina Racer.

Documented with the Chevrolet Engineering department build orders, newspaper articles and vintage photos from private collections, Chevrolet and the NASCAR archives! **This is the earliest known Corvette to run NASCAR's sanctioned events...and the earliest known Corvette to ever race thus "A Pioneer of Speed"...and a fascinating chapter of Corvette and NASCAR history!**

Show Awards and Invationals:

- National Corvette Museum invite for their NASCAR display for May 15, 2015 to Sept. 6, 2015
- Class Award at the 36th Annual Concours d'Elegance of America in July 2014.
- Bloomington Gold Great Hall Special Display in June 2014.
- First Place Class Award at the 36th Annual Ault Park Concours d'Elegance in June 2014.
- Bill Rudd Honorary Trophy at the 36th Annual Ault Park Concours d'Elegance in June 2014.
- 2014 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance on March 9th, 2014.
- "Competition Corvette" display at the Corvette Nationals Show in November 2012.

Editorialized:

Lance Miller's Corvette Corner shown on Velocity TV's Corvette Nation; Corvetted.com/Rick Tavel; Vette Vues Magazine; The Vette Signal; CorvetteBlogger.com; On Solid Ground; Hemmings Motor News; Vette Magazine; Old Cars Weekly; Good Times/1975

Interesting Links:

- Read about the Chevrolet Engineering Cars that helped save the Corvette: <http://www.tmichaelis.com/CE-cars-that-saved-Corvette/>.
- More information is wanted about the Chevrolet/NASCAR SCODA Corvettes that raced in 1955 and 1956 at Daytona Beach and NASCAR tracks in the Carolinas: <https://www.proteamcorvette.com/cars/1111B-Info.htm>.
- Chevrolet's answer to the Ford Thunderbird at the 1956 Daytona Speed Week in this 15-minute documentary on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=ETJMdEhroeE>
- Story, photos & timeline at <http://www.nascarcorvette.com/>

Credits:

Noland Adams, Dave Bartush, David Burroughs, Chevrolet Archives, Corvette Race Car Registry, The Daytona Beach NASCAR Archives, Eric Gill, Bill Gould/Auto Ancestry, Historic Speedway Group, John Hutchins, Tim Jones, Ralph Liguori, Dan McCrary, Richard Miller, Chocolate Myers, Randy Myers, Doris Nuckles, Rick Tavel, Dick Whittington, Laverne Zachary

Special Thank-you... must be given to Loren Lundberg, for without his help the true identity of VIN #211 may have been lost forever and Gray Tuttle of Clinton, NC, who bought VIN #211 from NASCAR in 1958 and was extremely helpful in identifying the "bones" and offering conclusive evidence that this was his old Corvette race car.

Keywords: Corvette, first, earliest, oldest, one of 300, NASCAR, SCODA, Daytona, Speed Week, Chevrolet Engineering, Bowman Gray Stadium, Martinsville Speedway, Raleigh Speedway

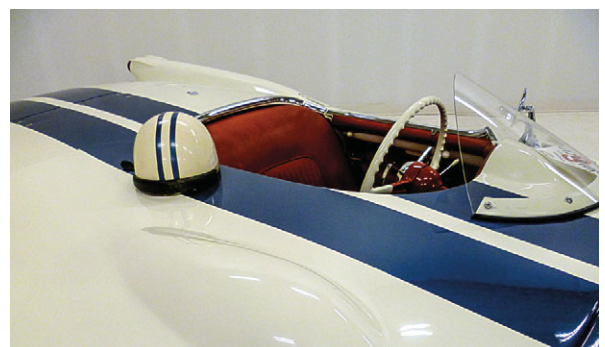
Key Phases: The untold story, rebuilding of NASCAR Corvettes for stock car racing, stock car racing program as requested by management.

Key Players: Ed Cole, Bill France, Paul Whiteman, Mauri Rose, Smokey Yunick, Hubert Westmoreland, Alvin Hawkins, Joe Hawkins, Chevrolet, NASCAR

Key Drivers: Johnny Dodson, Pee Wee Jones, Junior Johnson, Ralph Liguori, Jimmy Massey, Bobby Myers, Gwyn Staley, Don Thomas, Herb Thomas

Sidebar: 1953 was the first year production of the Corvette with only 300 produced.

Website: NASCARCorvette.com





Corvette's Little Known NASCAR Involvement

Rick Tavel© All Rights Reserved

The Chevrolet Corvette has one of the largest and longest running enthusiasts following of any car in the world. But that hasn't insured important historic events in the car's history have been recorded for posterity. In fact, looking back, there have been several events along the timeline of America's sports car that historically should have been documented in greater detail. This is true not only for the Corvette it also applies to one of the largest and most popular automobile organizations in the United States, NASCAR.

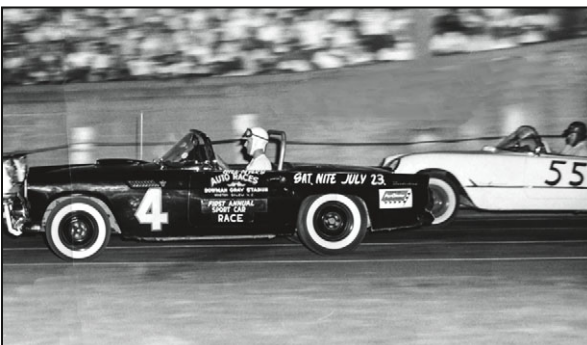
Chronologically, the early history of the Corvette and NASCAR closely coincide as both struggled to define their identities. What many followers of both the Corvette and NASCAR do not realize is that early in their beginnings the two organization's individual histories intersected. And they not only intersected but played a role in the future of both the Corvette and NASCAR. This is not well known and even less documented. The Corvette was on the cusp of being cancelled and NASCAR was attempting to forge a relationship with the largest automobile division in General Motors, Chevrolet. Not coincidentally, the two major players for both the Corvette, Ed Cole, and NASCAR, Big Bill France, teamed up in what can best be described as a dual branding strategy to mutually enhance both brands.

In 1955, three years after the Corvette's introduction, Ed Cole and his engineering team were frantically looking for ways to keep the sports car alive and live up to the expectations of a true performance sports car. Ed Cole's strategy to redeem the Corvette was as old as racing itself and can be best summarized by Ford dealer Bob Tasca's profound maxim, "Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday!"

Ed Cole, then the chief engineer of Chevrolet handpicked his team from a talent rich pool both inside and outside General Motors. What mattered most to the chief engineer, aside from a thorough and practical understanding of engineering principals and practice, was an urgency and attitude that nothing was impossible. From Cole's sixty-three year old, head of research and development, Maurice Olley, to the Russian émigré engineer Zora Arkus-Duntov, to the three time Indianapolis 500 winner Mauri Rose, plus over a hundred of the most talented engineers in the business all contributed to the transformation of the stodgy and conservative Chevrolet division.

Cole believed the Corvette could help ignite the transformation of Chevrolet before Cole's innovative new V8 engine would become available. Work was progressing on Cole's lightweight, high-revving V8 engine, an engine that potentially could revolutionize Chevrolet and help change the public's perception of the conservative division, but Cole's engine was still two years away when the Corvette was introduced at the 1953 Motorama and more importantly was the fact that the Corvette simply could not deliver the performance expected of a sports car. The quality problems could be fixed but it would take considerably more expertise to address the performance issues, establish credentials and change the public's perception of the sports car.

Along with the growing interest in sports cars there was also a growing interest in racing and watching the nimble little cars compete. Though there is little historic documentation on those pre-1956 races, we do know that the Corvette competed before that in SCCA sanctioned road races and even more took place on local dirt, clay and paved ovals sanctioned by organizations like Big Bill France's NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) and Bill Claren's SCODA (Sports Car Owners and Drivers Association).



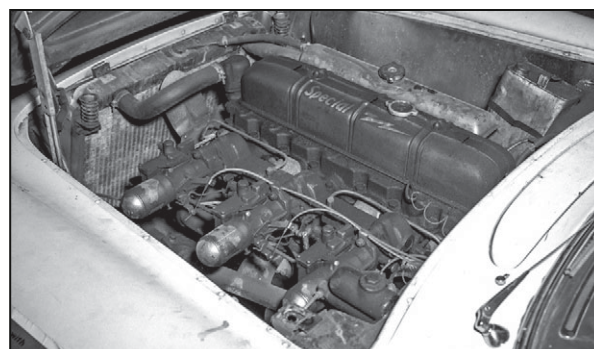
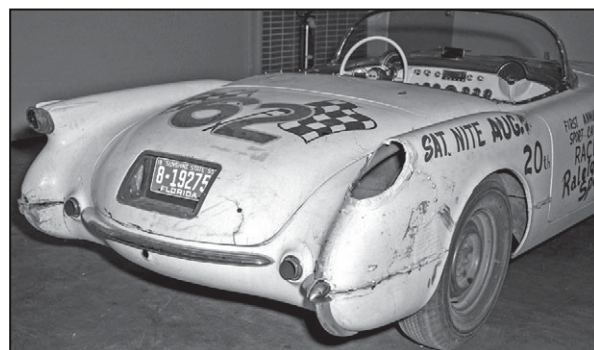
Though most of the documented history of those local tracks is written around NASCAR's Grand National series, there were several other classes that attracted thousands of fans each week. One of the more popular was the sports car series, sometimes referred to as the international class. This class attracted a diverse group of owners, enthusiasts and drivers. Super-star Paul Whiteman, the big band leader that recorded one of the biggest hits of the twentieth century - Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," was an avowed sports car enthusiast and owner. Whiteman sponsored the legendary Junior Johnson in a 1955 Corvette (VE-55F-001399) in the First Annual Sports Car Race at Bowman Gray Stadium in North Carolina. In that same race a second Corvette (E-53F-001211) driven by Johnny Dodson battled both Johnson and the Corvette's archenemy the Ford Thunderbird.

Competing with SCODA to become the dominant sports car sanctioning organization during the late 1940's and early 1950's was NASCAR. The promotional potential of sports car racing had been exploited by Bill France's NASCAR partner, Ed Otto, one of the most successful promoters in racing. A sports car enthusiast and event promoter, Otto, who owned almost half of NASCAR in the early years, promoted not only NASCAR sanctioned events but any race that would fill the stands and excite local fans. Otto was often staging a racing event five nights a week in and around New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

It was Otto's idea to promote NASCAR's first foreign car versus American car event in 1953 at the Langhorne Speedway in Pennsylvania where American sedans competed with Jaguars, Porsches, and Aston Martins. It was billed as the International 200 and was the first time NASCAR mixed sports car and stock cars during the same race. The groundbreaking concept filled the Langhorne Speedway to capacity to watch some of the most famous dirt track drivers of the day do battle for the \$2500 purse. The 20,000 spectators lined up to watch Lee Petty, Herb Thomas, Tim Flock, Ralph Liguori and Buck Baker push and shove their way around the one-mile dirt circle track. The first International 200 was an overwhelming success and the next year Otto promoted a second American versus foreign car race; this event differed from the first by being a road race on the paved Linden Airport in New Jersey. It was NASCAR's first road course Grand National event. The winner of that event was Al Keller who drove Paul Whiteman's Jaguar XK 120 coupe. Sixth place went to SCODA founder Bill Claren driving another Jaguar 120.

Competing and winning against world class sports cars like the Jaguars, Mercedes, Aston Martins and Porsches was Cole's objective for the Corvette, and the importance and timing of that objective was considerably elevated at the end of 1954 when over a third of all the Corvettes produced for the year were still sitting unsold. Based on its enthusiastic reception at the Motorama Chevrolet had optimistically projected future demand to be 10,000 cars a year. But after production had moved to St. Louis in January of 1954, based on the poor sales, production for the year was not only slashed to 3640, it was stopped on July 16 for the balance of the year. Though the compromise production plan reflected only about a third of the original projected sales, 3,640 was not what Curtiss and the rest of the brass wanted or expected.

Though not publicized nor officially decreed, most General Motors top executives had concluded that the Corvette was finished. Within the world's largest corporation, Corvette sales were unacceptable and the car required more time and attention than it was worth, since dealers still had more than 1100 unsold Corvettes to unload during 1955 the future of the car was not publicly discussed. It wouldn't be prudent to let potential buyers know the Corvette was on the chopping



CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BUILD ORDER

TO: **Experimental Shop**

DATE **November 3, 1955**

ORDER NO. **17955-1**

END
OF
PAGE

DIST: J-A-Z-H-J-K-P-R-S-T-U-V

W. R. MacKenzie

UPC 35

CHARGE TO: **STOCK CAR**

Sub-division (27)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WHERE USED

EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

SUBJECT

**Rebuilding of
MAGNUM Corvette
For Stock Car
Racing**

DESIGN ORDER NO.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

EST. COST

Rebuild Corvette car, **Serial Numbers E-535-00121 and 17-525-00139**, to incorporate special W/S screws, **aluminum-steel-iron**, right side plastic cover and components as designed and fabricated by body group. Repaint cars all white on completion of engine, chassis and body work.

Furnish both cars with 1956 engines to latest 1956 Corvette specifications with dual carburetion and 3-speed close ratio transmissions. Engines to have machined relief in pistons, streamlined lighter valves (15-20 Rb) 21 C/R and bored to .030" oversize service pistons. 1956 Generators with tachometer drive, cables and instrument leads. Exhaust system to have 1956 manifold with no muffler - exit at 1955 body exhaust outlet with 2 1/2" dia. pipes. Fit up two heavy-duty stock car racing R/A assemblies to be shipped to owner. Mount Koni to supply axle assemblies for rework to fit in brackets. Final build-up to have 1956 Corvette R/A with 3.47 gear ratios per W. O. 1910-L-1. Install new front spinnales shot-peened and new front wheel bearings and front and parts as required. Use same front hubs and springs as now on car. **Car No. E-535-00121 will require new body and fender moldings from new service stock - (27)**

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Order 1956 parts as required. Completion date = **January 1st, 1956.**

REASON:

Stock Car Racing Program as requested by Management.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

P.O.

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: **Per Muri Rose**

VIA

CHARGE

ENGINE Bldg.

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

REGISTERED BY
Muri Rose

DUP-CHEV. 33-000. REV. 3-54

500

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER **COMPLETION DATE** FEB 9 - 1958

TO: **Experimental Shop** **DATE** 1-25-58

DISPATCH 3-A-C-Y

UPC 15

CHARGE TO Stock Car (21)

NO. OF UNITS 27

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
 Please issue a Purchase Order for \$472.15, 12000# minimum @ \$3.92 per GAT & 1% Federal Tax to -
 McDowell Transport, Inc.
 4201 E. McMillan Road
 Detroit 13, Michigan
 Attn: Mr. C.D. Sprouse
 Telephone - Thimbrook 2-8720

EST. COST
 \$472.15

ORDER NO. 17725-21 ✓
SUBJECT Railway Delivery of Four (4) Corvettes to Daytona Beach, Florida (Passenger)

WHERE USED

EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

DESIGN ORDER NO.

To cover shipping by haulaway of four (4) Corvettes (#6903, #6905, 62 and 92) to Daytona Beach, Florida.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
 Cars are to be picked up February 1, 1958 A.M. and covered as loaded with covers to be furnished by the hauler.

REASON:
Stock Car Activity.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED: Yes, by Mr. W. F. Speer **P.O.**

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: **VIA** **CHARGE**
 Crowley's Automotive Service
 27 W. Beach Street
 Daytona Beach, Florida

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
REQUISITION TO	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

W. F. Speer *W. F. Speer*



block. But most GM insiders knew from strictly a business standpoint little justification could be made to keep the model alive.

In an introductory ad for the 1956 Chevrolet which depicted each model in the Chevrolet lineup, released in 1955 just after the introduction of the 1956 models, there was one model missing, a 1956 Corvette which was no longer part of the lineup.

Just when things looked like they couldn't get any darker for Chevrolet's sports car in 1954, something else happened that would become a major influence on the Corvette's destiny; Ford introduced the 1955 Thunderbird. Ford, like Chevrolet originally envisioned a demand of 10,000 cars annually for their new two seat cars, but unlike the Corvette, the Thunderbird obliterated their estimate selling 16,155 Thunderbirds during the first twelve months. The initial success of the Thunderbird did not go unnoticed by Cole or his team. Cole was well aware of that fact and not about to let Chevrolet's cross-town rivals embarrass his Chevrolet division by succeeding with the Thunderbird where the Corvette failed.

The rivalry between the Thunderbird and Corvette was not only being fought in the showrooms, it was also fiercely being contested on racetracks throughout the United States. The 193 HP V8 Thunderbird easily overpowered the Corvette's Blue Flame inline six which could only manage 155 HP. The competition between the Chevrolet and Ford cars was a great draw to enthusiasts around the country and organizers and opportunists were quick to promote the rivalry on local tracks. Nowhere was the brand rivalry more exploited than on local tracks sanctioned Bill France's NASCAR. Sports car racing had become important enough that by the mid 1950's NASCAR acquired SCODA and soon afterwards appointed Paul Whiteman as director of sports car racing.

Being bested on the racetrack by the Ford Thunderbird was just another indication that the Corvette was in desperate need of Cole's V8. By the middle of 1955 privately owned Chevrolet sedans equipped with the new high-revving V8 were "whooping the competition" and taking the checkered flag on races around the country. As part of a plan to showcase the V8, increase the public's awareness and demonstrate the engine's capability, a two-part plan was proposed to Ed Cole in the spring of 1955 by Barney Clark, a Campbell-Ewald ad man. Though Campbell-Ewald was getting some traction by advertising the V8's recent successes on the racetrack, Clark believed that a dedicated factory backed car could garner even more attention racing in important events on some of the larger tracks. The second part of Clark's plan was to enter a disguised 1956 Chevrolet with the new engine in the early September 1955 Pike's Peak Hill Climb in an attempt to break a record which had stood for twenty years and held by a Ford. Ed Cole approved the double-barreled proposal and though unknown at the time, set in motion a chain of events that would ultimately play a big part in bringing NASCAR and the Corvette together which in turn helped save Chevrolet's sports car.

In the summer of 1955, after several prolonged and difficult attempts to convince Smokey Yunick to help prepare a Chevrolet sedan to race in important NASCAR events, following a face to face meeting in North Wilkesboro with Cole, Yunick finally agreed. A deal was struck for the obstinate, but successful, racecar builder to prepare a Chevrolet for only one event, the Labor Day Darlington Southern 500. Yunick's fee was \$10,000 and at the end of the race he'd take ownership of the completed car. Mauri Rose was dispatched to help with the car's preparation and to be the link between Yunick, Cole and Chevrolet's engineering department. Yunick called on his old friend Herb Thomas to drive the Chevrolet. Though the dominant and more powerful

Chrysler 300s were favored to win, the lighter Chevrolet prevailed.

For the Pike's Peak Hill Climb Cole picked Duntov to get two 1956 Chevrolets prepped to make the run. Since the new 1956 models were not scheduled for release until late September the cars had to be disguised and the car preparation and set up was carried out secretly, not wanting to alert Chevrolet's competition to their plans.

If the victory at Darlington wasn't enough to lure Chevrolet to increased involvement in NASCAR, Duntov's record setting run up the 14,000-foot mountain was the icing on the cake and would go a long way to changing the public's perception of stodgy Chevrolet. Duntov set a new record for a sedan of 17 minutes, 24.04 seconds, besting the existing record by over two minutes. Ed Cole, Barney Clark, and GM public relations Walt Mackenzie were on hand to witness the record run. According to author and Corvette historian, Jerry Burton, "Big Bill" France, head of NASCAR, the sanctioning organization of the hill climb, was also present to celebrate Chevrolet's victory in hopes of sealing a deal for increased participation in NASCAR with Chevrolet. It was during the victory celebration at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs where the plan was hatched to get a Corvette ready for NASCAR Speed Week. France, enthusiastic to cultivate the developing relationship with Chevrolet, took the opportunity to strengthen their NASCAR ties to the largest of GM's divisions and on September 14, 1955, wrote Thomas Keating, Chevrolet's General Manager, a personal letter of congratulations. The Southern 500 victory and the Pike's Peak Hill Climb success was not only a public relations and advertising triumph, it helped set the stage for what was to become a mutually beneficial strategy that would not only help save the Corvette but help solidify the relationship between NASCAR and Chevrolet.

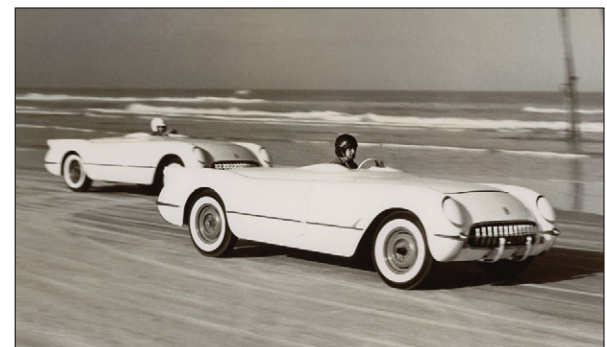
Not long after the Pike's Peak and Darlington victories Chevrolet began the process of validating the Corvette's performance credentials much the same way they had with Cole's new V8, by setting speed records and winning races. Duntov first broached the subject with Cole at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs the evening after he set the sedan hill climb record. When Duntov told Cole the Corvette was capable of reaching 150 MPH, Cole, though apprehensive, agreed to allow Duntov to prepare a car to be tested at the Mesa Proving Grounds in Arizona as a forerunner to a Daytona record attempt. The efforts produced a flurry of activity and new hope throughout the engineering division that the Corvette may get a reprieve from its death sentence.

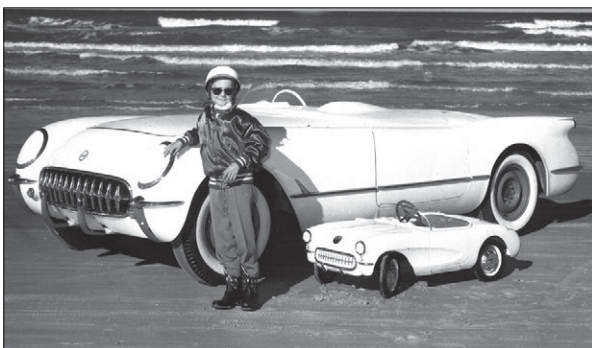
Wasting no time, just a few weeks after the Pike's Peak success, Duntov found a 1954 Corvette EX87 / #5951 and delivered it and his plans for modifying the Corvette to body and assistant chief engineer, Jim Premo. Zora wanted the newly developed NASCAR kit installed on the car. A Chevrolet engineering memo dated October 19, 1955, lists the components of package as a combination tail fin/headrest, a small cut down windshield, a fiberglass passenger side cockpit cover and an underbody belly pan enclosing the entire underside of the car. In addition to the body items the car was outfitted with an early high performance 1956 small block V8 and special instruments to help monitor the engine performance. According to a Chevrolet Inter-organization memo to E.J. Premo the additional instruments included a precision tachometer, fuel pressure, manifold vacuum, water, oil, under-hood air temperature and under-hood pressure gauges. Following some preliminary tests in Milford, Duntov realized that the 225 horsepower engine equipped with two Carter four barrel carburetors wasn't powerful enough to get the Corvette to 150 MPH and inspired the development of the legendary Duntov camshaft.

Cole, encouraged by the recent successes with his V8 engine and the

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER
COMPLETION DATE FEB 17 1956
TO: Experimental Shop & Garage DATE February 1, 1955 ORDER NO. 17725-26
WRO DIST: J-A-I
GM'S
WBU UPC 15
CHARGE TO: Stock Car (22)
NO. OF UNITS 2
WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
This work order is to supersede BWO-17395-1 to cover work already completed on two (2) Corvette cars, Serial #E-53P-001211 and VE-55F-001399, NASCAR units.
Cars were rebuilt using 1955 engine and rear axle assemblies removed from new 1955 Corvettes purchased for development testing.
Three-speed close ratio transmission assemblies were installed. Bodies are from Car #3950 mock-up Corvette and Corvette #5951.
Plastic tonneau covers fabricated and installed along with small racing windshields. Instruments were relocated per instructions from Buick Now.
EST. COST
DESIGN ORDER NO.
DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
REASON:
For Stock Car Activity.
HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED: P.O.
PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:
SHIP TO: VIA CHARGE
No. 11 for 5 cars
TABLE: DATES, FABRICATION, INSTALLATION, REQUESTED BY M. Rose, APPROVALS, REQUIRED, ESTIMATED, ACTUAL

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER
COMPLETION DATE 2-1-56
TO: Experimental Shop DATE February 1, 1955 Cancellation of ORDER NO. 17395-1
WRO DIST: J-A-E-F-H-J-K-P-B-C-T-E-I
GM'S
WBU UPC 15
CHARGE TO: Stock Car 227
NO. OF UNITS
WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
Cancel work order to rebuild Corvette cars, Serial numbers E-53P-001211 and VE-55F-001399, as cars have been rebuilt to conform to BWO-17725-26.
EST. COST
DESIGN ORDER NO.
DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
REASON:
Rebuild was done per BWO-17725-26.
HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:
PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:
SHIP TO: VIA
Rubby - Is anyone planning to cut short these Buicks on Buick frames Corvettes for Sobring?
Landon
No. See 7 Buick
TABLE: DATES, FABRICATION, INSTALLATION, REQUESTED BY M. Rose, APPROVALS, REQUIRED, ESTIMATED, ACTUAL





Corvette high-speed test, announced his interest in fielding a team of Corvettes in the upcoming February NASCAR Daytona Speed Week Trails and shortly thereafter the Sebring endurance race. Though Duntov's high-speed run in Milford was impressive, Fitch was severely critical of the Corvette saying, "The Corvette is a far cry from a competition sports car compared to foreign sports cars." He went on to criticize the gear-box, handling, brakes and the Corvette's weight distribution. As the evaluation continued it was obvious that significant work was needed in order to field a competent Corvette team. Not deterred, Cole was convinced that it was not only the right course but the only course that could save the Corvette.

Shortly after that meeting, on December 5, 1955, Duntov's test "mule" was loaded on a Proving Grounds flatbed and with a 1956 Chevrolet sedan in tow headed for the GM Proving Grounds in Mesa, Arizona. There, Duntov continued development and determining the right formula for balancing the best performance in three critical categories: Top Speed, Standing Mile, and Best Performance on a Closed Course. On December 20, 1956, Duntov recorded a speed of 156.16 MPH using a rear axle ratio of 2.92:1. Karl Ludvigsen, in his definitive Corvette, America's Star Spangled Sports Car, claims that Duntov reached 163 MPH in ensuing runs. Though Duntov had not broken the record set two years earlier in Europe by a Jaguar, the run was impressive and garnered much publicity and attention. After almost three weeks of testing in Arizona, Duntov was convinced the car was ready for an assault on Daytona.

A week prior to Duntov's Arizona run, Cole announced his decision to move forward on the Sebring effort. In a December 13, 1955, memo Mauri Rose recapped the November 30 meeting at the Milford Proving Grounds titled: "Minutes of Corvette Road Race Meeting at PG with Briggs Cunningham and John Fitch." In his four-page memo he quoted the observations and concerns of those in attendance. In that memo Rose states, "Mr. Cole opened the meeting by stating he would like to have 2 or 3 Corvette cars run Sebring Road Race in stock sport car class and requested B. Cunningham to furnish map and layout of the Sebring course." Cole had indeed made up his mind and later that same day Rose wrote a second lengthy memo to H. F. Barr detailing the requirements for a full blown Daytona Beach Corvette Program and the necessity of procuring three 1956 Corvettes all modified with the NASCAR racing package. Mauri Rose would head up the Sebring effort for Chevrolet and act as liaison between Ed Cole and John Fitch who Cole had selected to prepare the cars. Fitch was hired by Campbell-Ewald to avoid the appearance of a Chevrolet factory backed sponsorship.

Fitch was not the only one at the November 30 meeting that questioned whether the Corvette was ready for the rigors of racing. Zora Arkus-Duntov, self-appointed champion of the Corvette, was also highly skeptical. Though Duntov did not express his doubts during the meeting, afterwards he did voice his concerns to Maury Rosenberger, an assistant Chevrolet chief engineer, and Mauri Rose, the former Indy 500 champion. Duntov was well aware that there was a considerable difference in doing single car high-speed runs against the clock, like those during NASCAR's Daytona Speed Trials, and an extended endurance road race. Duntov would have preferred more development time for the Corvette before taking on some of the best sports cars in the world. Duntov believed that a racing car should be a purpose built and engineered car designed specifically for the task and was concerned the Corvette would be embarrassed by other racecars. Following the meeting, Cole decided to appoint Mauri Rose to spearhead the effort, bypassing Duntov completely.

In order to get the Corvette readied for Daytona and Sebring, Chevrolet's experimental engineering shop was inundated with new projects.

Three 1956 Corvettes were being prepared for Chevrolet's Daytona Speed Weeks: Engineering ID numbers 6901, 6903 and 6905. Engineering number 6901 was to be entered in the "modified production" class and the other two, 6903 and 6905, were to be entered in the production class, though both cars were actually developmental prototypes. Car 6901 had a reworked 1955 body and the engine, transmission, gages and headrest tail from Duntov's original Mesa test car, EX87. In addition to the Daytona Test and Speed Trails builds, two other Corvettes were also being rebuilt for Bill France and NASCAR. One a 1953 and the other a 1955, the two cars had campaigned together in 1955 on various NASCAR tracks in and around North Carolina. It is likely that both of these cars were owned by NASCAR and Bill France. On November 3, 1955, Mauri Rose issued an Engineering Department Build Order to the Experimental Shop, under the subject "Rebuilding of NASCAR Corvettes for Stock Car Racing" in which he requests two Corvettes, Serial Numbers E-53F-001211 and VE-55F-001399, to be rebuilt with the NASCAR racing kit excluding the headrest and tail. In addition the cars were to receive the latest 1956 engines with dual 4-barrel carburetion and 3 speed close ratio transmissions. Apparently a deal was struck between Ed Cole and Big Bill France to showcase the Corvette with the new engine not only in Daytona but also in subsequent NASCAR sanctioned events.

Though Rose had requested a completion date of January 1, 1956, that deadline was missed since the shop was busy preparing three Corvettes for Daytona, Corvettes 6901, 6903, and 6905. After the Mesa tests were completed Duntov's "mule" EX-87 was shipped back to Detroit where it was dismantled. The body was put on one of the two Corvettes being rebuilt for NASCAR, VE-55F-001399.

Following a quick turnaround, Corvette 6901 and a small Corvette team arrived in Daytona for a record speed attempt and precursor to the official Daytona Speed Trials in February. Conditions on the beach were less than ideal but eventually Betty Skelton and Zora Arkus-Duntov were able to complete their record-breaking runs. On January 16, 1956, an inter-organizational letter was issued to Ed Cole with copies to the engineering team recapping the successful Daytona tests and the official speed records set during the week of January 9, 1956.

New Record

Ladies Production Sport Car Class – Flying Mile

Betty Skelton High 135.440 MPH Average 130.838

Ladies Production Sport Car Class – Standing 1 Mile

Betty Skelton High 81.418 MPH Average 85.590 MPH

Mens Production Sport Car Class – Flying Mile

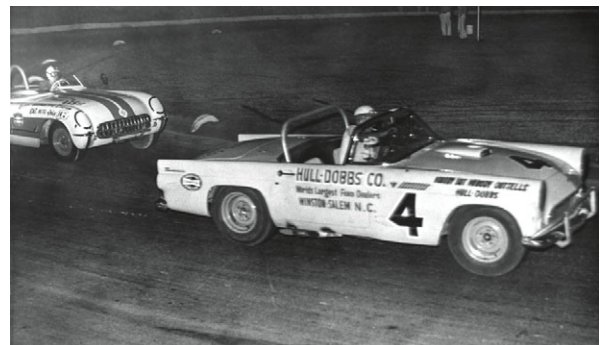
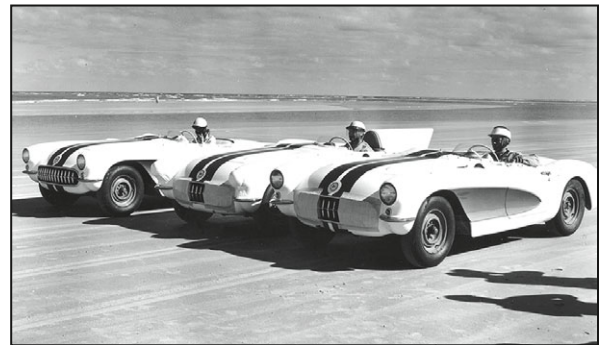
Zora Duntov High 151.579 MPH Average 150.533 MPH

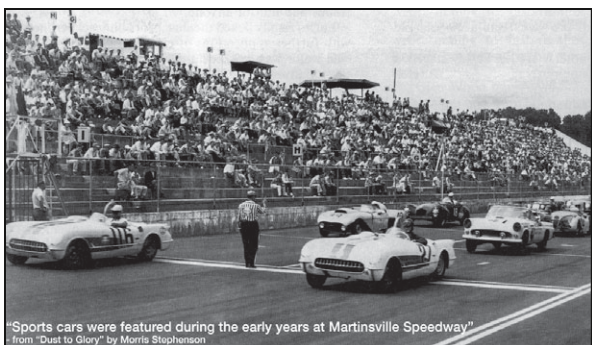
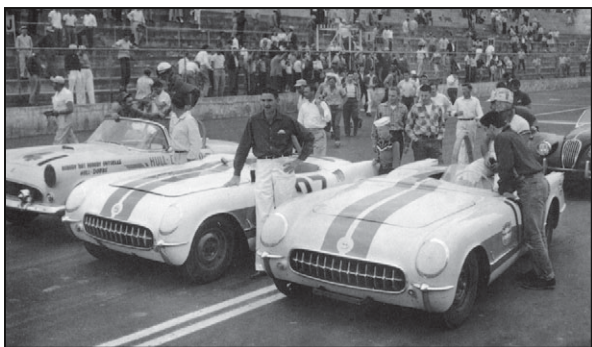
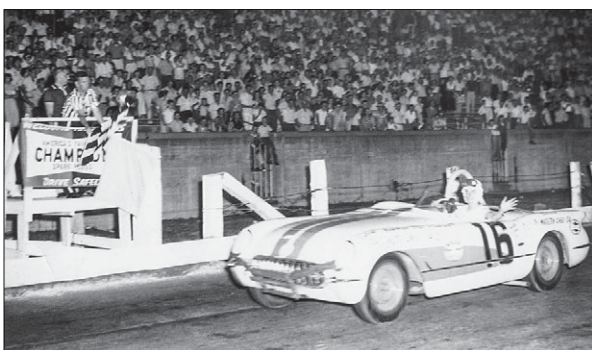
Mens Production Sport Car Class – Standing Mile

Zora Duntov High 91.696 MPH Average 90.932 MPH

By late January, Ed Cole was confident that they had turned the corner with the Corvette. The quality issues had been addressed and the car had been restyled offering more comfort and convenience options. But perhaps the biggest fix was the significant performance changes that allowed the car to be able to take on not only other sports cars but also Chevrolet's cross town rival's Thunderbird. Both of the new records set by Duntov in January had previously been set by a 1955 Thunderbird.

Of course, the tests and the records more than excited the chief engineer. Cole believed they had engineered a car that could win on the racetrack and thereby earn a reprieve from its impending death sentence. He was so confident in fact that, according to Karl Ludvigsen, Cole made an announcement on January 27, 1956, to tell the world that, "We're in the sports car business to stay." But the chief engineer





"Sports cars were featured during the early years at Martinsville Speedway" from "Dust to Glory" by Morris Stephenson

did not stop there, "The Corvette will return to Daytona in February's Speed Weeks. The cars will be raced through local Chevrolet dealers. We'll prepare the cars but prefer to be the force behind the scene," then Cole added the bombshell, "except perhaps at Le Mans where... who knows? We may run as Chevrolet Division, General Motors."

Typical of Ed Cole's tendency to promise the impossible, he may have spoken prematurely since the Corvettes had yet to square off against the competition. But also typical of Ed Cole, once he committed he delivered. Cole's announcement not only answered questions about the Corvette's future it prompted the press and the competition on both sides of the Atlantic to take notice, the Corvette was not to be ignored.

In late January an engineering order (17725-21) was placed to have four cars shipped to Daytona, car 6903, 6905, and the two NASCAR Corvettes E-53F-001211 and VE-55F-001399. Car 6901 had already been shipped to Daytona for the January tests. The order called for the four cars to be delivered to Smokey's Automotive Service on North Beach Street in Daytona Beach since Ed Cole had convinced Smokey Yunick to assist in both the Daytona and Sebring preparations.

When the Chevrolet entourage arrived in Daytona weather delayed activities. Automotive journalist Tom McCahill wrote, in the May 1956 issue of Modern Mechanix, the beach was in such bad shape it "resembled an H-bomb test ground." It was several days before the tests could take place. It was decided that Zora Arkus-Duntov would drive 6901, John Fitch would drive 6905 and Betty Skelton, a protégé of Big Bill France would drive 6903. Even though things were slow to start it was clear that the rivalry between Chevrolet and Ford was intense. McCahill went on to say that the speed trials would go down in history as "the most razzle-dazzle hunk of competition since Rip Van Winkle switched to an electric razor." Rules were interpreted in different ways and when it was all over some runs were disqualified. It was reported that prior to a run a used engine block was found in the trunk of Fitch's Corvette for increased traction, though Fitch claimed it was an oversight. Fitch later said there was no rule against it in 1956. Some engines had been modified beyond acceptable specifications. However, in the end officials confirmed that the times of the cars that won were legitimate.

In the "flying mile" runs the Corvettes excelled. Duntov was first in the "modified sports car" class, averaging 147.3 MPH. A strong wind prevented him from equaling his prior Daytona time of 150.5 MPH, though he did reach 155.652 MPH during his down-wind run. And Fitch took first in the "production sports car" class averaging 145.543 MPH with Skelton finishing third at 137.773 MPH. Likewise in the "standing mile" competition Duntov again captured first in the modified class with a time of 89.753 MPH but in the production class two Ford Thunderbirds beat both Fitch and Skelton. Taking first was Chuck Daigh at 88.779 MPH two miles an hour quicker than third place Fitch.

At the end of the event Big Bill France proclaimed Betty Skelton the fastest woman driver in the world and Campbell-Ewald was equally fast publicizing that fact. Skelton was immediately booked for personal appearances throughout the United States. In addition Campbell-Ewald ran an ad entitled "Bring on the hay bales," that touted Skelton's speed time and encouraged Corvette owners to enter other upcoming performance events. Campbell-Ewald also publicized Duntov's and Fitch's first place finishes to help establish the Corvette's performance image. Overall the 1956 Daytona Speed Trials was the first major step in recognizing the Corvette as a legitimate sports car contender.

Just as the Daytona Trials were drawing to a close, preparation of the four actual racing Corvettes for Sebring began on February 18th, leaving not nearly enough time to iron out all of the problems. As Duntov had predicted the Corvettes were not sufficiently prepared for a twelve-hour endurance race. The Sebring track was particularly hard on cars, especially the brakes, the Corvette's weakest area. Memos to and from the engineering department were flying back and forth to try and resolve the problems. Fitch later commented that it was "quite some time before we could complete a lap at speed without breaking something." Smokey Yunick, who had also helped with the Daytona events, was commissioned to build all of the engines and was also consulted on the brake and transmission problems. Ludvigsen quotes Yunick who pretty well summed up the Sebring preparation, "What saved my ass that frustrating month was that Cole sent mechanics from Chevy's proving grounds crew." Yunick, outspoken and never easy to please, went on to say that the crew, "worked like dogs eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. Also Mauri Rose was a working demon. The Chevy mechanics shocked me with their willingness and first-class work."

Four Corvettes, entered by racer and Chevrolet dealer, Dick Doane to comply with GM's policy regarding racing, started the twelve-hour endurance Sebring event in March of 1956, three in the production category and one in the prototype class. Two of the production Corvettes failed early in the race, one with a drive shaft and another with an engine problem. Amazingly Ray Crawford and Max Goldman were able finish the number 5 production Corvette in 15th place overall even though by the end of the race had lost first and second gears. John Fitch and Walt Hansen were able to finish 9th overall and first in class in the prototype.

Fitch's summary of the Sebring race was at least in part erroneous when he said, "Our performance was less than we had hoped but more than we deserved." What the engineers and mechanics accomplished in an impossibly short time frame was unparalleled. In less than twelve weeks they virtually reengineered a car capable of tackling one of the most rigorous racing events in the world. The race proved to potential customers and the competition that the Corvette could go head to head and win on the track against the best sports cars in the world. It was a race that opened eyes and the door to private and amateur racers. The effort put forth to field a team of Corvettes for NASCAR, Daytona, and Sebring was not only a tribute to Ed Cole and his team; it was a supreme effort that began to establish the Corvette's performance pedigree and virtually saved the car that went on to become an America's icon.

Rick Tavel is an automotive journalist and Corvette historian as well as a Corvette enthusiast and collector. He is currently working on two books: *The History of the Corvette through Advertising* (in coordination with James Bernardin former Campbell-Ewald executive and art director in charge of Chevrolet advertising) and *the Corvette Fixed Roof Coupe 1999 – 2004*. He writes for most of the major Corvette sites and publications including Corvette Forum, Corvette Online, Corvette Blogger and is the editor and owner of Corvetted. Formerly he was a Corvette consultant for Corvette enthusiasts and collectors located outside of the US and Canada.

"The Past is never dead. It's not even past... what happened previously influences what happens now. In this sense, the past is always with us because it lives on in the present." - Wm. Faulkner



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



Johnny Dodson sitting in VIN #211 (1953) Race #62 for First Annual Sports Car Race at Bowman Gray Stadium, July 23rd, 1955.

Photo Courtesy of Motorsports Images and Archives

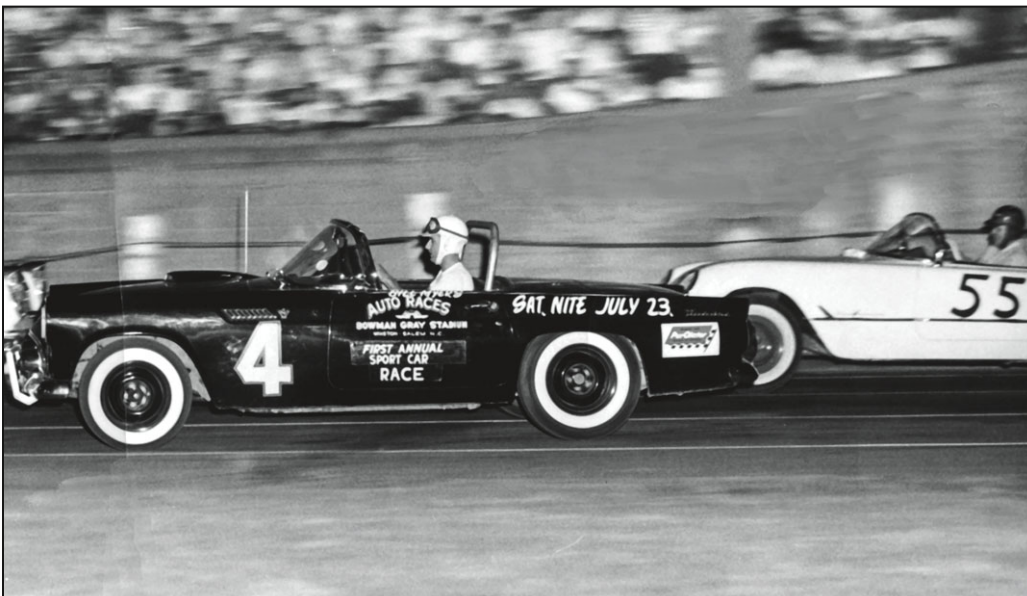
VIN #399 (1955) Race #55, VIN #211 (1953) Race #62, Race #04 (1955 Chevrolet), and Race #2 (Gwyn Staley's 1955 Chevrolet) in front of Hubert Westmoreland's shop in 1955. Note: "King of Jazz" Paul Whiteman's name on #55 that was driven by Junior Johnson and Herb Thomas in 1955.

Hubert Westmoreland Photo
Courtesy of
LaVerne Zachary Collection



Hubert Westmoreland Photo

LaVerne Zachary collection



Race #4 T-Bird driven by Billy Myers and VIN #399 (1955) Race #55 driven by Junior Johnson at Bowman Gray Stadium on July 23rd, 1955.

Photo Courtesy of
Randy Myers

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

VIN #211 (1953 Corvette) Race #62 at Chevrolet Engineering Executive Parking Garage in late fall 1955 prior to Chevrolet Engineering Experimental Shop's rebuilding of two NASCAR Corvettes (VIN #211 and #399) for stock car racing.

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955

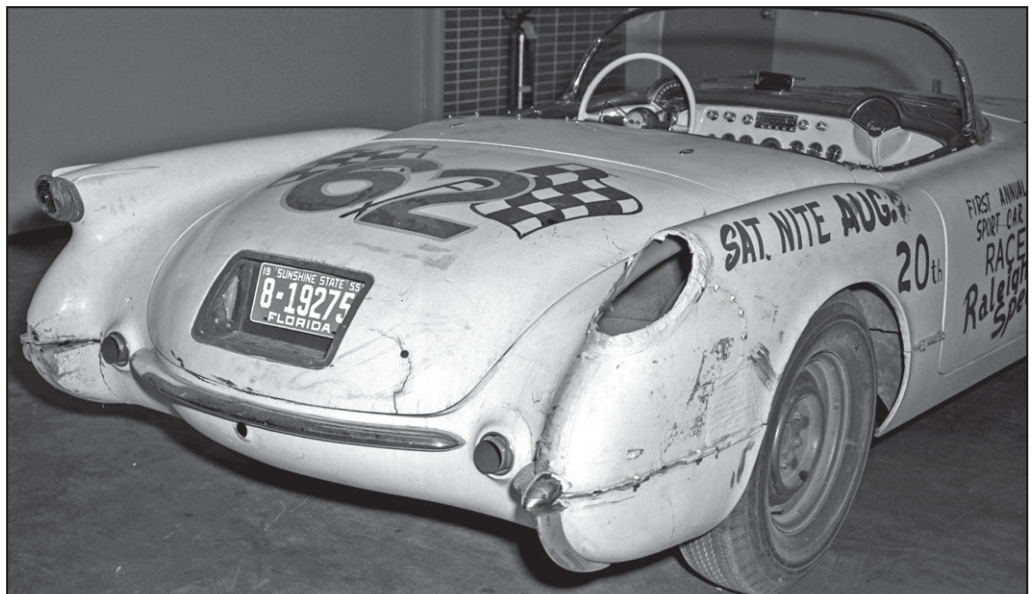


Another view of #211 in Michigan. Note the missing bumper, missing fiberglass, cracked rear fender and missing taillight. Racing in the Southeast was a Contact sport.

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955

Note the Volusia County (Daytona Beach) license plates (tracking continues). Note also the 1953 short exhaust tips.

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



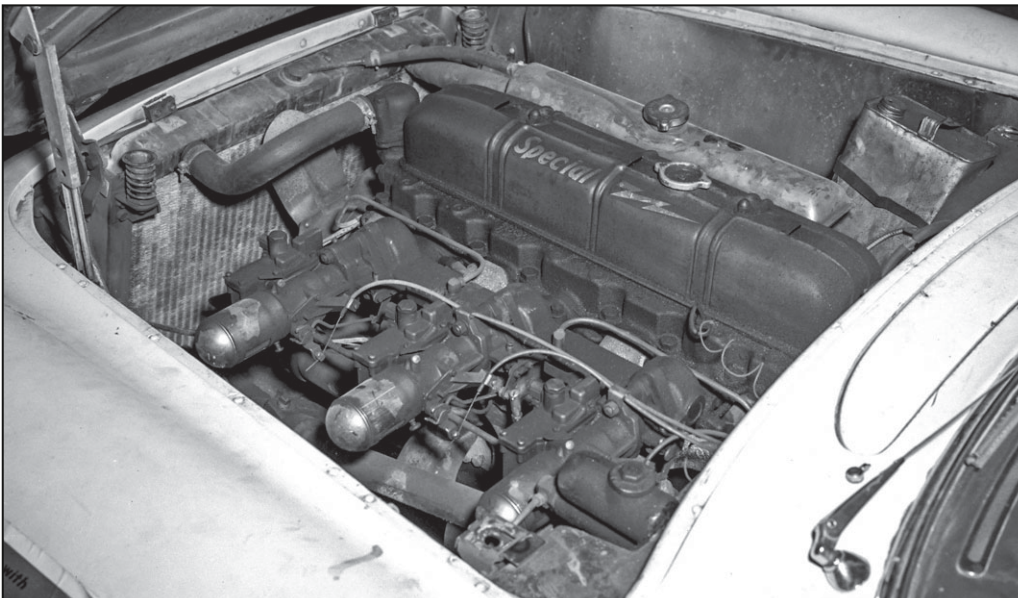
Another view of #211 in Michigan pre-rebuild by Chevrolet Engineering.

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955



Note the still stock interior, complete with door panels, and an added seat belt for the driver. Note also the still stock Powerglide shifter.

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955



The amazingly stock engine compartment, except for what may be a one-gallon can of Sterno fuel wedged under the right front fender. Tech inspection, anyone?

Photo Courtesy of David R. Bartush
GM Media Archives/GM Heritage Center
and Auto Ancestry
Dated Sept 23, 1955

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BUILD ORDER



ENC
CMR
DFU
WGM

TO: **Experimental Shop**

DATE **November 3, 1955**

ORDER NO. **17395 -1**

DIST: **3-A-E-F-H-J-K-P-R-S-T-Z-Y**

W. R. MacKenzie

UPC **15**

CHARGE TO: **STOCK CAR**
Administration (27)

NO. OF UNITS **2**

WHERE USED

EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

SUBJECT **Rebuilding of
NASCAR Corvettes
for Stock Car
Racing**

DESIGN ORDER NO.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

EST. COST

Rebuild Corvette cars, **Serial Numbers E-53F-001211 and VE-55F-001399**, to incorporate special W/S screens, ~~specialized~~ right side plastic covers and underparts as designed and fabricated by body group. Repaint cars all white on completion of engine, chassis and body work.

Furnish both cars with 1956 engines to latest 1956 Corvette specifications with dual 4-bbl carburetion and 3-speed close ratio transmissions. Engines to have machined relief in pistons, streamlined lighter valves (MS-201 Exh) 9 1/2 C/R and bored to .030" oversize service pistons. 1956 Generators with tachometer drive, cables and instrument leads. Exhaust system to have 1956 manifolds with no mufflers - exit at 1955 body exhaust outlet with 2 1/4" dia. pipes. Fit up two heavy-duty stock car racing R/A assemblies to be shipped to owner. Mauri Rose to supply axle assemblies for rework to fit in Corvettes. Final build-up of Corvettes to have 1956 Corvette R/A with 3.27 gear ratios per W. O. 19310-4. Install new front spindles shot-peened and new front wheel bearings and front end parts as required. Use same front hubs and springs as now on car.

Car No. E-53F-001211 will require new body and fender moldings from new service stock - (St. Louis)

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Order 1956 parts as required. Completion date - January 1st, 1956.

REASON:

Stock Car Racing Program as requested by Management.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

P.O.

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: **Per Mauri Rose**

VIA

CHARGE

		REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
DATES	FABRICATION			
	INSTALLATION			
REQUESTED BY <i>Mauri Rose</i>		APPROVALS	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

BUILD ORDER

COMPLETION DATE FEB 9 - 1956

TO: Experimental Shop

DATE 1-25-56

ORDER NO. 17725-21 ✓

MR

DIST: 3-A-C-Y

UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (21)

NO. OF UNITS

WHERE USED	
EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

15500 Purchase Order
SUBJECT Haulaway Delivery
of Four (4) Corvettes to
Daytona Beach, Florida
(NASCAR)

DESIGN ORDER NO.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

Please issue a Purchase Order for \$472.15, 12000# minimum @ \$3.82 per CWT & 3% Federal Tax to -

McDowall Transport, Inc.
6201 E. McNichols Road
Detroit 13, Michigan
Att: Mr. C.D. Sprouse
Telephone - Twinbrook 2-8720

EST. COST

To cover shipping by haulaway of four (4) Corvettes (#6903, 6905, 62 and 92) to Daytona Beach, Florida.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Cars are to be picked up February 1, 1956 A.M. and covered as loaded with covers to be furnished by the hauler.

REASON:

Stock Car Activity.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED: Yes, by Mr. W. F. Speer

P.O.

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO:

VIA

CHARGE

Smokey's Automotive Service
957 N. Beach Street
Daytona Beach, Florida

		REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
DATES	FABRICATION			
	INSTALLATION			
REQUESTED BY	APPROVALS			

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BUILD ORDER

COMPLETION DATE FEB 17 1956

TO: Experimental Shop & Garage

DATE February 1, 1956

ORDER NO. 17725-26

WRM DIST: 3-A-I

MR
ENC

RJB UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (22)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WHERE USED	
EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

SUBJECT Rebuilding of-
NASCAR Corvettes for Stock
Car Racing. ✓

DESIGN ORDER NO.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

This work order is to supersede BWO-17395-1 to cover work already completed on two (2) Corvette cars, Serial #E-53F-001211 and VE-55F-001399, NASCAR units.

EST. COST

Cars were rebuilt using 1955 engine and rear axle assemblies removed from new 1955 Corvettes purchased for development testing.

Three-speed close ratio transmission assemblies were installed. Bodies are from Car #3950 mock-up Corvette and Corvette #5951.

Plastic tonneau covers fabricated and installed along with small racing windshields. Instruments were relocated per instructions from Mauri Rose.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

REASON:

For Stock Car Activity.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

P.O.

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO:

VIA

CHARGE

NO "H" PEX
SPEER

		REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
DATES	FABRICATION			
	INSTALLATION			
REQUESTED BY M. Rose	M. Rose	APPROVALS		

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BUILD ORDER

COMPLETION DATE 2-1-56

TO: Experimental Shop

DATE February 1, 1956

Cancellation of
ORDER NO. 17395-1

ENC DIST: 3-A-E-F-H-J-K-P-R-S-T-Z-Y

CMR

DFU

NHM UPC 15

WRM

LR CHARGE TO: Stock Car #27

RJB

NO. OF UNITS

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

WHERE USED	
EXP.	CAR #
PROD.	YEAR
FUTURE	PROGRAM

SUBJECT Rebuilding of
NASCAR Corvettes for
Stock Car Racing

DESIGN ORDER NO.

EST. COST

Cancel work order to rebuild Corvette cars, Serial numbers E-53F-001211
and VE-55F-001399, as cars have been rebuilt to conform to BWO-17725-26.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

REASON:

Rebuild was done per BWO-17725-26.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO:

VIA

Rubly -
Is any one planning to
put spot disc Brakes on
Bell Frances's Corvettes
for Sebring?

Sanders

No. See F. Burrell

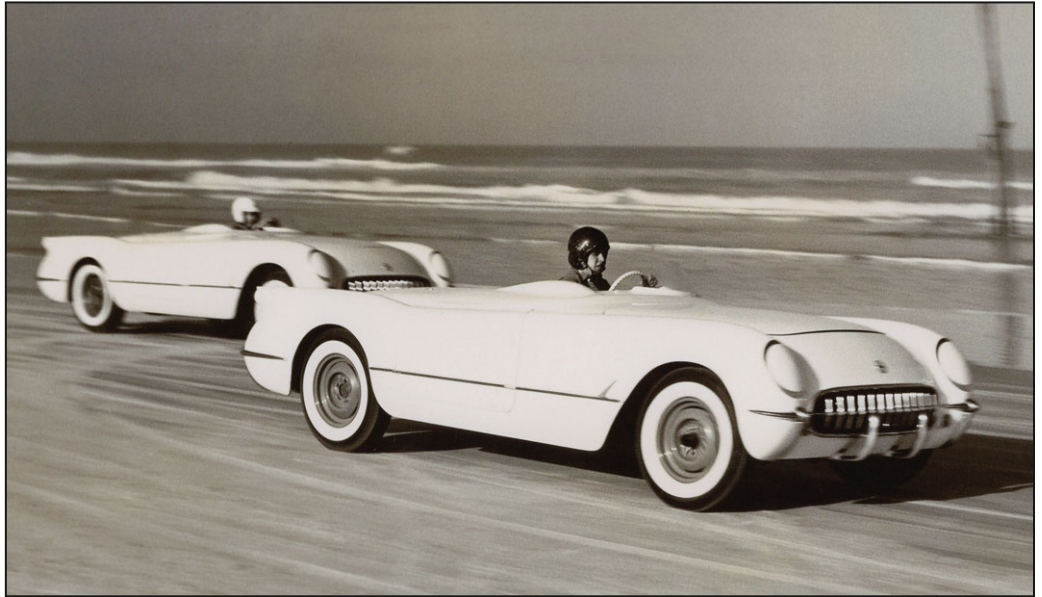
C.M. Rubly - Chassis Engineer
R.F. Sanders - Chief Chassis Design Engineer
Frank Burrell - Research & Development Engineer
Mauri Rose - Vehicle Development Engineer

		REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
DATES	FABRICATION			
	INSTALLATION			
REQUESTED BY	<i>M. Rose</i>	APPROVALS	<i>LR</i>	<i>[Signatures]</i>

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

Promotional photos of VIN #211 (1953) front with Bill France, Jr. and VIN #399 (1955) rear with Joe Hawkins in February 1956 at Daytona Beach after Chevrolet Engineering rebuild and shipment to Smokey Yunick for the 7th Annual Winter Daytona Beach Classics (Speedweek).

Photo Courtesy of
L. Gray Tuttle and Joe (Jack) Hawkins



Promotional photos of VIN #211 (1953) on left with Bill France, Jr. and VIN #399 (1955) on right with Joe Hawkins at Daytona Beach in February 1956.

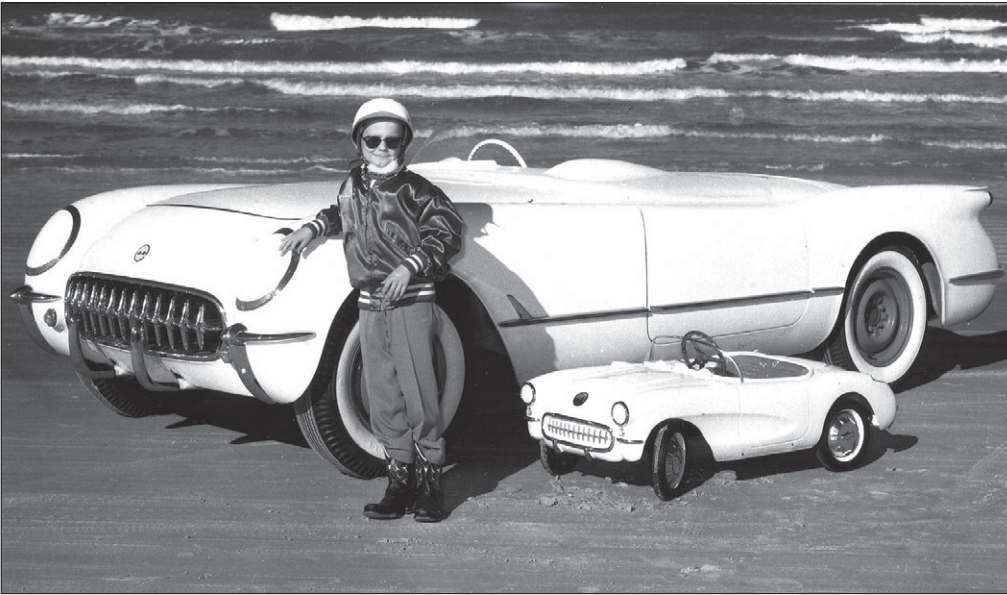
Photo Courtesy of
L. Gray Tuttle and Joe (Jack) Hawkins

Promotional photos of VIN #211 (1953) in rear with Bill France, Jr. and VIN #399 (1955) in front with Joe Hawkins at Daytona Beach in February 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
L. Gray Tuttle and Joe (Jack) Hawkins



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

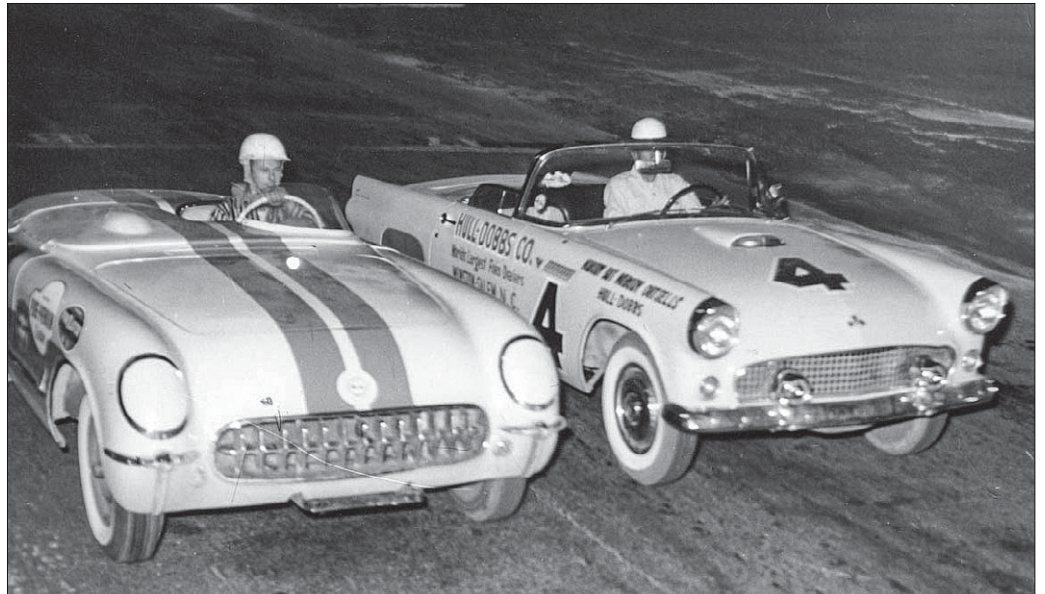


Promotional photo of VIN #211 (1953) prior to stripes and numbers at Daytona Beach in February 1956 with Smokey Albert Yunick "Little Smokey".

Photo Courtesy of
Motorsports Images and Archives

VIN #399 (1955) now dressed-out with stripes, #16 and sponsor decals at Daytona Beach in February 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
Motorsports Images and Archives



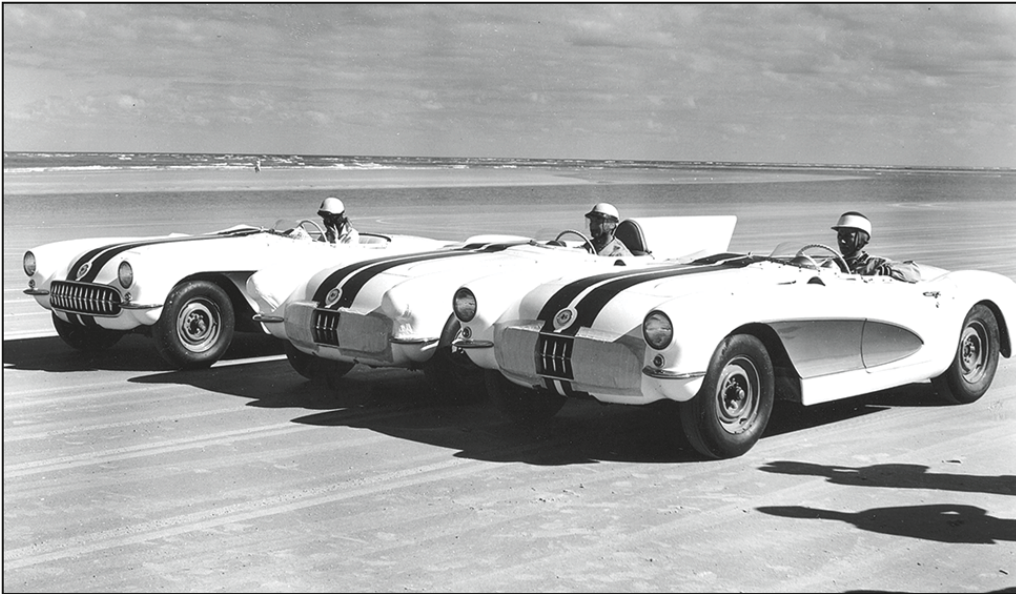
VIN #211 (1953) now dressed-out with stripes, #27 and sponsor decals at Daytona Beach in February 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
Motorsports Images and Archives

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

VIN #399 (1955) with Race #16 at Daytona Beach in February 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
Motorsports Images and Archives

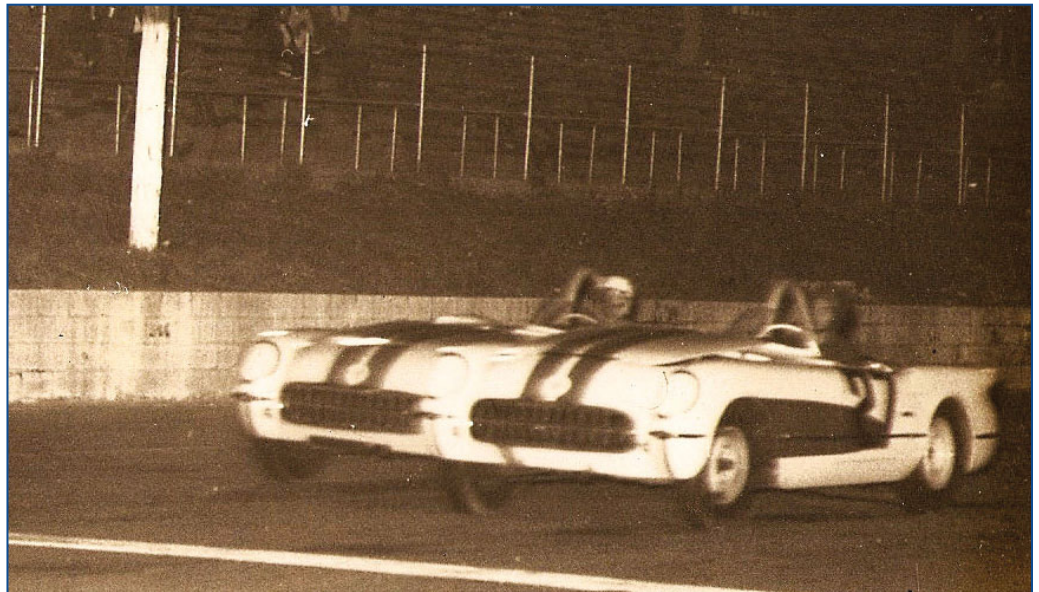


Engineering ID cars 6901, 6903 and 6905 at Daytona. All were 1955 chassis rebodied with 1956 prototype and production bodies. #6901 in the middle is 1955 VIN #194. A 4th car, a 1956 would join them for the 12 Hours of Sebring.

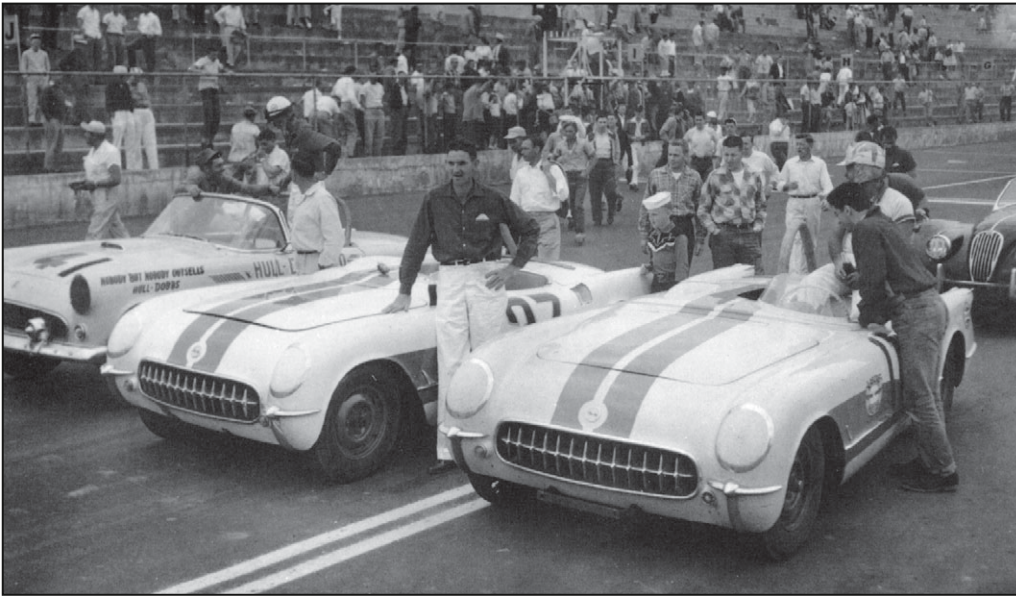
Photo Courtesy of
Motorsports Images and Archives

Gwyn Staley driving and winning in VIN #211 (1953) race #27 with a very close finish with Ralph Liguori driving VIN #399 (1955) Race #16 at the Raleigh Speedway on June 2nd, 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
Ralph Liguori



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

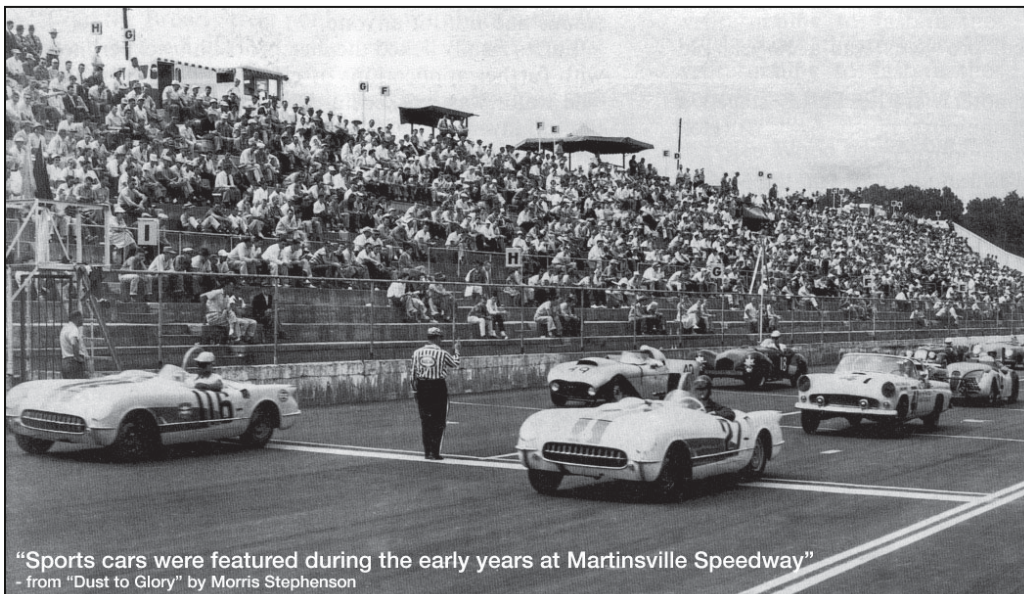
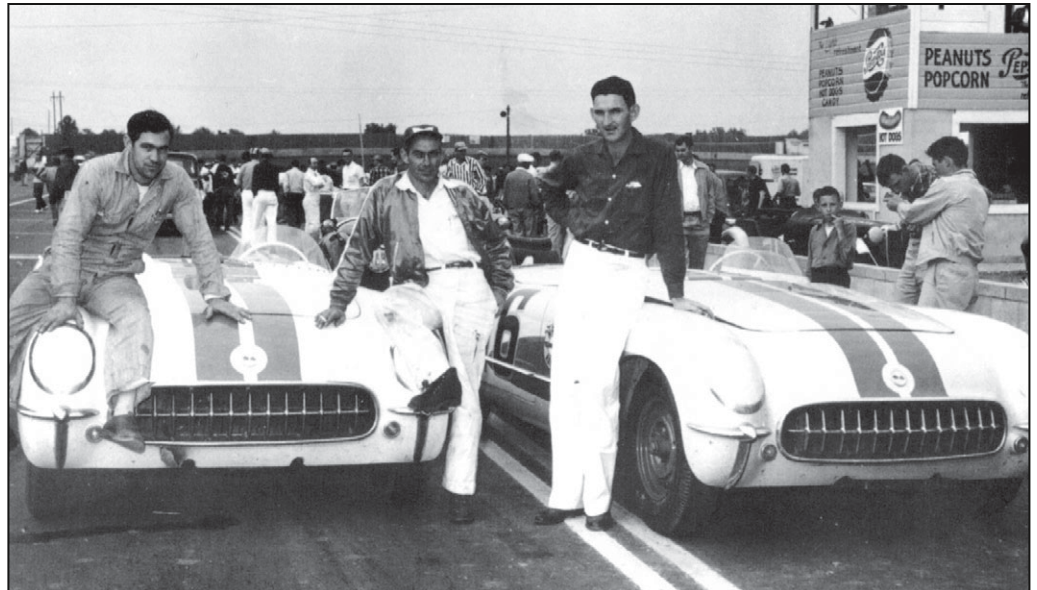


VIN #211 (1953) Race #27 in center with VIN #399 (1955) Race #116 on right at Martinsville Speedway on June 3rd, 1956.

T. Taylor Warren Photo
Courtesy of
Doris Westmoreland Nuckles

VIN #211 (1953) Race #27 on left and VIN #399 (1955) Race #116 on right at Martinsville Speedway on June 3rd, 1956. Pictured from left to right are Jimmy Massey, Hubert Westmoreland and Gwyn Staley.

T. Taylor Warren Photo
Courtesy of
Doris Westmoreland Nuckles



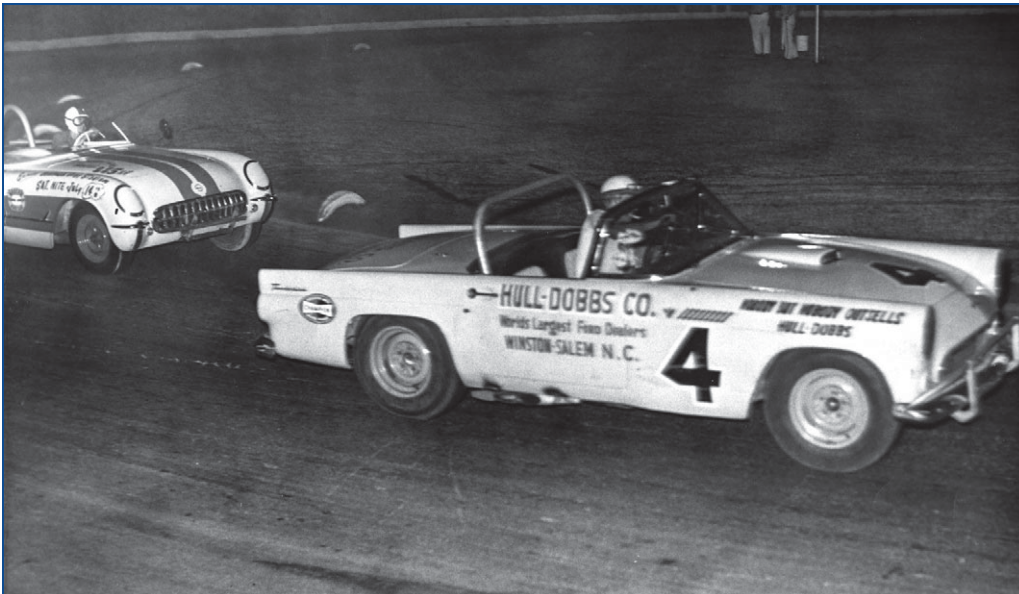
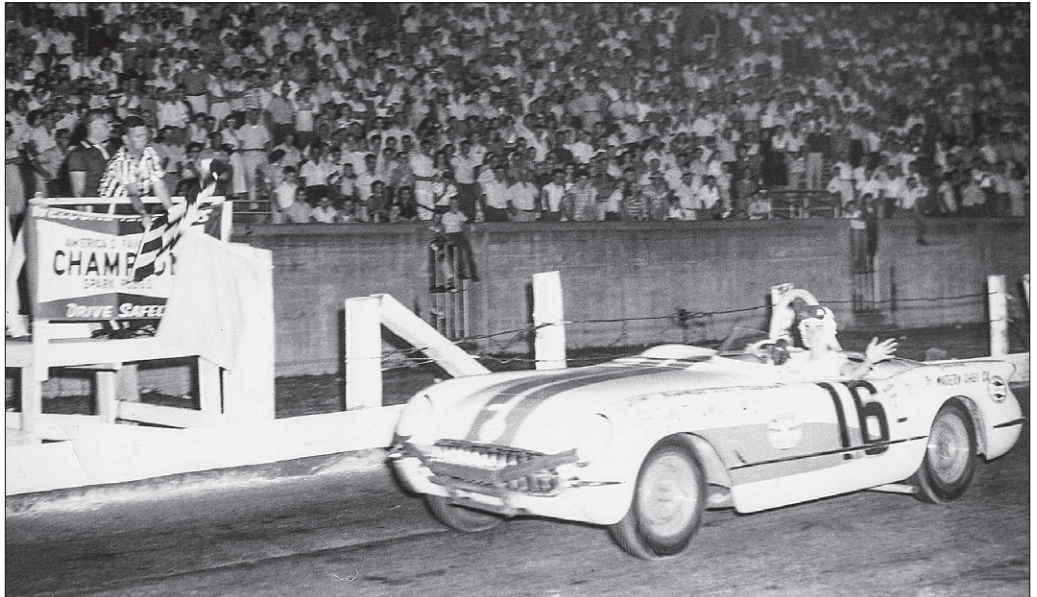
VIN #399 (1955) Race #116 on left and VIN #211 (1953) Race #27 on right at Martinsville Speedway on June 3rd, 1956.

T. Taylor Warren Photo
Courtesy of
"From Dust to Glory",
by Morris Stephenson

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

VIN #399 (1955) Race #16 probably at Bowman Gray Stadium.

Photo Courtesy of
Chocolate Myers and Tim Jones



I believe the car to be #211, based on the bumper guards. Compare to the front of #399 in the above photo.

T. Taylor Warren Photo
Courtesy of
Randy Myers

Pee Wee Jones in VIN #399 (1955) Race #16 at Bowman Gray Stadium July 14th, 1956.

Photo Courtesy of
Tim Jones



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



Pee Wee Jones in VIN #211 (1953) Race #3 at Bowman Gray Stadium July 27th, 1957. Pee Wee Jones was the Bowman Gray Stadium champion for 6 years and holds the record for five championships in a row. 1956-1957-1958-1959-1960 and 1967. This record has never been broken.

Photo Courtesy of
Tim Jones

1953 Corvette #211 in 1960 after repair/rebuild by L. Gray Tuttle for street use. Mr. Tuttle purchased #211 from NASCAR/ Joe (Jack) Hawkins in 1958 and received a GM-MSO that was signed-off to NASCAR and became the first titled owner.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo Courtesy of
L. Gray Tuttle



1953 Corvette #211 in 1961 with L. Gray Tuttle and his wife Judy.

Note the 1956-8 Corvette hubcaps and the aftermarket 'Plasticon' hardtop. L. Gray Tuttle was a 'Plasticon' dealer.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

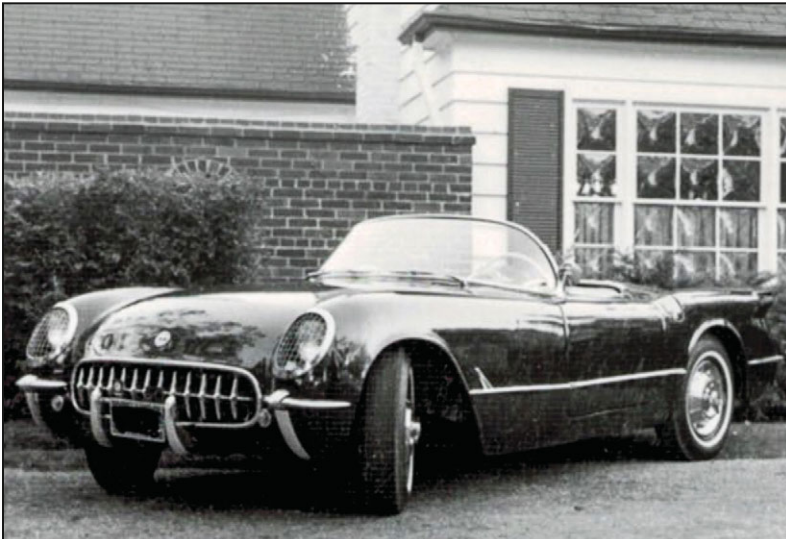
Photo Courtesy of
L. Gray Tuttle

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

L. Gray Tuttle sold #211 to Canadian James Ivey of Oakville, Ontario. Note: 1971 Ontario license plate 344 073.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo courtesy of
David R. Bartush and Dr. D.M. Wallace



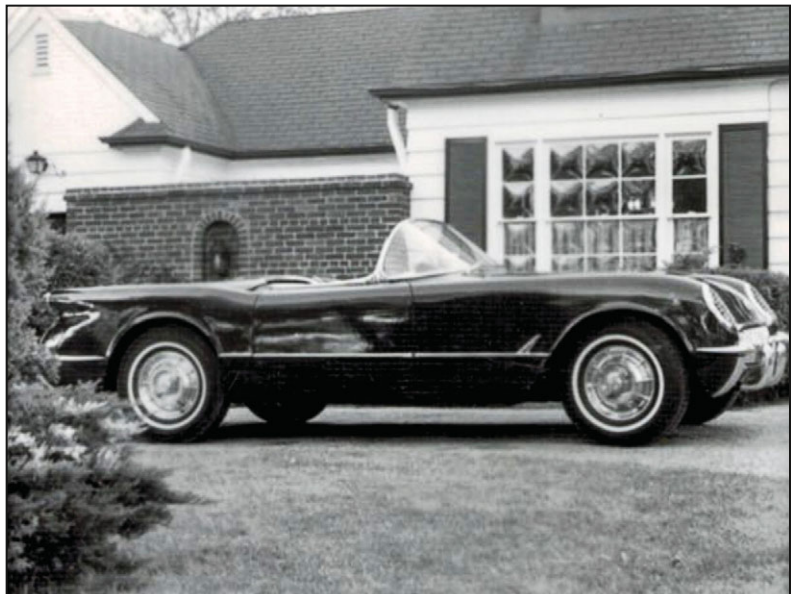
#211 appears to be painted a very dark color by 1971. James Ivey's family said in a 2014 interview that it was dark green.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo courtesy of
David R. Bartush and Dr. D.M. Wallace

#211 remained in Canada until approximately 1996 when it was sold to Tom Hattey of Roseville, Michigan. In 1997-98 Dr. Richard Cohen of Boca Raton purchased #211 from an advertisement in Hemmings Motor News. Dr. Cohen sells #211 in approximately 2001 to John Benefield of Wynne, Arkansas who then sells #211 to ProTeam in 2010. See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo courtesy of
David R. Bartush and Dr. D.M. Wallace



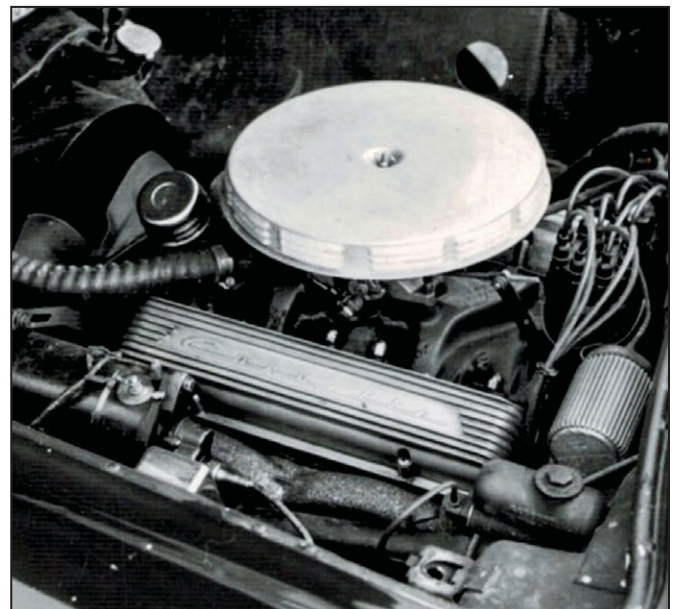
Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



Interior photo in Canada of #211 shows dash gauge area that is not typical to a stock 1953 Corvette. Radio block off plate and non-stock tachometer. Gauges relocated per Mauri Rose. Also note 1956 style 3-speed shifter and counsel trim.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo courtesy of
David R. Bartush and Dr. D.M. Wallace



Engine compartment photo in Canada of #211 shows 3 1/2"-4" hole in right hand inner fender, V8 engine, 1956 style radiator, nine fin valve cover, 1956 tach drive generator and 3-speed (manual) patch on the firewall by the master cylinder brake unit.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo courtesy of
David R. Bartush and Dr. D.M. Wallace



1953 Corvette #211 in 2010 after purchase by ProTeam-Corvette.com. Several changes in ownership occurred since L. Gray Tuttle rescued #211 from the perils of being an old beat-up ex-NASCAR racer. #211 had been repaired/rebuilt back to factory looking 1953 Corvette including six-cylinder engine and power glide transmission.

See Page 49 for complete owner history.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

1953 Corvette #211 in 2010 after purchase by ProTeam Corvette.com. Several changes in ownership occurred since L. Gray Tuttle rescued #211 from the perils of being an old beat-up ex-NASCAR racer. #211 had been repaired/rebuilt back to factory looking 1953 Corvette including six-cylinder engine and power glide transmission.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



1953 Corvette #211 in 2010 after purchase by ProTeam Corvette.com. Several changes in ownership occurred since L. Gray Tuttle rescued #211 from the perils of being an old beat-up ex-NASCAR racer. #211 had been repaired/rebuilt back to factory looking 1953 Corvette including six-cylinder engine and power glide transmission.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

1953 Corvette #211 in 2010 after purchase by ProTeam Corvette.com. Several changes in ownership occurred since L. Gray Tuttle rescued #211 from the perils of being an old beat-up ex-NASCAR racer. #211 had been repaired/rebuilt back to factory looking 1953 Corvette including six-cylinder engine and power glide transmission.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



1953 Corvette #211 in 2010 after purchase by ProTeam Corvette.com. Several changes in ownership occurred since L. Gray Tuttle rescued #211 from the perils of being an old beat-up ex-NASCAR racer. #211 had been repaired/rebuilt back to factory looking 1953 Corvette including six-cylinder engine and power glide transmission.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

1953 #211 on display at Corvettes of Carlisle in August 2013. The car was completely stripped of paint, which showed the fingerprints of what Chevrolet Engineering had done to this car over 58 years prior.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



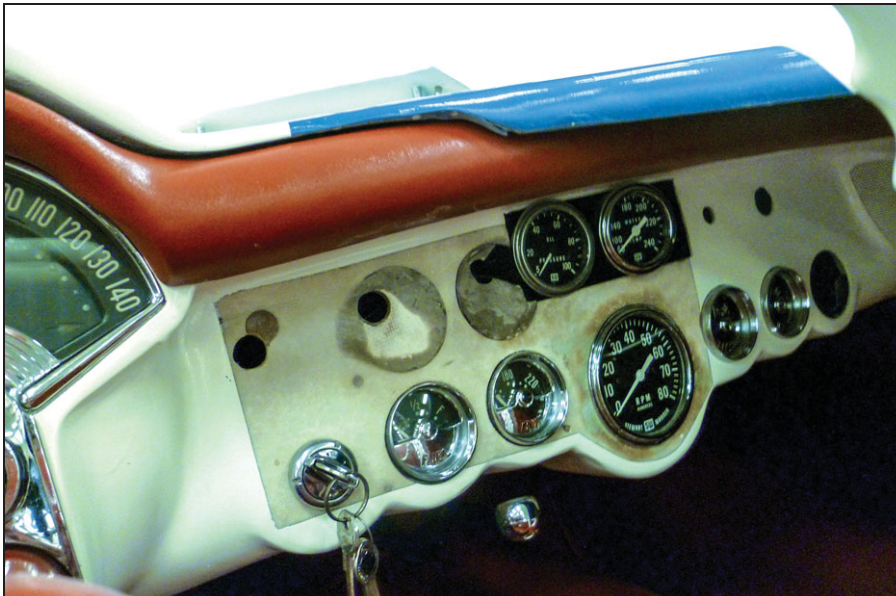
1953 #211 on display at Corvettes of Carlisle in August 2013. The car was completely stripped of paint, which showed the fingerprints of what Chevrolet Engineering had done to this car over 58 years prior.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

1953 #211 on display at Corvettes of Carlisle in August 2013. The car was completely stripped of paint, which showed the fingerprints of what Chevrolet Engineering had done to this car over 58 years prior.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

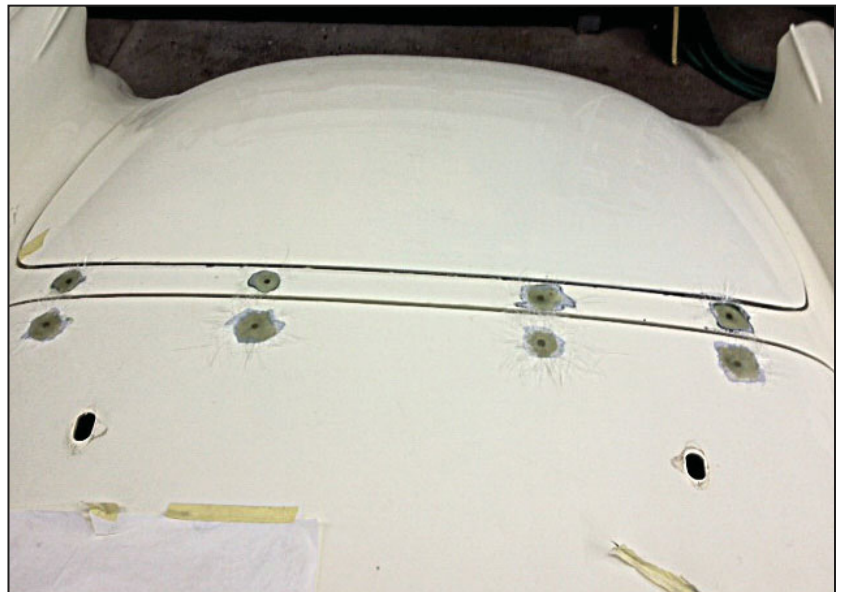


The dash and gauge area of #211 showing ghost holes where gauges were relocated per Chevrolet Engineering work order and Mauri Rose. Note oversized hole and Stewart Warner tachometer.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

By 1956 NASCAR installed roll bars on #211 (1953) and #399 (1955). Note eight ghost holes in the deck lid/trunk area where a steel plate was bolted. The roll bar loop ran forward into the interior.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



The right hand door was screwed into the body because of G-force of racing counterclockwise.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

VIN Tag Identification Plate

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Photo of the heater (Chevy truck) that was in #211 when purchased by ProTeamCorvette.com. Heater was installed by L. Gray Tuttle. Top right is the 3-speed clutch rod and pedal that was cut-off when a powerglide was put in the car after race retirement. Lower right is the original 3-speed patch that was on the firewall by the master cylinder brake unit.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Photo of #211 in ProTeam's shop during body-off restoration in early 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

Photo of #211 in ProTeam's shop during body-off restoration in early 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Photo of #211 at Hendrick's Motorsports in October 2014. Also pictured are Junior Johnson and Terry Michaelis discussing Junior's involvement as a driver of one or both of the NASCAR units.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Photo of #211 at Hendrick's Motorsports in October 2014. Also pictured are Junior Johnson and Terry Michaelis discussing Junior's involvement as a driver of one or both of the NASCAR units.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



Photo of #211 at Hendrick's Motorsports in October 2014. Also pictured are Junior Johnson and Terry Michaelis discussing Junior's involvement as a driver of one or both of the NASCAR units.

Photo Courtesy of ProTeamCorvette.com



Photo of #211 at RCR Racing Museum in Lexington, NC in October 2014.

Photo Courtesy of ProTeamCorvette.com



Photo of #211 at RCR Racing Museum and L. Gray Tuttle in October 2014. Mr. Tuttle was the first titled owner of #211.

Photo Courtesy of ProTeamCorvette.com

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

Photo of #211 at RCR Racing Museum L. Gray Tuttle and Chocolate Myers in October 2014. Chocolate Myers' father, Bobby Myers, drove one or both of the NASCAR units. Chocolate currently has a NASCAR radio talk show on Sirius XM-90. Check out: SiriusXM.com/NASCAR

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



Photo of Chocolate Myers in his XM-90 studio in October 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Photos of #211 at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance in March 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
Dennis Hedberg



Scrapbook...a photographic timeline



Photos of #211 at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance in March 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
Dennis Hedberg



Photos of #211 at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance in March 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
Ed Augustine



Photo of #211 in a special display at the June 2014 Bloomington Gold Great Hall.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Scrapbook...a photographic timeline

National Corvette Museum invitation to exhibit #211 in their NASCAR exhibit from May 15th, 2015 through September 6th, 2015.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com



National Corvette Museum

350 Corvette Drive • Bowling Green, KY 42101-9134
Phone [270] 781-7973 • Fax [270] 781-5286
www.corvettemuseum.org

November 6, 2014

Mr. Terry Michaelis
PO Box 606
Napoleon, OH 43545

Dear Terry,

Thank you for taking a moment to talk with Adam Boca about the possibility of loaning your Corvette to the National Corvette Museum for our NASCAR exhibit. This exhibit will highlight a timeline of the history of NASCAR, and tying in the Corvette would only add to the historical significance of this display.

Please accept this letter as a formal invitation for you and your 1953 Corvette, VIN # E53F001211, to be displayed from May 15th, 2015 – September 6th, 2015.

We are working with several race teams and museums to put together a great display of vehicles and memorabilia. We hope to have either an original or replica Moonshine Runner that started the NASCAR movement, your 1953 to famous stock cars that have raced over the years.

We expect attendance will be great over this time period to see the exhibit. Thousands of NASCAR, Corvette, and automobile enthusiasts will walk this timeline of history.

In closing, we would be pleased and honored if you would consent to loaning your 1953 NASCAR Corvette to the National Corvette Museum.

Yours sincerely,


Wendell Strode
Executive Director


Bob Hellmann
Facilities & Display Manager

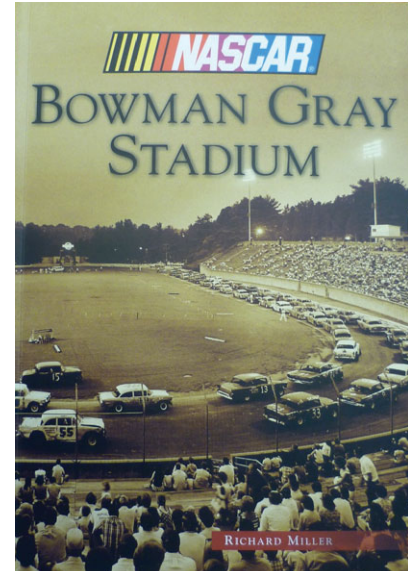
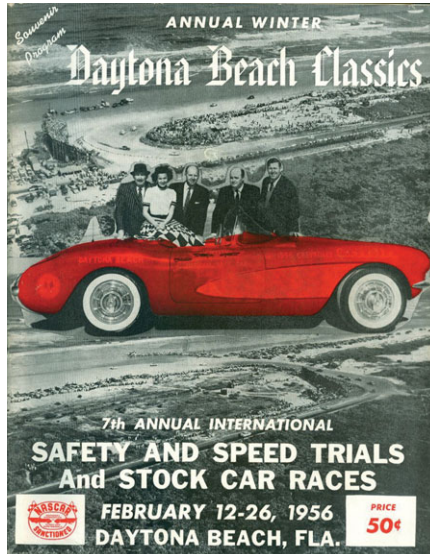
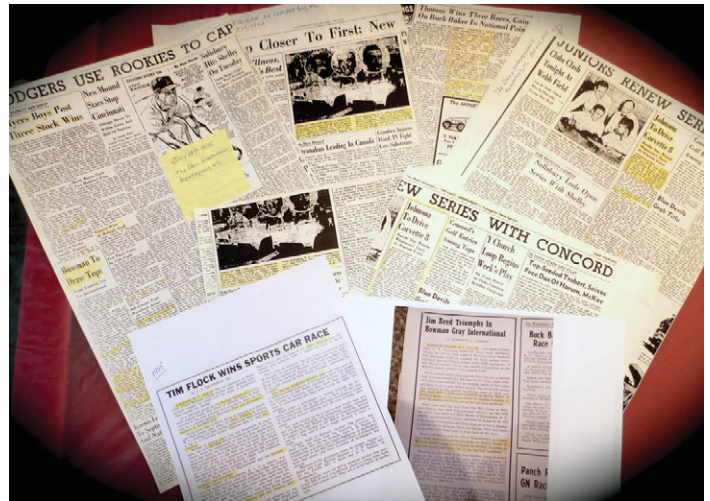
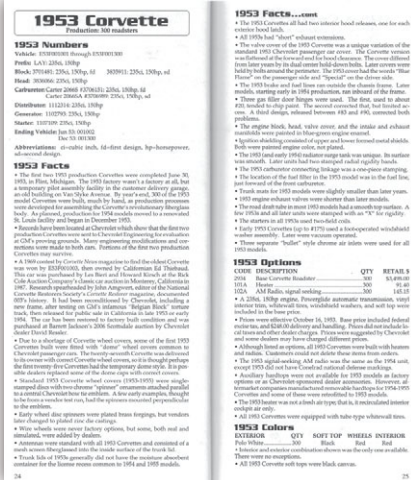
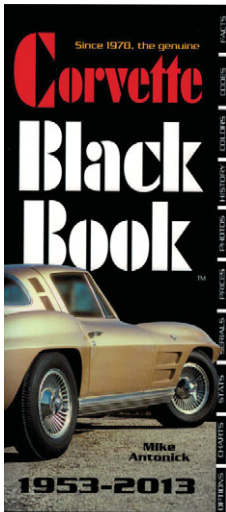
"The National Corvette Museum is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation"



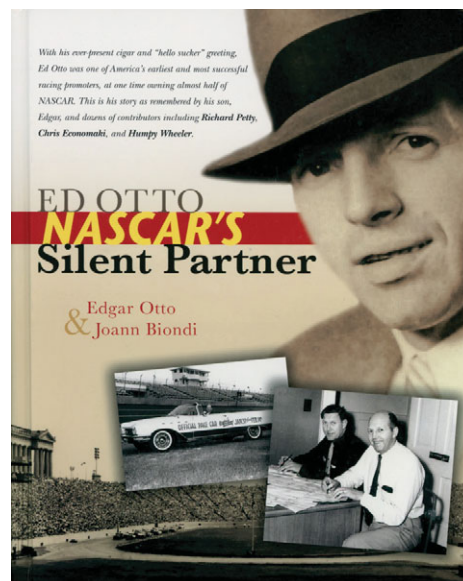
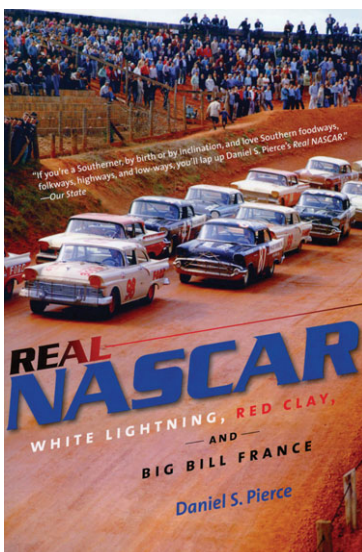
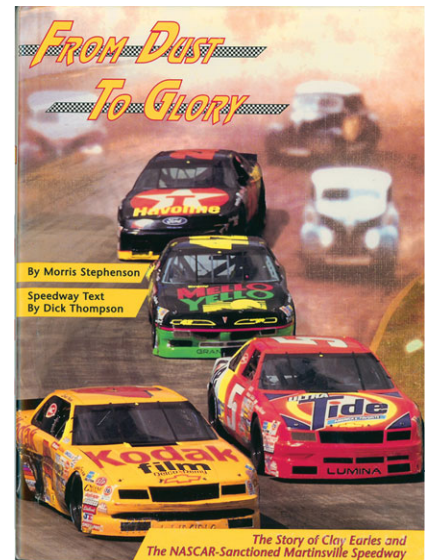
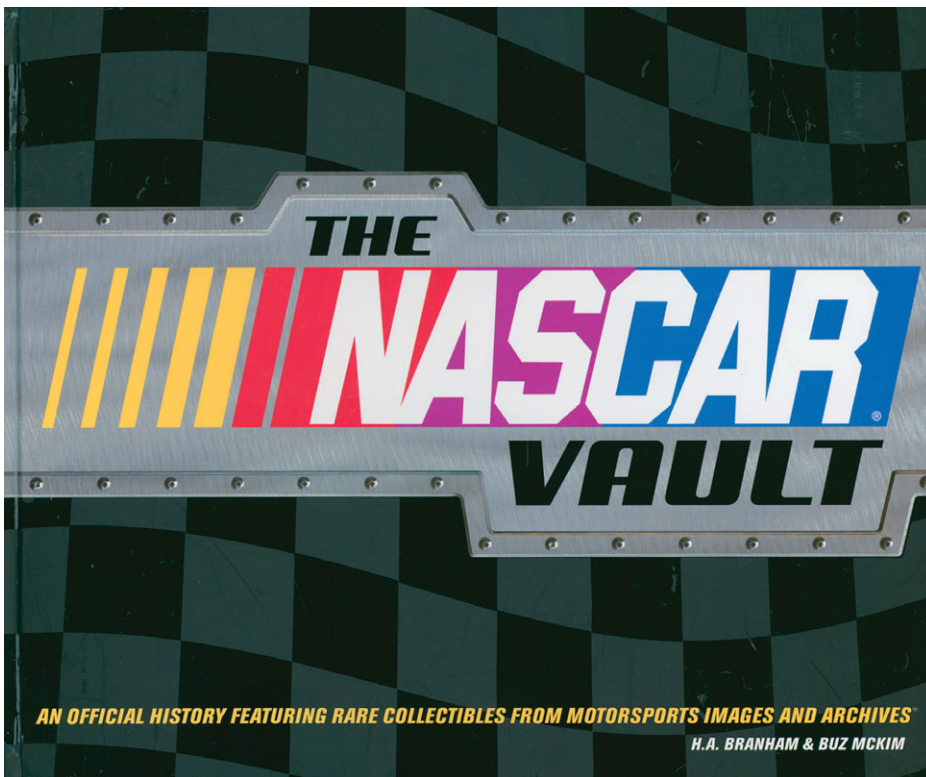
Photo of the full size #211 and its matching pedal car in November 2014.

Photo Courtesy of
ProTeamCorvette.com

Research and Reference Materials



Research and Reference Materials



Research and Reference Materials

**CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER**

TO: Experimental Shop DATE November 3, 1955 ORDER NO. 17395-1

DIST: J-A-E-F-H-J-K-P-R-S-T-Z
W. R. MacKenzie

UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (21)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

Rebuild Corvette cars, Serial Numbers E-537-001211 and VE-557-001399, to incorporate special W/S screens, ~~disc brakes~~, right side plastic covers and ~~engine~~ as designed and fabricated by body group. Reprint cars all white on completion of engine, chassis and body work.

Purnish both cars with 1956 engines to latest 1956 Corvette specifications with dual h-hbl carburetion and 3-speed close ratio transmissions. Engines to have machined relief in pistons, streamlined lighter valves (HS-201 1/2 in) 92 C/R and bored to .030" oversize service pistons. 1956 Generators with tachometer drive, cables and instrum bands. Exhaust system to have 1956 manifold with no mufflers - exit at 1956 body exhaust outlet with 2 1/2" diameter. Fit up two heavy-duty stock car engine 1/4" ~~to be shipped to owner. Mauri Rose to supply axle assembly~~ Corvettes. Final build-up of Corvettes to have 1956 Corve per W. O. 19310-1. Install new front spindles shot-peened and front end parts as required. Use same front hubs and ~~Car No. E-537-001211 will require new body and fender mold (St. Louis)~~

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Order 1956 parts as required. Completion date - January 1

REASON:

Stock Car Racing Program as requested by Management.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: Per Mauri Rose VIA

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
REQUESTED BY:	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

**CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER**

TO: Experimental Shop DATE 1-25-56 ORDER NO. 17725-21

DIST: 3-4-C-Y

UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (21)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

Please issue a Purchase Order for \$172.15, 12000# minimum @ \$3.82 per GAT & 3% federal tax to -

McNell Transport, Inc.
6201 E. Nichols Road
Detroit 13, Michigan
Attn: Mr. C.D. Sprouse
Telephone - Tainbrook 2-8720

To cover shipping by haulaway of four (4) Corvettes (#6903, 6405, 62 and 92) to Daytona Beach, Florida.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

NS:

picked up February 1, 1956 A.M. and covered as loaded with covers by the hauler.

CONTACTED: Yes, by Mr. W. F. Speer P.O.

STATUS:

VIA CHARGE

Ship Service
Detroit
Florida

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
REQUESTED BY:	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

*Rubly -
Is any one planning to
put spot disc Brakes on
Bell Frances's Corvettes
for Sebring?*

Sanders

No. See F. Burrell

**CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER**

TO: Experimental Shop & Garage DATE February 1, 1956

DIST: J-A-I
W. R. MacKenzie

UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (22)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

This work order is to supersede BWO-17395-1 to cover work already completed on two (2) Corvette cars, Serial #E-537-001211 and VE-557-001399, NASCAR units.

Cars were rebuilt using 1956 engine and rear axle assemblies removed from new 1956 Corvettes purchased for development testing.

Three-speed close ratio transmission assemblies were installed. Bodies are from Car #3950 mock-up Corvette and Corvette #5951.

Plastic tonneau covers fabricated and installed along with small racing windshields. Instruments were relocated per instructions from Mauri Rose.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

REASON:

For Stock Car Activity.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: VIA CHARGE

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
REQUESTED BY:	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

C.M. Rubly - Chassis Engineer
R.F. Sanders - Chief Chassis Design Engineer
Frank Burrell - Research & Development Engineer
Mauri Rose - Vehicle Development Engineer

**CHEVROLET ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
BUILD ORDER**

TO: Experimental Shop & Garage DATE February 1, 1956

DIST: J-A-I
W. R. MacKenzie

UPC 15

CHARGE TO: Stock Car (22)

NO. OF UNITS 2

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

Cancel work order to rebuild Corvette cars, Serial numbers E-537-001211 and VE-557-001399, as cars have been rebuilt to conform to BWO-17725-26.

DISPOSITION OF FINISHED MATERIAL:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

REASON:

Rebuild was done per BWO-17725-26.

HAS SOURCE BEEN CONTACTED:

PRESENT SOURCE STATUS:

SHIP TO: VIA CHARGE

DATES	FABRICATION	REQUIRED	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
REQUESTED BY:	INSTALLATION	APPROVALS		

The organizational chart for the Ford Motor Company is structured as follows:

- CHIEF ENGINEER** (E. N. COLE)
 - EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT** (P. A. COLLINS)
 - DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT** (W. COLLEY)
 - ASSISTANT CHIEF ENGINEER ADMINISTRATION** (J. J. ALTZ)
 - ADMINISTRATOR ENGINEER COST & BUDGET** (T. A. CARLTON)
 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENGINEER** (B. H. HOLMES)
 - PLANT ENGINEER** (C. F. MACDONALD)
 - H. C. HAZAR
 - ASSISTANT CHIEF ENGINEER PRODUCTION** (C. W. FREDRICK)
 - CHIEF PRODUCTION ENGINEER** (W. F. FLOWERS)
 - CHIEF FIELD PRODUCT ENGINEER** (A. W. HARRIS)
 - AVIATION PROJECT CHIEF** (R. O. FLANN)
 - A. J. JONES
 - M. S. JOHNSON
 - D. L. WESTGOTT
 - CHIEF PLANT ENGINEER** (W. D. ZIGLER)
 - R. E. DUNN
 - ASSISTANT CHIEF ENGINEER BODY** (E. F. FLEMING)
 - CHIEF PASS CAR BODY ENGINEER** (E. J. LUNAGORE)
 - CHIEF TRUCK BODY ENGINEER** (B. J. DOLZNER)
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 - CHIEF ENGINEER LABORATORY TESTS** (A. J. UNDERWOOD)
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 - V. F. FISHER
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 - F. J. WYCHELL
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 - D. E. LEFFLER
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 - J. P. HERBERT
 - M. T. ROEBROCK
- CHIEF TRUCK CHASSIS DESIGN ENGINEER**

Research and Reference Materials

Races and Dates

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday, July 23, 1955 | Bowman Gray Stadium, 1st Annual Sports Car Race, Dodson/Johnson/Jones |
| Saturday, August 6, 1955 | Raleigh Speedway - 1st Annual Sports Car Race, Don/Herb Thomas |
| Saturday, August 20, 1955 | Raleigh Speedway |
| Saturday, June 2, 1956 | Raleigh Speedway - Gwyn Staley/Liguori |
| Saturday, June 3, 1956 | Martinsville Speedway - Grand National Race, co-sanctioned with SCODA, Gwyn Staley/Liguori |
| Saturday, July 14, 1956 | Bowman Gray - 2nd Annual International Race, Junior Johnson/Pee Wee Jones |
| Saturday, July 27, 1957 | Bowman Gray - 3rd Annual International Race, Jim Reed/Bobby Myers/Pee Wee Jones |

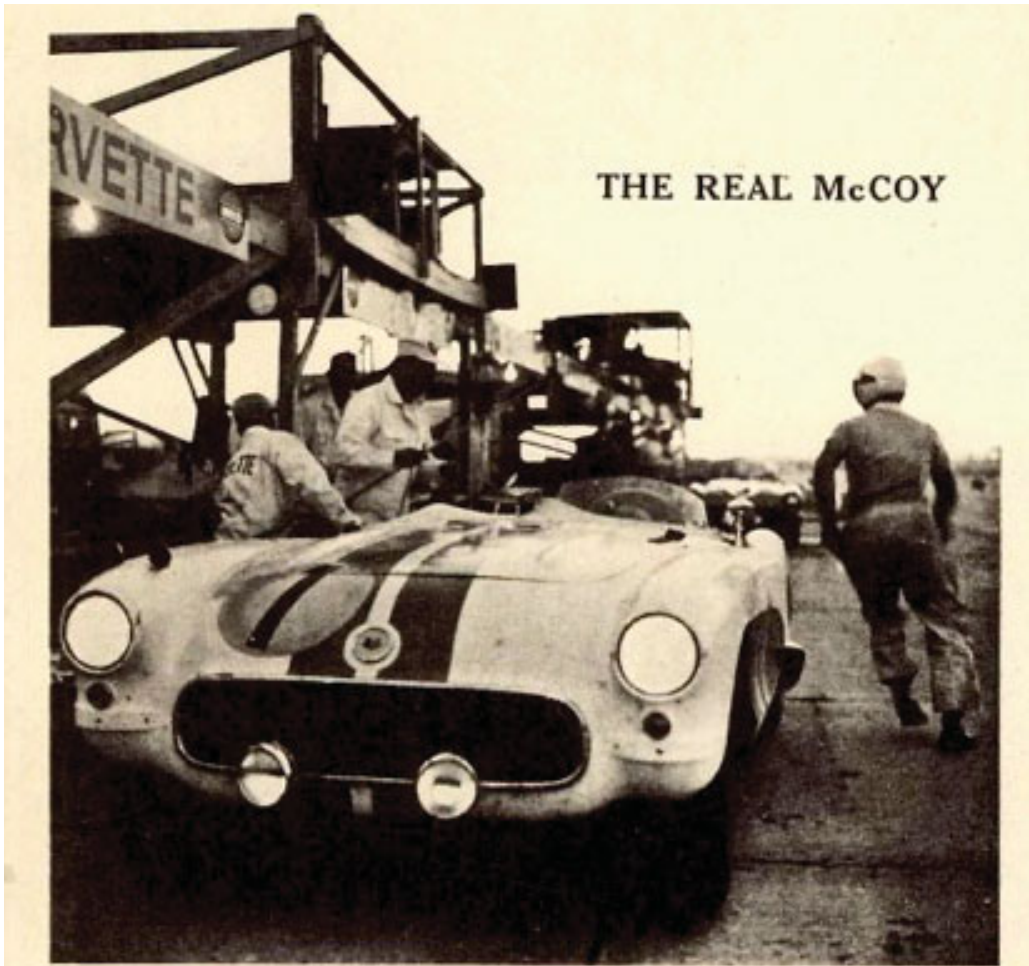
Birthdays and Production Data

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1953 Corvette | 300 produced
Beginning July 1st, 1953 – Ending December 24th, 1953 |
| 1954 Corvette | 3,640 produced
Beginning December 28th, 1953 – Ending July 16th, 1954 |
| 1955 Corvette | 700 produced
Beginning January 11th, 1955 – Ending December 20th, 1955 |
| 1956 Corvette | 3,467 produced
Beginning January 9th, 1956 – Ending September 20th, 1956 |
| 1957 Corvette | 6,339 produced
Beginning September 21st, 1956 – Ending September 6th 1957 |
| | #211 (1953) was produced on November 12th, 1953 |
| | #399 (1955) was produced on July 5th, 1955 |

T-Bird Production

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1955 T-Bird | 16,155 produced |
| 1956 T-Bird | 15,631 produced |
| 1957 T-Bird | 21,380 produced |

Corvette Wins At Sebring!!



THE REAL McCoy

Here is the most remarkable car made in America today — the new Chevrolet Corvette.

Why remarkable?

Because it is two cars wrapped up in one sleek skin. One is a luxury car with glove-soft upholstery, wind-up windows, a removable hardtop (with virtually 360° vision), or fabric top, ample luggage space, a velvety ride and all the power assists you could want, including power-operated fabric top* and Powerglide transmission*.

The other is a sports car. And we mean the real McCoy, a tough, road-gripping torpeda-on-wheels with the stamina to last through the brutal 12 hours of Sebring, a close-ratio transmission (2.2 low gear, 1.31 second) matched to engine torque characteristics, razor-sharp steering (16 to 1) that puts command into your fingertips.

Other people make a luxury car that has much the same dimensions as this. That's not so tough. And the Europeans make some real rugged competition sports cars — and that's considerably tougher. But nobody but Chevrolet makes a luxury car that also is a genuine 100-proof sports car.

It's a wicked combination to work out, and we didn't hit it overnight. But you'll find, when you take the wheel of a new Corvette, that the result is fantastic — the most heart-lifting blend of all the things you've ever wanted a car to be.

If you find it hard to believe that one car could combine such widely different characteristics we can't blame you. And no amount of talk can tell you half so much as 15 minutes in a Corvette's cockpit — so why don't you let your Chevrolet dealer set up a road test of the most remarkable car made in America today? . . . Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit 2, Michigan.

*Powerglide and power-operated fabric top optional at extra cost.

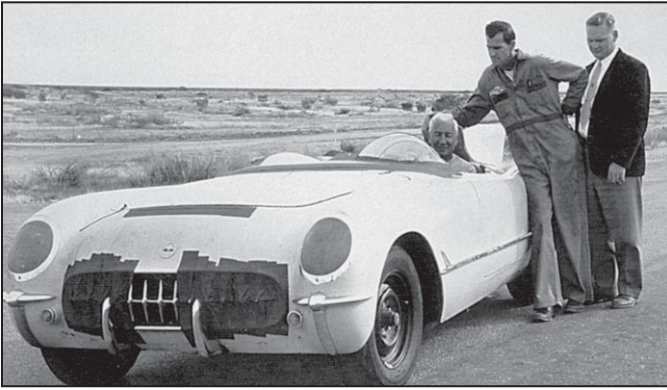
CORVETTE

1955 Chevrolet Engineering Corvette #6901 VIN #E55S001194 Wins At Sebring in March 1956

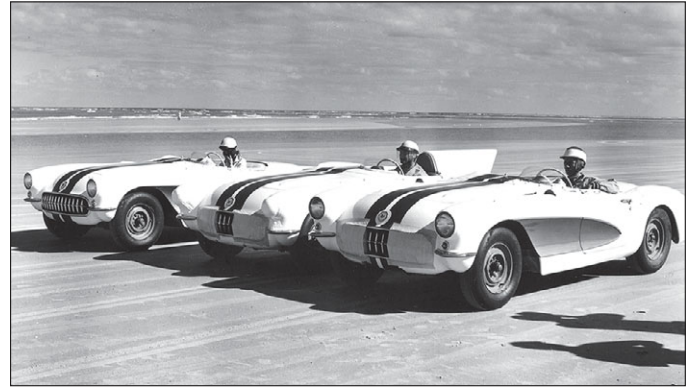
Chevrolet's PR people wasted little time to tell the world that the Corvette is here to stay.
Win on Sunday... Sell on Monday!!!

The Real McCoy advertisement courtesy of Jim Bernardin/Former Campbell Ewald Art Director/Private Archive

The Early Chevrolet Engineering Corvettes

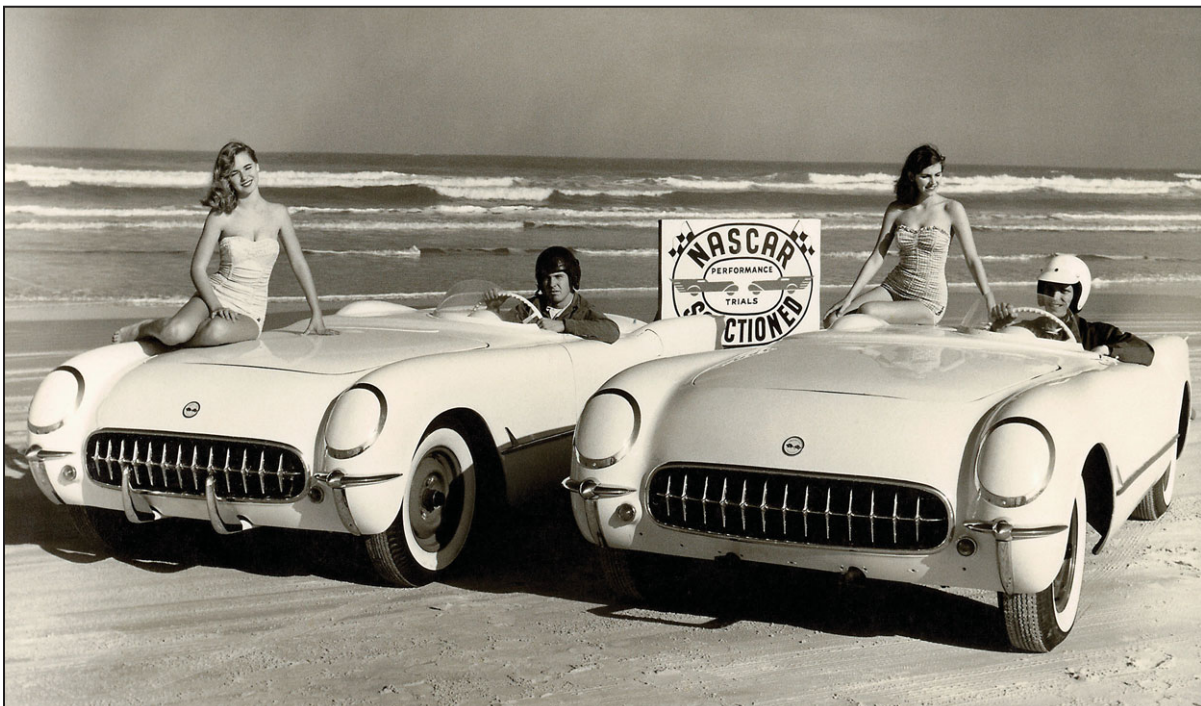


EX-87/ #5951



#6901, #6903, #6905 - 1956 SEBRING CARS

Harley Earl Created the Corvette...



#211 (1953) #399 (1955)

Ed Cole & Chevrolet Engineering Saved the Corvette!



#399 (1955)



#211 (1953)

Owner History of E53F001211

November 12, 1953 Chevrolet Flint, Michigan build date. Possibly used by Chevrolet Engineering until sold or given to first untitled owner.

1953-1955 NASCAR/Bill France received GM-MSO from Chevrolet
(Approximate) note: Engineering memo on page 24 and Volusia County (Daytona Beach) license plate #8-19275 on page 19... Chevrolet Engineering photo dated September 3, 1955

November 1958 L. Gray Tuttle of Winston-Salem purchases #211 from NASCAR and receives the GM-MSO that was given to NASCAR and becomes first titled owner.

1968..... James Ivey of Oakville, Ontario, Canada purchases #211 from L. Gray Tuttle
(Approximate)

1972..... Dr. D.M. Wallace of Agincourt, Ontario, Canada purchases #211
(Approximate)

1976..... Bob Johnson Chevrolet of West Hill, Ontario, Canada purchases #211 and restores car back to Blue Flame Six with Powerglide. Uses car for photo op with a 1978 Indy Pace Car.
(Approximate)

December 29, 1995 John Bohl/U-Can Sales of London, Ontario, Canada purchases #211

January 1996..... Tom Hattey of Roseville, Michigan purchases #211

1997-1998 Dr. Richard Cohen of Boca Raton, Florida purchases #211
(Approximate)

2001..... John Benefield of Wynne, Arkansas purchases #211 from Dr. Richard Cohen
(title shows November 2007)

2010..... ProTeam Corvette Sales of Napoleon, Ohio purchases #211 from Mr. Benefield

NASCAR Corvette History Wanted

We are very interested in picking the brains of anyone familiar with the NASCAR Corvettes or an official/unofficial historian of each of these racetracks and persons involved in NASCAR during the short lived period of the Sports Car Owners Drivers Association (SCODA).

We are looking for any NASCAR Corvette Photos, Programs, Magazine/Newspaper articles, Race Grids/Results of the early 1953-55 Corvettes that raced against the T-Birds at Raleigh Speedway in 1955 & 1956, Martinsville Speedway in 1955 & 1956, Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston-Salem, NC in 1955-'57 & Daytona Beach, FL in February 1956. The race numbers probably were #92, #62, #55, #27, #16, #3.

The Drivers were Bill France, Joe Hawkins in Daytona, the Thomas brothers, Gwyn Staley, Pee Wee Jones, Junior Johnson, Jimmy Massey, Ralph Liguori, Bobby Myers and Johnny Dodson in the Carolinas. The cars were maintained by Hubert Westmoreland. The Corvettes were probably owned by NASCAR or Bill France Racing in Greensboro, NC.

We would like to discuss the NASCAR Scoda sanctioned events where the Corvettes and T-birds raced against European Sports Cars.

Email: terry@proteamcorvette.com or write to: P.O. Box 606, Napoleon, Ohio 43545

A Tribute



I wish to recognize Mr. L. Gray Tuttle who so graciously provided photos, dates, and hours of conversation that helped ProTeam positively identify #211 as one of the two NASCAR Corvette race cars, as with Mr. Tuttle's help he again rescued #211 and its history from the overzealous restorers who time after time cover everything including the fingerprints with plastic paint.

This was Mr. Tuttle's second rescue of #211, which in 1958 was being used by NASCAR as a parts car and was destined to salvage, as it was a "used-up" dated racecar.

Mr. Tuttle purchased #211 in 1958 for \$350.00 and repaired the left front fender, door, and rear quarter panel by cutting-up the fiberglass tonneau cover for repair pieces and parts.

Mr. Tuttle removed the roll bar, racing windshield, and installed a plasticon hardtop, Corvette stock windshield, 1956 hubcaps, right hand seat, a passenger car 3-speed transmission (tranny was already gone) and his father's 1951 pick-up truck heater.

Mr. Tuttle's interest in Corvettes began after his grandfather took him and his brothers to Modern Chevrolet in Winston-Salem to see the new 1953 Corvette. Gray was only eleven years old as he was born May 5th, 1942.

That Christmas Gray received an Ideal Plastic Corvette Model from his grandfather and has been a Corvette enthusiast and/or a Corvette owner ever since.

Gray remembers well the two Corvettes and a T-Bird that raced at Bowman Gray Stadium in the summers of 1955 and 1956 even though he was only 13 and 14 years old at that time.

Gray drove #211 with its NASCAR 2 four V-8 until approximately 1968 when he sold #211 for \$950.00 to a man from Canada.

Gray also painted the other NASCAR Corvette, a 1955 VIN #399, for Pee Wee Jones who thought it was promised to him by the NASCAR officials.

Gray has owned several early Corvettes over the years including a very rare six cylinder 1955 and currently owns a 1954 Corvette.

Gray is a true Corvette enthusiast, a gentleman, and a person who shares... and for that I say thank-you very much!!



About The Author



"Terry Michaelis may be the single most versatile contributor to the Corvette Phenomenon. Collector. Dealer. Publisher. Researcher. Teacher. Vendor." Quote from Bloomington Great Hall.

Terry has procured, marketed, and sold more than 10,000 Corvettes in his storied career.

He began the love affair with the Corvette over 40 years ago on a local car lot. By the mid-1970's, Michaelis was dubbed "King" of Corvette aftermarket parts. Michaelis and his brother, Fred, formed ProTeam Classic Corvette in 1987, where they assembled the largest most dynamic collection of classic Corvettes in the world.

Terry Michaelis is a world-renowned expert on Corvettes having been the focus of hundreds of radio interviews, newspaper articles, and other industry publications. He continues to lobby for the collector Corvette community with the same passion and affection for over the

top marketing that he envisioned when he hosted the MGM world premiere of Corvette Summer in 1978 and the production of "The Last Stingray" SPEEDtv miniseries in 2006 of which won a Silver Telly award.

Beyond marketing wizardry, Michaelis has developed into one of the foremost proponents of preservation, forensics research, and sorting historic facts from promotional fiction related to high-profile Corvettes. He may now be at the most important phase of his career - helping new collectors learn what to look for, how to recognize it, and what to do about it.

The work presented in these pages is a culmination of a career spent under the hood and forming relationships with people as a passionate about the Corvette as he is. Terry pulled-out all the stops and cashed-in more than a few favors to bring the complex saga of #211, The NASCAR Corvette, to the light of day.

Terry is a member of the NCRS #136, SACC #32, Founding member of the National Corvette Museum, Bloomington Gold Great Hall inductee (2014), Named One of Corvette's 50 Most Influential People in 2014.

Acknowledgments and Sources

For NASCAR CORVETTE Story by Rick Tavel

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Research Acknowledgments

Credits

Noland Adams, Dave Bartush, David Burroughs, Chevrolet Archives, Corvette Race Car Registry, The Daytona Beach NASCAR Archives, Eric Gill, Bill Gould/Auto Ancestry, Historic Speedway Group, John Hutchins, Tim Jones, Ralph Liguori, Dan McCrary, Richard Miller, Chocolate Myers, Randy Myers, Doris Nuckles, Rick Tavel, Dick Whittington, Laverne Zachary, Ray Evernham, Rick Hendricks, Junior Johnson

Photo Credits

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| Auto Ancestry/Bill Gould | Chocolate Myers | David R. Bartush | Dennis Hedberg | Ed Augustine |
| Doris Westmoreland Nuckles | GM Heritage Center | GM Media Archives | Jim Bernardin | Joe (Jack) Hawkins |
| Hubert Westmoreland | John Hutchins | L. Gray Tuttle | Morris Stephenson | Noland Adams |
| La Verne Zachary Collection | Ralph Liguori | Randy Myers | Rick Tavel | Tim Jones |
| Motosports Images & Archives | T. Taylor Warren | | | |

Magazine & Newspaper Credits

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| "Dust to Glory" | The Daily Independent, Kennapolis, NC | The Daily Times-News, Burlington, NC |
| Robesonian News, Lumberton, NC | Greensboro Daily News, Greensboro, NC | Statesville Record & Landmark |
| The Corvette Restorer Magazine | Goodtimes, Classic Corvette Club (1975) | Hot Rod Magazine (May 1956) |
| Daytona Beach Classics Program (1956) | | |

Special Thank-you... must be given to Loren Lundberg, for without his help the true identity of VIN #211 may have been lost forever and Gray Tuttle of Clinton, NC, who bought VIN #211 from NASCAR in 1958 and was extremely helpful in identifying the "bones" and offering conclusive evidence that this was his old Corvette race car.



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