

HISTORY OF 1936 CORD 810 WESTCHESTER SERIAL NO 1586A.

Written by Terry Cockerell ACD Club Member No 2187. Date: 2014.



According to research done by Jim Brockman in Canada and published in the ACD Newsletter VOL. XVII. No 2 February 1969, this particular car was exported to Canada and sold by O'Donnell Mackie, the Auburn and Cord agents in Toronto. It was the fifth 810 Cord the agency sold.

The sale date was 9th April 1936 and the first owner was A. Mason of Acton, Ontario. The original engine at that time was FB 582. Nothing is known of A. Mason, however Acton was known as a centre for the production of tanned leather goods.

1586A has the Westchester body style, was originally painted Cadet Grey and had the standard broad cloth blue interior. The underside of the bonnet or hood was not painted but sprayed with a bitumen type body deadener. I believe the car was assembled during early March 1936 in Connersville, Indiana.

Early Cords were known for some common faults, namely transmission failure due to the small Archimedes type oil pump, overheating and vapour lock.

I suspect that the original owner was not happy with the cars performance consequently 1586A was probably sold or traded as it next appears for sale during 1937 at J.D. Patterson & Co the Auburn and Cord agents in Hamilton, Ontario.

Mr L.L. Merrill of Hamilton, Ontario purchased 1586A during 1937 and subsequently claimed that he had purchased it as a “brand new car” for the price of \$5,200.00 Can. It still carried engine No FB 582.

Mr L.L. Merrill was an executive working for International Harvester in Hamilton and must have driven 1586A extensively for it had covered over 200,000 miles by the early 1950’s

Richard (Ric) Simpson in Canada told me when I met him in Auburn 2011, that he first saw 1586A in about 1940 whilst it was parked in Main St, Hamilton. Ric and his father were walking along Main St and stopped to have a closed look at it, where upon Mr Merrill came running out to intervene. Mr Merrill didn’t want to talk about his car until Ric’s father said “It’s ok we have one too !”



During 1952 1586A was again seen by Ric Simpson in the parking lot of Szabo Motors in Hamilton with the sale price of \$800.00 Can. The car had acquired a two tone colour scheme by this time with dark blue fenders and the original Cadet Grey body.

In 1954 1586A was purchased by Bob Peel of Galt, Ontario according to information supplied by 810/812 Cord Historian Ron Irwin. Talking with Tom Landreth (aged 83 in 2014) in Ontario, he explained that he was a long-time friend of Bob however he said as far as he knew Bob never owned a Cord. With the help of Tom and Nancy Landreth I was able to get in contact with Bob Peel and indeed Bob never owned a Cord it was his brother Fred who owned the grey Cord with the dark blue fenders. Fred worked in the family shoe trade as a factory manager. Ric Simpson had told me there was a small group of Cord owning individuals in the Hamilton area and indeed the grey Cord with the blue fenders could be seen often in company with other Cords including an L29 cabriolet owned by Tom Landreth. I phoned and spoke to Fred aged 86 in October 2014, he told me he had a fair sized collection of old cars and mainly used the Cord for long trips on the weekends as it was still like a new car and went so well. It never gave him any trouble at all. He was delighted to hear it was still a good driver but unfortunately he did not have any pictures of it.

September 1st 1955 1586A was purchased by William Horning of Waterdown, Ontario. The car was still grey with blue fenders however by this time engine No FB 3213 had been installed. It has been noted that over 200,000 miles had been covered by this time. The engine swap had probably been done by Dallas Winslow’s company in Auburn, Indiana. The replacement engine and probably the original transmission were painted a royal blue colour. Engine No FB 3213 had come from a 1937 Custom Series Cord according to Josh Malks lists of records. William Horning paid \$700.00 Can for the car, found it to be in good overall condition and kept it as a driver for three years. William had owned a total of eight Cords including a very rare phaeton with twin side mounted spares which he was restoring. Six of these Cords were parted out for spares. William was a motor mechanic employed at a Ford agency. He did a lot of work from home where he had built a large garage and workshop. William is recorder as being a member of the ACD Club in 1956.



Tom Landreth was also a good friend of William Horning and went with William to numerous meets in 1586A. Two were held in Ohio prior to 1956, one of which was held in East Liverpool, Ohio. Tom

also accompanied William in 1586A to Auburn in the mid 1950's however he couldn't remember the actual year.

I found a picture of 1586A in the Jim Brockman Collection of photographs in the ACD Club website. Cord 810-812 Archive sheet 6, picture No JBA 307 simply because of the two tone colour scheme. This picture was taken in 1957 in Ninth St, Auburn, Indiana. The licence plate is 380-982 with Ontario 1957, I believe these were issued on an annual basis. The picture clearly shows the car was fitted with side wing windows however I have no idea when these were originally fitted, probably when L.L. Merrill owned it. It also had the plain unperforated hub caps at that time which had probably been supplied by Dallas Winslow in Auburn. I had found a film on You Tube titled "Classic Car Club of America CARavan 1957" where 1586A can be clearly seen a number of times. This event was run August 18-23, 1957 starting in New York and going via Niagara Falls to Milwaukee, I think William then continued on to Auburn where the 1957 pictures were taken. To see the film see <http://youtu.br/1F5Fy72fmG8>

April 27th 1958 1596A was purchased by George Van Nostrand of Gormley, Ontario. I was able to obtain a brief history of the car from Ron Irwin the 810/812 historian in California. Shortly after 1586A arrived in Australia I had sent out letters to all known previous owners with George being the only one to reply. That reply was a good beginning as my wife and I eventually met George and his wife Sheilah in Auburn, Indiana for the 75th Anniversary Celebrations of the release of the 810 Cord in 2011.

George eventually sold 1586A to Fred Tremeer, however he was delighted to hear it had turned up in Australia. He said that he wished that he had never parted with it. George used it as a daily driver for many years including long distance annual holiday trips from Ontario. George drove 1586A to ACD Club Spring and Auburn Meets from 1959 onwards. He explained that it was a dream to drive at 85 mph all day long. George had his own auto repair shop that specialised in front wheel alignments and wheel balancing, no doubt it was a dream to drive! All up George had covered over 36,000 miles while he owned it and it had covered over 200,000 miles when he first bought it.

George sent me a few pictures of 1586A at early meets, two in particular stand out as they were both taken in Auburn, Indiana. The first was taken in 1957 by Sid Ayers with Gordon Buehrig standing next to it in Ninth St where ACD cars tend to congregate to this date. The second was taken in 1959 by George himself again Gordon Buehrig is standing next to it but the location is outside the Auburn Town hall. It is interesting to note that the 1957 picture was taken in the same location as the picture I found in the Jim Brockman collection but showing the opposite end of the car. If you look closely in both pictures you can see a discarded wrapper that says "DOLCIN" adjacent to the rear LHS wheel.

In 1961 George exhibited 1586A at the Canadian National Exhibition which is held annually in Toronto. The venue is held inside the same building as the 1930's CNE where Cords were exhibited for the first time. George related how the "Vintage Cars" were displayed on the mezzanine floor which can be clearly seen in the amazing pictures of the 1930's shows found by Jim Brockman.

Glenn Pray came to Auburn Reunion in 1964 with his prototype 810 Cord convertible. 1586A was photographed with the prototype, the pictures were used in auto magazines to promote Glen's new replica Cords. Actually 1586A was featured in a number of Canadian and US magazines around this period.

Among the numerous stories that George told me about the car the one that stands out is that he taught his wife to drive it and she and another lady drove it on a round trip of about 300 miles to see a special show. The ladies and their car got a lot of attention from envious admirers.

George eventually sold 1586A to Fred Tremeer of Bowmanville, Ontario on 10th August 1966. I believe during Fred's ownership the driver's door came open at speed and did a considerable amount of damage which was repaired. Fred eventually sold it to purchase a replica 1935 Auburn Speedster.

Sometime before December 1982 it was owned by someone in Texas or Oklahoma. According to 810/812 Cord Historian Ron Irwin in California

August 1983, 1586A was owned by J.Martin Anderson of Kent, Washington state according to 810/812 Cord historian Ron Irwin however, when I was able to make contact with J Martin Anderson (Marty Anderson) he explained in a letter that he bought the car in the mid to late 1970's from a dealer named Tom Crook. 1586A was then sold to Larry Galbo in Bellaire, Texas 24th September 2004. Marty stated that he only drove 1586A about 200 miles during all the years he owned it simply because it was one of a large collection of cars that he owned.

March 2007, 1586A was for sale with Mark Hyman Classic Cars in St Louis, Missouri. Speaking with Mark he explained that the car was a good driver, the paint was "acceptable", the interior was good but it was a bit of a mess under the hood. The motor had good oil pressure and the gear change worked ok, Sale price \$49,500 US. Mark also stated the car had been sitting in a private museum for quite a number of years. Obviously J Martin Anderson's collection. I agreed to purchase it.

1586A was shipped in a container to Los Angeles then transferred to a ship that came across the Pacific Ocean via Shanghai to Sydney, Australia. I was at the importing agents Friday morning 13th July 2007 when the container was first opened and the car rolled out to take some pictures. I found the container to be dry inside as well as the car. After a lot of red tape I towed 1586A home on a tandem trailer pulled by my wife's V6 Toyota Camry with front wheel drive.

The next day, Saturday 14th July 2007 I summoned up courage to start the motor and take 1586A for a short drive. It was certainly a mess under the bonnet with the exhaust pipes ready to fall off the manifolds. Basically everything had been untouched for many years. The radiator was checked and was found to be full. It started easily and the gear change worked ok to begin with. Two short trip of about 4 to 5 miles resulted in the motor boiling and water spraying from the water pump seals. The radiator was blocked and the water pump was blown. So much for a good driver.

Apart from normal wear and tear first, reverse and the sliding gear were badly damaged by a driver who obviously was not aware of how to drive a Cord properly. Two years work and a considerable amount of money had 1586A back on the road again and fairly reliable after considerable testing.

The first major ACD Club event in Australia that I drove 1586A to was Echuca, Victoria in March 2011. 1586A won the trophy for the "Longest Distance Driven" to the event which pleased me no end as it was completely unexpected. The round trip was 1,300 miles and basically trouble free. At times it did run hot in traffic through Sydney. A shroud that completely covered the radiator was made and fitted to protect and improve the reliability of 1586A plus an electric fuel pump for priming.

During October 2012 I drove 1586A to Melbourne and back to visit relatives and friends averaging 55 to 60 miles per hour for the entire trip. Overdrive was used continuously with the motor ticking over around 1,800 rpm. The round trip of 1,300 miles was trouble free. Driving 500 miles non stop to

Benalla apart from petrol stops was as comfortable as a modern car. Cords were certainly light years ahead of the competition concerning driver comfort way back in 1936.

Two years later we attended the Bathurst ACD Club Rally in March 2013 where 1586A continued to perform faultlessly and opened the eyes of other Cord owners here in Australia. We actually won the Fuel Economy run averaging 22 miles per Imperial gallon.

1586A continues to be a good reliable car and it certainly gets a lot of attention on the road and at car shows here in New South Wales. I get a lot of pleasure driving it, showing it, talking to the general public about it and just looking at it even when it's parked at home.