



1915

ORIGINAL

CHEVROLET 1915 4-CYLINDER CAR SPECIFICATIONS
(Copied from the Automobile, December 31, 1914)

Model name	Baby Grand	Royal Mail	Amesbury
Model symbol	H	H-2	H-3
Model type	Touring Car	Roadster	Roadster
Number of passengers	5	2	3
Price	\$875*	\$750*	\$985 (?)

* - plus \$110 for Auto-lite electrical system.

1915

ENGINE:

Number of cylinders	4
Bore and stroke	3-11/16 x 4
SAE Horsepower	21.8
Horsepower	24
Piston Displacement	170.9 cu. in.
Cylinders shape	1-head
Cylinders - How cast	Cast in block with upper half of crankcase.
Valve location	Valves in head
Cylinder head	One piece casting bolted on block
Camshaft drive	Helical gears
Cooling circulation	Thermo-syphon
Lubrication	Splash
Oil pump	Gear
Ignition system	Single
Ignition make	Simms
Ignition control	Hand
Carburetor make	Zenith
Fuel feed	Vacuum (Gravity on roadsters)
Is hot air pipe fitted?	Yes
Cranking system type	Electric
Cranking system make	Auto-lite

TRANSMISSION:

Clutch type	Cone
Gearset type	Selective
Gearset location	Amidships
Gearset forward speeds	3
Universal joints	2
Propeller shaft	Unenclosed
Final drive	Bevel
Car drives through	Torsion rod
Rear axle ratio	4.00:1
Rear axle	Semi-floating

RUNNING GEAR:

Wheelbase	106 (60" tread optional)
Tires, front and rear	32 x 3-1/2
Wheels	Wood
Brakes	12-inch

CONTROL:

Rear springs	3/4 elliptic
Steering wheel location	Left
Gearshift location	Center

BEARINGS:

Crankshaft, type	Plain
Crankshaft, number	3
Gearset	Ball
Rear axle	Ball and roller
Front wheel	Ball

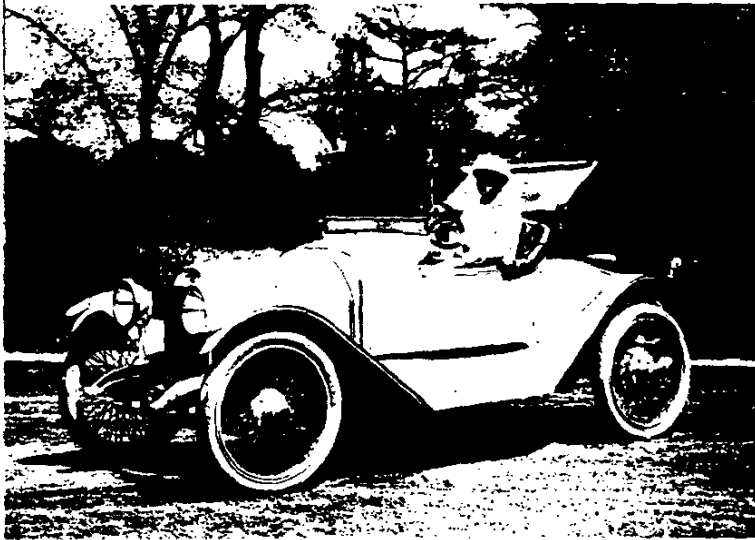
1915

With the large Classic Six gone, Chevrolet's prestige car turned out to be the Series L Light Six Touring, now down-priced to \$1,425. However, the car was still not attractive to buyers, and after 500 were built in 1915, the line was dropped after a total run of 1,000. Serial Nos. of the 1915 issue ran from 501 to 1,000.

The Series L continued to utilize a 112-inch wheelbase, cone clutch, and three-speed transmission on the rear axle. Earlier in the year plans were made to expand the line, and a Series L Roadster was listed at \$1,425. However, there is no record of any of these having been built, though one old publication lists its weight at 2,900 pounds — either a good guess or the weight of an experimental prototype that has been lost in history.

The Series H, received some interesting revisions plus a new model. The new style was the Amesbury Special, Model H-3, a classy looking roadster with wire wheels, an exposed wooden dash, covered rear deck, combination top and dust shield, and folding one-piece windshield. It was finished in French Gray with green patent leather upholstery. Actually, the Houk wire wheels were a \$125 accessory, with wood spoke wheels being standard, but virtually all Amesbury models had the accessory wheels.

The wheelbase of all Series H cars was increased two inches to 106 inches, and demountable rims were made



The Amesbury Special, Series H Model H-3, was a very attractive car produced this year only. The Houk wire wheels cost \$125 above the \$985 base price. In standard form, the car was fitted with 6-lug demountable rims and wood-spoke wheels, though it is doubtful that very many were sold in this form. The combination top and dust shield could be raised to a fully protective top, lowered completely, or held in the position show here to prevent dust from blowing back on the occupants. The car weighed 2,100 pounds and featured its own special body with an almost archaic visible firewall, scalloped cowl/windshield mounting, and pronounced rear compartment with its own integral lock. For the sporting types, the windshield and frame could be completely removed and stored behind the front seat, or could be folded forward over the cowl, not unlike the design of the World War II Jeeps. Officially, Chevrolet referred to this car as the H-3 Special Roadster, but its commonly accepted name was Amesbury Special.

standard. Starters were still optional, but now the starter was mounted on the flywheel at the rear of the engine rather than behind the radiator as on the 1914 models.

Much confusion exists over the actual production of Series H cars in 1915. Serial numbers are listed as running from 6,244 to 13,000, which would indicate a production run of about 6,800 cars. Yet production records indicate 13,600 vehicles were produced.

Part of the discrepancy may lie in the fact that on April 29, 1915, what was to become Chevrolet's most popular car was introduced — but as a 1916 model, so these figures may or may not be given in the above production totals. This car was the 490 which came out in prototype form about Jan. 1, 1915, and actually went on sale June 1, 1915. Still, since it is always considered a 1916 model, full details of the car will be found in the following chapter. Suffice to say at this point, that the car was an immediate success. Following its introduction, a reported total of 46,621 orders were received for the car in the first three weeks of June. This resulted in an estimated value of over \$22.5 million in orders, making Chevrolet a fantastic success for the year.

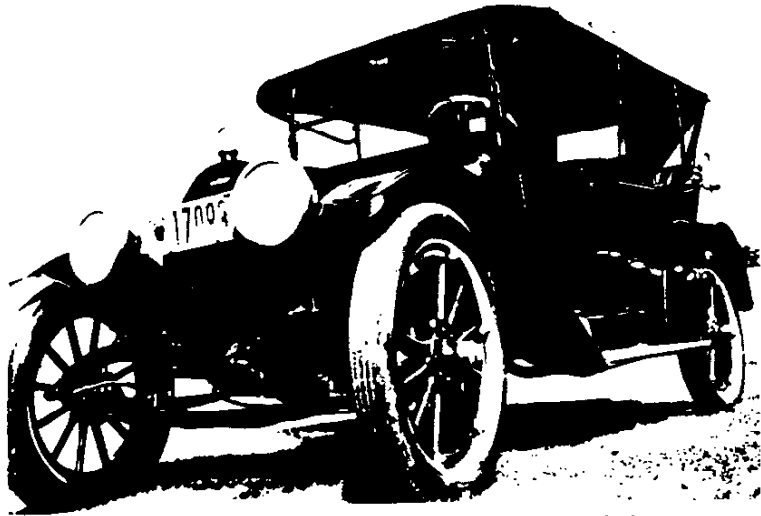
The success was so great that on Sept. 16, Durant declared a common stock dividend of \$50 a share of Chevrolet Co. stock. This was one of the largest dividends ever paid by an American corporation, but until, by Dec. 31, 1915, Chevrolet had a working capital of nearly \$7.5 million and capital stock of \$20 million — all built in four years starting from a virtu shoestring.

In addition, besides the main factory at Flint, Mich., Chevrolets were now being produced in St. Louis and Oshawa, Canada, and later in the year, at the former Maxwell Motor Car plant at Tarrytown, N.Y. Also during the year, the Garner Buggy Co. of St. Louis was licensed to build the new Model 490 for Chevrolet. In addition, new sales and distribution facilities were opened at Kansas City, Mo., and Atlanta, Ga.

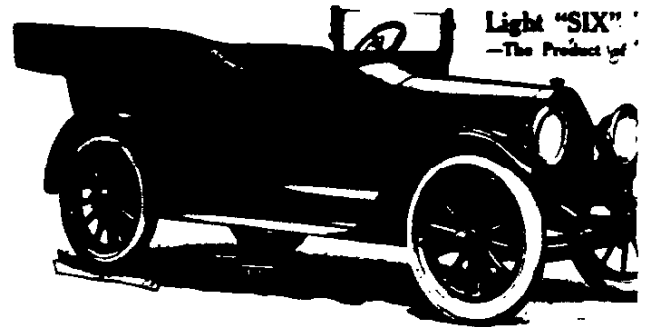
On the corporate side, Durant had been busy throughout the year trading Chevrolet stock for that of General Motors. He was not without help in this as some of his high-powered allies included Pierre du Pont of the famed du Pont family, Louis G. Kaufman, a notable New York banker, and even Wilfred Leland, president of Cadillac. On Sept. 16, the same day that Chevrolet declared its huge stock dividend, and exactly seven years since he had been ousted from General Motors, Durant was able to point out to the GMC board of directors that he did indeed control a minority voting block in the corporation, a block which could and would give him subsequent control of General Motors by the following year.



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The Baby Grand Touring, Model H-4, cost \$850 and weighed 2,500 pounds fully equipped. The equipment included mohair top and boot, side curtains, windshield, speedometer, electric horn, and complete lamp equipment. Upholstery was of buffed leather. Doors were suspended on hidden hinges, with steel sills and posts.

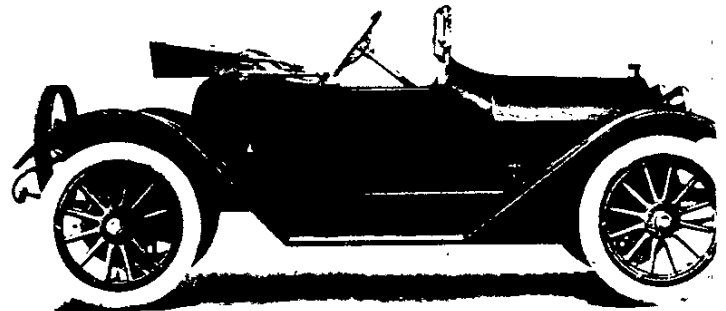


Light "SIX"
—The Product of

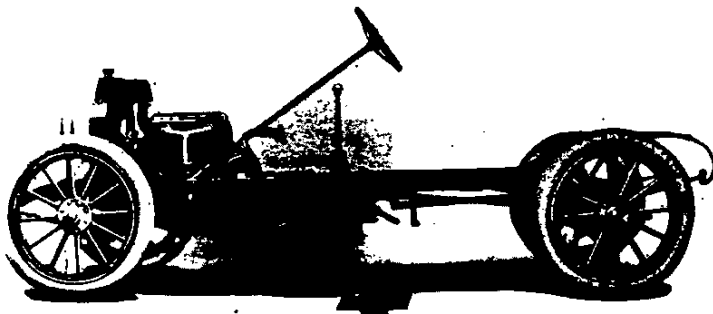
Appearing for the last time was the Series L Light Six Touring, now down-priced to \$1,425. The car was dropped after 500 models had been built for 1915. This coupled with the 500 built in 1914, gave the car a total run of 1,000. Weighing 3,050 pounds, the car was still available in either blue or gray body with blue wheels, fenders, and frame.

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The "official" photo of the 1915 Royal Mail, appearing in the Handbook of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, shows that the car retained its flat rear deck and oval gas tank. Since demountable rims were now standard, the rear spare rim was included in the price and was a handy thing to have. However, the tire to go on the rim was an extra-cost accessory. Tire size was now increased to 32 x 3 1/2 inches, a two inch larger size than used in 1914. Also, its wheelbase was now 106 inches, a two inch increase over 1914. The car weighed 2,000 pounds and was base priced at \$750 with magneto ignition and gas lamps, or \$860 with a full electrical system, such as seen here. Designated the Model H-2, the car continued to include such extras as a boot for the top, side curtains, buffed leather upholstery, and a speedometer.



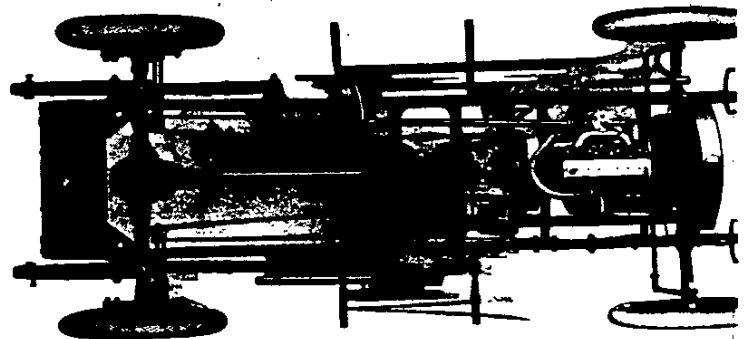
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Of interest is this view of the Series H chassis showing the new demountable rims that became standard on all three models in the series early in the year. The only trouble is that this car has 5-bolt rims, while all photos of 1915 models with demountable rims show a 6-bolt pattern. Whether or not these were an earlier type of wheel, an experimental set, or whether two different bolt patterns were used is not known at this time. Tires were still 32 x 3 1/2 inches in size. Note the common practice of the time, of equipping the front wheels with smooth tread tires, while the rear wheels used a heavy tread.

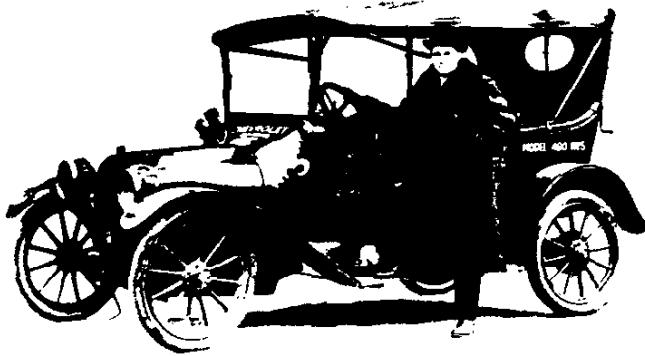
From the top, the Series H chassis shows some interesting details, such as the exposed starter gears, with the starter now located on the flywheel rather than at the front of the engine, the short muffler with stubby tailpipe ending just under the passenger seat, and the smooth cover of the O.V. engine's rocker arms. The heavy rods led to the external contracting brakes on the rear wheels. The new chassis length was now 106 inches. The rear mounted gas tank indicates that this was the Baby Grand chassis, as the Royal Mail continued to have its gas tank located on the flat deck behind the body.

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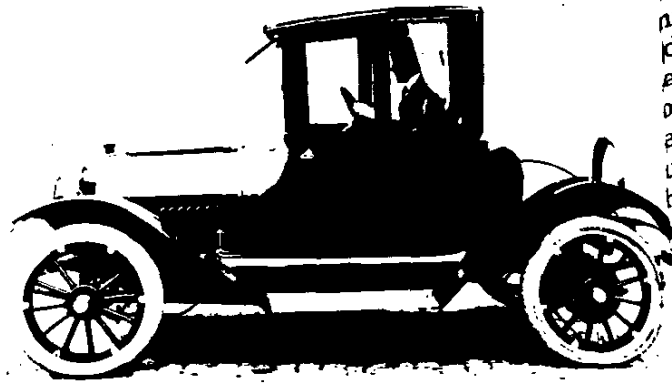




The Chevrolet emblem is today certainly one of the world's best known trademarks. The original, which first appeared on the 1914 models, excluding the Classic Six, is not too different than the design currently in use. Its origins have been clouded in myth. Durant liked to say that he first saw the design on the wallpaper of his Paris hotel room in 1908. Thinking it would make a good emblem for some future car, he said he ripped off a small piece and saved it as a sample for the future. However, in a much later interview, Mrs. Durant said her husband saw the design in an ad in the Sunday paper while they were vacationing in West Virginia. He liked the design and simply substituted the name "Chevrolet" for whatever name had been in the original design. Either way, Durant was directly responsible for the selection of an emblem that today is readily recognizable in virtually every corner of the world.

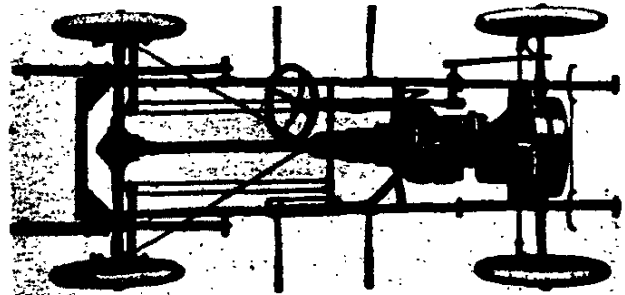


An interesting and rather short-lived car entered the Chevrolet dealerships during the 1915 sales season. It was the Monroe, which almost seemed to be a reincarnation of the Little Roadster. Built on a 96-inch wheelbase and costing \$460, the 1,325-pound car used a Mason 4-cylinder engine of 3 x 3 3/4 inch bore and stroke which developed 20 horsepower. It used a Connecticut ignition and Auto-Lite generator as standard equipment, but an Auto-Lite starter cost an additional \$35. Electric lights were standard equipment, as was top, boot, and side curtains. A cone clutch was used behind the transmission, and the latter, built in unit with the engine, was of the 3-speed selective sliding gear type. Though Monroe Motor Co. of Flint was an independent firm, its stockholders at this time were all stockholders of Chevrolet also. With Durant as its vice-president, the Monroe Company received Chevrolet's permission to use its dealer network to market its car along with the Chevrolet line. The arrangement had a twofold advantage — Chevrolet dealers were able to offer a broader market range, and the Monroe company did not have to go through the often long and costly process of building up a dealer network. The arrangement lasted through 1916, when dissatisfaction on the part of both sides caused the Monroe firm to begin action to free itself from Chevrolet and go off on its own, which it did in the 1917 sales season.

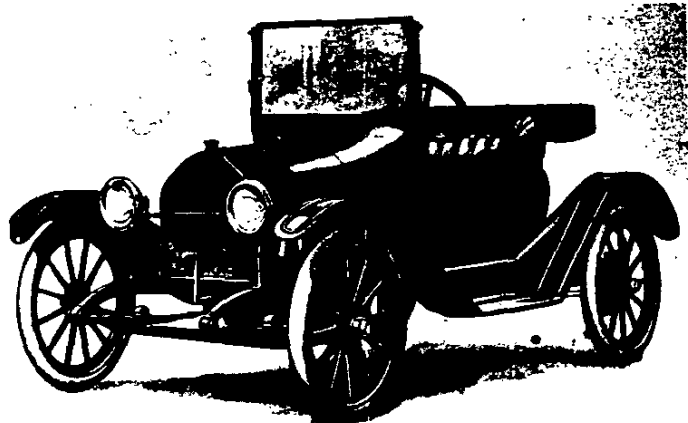


Although accessory products for Chevrolets never approached those for the Model T Ford in either number or variety, the cars did not escape the notice and fertile minds of the satellite industries. One such accessory, by an unknown builder, was this winter coupe top that could be fitted over the standard body of the Royal Mail — a concept used on the Corvette and Thunderbird 40 years later.

Chevrolet Sales Manager Rich H. Grant poses with what is supposed to be the first production "490" Touring to come off the line. The car was actually the fifth 490 to be produced as there were four prototypes ahead of it. It was classed as a 1916 model despite being introduced to dealers on June 1, 1915. The "490" name stood for two things — the car's initial price of \$490, and the price of a new Ford Touring car, which also was \$490. However, with a short time, Ford dropped its Touring Car price to \$440, which had been the price of its Roadster. Still, the 490 Chevrolet was one of the first serious competitive attacks that had been launched against the Model T.



The chassis of the Monroe Roadster was one of amazing simplicity, yet quite sufficient for such a light car. Goodyear clincher tires were standard equipment. The 4-cylinder engine was cast enblock, with removable head. An average of 30 miles per gallon was claimed for gas consumption.



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