

Bob Schmitt's 1931 Victoria

By Nancy Firth from January 2021 Henry's Lady Rogue Ramblings Newsletter

Source: Bob's memories of the restoration of his 1931 Victoria

Bob Schmitt has had classic Fords in his life for about as long as he can remember. He bought this beautiful Victoria (Vicky) when he was in high school in the early 1950's. His first car was a '32 five window coupe. He later traded it for a '40 Ford sedan because it was a better girl catcher. He was driving it home from school one day when he saw this Vicky. He didn't need another car, he just had to have it. The agreed on price was \$35. Bob borrowed \$25 from his dad, agreed to pay the man the \$10



balance as soon as he could, and took the car home. He went back three times to pay the balance and make good on his promise, but he could never catch the guy at home. However, he noticed there were a couple of midget race cars in the garage, so after the third try he figured the guy could probably make do without his \$10. The Vicky had been sitting outside for about 20 years, but with his dad's expert mechanical help and a new battery, it was soon brought back to life. After high school and his move to Oregon a few years later, the car was in storage for the next 30 years.

Bob grew up in Southgate, California. After high school, two years in the service, and a year on the job as a truck driver, his life took a turn to the north. In 1956, Bob quit his job and made plans to move to Oregon to help his dad run his ranch near Rogue River. Household goods were loaded into his dad's pickup and the Victoria, and off they went. When he got to Bakersfield, Bob was pulled over by a CHP officer. He was informed that his dad had been rearended in an accident on the Grapevine (the old one) and their stuff was strewn all over the place. The officer told Bob to go on ahead, his dad was okay and they had cleaned everything up. He continued on in the Vicky, pulling over for naps as needed. He remembers waking up after a nap at the top of the Siskiyou shivering like crazy because it was so darned cold. It was not a very hospitable "Welcome to Oregon" experience for this young man from sunny Southern California!

Bob helped his dad with the ranch while working full time at local plywood mills (Bate, Custom, and SoPly), and raising a family. They raised cattle and had 100 fruit trees. After his dad passed away he couldn't do both, so they sold the ranch and moved to Grants Pass. Around 1988, after 30 years, the Vicky came out of storage and he started to turn some wrenches. The garage he had to work in was so small he had to remove the hub caps to get the car in and out to work on it! His daughters were in high school during this time and of course they were always looking for opportunities to drive. At that time, Harry's Early Ford Parts was still located in Redding, so whenever Bob needed a parts order delivered, guess who got the job! About three years later, the chassis and body were restored.

The finishing touches came about fifteen years later. The car was about ready for paint so he chose a paint shop and work began. While work was in progress, Bob had a real scare when the guy moved his shop without informing him. He had no idea where his car was! He located the shop owner's brother and, to increase his chances of getting the information he needed, he told him he owed his brother some money. Sure enough, he got the new location and tracked down the car. After all was said and done, he ended up with a beautiful black paint job. He recently put in a Mitchell overdrive and transmission which he is very happy with. Bob is now confident his daughter will someday have a beautiful car that is safe and easy to drive.