

## 1965 CHEVROLET Impala- Joe

Written by Double Dragon

Friday, 13 February 2015 23:11 - Last Updated Saturday, 26 December 2015 13:07

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Chevrolet first applied the Impala name to a Corvette show car in the 1950s. Chevrolet liked the name enough to revive the Impala name Oct 31, 1957 to describe an option upgrade on the 1958 model year full size Chevy Bel Airs.

Soon after its introduction as an option the Impala quickly graduated to its own series as a runaway sales success. The Impala became the number one family car of the 1960s. It was full size car and yet it was also graced with proportionate lines. Being inexpensive and reliable added to its reputation.



The 1965 Impala was the best selling year for the Impala. Impala was also the best selling car in USA that year. Impala sold more than a million copies. Even bearing in mind the fact that 1965 was one of the best sales years of all time for domestic cars these are huge numbers. Amazingly, Chevrolet had also diluted the sales numbers of the Impala by adding a separate

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breakdown for sales of a new sub series on the Impala called the Caprice. If not for the Caprice being tallied separately the Impala production would have been edging towards 1.5 million.

This 1965 Chevrolet Impala is now owned by Joe who is the grandson of the original owner. The story begins when Joe's grand parents left the Philippines in 1955 to settle in California. 10 years later the family was living in Alameda, California. Joe's grandfather owned a used Oldsmobile F85 which he parked outside the family home 1 block away from a drive in theater. One Saturday night in fall, 1965 a drunk driver exiting the drive in side swiped 3 cars parked on the street. One of the cars that the drunk hit was the Olds F-85. The drunk's car damaged Joe's grandparent's Oldsmobile badly enough that the insurance company wrote it off as a totaled car.



Joe's grandparents needed a new car to replace the F-85 and thus began a search for their first new car. Joe's grandparents were very frugal and wanted a bare bones stripped car.

In the 1950s buying a strippo family car was not only easy it was pretty much the default way to buy a new car. As the 1960s began to unwind the Impala began to catch some of the optimism swirling around in the JFK buoyancy of USA expansion. Buyers who ordered their full size Chevrolets in the 1950s with no options except perhaps a heater and possibly a radio were outfitting their Impalas with gusto in the 1960s. Instead of the straight six engine and 'three on the tree' manual shift, many people went for the optional 283 V8 engine and automatic transmission with power steering. Finding the theoretically available straight 6 with 3 speed manual shift on the tree and fully manual steering and brakes was now a rarity.

'Uncle' Tom McCahill wrote a story for MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED about the 1965 Chevrolet Impala. Tom wanted an Impala set up as close to the 'typical' Impala ordered by customers. Tom went through the order sheet to create the worlds' most popular car for testing.

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Tom ended up with a 1965 Chevrolet Impala Sport Coupe 2 door hardtop. It was not ordered with a 6 cylinder base engine but rather the cheapest of the available V8 engines which was the 283. No one in the 1960s bothered with manual shifting anymore which was reflected in the installation of optional 2 speed Powerglide. Tom's Impala also had optional power steering and brakes, a radio, and whitewall tires. By today's standards this is a Spartan car but in the 1960s it reflected growing consumer confidence and largess when compared to the typical family hauler of prior decades.



Somewhere out there some base level Biscaynes or Bel Airs were probably pumped out with the base equipment but to find an Impala in this bare bones state was trickier. The Impala was considered a well appointed car although not too pricey. The new Caprice sub series was the one people chose when they wanted a lavish full size Chevy.

Joe's grandparents continued their hunt for an elusive base Impala with no options. The search eventually led to the new car lot at Good Chevrolet in Alameda, California. See story on Good Chevrolet filed under CALIFORNIA/ OAKLAND OUTSKIRTS in the DEALERSHIPS section of this website.

The 1965 Chevrolet Impala in this story became the only new car Joe's grandparents ever purchased. It lasted so well that is is also the final new car they purchased.



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This particular Chevrolet Impala 4 door is pretty Spartan. Joe's grandparents bought it despite the presence of one option: power steering. This particular Impala has standard brakes. Back in the day it was common to find full size cars with manual drum brakes all around. A full size car in mid 1965 actually weighed under 4,000 pounds so its not that uncommon to see non power brakes on full size cars from this era. The Impala does have a column shifted automatic transmission as seen in the photo below.



The Impala doesn't have floor mats which were an option. Incredibly, it lacks a washer fluid pump for the wind shield because this was not a standard feature on the car, but an option. Talk about a stripped car! At least it does have a driver side outside rear view mirror. There were actually domestic vehicles built in the early 1960s that listed the outside rear view mirror was an option!



Joe's grand parents saved all the receipts and records starting from the October, 1965 time of purchase. When Joe inherited the car he couldn't find the Pink Slip so he applied for a duplicate Pink slip. This is when Joe discovered that the Chevrolet Impala had an earlier registration with a Lien Holder on it. The Impala was first registered to Good Chevrolet in March, 1965.

It seems that the dealership used it as a demo vehicle. Good Chevrolet was still in business at the time Joe applied for the new pink slip. Joe questioned the body shop manager about the 'old days'. The body shop manager stated that back in 1965 Good Chevrolet only financed their vehicles for employees. This dealership policy narrows down the early history of the Impala. It

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indicates that Good Chevrolet used this car for either a demo model or one of the department heads of the dealership drove it from March, 1965 to October, 1965.



Note the AAA car club sticker on the bumper and the original Good Chevrolet license frames.