

1967 CHRYSLER New Yorker- Charles Kee- Redmond, Oregon

Written by Double Dragon

Monday, 12 May 2014 12:45 - Last Updated Thursday, 19 June 2014 13:27

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Charles Franklin Kee is a famous eccentric legend of the car world. Kee amassed several hundred Mopars on his desert property in Brothers, Oregon but would only sell to people he liked. Money was not the issue when he sold a car. Some people lament the fact that he left the cars outdoors for decades, but in the desert acreage they were left on rust isn't a big issue. Kee covered the interiors of many cars with cloth and blankets to protect against the sun and replaced flat tires to prevent the cars from sinking into the ground.

In the final analysis many of the cars in Kee's collection were cars on a fast track to the junkyard before he scooped them up. Most of the cars sitting in his desert acreage wouldn't exist today if not for his intervention. Back in the 1980s the 'also rans' of the Chrysler world didn't have anyone to protect them from oblivion. Countless C bodies were crushed in the 3 decades that the Kee 'C' cars sat out in the desert safe from total destruction but not gradual deterioration. Take a look in the ALLEY FINDS section of this website to see some of the Kee cars biding their time in the desert.

This 1967 Chrysler New Yorker was used as a driver by Charles Kee and his wife Donna as attested by the registration from Redmond, Oregon where he lived. His desert collection was kept out in Brothers, Oregon. The interior of the New Yorker is in nice shape as is the body. Unlike many of the Mopars in his collection which were towed to his 50 acre property in Brothers, Oregon this car led a pampered life before making its way into Kee's driver fleet in Redmond. It was kept out of the weather over the decades.

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Many of the cars in Kee's collection were rescued from junkyards and didn't see any use after the 1980s when they were transported to the desert. This particular car may have been driven occasionally using one day permits after the registration expiry date of Nov 30, 1986. Kee's address and zip code from the 1980s is removed from the last valid registration shown below.



When Chuck (as he was known to most people) Kee died in Redmond, Oregon at age 84 in the early hours of December 21, 2013 a chapter was closed on one of the last big time hoarders of cars. The LeMay collection in Washington state was bigger, but this one lasted longer.

Chuck was born to Cecil and Anna Beryl (Chamberlain) Kee September 4, 1929, in Great Falls, Montana. Chuck married Donna Aileen Perkins in 1950 and subsequently served in the Air Force in Korea. Chuck made his mark by creating the first cable TV system in Redmond, Oregon in 1964. In addition to his photography hobby, cars took up his leisure time. Chuck was a member of "The Drifters" car club and the "Chrysler 300 Club, Inc" but he stood out from typical car guys due to the extreme scope of his collecting.

There was talk of creating a car museum but this idea was clearly dropped prior to Chuck's

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death when he sold off the most prized vehicles from the collection. In May, 2014 when the remainder of his collection was auctioned off the bulk of the cars left were either in rough shape or a few notches down the rating scale of the Mopar hierarchy of collectibles or had both strikes against them.

This New Yorker is nothing too special to the elite collectors but it is a nice find. It came with a good option load for the time period and the subtle intentions hinted at by the factory applied red pinstripe is backed up by a 440 4 barrel engine.



The New Yorker VIN CH23K73115075 decodes as:

C= Chrysler

H= High price class

23= 2 door hardtop

K= 440-4 bbl engine (the high performance 440 was code L)

7= 1967 model year

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3= Final assembly in Jefferson, Michigan

115075= the sequence number.

The fender tag below adds more detail.



Reading across the bottom line the model and engine are confirmed, a 3 speed automatic is indicated and 8.55 x 14 White Wall 2-4 Ply Steel Belt tires are specified. The build date is September 14, 1966.

On the second line the XX1 Paint code means Light Tan when applied on a Dodge, Beige on a Plymouth, and Sandalwood on a Chrysler. Imperial named this color Navaho Beige. The Red Horizontal Accent Stripe shown in the codes is still on the car just below the highest full length body crease. The trim code H2T means the High Trim Grade. Axle 1 is the 2.76:1 highway ratio.

The line above lists some desirable options: K8 means Power Windows, R2 is the Music Master AM Radio and X1 specifies Tinted Glass all around.

The top line lists g6 which is Driver's Outside Remote Operated Mirror, h7 which is Fender or Hood Mounted Turn Signal Indicators, and j0 which is Tilt/Telescoping Steering Column.

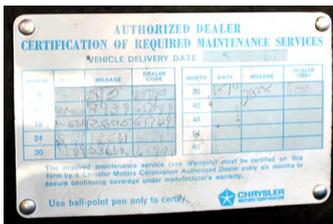
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Looking under hood it is evident that the New Yorker also has power brakes and power steering. There is no Air Conditioning under the hood and no indication of it in the fender tag. The dash has factory block offs where the A/C vents were mounted in A/C cars so this is one option not ordered for the otherwise heavily loaded New Yorker. The weather in Pendleton, Oregon where this car was first owned can top out at 90 degrees F in July and August.

The New Yorker still has original license frames from Keith Farley Chrysler in Pendleton, Oregon. Read about Farley Chrysler in the DEALERSHIPS section of this website filed under OREGON. It is likely that the dealer number for Farley Chrysler is 617149. This dealer number appears on the first few service records on the certification card mounted inside the glove box as shown below.



The subsequent dealer numbers are very close to the first one which suggests that the car stayed in the Pendleton area for the first 3 years of its life. The New Yorker never went too far after that. Pendleton is about 200 miles north east of Chuck's place in Redmond, Oregon.

The service record first entry seems to read 4,993 miles at the first 6 month servicing and 8,939 miles is definitely the figure for the 12 month service. This is about 3,000 miles less than the usual 12,000 mile annual average logged by drivers in the 1960s. Nowadays the annual average hovers near 15,000 miles.

The New Yorker finally reached the typical annual average with 12,605 miles at the 18 month service which appears to be dated 10-68. In May, 1969 the 2 year service came up at 16,611 miles. Assuming that the maintenance was falling roughly on schedule it means the car wasn't sold until May, 1967 which was 6 months after manufacture in September, 1966.

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The 30 month service in Nov, 1969 registered a sharp increase in mileage to what looks like 33,669 miles. It is likely that this number is actually 23,669 miles because the writing is difficult to read and it exceeds the following entry. The next service occurs a mere 2 months later in January, 1970 which suggests plenty of mileage was piled on in that 2 month span. 29,295 miles in Jan, 1970 supports the theory that the prior number was 23,000. It seems that someone took a 6,000 mile road trip in winter to get away from it all. The record ends at this point when the car is 3 years old.

Since the car still had 2 years of warranty available it is reasonable to assume the car was sold at this point having averaged 10,000 miles a year. In the 16 years from 1970 until 1986 the car only accumulated an additional 60,000 miles. The odometer says 91,294 miles and it seems right. The brake lines are new but the original master cylinder is still intact as is the factory radiator. The radio antenna is intact as is most of the chrome and trim. The tires are whitewall radials consistent with the 1980s.



This car was saved from the ravages of time because it was stored indoors and well cared for when in use. The floor mats and carpet show light wear and the pedals have minimal scuffing. True, the metal framed pedals stand up to use much better than regular rubber ones, but even a metal framed pedal starts to breakdown when a car passes 100,000 miles.



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The seats are clean with no rips or tears and the driver's door panel is immaculate. The windshield is good and the three spoke steering wheel is in nice shape without any cracks. Sitting on the seat the position is typical Chrysler with a high good vantage point. The seat is luxuriously soft but has no sag or wear and offers excellent support.



The auctioneer stated that many of the better condition cars were going to be started up. The cars selected for this procedure were displayed at the front of the auction. This New Yorker was one of the cars that they seemed to think was a good bet for getting started. It was positioned in the front of the auction with other vehicles that had been apparently driven more often and stored indoors.

