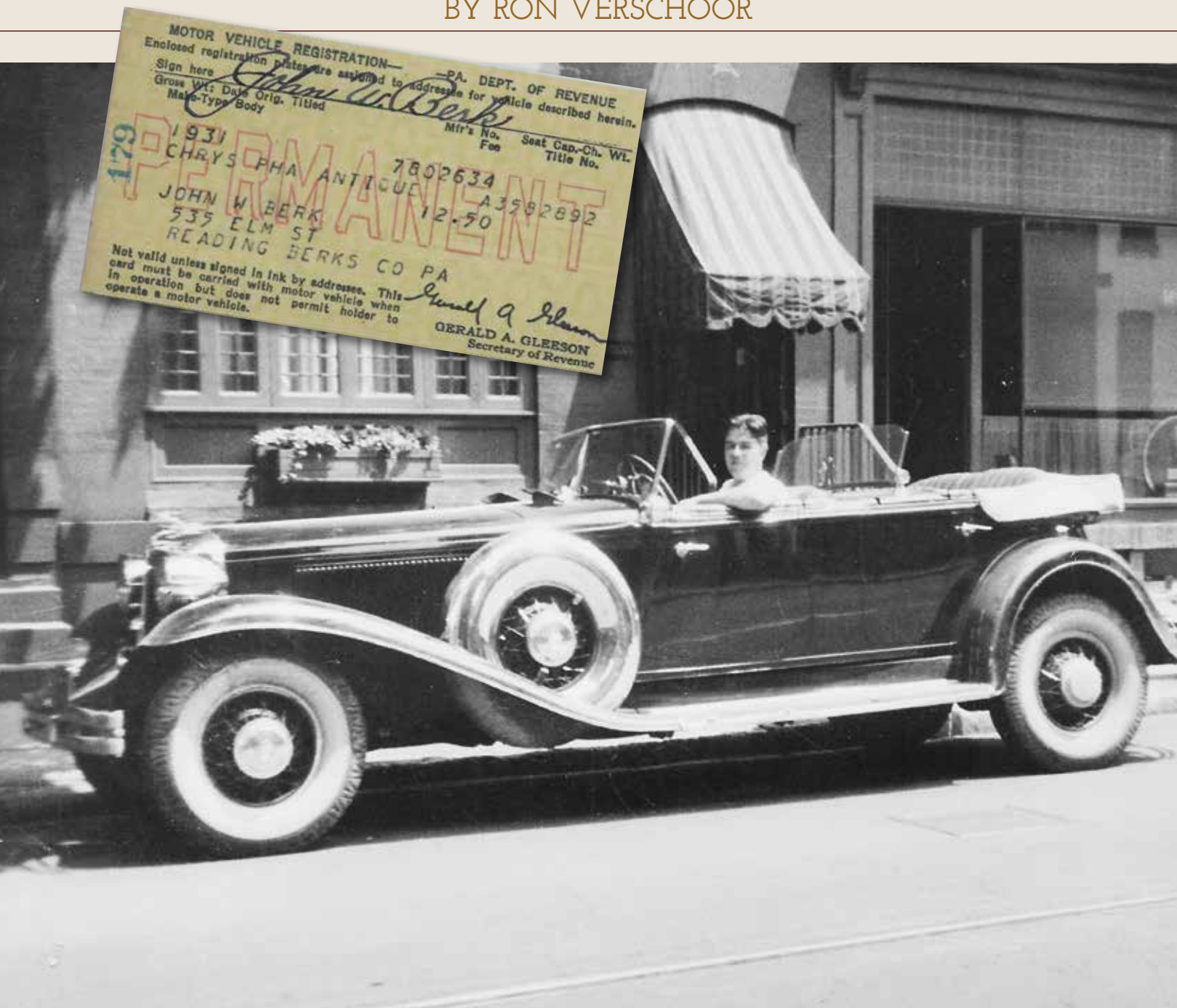


# LOST AND FOUND (AGAIN): CHRYSLERS, LINCOLNS, PACKARDS AND PIERCE-ARROWS

BY RON VERSCHOOR



ON JANUARY 2, 2021, THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION'S EMAIL ADDRESS RECEIVED THIS SHORT NOTE:

*We have a small box of original manuals and related materials that belonged to our grandfather who owned a 1931 Chrysler LeBaron Dual Cowl Phaeton and a 1929 Packard Roadster. "The Packard Story" by Robert Turnquist is there, too. Do you know someone who could use them? [no charge] We're in Studio City.*

*Thanks much,*

I volunteered to investigate and had a delightful phone conversation with the granddaughter of a former CCCA member, Ray Williams. I made arrangements to pick up the box of material the next day and learned more about Ray and the Classics he owned.

Ray C. Williams lived in Reading, Pennsylvania and was a member of the CCCA from at least 1960 to as late as 1972. From the 1970 CCCA directory is this listing of Classics he owned at that time.

- 1929 Packard, 8, 640 Roadster
- 1931 Chrysler Imperial, 8, Dual-Cowl Phaeton, LeBaron
- 1933 Lincoln, 12, KB Dual-Cowl Phaeton
- 1933 Lincoln, 12 KB Four-door Sedan
- 1934 Pierce-Arrow, 8, 840 Club Sedan

The materials in the box were mostly old correspondence and bills related to these Classics along with some photos, newspaper clippings and marque-related literature. The question in my mind was naturally, "Where are these Classics today?"

Ray's granddaughter knew a little bit about the background of some of them and I began to trace their whereabouts. The Chrysler Imperial was the most interesting to me as about half the material in the box related to it. Mr. Williams was the second owner of this car, having purchased it from John Berk, a dentist in the Reading, Pennsylvania area. A photo of Mr. Berk with the Imperial was included in the box of materials. >



Raymond C. Williams, 341 Sunset Road, West Reading, takes the wheel of his "new" 1931 Chrysler. Only 110 automobiles were built like it. The car has

"eaten dust" for about 50,500 miles in its lifetime. —Staff Photo.

Photos clockwise from top left: The 1931 Chrysler Imperial CG Dual-Cowl Phaeton with its original owner John Berk (inset) 1931 Chrysler Imperial CG Pennsylvania registration for owner Berk; Ray Williams newspaper clipping with 1931 Chrysler Imperial; 1931 Chrysler Imperial CG Pennsylvania registration for owner Williams.



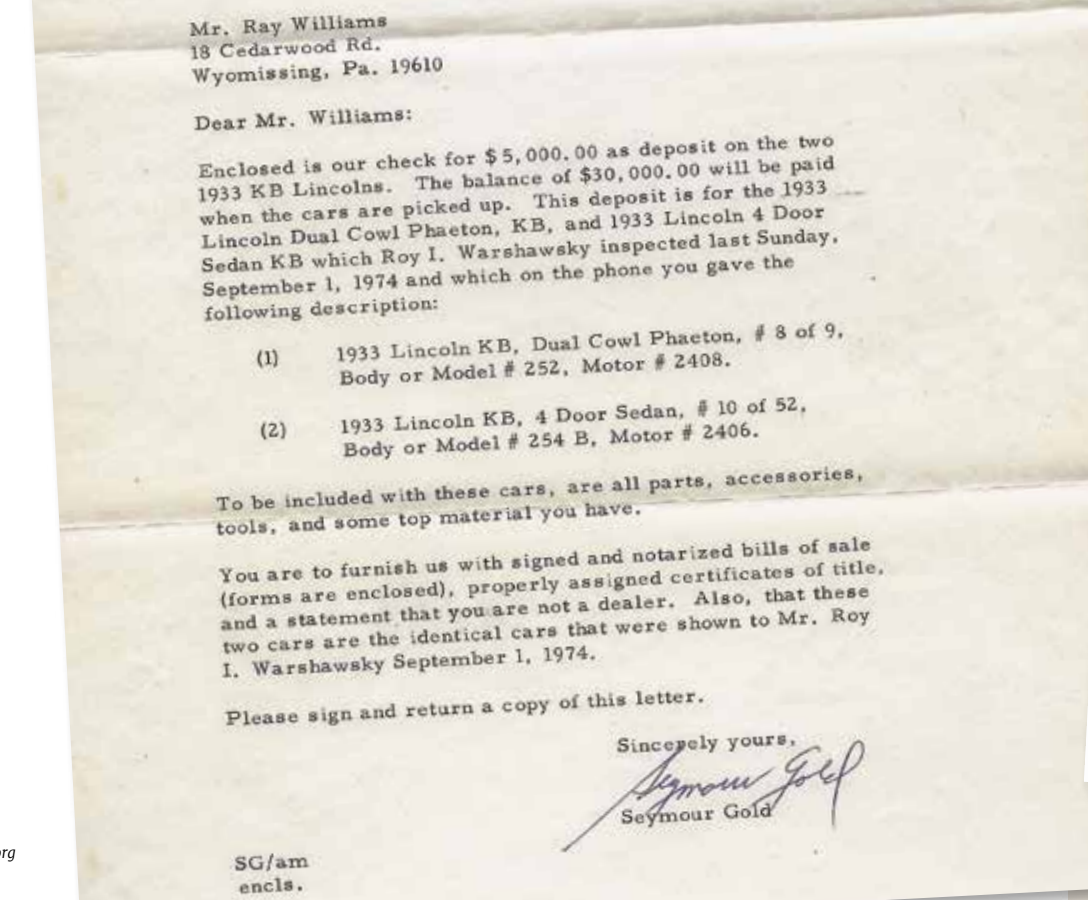
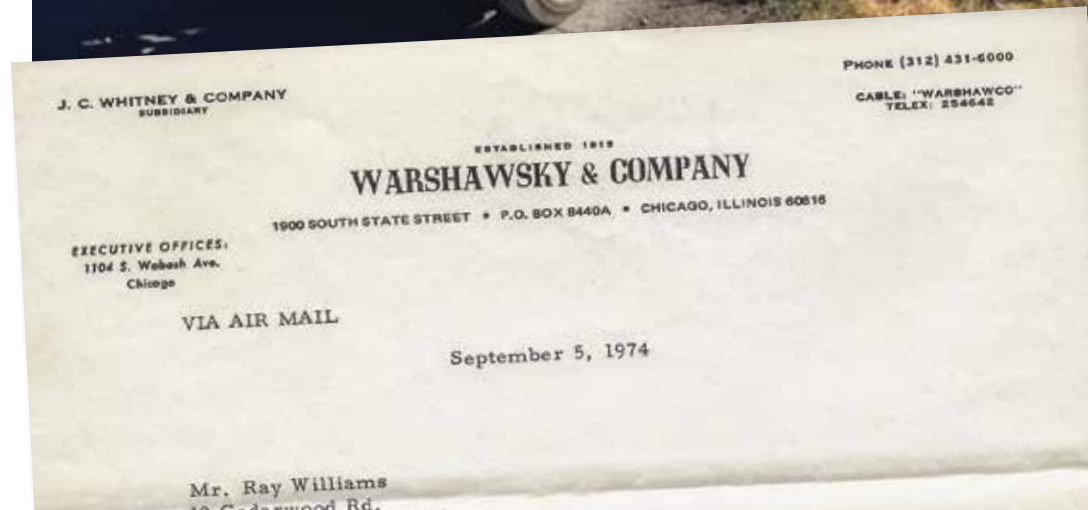
## LOST AND FOUND

The Dual-Cowl Phaeton body by LeBaron was a one-year only offering for the Chrysler Imperial, a stunning design well suited to the first eight-cylinder Chrysler. In the Summer 2005 issue of *The Classic Car*, CCCA member and former Chrysler vice president Darrell Davis estimated total Imperial CG production at less than 3,200 with 85 of those equipped with Dual-Cowl LeBaron coachwork. I spoke with several CCCA Imperial enthusiasts and owners including Dave Kane, Joe Morgan and Frank Wright. Frank had assisted me in the past with information about the big Imperials and he maintains extensive records about these cars. While it appears this particular Imperial is not currently in the CCCA fold, I decided Frank would put the information about this car to good use. Frank, who also lives in Pennsylvania, was familiar with the car and knew Mr. Williams daughter Jeannie quite well. He was thrilled to learn more about the Imperial since he last saw it more than 30 years ago.

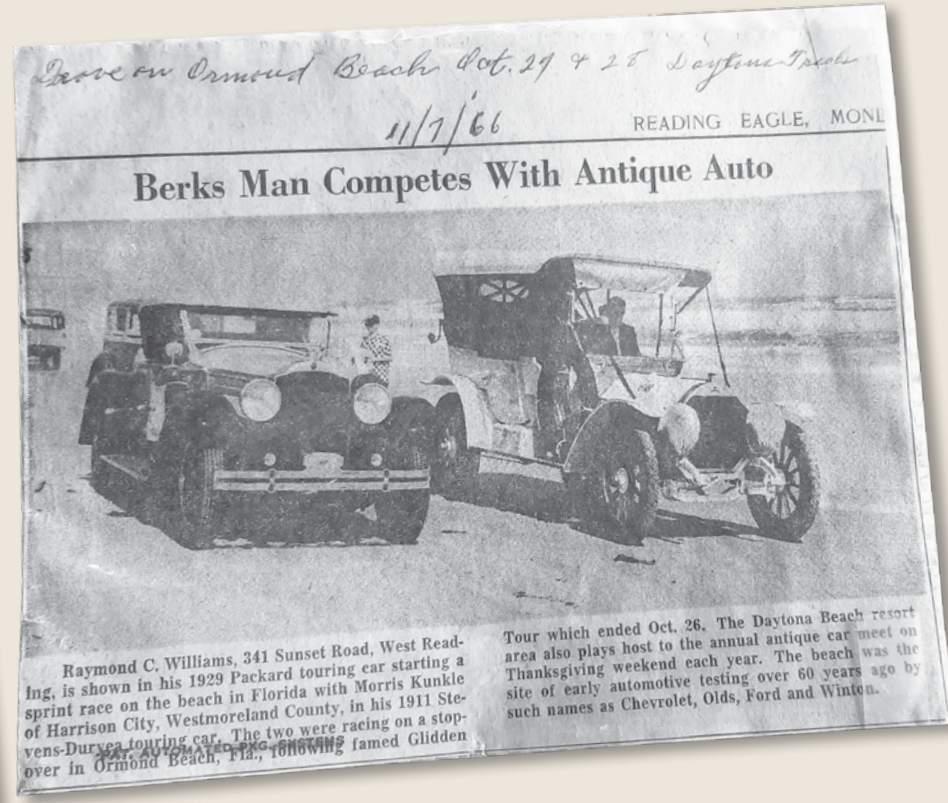
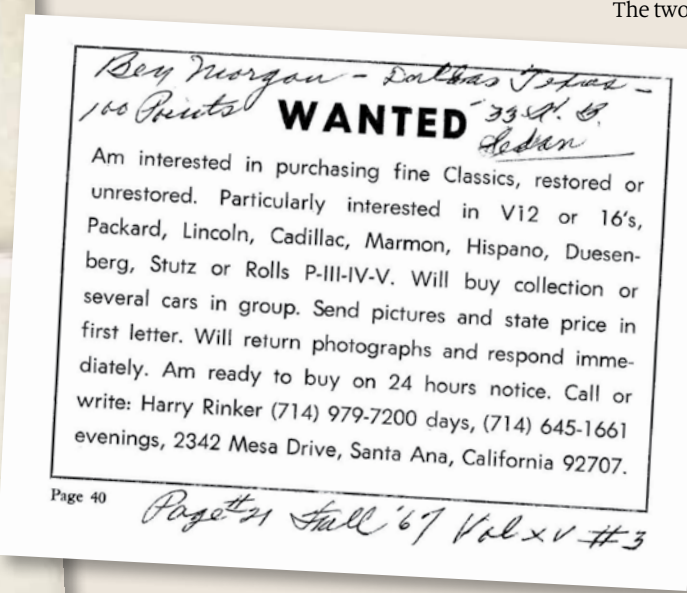
Information about the 1929 Packard was limited to a small newspaper clipping from 1966 when the car was part of a tour in Ormond Beach, Florida. In speaking with Mr. Williams' granddaughter, Tom Crook's name came up so I phoned him and asked about the Packard. Tom remembered the car well, describing it as a well maintained and preserved original Classic, currently owned by CCCA member Bill Ramsden of Nevada. Some of you may have seen the car when the CCCA toured Bill's collection during the 2017 Annual Meeting in Reno.

Here is Bill's description of the car:  
*I bought the car from Tom Crook in early 2008. I have had the car on many tours as well as back and forth over the Sierras just for day trips or overnights. All of the enthusiasts including ourselves love the originality of the car. The interiors, leather, and all the car has lots of patina.*

*After I bought the car, I found what appeared to be the original side curtains in the golf club compartment. I soaked and stretched them for days until they made a perfect fit. The vision panels were rotted out so I had the re-done in the original canvas.*



Photos clockwise from top left: Bill Ramsden's 1929 Packard 640 Roadster; 1931 Chrysler Imperial owners manual; 1929 Packard 640 roadster news clipping; Harry Rinker of Orange County searches for Classics; 1974 Warshawsky letter about the purchase of Lincoln KBs.



The two spare tires on the car when I bought it were two of the original tires. They were completely petrified and I had to cut them from the wheels. The flaps were cotton and the tubes were red synthetic type. The four tires on the ground are, according to my tire shop friend, over 50 years old. They are still pliable, 75% tread and are 8-ply truck type. They still drive perfectly.

It was my understanding from Tom Crook that I am the first registered owner outside the original owners' family.

The two Lincoln KBs were sold to Roy Warshawsky of Illinois (and J.C. Whitney fame) in 1974 and while Mr. Warshawsky owned many KB and K Lincolns over his lifetime, neither of these were listed in the CCCA directory. I provided Lincoln enthusiast David Schultz with the serial numbers of both, but their current whereabouts remains a mystery.

A remote connection to Mr. Williams and Southern California comes in the form

of two clippings about Classic cars and the possible sales of his cars. A small "WANTED" advertisement placed by Harry Rinker of Orange County was found in the box of goodies. Perhaps Mr. Williams was planning to sell one or more to Mr. Rinker. The name and date of the publication where this ad was placed is unknown, other than that it appeared on "page 40." It is most definitely not the Fall 1967 issue of *The Classic Car* which is hand written at the bottom of the ad—I checked. (Although that issue does include coverage of a Grand Classic in Santa Barbara that year.)

Next, two letters from Don Westerdale (who lived in Orange County but listed business addresses in Norwalk and Paramount) to Mr. Williams inquired specifically about the Lincoln KBs. It appears that Mr. Westerdale satisfied his Lincoln KB itch with another car as a 1932 Lincoln KB Dual-Cowl Phaeton was listed in past CCCA directories.

Nothing else is known about the 1934 Pierce-Arrow but I welcome any information about it or the Lincolns which might be useful to their current owners or marque historians. Part of our role as members of the CCCA is connecting the past history of our Classics to the present so please share your knowledge and memories. ●