

Member Feature

One Members Approach, Restoration - Initial Inspection

By John Alleshouse

Before initiating the disassembly portion of the restoration effort, I would strongly suggest grabbing a clip board, a pencil, and a camera. Conduct a detailed visual walk-around inspection of the car's exterior for completeness and condition. Look for corrosion in the area where the body interfaces with the running board aprons. Verify body, door, hood, fender, bumper, and frame alignment. Look for rust damage. Examine the radiator shell (especially at the bottom) and honeycomb core for leaks and general condition. Open the hood and examine and inventory the engine and engine compartment. Examine rubber bumper pads installed on the hood hold down receptacles. Inventory the gas cap, fuel gauge/cap, license plate/tail light assembly, and spare tire carrier. Review each wheel for condition of the wooden spokes and completeness including bolts, rim clamps, nuts and hub caps. Next, open the doors and look at the interior. Test/try everything that moves to ensure function. There should be a rear view mirror, one windshield wiper, and a pull down rear shade. The gas pedal should be round with a foot rest (bracket) below it. The starter should be a floor mounted foot button switch. Carefully note missing parts, condition issues, and incorrect parts that may have been installed. If you are planning to replace the interior, for accuracy in duplication, take lots of photos of the interior to capture and record where and how the interior panels were/are installed.

Under the car focus on the mechanical brake links and steering links for proper connection and function. While you are down there give the entire under carriage a thorough inspection.

Start the car and listen to the engine for the obvious tell-tale sounds indicating internal problems. Re-visit under the hood to look over the entire installation for leaks, loose or unconnected lines, leads, and or pieces. Inside the car, test the dome light and switch, the ignition/light switch and determine proper operation of all components. There should be a small door lock lever on the inside of the driver's door.

At the conclusion of the note taking and photo session, one can then bounce any questionable findings against photographs that are available on-line,

in the POCI library, public library, and actual automobiles in museums to determine the accuracy of the car's fittings.



The rear passenger compartment showing obvious signs of water damage, but otherwise surprisingly intact for a 1926 automobile.



The passenger side door panel suffered far more than the rear seat, not unusual considering that doors typically get a great deal of use. Fortunately the hardware is present!



This is another surprising photograph, how often do you see a headliner in this condition? The dome lamp and rear window shade are also complete and intact. A restoration is definitely easier if you have a complete car, then at least you have examples of all of the parts and pieces that you may need to replace if they are beyond repair.



Despite the fact that the camera was held on an angle, the details are still readily apparent. This is the crank for the Fisher Body Vision Ventilation windshield.



Detail photographs, such as this shot of the driver's side of the passenger compartment, are essential to re-create the correct appearance of the interior.

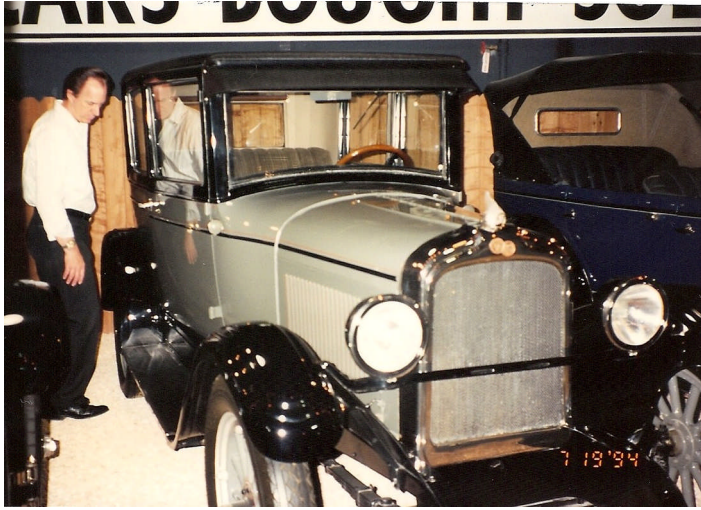
When initiating the restoration I was nearly working blind. At that time the internet didn't have a lot to say about '26 Pontiacs. Therefore, the above mentioned method(s) were used to get a better understanding of what direction should be taken. The highly capable assistance provided by the National Automobile Museum, located in Reno, Nevada proved to be an invaluable resource.

After mailing numerous inquiries back and forth regarding configuration and paint schemes issues to the National Automobile Museum, one of their curators urged a visit to come and take a look at the 1926 Pontiac Coach on display in their fine collection.

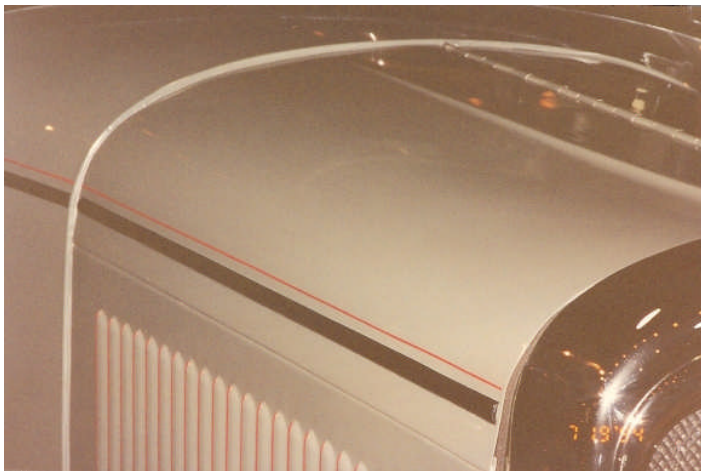
The museum was truly worth driving the 500 miles to see. The collection of cars and their presentation settings are second to none. After wandering around the museum for a couple of hours, my wife and I located their '26 Pontiac. It was displayed along with several other makes of cars from the same era. The display was an antique used car lot setting. To protect their collection, the museum keeps their cars behind a rope fence barrier that doubles as their electronic security alarm system. To give the reader an idea as to the level of cooperation and support the museum has for car buffs, they actually shut down the security system and allowed Yours Truly to step over the rope to gain

close-up visual access to the car. Additionally, the museum has and maintains a library complete with technical data and the history for each one of their cars.

John Alleshouse



**John in the display for a closer look at the museum's '26 Pontiac.
Below: a detail shot of the hood pin stripe.**



Close-up of a restored wheel, which is far more work than 50's era wheel covers, but later engine compartments make up for it!



Above and at left: John researching his Pontiac in the museum library.

One of the smartest things that POCI ever did was to house their club library within the Antique Automobile Club of America Library in Hershey, PA. AACA had the resources to catalog the POCI collection and provides a full-time librarian to help members access it.

NOTE: all photo captions for this article were written by the editor, so any errors are his, not John's.

