

1955 Packard Clipper Custom Craig & Mary Coulombe



According to the serial number, our 1955 Packard Clipper Custom Constellation (model 5567) was built at the Connor plant in late May/early June 1955 and was first sold at a dealership in Albuquerque, NM. I have a service receipt for the car from a shop in Albuquerque in April 1962. The owner of the car at that time was Leroy Anderson. After that, nothing until the late 1970s when the Clipper ended up in an Albuquerque junk yard.

(Note: As a former resident of Arizona, I can attest that a junkyard in the Southwest can be substantially different from ones in other parts of the country. While the paint gradually oxidizes, the body of the car generally does not rust and interiors stay reasonably intact. This is important to what happened next to the Clipper.)

During the early 1980s, a gentleman in Minnesota was preparing to restore a '55 Clipper Constellation that he had acquired in New England. Realizing that he needed a parts car, he found a matching Constellation in the aforementioned Albuquerque junk yard. He apparently bought the car sight unseen and arranged for it to be trailered to Minnesota. When it arrived, it was clear that the New Mexico Constellation was in better shape overall than the New England one, so the two cars' future was reversed and our beautiful Bumblebee began its total restoration.

In the early 2000s, the Clipper was purchased and relocated to Virginia, where it was later sold to Packards Virginia members Jon and Donna Hatfield

of Chester, VA, and in June 2012, sold by the Hatfields to Mary and me.

The Clipper retains its original factory paint scheme. It is powered by Packard's first V-8 – a 352 cid, 245-horsepower engine – mated with Packard's new Twin Ultramatic automatic transmission. Like the senior line or Caribbeans, Patricians, and 400s, the Constellation (the top of the Clipper line) rides on the new torsion bar/self-leveling system. Other features include a hydraulic windshield washer, electric front seat, electric antenna, power steering, Easamatic (power) brakes, and dual heaters.

Craig Coulombe