

Studebaker : THE COMPLETE HISTORY

By **Patrick R. Foster**

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Book Review

By SFNA board member

Clement V. Neal [H364-142-2]

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IF you want a book that will make a lovely coffee table book filled with excellent photography and reproduction car ads, this is the book for you. If you want a book that does not get bogged down in the interwoven growth of the Studebaker family tree in America but instead focuses, simply and informatively, on the brothers who founded the Studebaker corporation, this book is for you.

If you want a book that outlines, year by year, the amazing development and slow demise of the Studebaker Corporation and if you want a book that spells out its highs and lows, then this book will fill the bill. If you have heard all of the rumors about shortsighted corporation executives, killer labor strikes, production problems, steel shortages and exorbitant returns paid to stockholders then this book will put most of these in perspective. Some myth bubbles will be popped when you read the truth about Studebaker employees, their occasional lack of company loyalty and their low productivity.

You will be fascinated by all of the developments, twists and turns, depression and wartime events that impacted Studebaker cars. You will discover some of

what happened between the company's 100th anniversary celebration in 1952, when Studebaker was at its height, and eleven years later in 1963 when the South Bend plant was closed for good. You will also discover some of the methods used to keep the corporation operational for many years, just not in the automobile business.

I found the book very informative. The research is extensive and complete. Studebaker was never quite all that the Studebaker brothers promised and never as bad as some might paint it to be. As Foster suggests, the Studebaker lives on in all of the love and support given through its many Studebaker Drivers Club chapters and extensive worldwide membership. I deeply appreciate both of my Studebaker cars.

If I have one disappointment in the book its that it says almost nothing about the continuation of the Avanti until very recently. I guess that's the content of another book. This book, Studebaker : The Complete History, is \$40 well spent. My copy was even autographed by Pat Foster at the Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in September, 2008. The book, like my Stude cars, is a "keeper."