

Columbia Motors History by Keith Potter

The Columbia Motor Works was incorporated in Detroit in 1916. The Directors had all had experience in the automobile industry, having come from such firms as the King Motor Car Company, E.M.F., Oldsmobile and Packard. The Columbia Six was an assembled car, but a particularly fine one: Continental Engines, Timken axles and roller bearings, Detroit Self Lubricating springs, Warner transmission, Durston steering gear, Borg & Beck clutch, Stromberg carburetor and Harrison radiator. But one feature that belonged to Columbia was its motor temperature control: a thermostat placed just above the fan that automatically opened the radiator shutters as the temperature increased. The Columbia Six was probably the first car in its price class to feature such a device. When sales reached 6,000 units in 1923, however, the men who had so wisely guided Columbia's fortunes thus far became overenthusiastic. Anticipating a boom they acquired plants formerly occupied by Hudson and the B.F. Everitt Company, and bought out the Liberty Motor Car Company across town in Detroit. Both Liberty and Columbia failed the following year.

Columbia Six productions Figures

1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	TOTAL
1,317	1,793	1,718	3,163	3,213	4,807	5,903	2,603	24,517

A number of companies built cars under the Columbia Trademark, with this one operating in the 1916-24 period. Curiously their trademark application of October 1919 lists July 1 1894, as the first use of the mark, even though the Columbia Six first went on the market in 1917

The Columbia Six Motor Company produced cars in many body styles on either a light six or heavy six chassis, everything about these chassis was different, the only parts that were interchangeable between a light six and a heavy six were the hub caps and the radiator badge.

In the 40 years since I purchased my car as a total basket case I have only been able to trace the location of 12 cars (or parts thereof in Australia or Overseas)

There is 1 restored Light Six in England. There is 1 restored Light Six in Indiana U.S.A. There are 2 restored Light Six in Queensland (different owners). There is 1 unrestored Light Six in Western Australia. There are the remains of 2 Light Six in New Zealand. There is an unrestored Light/Heavy Six at Maclean (I believe that this is one of the last cars that left the factory as it is made up using a Light Six chassis and the radiator bonnet and windscreens of a Heavy Six, the current owner has had this car since the 1920s and still has the original registration papers.

The car that I own is a 1923/4 Heavy Six touring car. (Possibly the only surviving Heavy Six)

Model No CC18R

Motor No 739-8R-3503

Car No 21583

Body No -----