

Student Essay on A Brief Look at Corvettes in the 1950s

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Essay

Life in the 1950s was shaped by many things, such as the end of WWII, the beginning of the Cold War, McCarthyism, beatniks, rock `n roll, and of course, the automobile. In the 1950s cars became a much larger part of everyone's lives. Many families owned two cars, one to commute from the suburbs to the city, and a car for grocery shopping, or general transportation. However, some families during this time were lucky enough to own what would become an American icon, the Corvette.

The Corvette was one of the most sought after automobiles for kids going to drive-in and drive-thrus. It was on June 30th, 1953, that the first ever production Corvette rolled out a makeshift assembly line in Flint Michigan. It was the first real attempt by American carmakers to break into the European dominated sports car market. The Corvette was very unique automotive from the beginning however. It was made with an all fiberglass body due to its low production numbers, as it would not be cost efficient to stamp out the bodies in steel for so few cars. Also, it only sat 2 people and for the first year was only available as a white convertible with red interior. The only engine available was an inline 6 cylinder even.

However, as the years went on, the Chevrolet Corvette grew. Larger engines and more options became available, and eventually in 1956 (and still to this day) the corvette was only available as a V6. That same year, the Corvette also received its first major styling change, now synonymous with the first generation corvettes: scooped sides. By 1958, the Corvette was renowned as a true sports car with its superior handling, power, and style, however, the Corvette remained only available in convertible form. Chevrolet was also determined to build an image or reputation for the corvette as a true street machine. They supported racers, both quarter mile and circle track, and even had options available to the general public that these high performance cars used.

Life in the 1950s may not have been turned inside out through the introduction of the Corvette, but it was truly a symbol of the era, and America today.