

City Beat

There are eight million stories in my albums. This is one of them...

On November 3, 1911, Swiss race car driver and automotive engineer Louis Chevrolet co-founded the Chevrolet Motor Company in Detroit with William C. Durant and investment partners William Little (maker of the Little automobile), former Buick owner James H. Whiting, Dr. Edwin R. Campbell (son-in-law of Durant) and in 1912 R. S. McLaughlin CEO of General Motors in Canada.

Durant was cast out from the management of General Motors in 1910, a company which he had founded in 1908. In 1904, he had taken over the Flint Wagon Works and Buick Motor Company of Flint, Michigan. He also incorporated the Mason and Little companies. As head of Buick, Durant had hired Louis Chevrolet to drive Buicks in promotional races. Durant planned to use Chevrolet's reputation as a racer as the foundation for his new automobile company. The first factory location was in Flint, Michigan at the corner of Wilcox and Kearsley Street, now known as "Chevy Commons", along the Flint River.

The first C prototype was ready months before Chevrolet was actually incorporated. However, the first actual production wasn't until the 1913 model. In the fall of that year the new 1913 model was introduced at the New York auto show. Louis Chevrolet had differences with Durant over design and in 1914 sold Durant his share in the company. By 1916, Chevrolet was profitable enough with successful sales of the cheaper Series 490 to allow Durant to repurchase a controlling interest in General Motors. After the deal was completed in 1917, Durant became president of General Motors, and Chevrolet was merged into GM as a separate division.

Beginning also in 1919, GMC commercial grade trucks were rebranded as Chevrolet, and using the same chassis of Chevrolet passenger cars and building light-duty trucks. GMC commercial grade trucks were also rebranded as Chevrolet commercial grade trucks, sharing an almost identical appearance with GMC products. Chevrolet continued into the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s competing with Ford, and after the Chrysler Corporation formed Plymouth in 1928, Plymouth, Ford, and Chevrolet were known as the "Low-priced three". Chevrolet had a great influence on the American automobile market during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1953, it produced the Corvette, a two-seater sports car with a fiberglass body. In 1957, Chevy introduced its first fuel injected engine, the Rochester Ramjet option on Corvette and passenger cars, priced at \$484. In 1960 it introduced the Corvair, with a rear-mounted air-cooled engine. In 1963 one out of every ten cars sold in the United States was a Chevrolet.

