

Forerunner of the New Yorker series, the 1938 Chrysler New York Special was a limited edition Model C19, built for an elite clientele.

feature was received with a response that was somewhat less than enthusiastic.

The thin-line ("ribbon") radiator trim resulted from a desire to make the hood appear longer in the side view. It follows as certain that the thought of moving the radiator or shell further forward was rejected, for reasons best known at the time. Oliver Clark, Chrysler's longtime body engineer who was chief of the eight-man body design group at the time the body development was under way, in an interview ten years ago affirmed the appearance advantage gained in lengthening the hood, but if he said anything about the resultant "ribbon" it is not on record.

Chrysler did not have a styling group, as such, at the time, but a small Art Department was functioning as early as July, 1928. It evolved into the Art & Color section by the mid-thirties and went on to future expansion. Although advancing years have obscured what happened in the late twenties, the riddle of the ribbon may yet be solved. The brilliance of the concept cannot remain lost in the darkness forever. Now we will continue with some cars that succeeded it.

The 1931 Chrysler 70 is another car that has been left in the darkness. Perhaps that is appropriate because it was not heralded with fanfare when it nudged its way onto the market by way of a confidential bulletin to the distributors on February 16, 1931. The bulletin stated that the splendid new appearance of the Chrysler cars (CM Six, CP Eight and CG Imperial Eight) with V-type radiators enjoyed such a favorable public acceptance that the company was now giving this same appearance to the New Chrysler 70. It further stated that all 70's shipped from the factory after February 14th would have this new treatment.

The 70 of 1930 continued to be sold alongside the new Eight and Imperial Eight after they were introduced in July, 1930, and the 70 met with a bad sales slump when the new Model CA Six joined the family circle in January. Purely speculation, but it is possible that a large inventory of leftover 70's had to be moved somehow. Records indicate that shipments ended in May.

The bulletin went on to say that since the new Vee grille Eights came in the public felt that the 70 with thin-profile flat radiator was too obsolete and associated with former Chrysler models. It followed that the exceptional qualities of the 70 were quite marketable, and that the frontal update would overcome the sales resistance. The records show that this did not save the 70 for long.

While some have used an unutterable word in reference to the New 70, there is no question of the good character of its parentage. The bodies, most of the sheet metal parts and the transmission had been in use nineteen months, and the 91-horsepower engine had been on the road thirteen months when the first Vee grilled 70 turned a mile. The new frontal ensemble included the radiator shell with built-in automatically-controlled shutters, bullet headlamps, and the simplicity of no tie bar across the front. New hood top panels were also required. All of the newness was directly copied from the other 1931 models which had been on the road seven months. This New 70 was a mixed-up kid, but it had quite respectable parents.

The grafting of a new face on the old body and underpinnings was not a successful operation. It is a bit odd, too, that

the doctors didn't see fit to affix new cowl lamps to match the bullet headlamps. They didn't quite finish the job.

The dressed-up 70 was treated somewhat like an unwanted child. Advertisements gave it one little line in small print at the bottom of the page, which simply read: Chrysler "70" . . . \$1,245 to \$1,295. Although that line was grouped with similar lines in a list of all four series, the entire page extolled the virtues of the more charming members of the family. The 70's body line included a Royal Sedan, Royal Coupe, Business Coupe and Brougham. Its L-head six-cylinder 93 horsepower engine was coupled to a Multi-Range four-speed transmission. The wheelbase was 116½ inches. It was not a spectacular performer, but not a slouch, either. When asked to do so, it gave a good account of itself on the roads of its day.

One of the big brothers of the 70 was the 1931 Chrysler Eight, Model CD. It was a smart looking car, having the Vee grille and bullet headlamps that were copied for the 70. Of wholly new design, the elements were well-integrated and the graceful fenders had a sweep of line never before seen on Chryslers. The styling of this car and the new Imperial Eight was inspired by the Cord L-29 front-wheel-drive car that was a sensation when it came on the market in midsummer of 1929.

The Model CD as a car line is familiar to most of us, and the CD dual-cowl phaeton in particular is not exactly a stranger, but it is rare and uncommon. It is listed among the other CD bodies in the trade journals of its time, but it is seldom mentioned today. Of the 14,355 CD Eights (not the CD Eight DeLuxe) built, only 85 were phaetons. There may be two or three still around.

The sporty phaeton bodies were built by Locke, but they were not of the kind known as coachbuilt. They were, however, of excellent quality and meticulously constructed. The body was continued after the Eight was succeeded by the Eight DeLuxe in mid-May, and 113 were built in the DeLuxe series.

The special nature of the phaeton was only in the body, the rest of the car being of standard CD Eight appearance and mechanical detail. The straight-eight was (with the Imperial Eight) the first eight-cylinder engine to be used in a car bearing the Chrysler name. During the first six months of production the engine delivered 80 horsepower. Beginning January 1st, horsepower went up to 88 by increasing the bore and adding minor refinement. The Multi-Range four-speed transmission was used and rear axle ratio was 4.1. The phaeton accommodated five passengers, was built only with tonneau cowl and windshield, and had six wire wheels as standard equipment. It was mounted on a 124-inch wheelbase, weighed 3,490 pounds and the F.O.B. price was \$1,970.

A good many examples of the 1934 Chrysler Six are running today, and so the model is well known. Yet, it has never felt the warmth of the limelight because of the tremendous interest generated by the famed Airflow Chryslers. The Six was the bread-and-butter Chrysler, and it gave good reliable service to many more owners than the Airflows did. Because it was a "Plain Jane" of quiet character as compared to her daring and adventurous brothers, the Six will get some attention here.

Alongside its conventional contemporaries, it was a "me too" car rather than a standour in style. The six-cylinder L-head engine capably delivered 93 horsepower with virtual freedom from vibration because of its Floating Power mountings. The coil-sprung independent front suspension was a new feature that even the Airflow could not brag about. The Six was built in two wheelbase lengths. Five body types were mounted on a 118-inch wheelbase, known as Model CA, which accounted for almost all of the six-cylinder production. A longer wheelbase of 121 inches carried two body types and was known as the Model CB. The CB bodies were at the very top of the price list, and their wheelbase was shared with the DeLuxe Dodge this year. List price range of the CA was from \$725 to \$810, and the two CB bodies listed at \$885 and \$935.

Some catalogue artwork shows the Six with vertical doors on the hood. Although the original intention was to continue this feature from 1933, there is no record that the car went into production with them. Instead, the louver style was changed to long horizontal slots with chrome mouldings to accentuate and beautify them. The first intent was to use three slots and four mouldings, and the catalogue artwork was altered accordingly.

No cars are known to have been manufactured with that arrangement, either. But what did come out of the factory was the same horizontal treatment utilizing four slots and five mouldings. The 1934 Chrysler Six had finally matured.

The Airflow Chryslers had much to talk about, and much has been said about them ever since the pre-announcement days. What they were and what happened to them during their four-year production run has been pretty well chronicled. But something did happen that is not so well known outside of Airflow circles, and it merits mention here.

There was some objection to the profile of the "waterfall" front end design of the 1934 Airflow Chrysler, and the 1935 model offered a new profile as the answer. The new grille employed a kind of backswept prow-like form as a relief from the curved front. The grille was integral with the hood, and the opening outline was exactly like the previous model. Soon after the 1935 models went on the market, Chrysler informed the dealers that the new hood was available for the purpose of updating 1934 Airflows for those owners who wanted to do so. It was stressed that, in addition to improved appearance, trade-in value would increase. Also, the company said the conversions would give the impression of many more 1935 models on the street and this would help to increase sales of the new models. The company did not suggest that the dealers update 1934 cars they had in used car stocks. The customer should not have to pay more than \$60 for the conversion, according to the company's estimate.

In appearance, no other parts were involved in the conversion. The updated cars still had their distinctive stacked-rail bumpers, headlamp assemblies, body side louvers and other trim. Not involved with the hood update, though, was another part that the company advised dealers to change at the same time they made hood conversions. In fact, the company recommended that dealers advise 1934 owners to have a new and longer left steering knuckle arm installed to provide easier steering wheel movement. This was to cost the owner nothing. There are no known records to indicate how many cars got either of these changes. The new front improved the appearance of some 1934 models, but it did not help sales of new Airflows in 1935. Instead, they declined sharply.

Lack of public acceptance of the Airflow was a bitter disappointment to Chrysler, but sales of the new 1935 Chrysler Airstream series were climbing. Of conventional design, they were more palatable to the public. Advertised as the Airstream Six and Airstream Eight, their titles carried the model designations C6 and CZ, respectively. The Six had six body types mounted on a 118-inch wheelbase, and the Eight had five bodies on 121-inch wheelbase. The Six was listed in the \$745 to \$870 bracket, while the Eight was tagged from \$910 to \$995. Not included here is a Traveler Sedan added to the Eight in March.

The Airstream series was given much promotion when it was new, and its identity has been sustained ever since, despite overwhelming attention given to the Airflow. Yet, there was a branch of the Airstream not usually realized or recognized today. It was introduced in midyear to answer the need for a Chrysler car in the \$1,000 price class. The Airflow DeSoto was already in this class, but it didn't fill the bill.

The new car line was the 1935 Chrysler DeLuxe Airstream Eight, and it retained the designation of Model CZ because it was basically a derivation of the lower-priced Eight. It had all of the features of the Eight, and much more. As usually happens when a model is upgraded, appearance was enhanced. This new DeLuxe car offered several means for identifying it on sight. Headlamps were positioned higher and were now attached to short horizontal struts extending from the sides of the radiator shell. Twin trumpet horns were chrome plated like the headlamps and installed just below them. The radiator grille design was not different, but it was now in a new Velchrome finish. Bullet-shaped parking lamps, matching the headlamp style, were perched on the crowns of the front fenders. A new ornamental "8" was included in the decor at the leading end of the hood louvers, and was repeated in embossing on the new hub caps. The running boards had new rubber safety treads enclosed in chromed bands, and ~~overalls~~ had simpler trim.

Interiors of the new DeLuxe got their share of newness. Embossed models were available in either mohair or broadcloth

trim. Seats had a new angle for greater comfort, and all models had arm rests in both front and rear compartments. Sedans had two footrests, two assist cords, a dome light and a robe cord in the rear compartment.

The DeLuxe Airstream Eight utilized two wheelbases. Six body types, listed from \$930 to \$1,015, were mounted on a 121-inch wheelbase. A seven-passenger sedan and a five-passenger Traveler sedan used a new 133-inch wheelbase, and each listed at \$1,235. The Traveler had exceptional leg room in the rear compartment, and had two generous storage spaces in the back of the front seat instead of recesses for folded auxiliary seats as used in the seven-passenger sedan. These sedans had exceptionally wide doors.

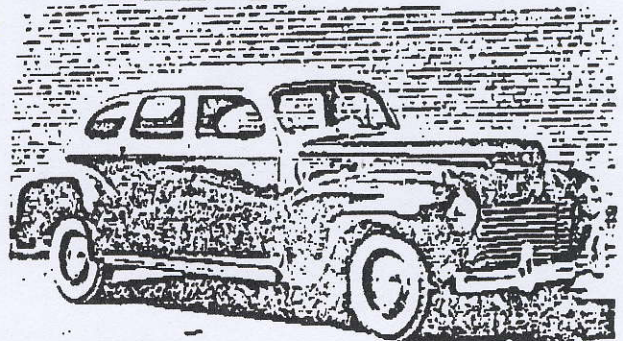
The basic straight-eight engine of 105 horsepower was used in the 121-inch wheelbase models. The same engine powered the longer wheelbase cars, but with an aluminum head giving it 110 horsepower. Engines were coupled to a synchro-silent transmission, and these as a unit were cradled in rubber on Floating Power mountings. A hypoid rear axle was used. A luxury ride was provided by independent suspension with coil springs at the front and semi-elliptic tapered leaf springs at the rear, complemented by hydraulic shock absorbers all around. Airwheel tires were 6.50 x 16.

All-steel bodies for the DeLuxe Airstream Eight were Chrysler-designed and Briggs-built. Draft-free ventilation resulted when the closed front windows slid back slightly with a partial turn of the regulator handle. Full ventilation could be had by lowering all windows, cranking the hinged windshield outward and opening the cowl ventilator. The DeLuxe model offered a lot to the buyer for the price he paid.

The year 1938 experienced an economic recession, but it also brought something in contrast. That "something" was the snobbish New York Special, an extra-luxury model at the top of the common Imperial line but something less than the ultra-luxury Custom Imperial. Proper name-calling of the car is difficult today. When it was announced, corporate public relations released it as the Chrysler New York Special, but advertising didn't use either Chrysler or Imperial names. Like its running mate, Imperial and Custom Imperial, it carried the names Chrysler Imperial on its radiator shell and hub caps. The name New York Special was not to be found on the car. This point seems so insignificant that it is unworthy of time and thought, but it reflects some original confusion about proper identity.

The New York Special was known as a Chrysler by simple reason of having been built by Chrysler. It used the chassis, body and sheet metal of the Model C19 Imperial, but had the bigger Model C20 Custom Imperial engine. It was designated Model C19^o because it was much closer related to the C19 than to the C20. In some corporate statistical records it is found in the Chrysler column, in others it's an Imperial, depending upon what statistic one is looking for.

This luxury car is the forerunner of the Chrysler New Yorker, which began with a series status as a 1939 model and has continued through successive years to this day. It all began when an Imperial of similar specifications was specially built for a rich New Yorker. Many who saw that car wanted copies, and limited production was begun.

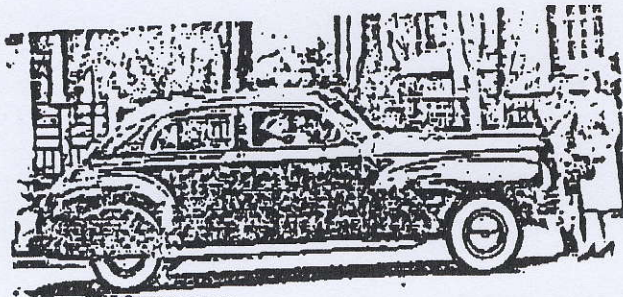


This 1940 Chrysler Traveler has optional two-tone body colors, running boards, and whitewall tires. After several years of monotones only, two-tones were revived for all series in mid-1940.

July, 1975

CARS & PARTS

OVER



This model quickly switched identity. As seen here, it is the 1941 Chrysler New Yorker Special Town Sedan, but three months after production began it became the Crown Imperial Town Sedan by simply changing the nameplates.

The Special C19* was built on the Imperial C19 125-inch wheelbase chassis, in which the Custom C120 130-horsepower straight-eight engine was installed, so it had more performance punch than the C19. It was a four-door five-passenger six-window sedan weighing 3,605 pounds and listing at \$1,370 standard-equipped. With fender wells, side-mounts and special features it listed at \$1,445 in Detroit and \$1,492 in New York. Interiors were sumptuous, offering a wide choice of single-tone or two-tone color schemes. Seats were upholstered in expensive Laidlaw cloth, and there was a folding center armrest in the rear. An especially swanky combination was chinchilla grey exterior body color with interior walls and ceiling in pearl grey and seats in dark blue.

The Chrysler New York Special was hard to identify at a glance. One had to look at the grille to know, because all other trim detail was like other Imperials, and there was no special identity nameplate. The grille design was exactly Imperial, but finish was different in that only alternating horizontal bars were chromed, instead of all of them. A coupe was planned as accompaniment to the sedan but records do not indicate that any were built.

The Traveler name was given to some special limited production sedan types of Plymouth, DeSoro and Chrysler at rare intervals in the mid-thirties. It must have been well regarded by the Chrysler division, because they applied it to a car line in the 1940 series. Going up the model ladder that year, they ranged from the Royal to the Windsor, Traveler, New Yorker, Saratoga and Crown Imperial. The first two were sixes and the rest were straight eights, with Traveler on the low-price end. Those were not enough, so the Highlander was added, but it was simply a Scotch plaid trim job applied to the Windsor and New Yorker.

One might visualize sedans and coupes with luggage rails on the roof, and having other special-need features for touring, or even a station wagon, as positively in character with the name Traveler. But upon meeting the 1940 Chrysler Traveler one would find that it possessed none of these notions. The Traveler name was easy to come by, though, because Chrysler had long had the right to use it. Had the name not been readily available, the car might have been dubbed Your Majesty, Transient, Hoboken, or even Sulphur Springs, and who would have thought any of these appropriate? The Traveler name was right for this Chrysler, though, because it was a good road car. However, the Traveler is not so readily recalled today because the other series names have been used so repeatedly into the recent years that they are quite familiar to us.

The Traveler was known as Model C26, which was also the designation for the New Yorker and Saratoga. Accordingly, the C26 engine and chassis was common to all three. The straight eight-cylinder engine was of L-head design. Piston displacement was 323.5 cubic inches, AMA horsepower was 33.80, but a whopping 135 horsepower was delivered at 3400 r.p.m. This was only two horsepower less than the Crown Imperial. The engine was suspended on time-proven Floating Power mountings. The three-speed transmission was newly redesigned to have the shifting mechanism at the side instead of on top, resulting in a flatter front compartment floor, and the shift lever was on the steering column where it had been moved for 1939. Rear axle was of the

hypoid semi-floating design. Front wheels were semi-elliptically suspended, using coil springs, and rear springs were semi-elliptic with eleven leaves tapered at the ends. Aero-type hydraulic double-acting shock absorbers were used. These ride factors, coupled with the new and more forward positioning of the engine and body in relation to the wheels, provided what Chrysler called the Floating Ride. Also contributing to ride quality was a 6.50 x 16 tire size.

Chrysler's revolutionary Fluid Drive coupling, first introduced as standard equipment for the 1939 Custom Imperial, was now optional for the C26 series at \$38. Fluid Drive was not in conjunction with an automatic transmission, but it made gear shifting unnecessary when driving under ordinary conditions. It provided a smooth and constant movement as speed was increased, giving the car even more smoothness and flexibility than the old steam and electric cars.

Wheelbase of the C26 chassis was 128.5 inches, and overall length with bumpers was 208.5 inches. Bodies for the C26 were manufactured by Briggs. The Traveler had four body styles. The three-passenger coupe was lowest priced at \$1,095 delivered at Detroit. The same coupe body, carrying five passengers inside (there were no rumble seats now), listed at \$1,110. A like price tag was attached to the Victoria Sedan, a two-door six-passenger model. Top of the Traveler line was the four-door six-passenger sedan at \$1,180. Convertible fanciers could not have a Traveler.

The Traveler was not easy to distinguish from other Chryslers. In size and exterior trim it was exactly like its C26 brothers. It had the same kind of vent panes in the front windows, and was seen with or without running boards. Grilles, lamps and other details were alike. One had to focus on the Chrysler nameplates on each side of the prow-like nose. There, on a little bar attached to the bottom of the Chrysler name, was the name Traveler. It was a modest car and it bore a modest, almost undefinable, identity.

For 1941, Chrysler planned a special-edition body for the New Yorker, much in the manner of the 1938 New York Special. It was known as the New Yorker Special Town Sedan, and its distinction was in the interior. Therein was design, quality and luxury of a better class than the other New Yorkers. In fact, it was Crown Imperial class. The reason for planning this car as a special New Yorker is unknown, but another reason caused the car's identity to be changed after production began.

New Yorker shipments began to leave the factory in September, 1940, and Crown Imperial shipments began in November. Some of the Special Town Sedans were at dealerships, and possibly even delivered to buyers, when a change of identity came in mid-December. Chrysler notified its dealers that the name of the New Yorker Special Town Sedan was now changed to Crown Imperial Town Sedan because the quality of the car was so similar to the other Crown Imperial models, and because many requests for this change had been received from the field. The company then sent new Crown Imperial nameplates to the dealers for replacement of the New Yorker nameplates on cars they already had. No other change was made in the cars. Those already shipped, however, were lacking another feature because of a delay in procurement. A grained panel for the back of the front seat, with a robe rail and lights at each end, was needed, but wiring for the lights was already assembled into the cars. Dealers were advised that these panels would be sent when available, and they should be installed promptly.

Appointments of the New Yorker Special/Crown Imperial Town Sedan included automatic window lifts and other luxury niceties. Although the Crown Imperial was known as Model C33, Town Sedan motor numbers had a C30 prefix because the chassis was New Yorker C30. The Crown Imperial listed at \$1,760. The New Yorker got its own Town Sedan at \$1,399.

The objective of this article was to present some of the uncommonly-known cars of Chrysler so that they would be better known. Perhaps they will be better understood and appreciated, also.

The author is grateful to C. R. Cheney of the Chrysler Historical Collection and to James Bradley of the National Automotive History Collection for their courtesies and assistance. Illustrations are from photographs in the Chrysler Historical Collection and from the author's collection.

P 14/14

Postwar Scripts

By R. Perry Zavitz

New Yorker Very Classy

Of all the many nameplates currently in use on North American cars, the one that has been in use the longest is the New Yorker. It has been with us constantly (except when all car production was suspended for World War II) since those thoroughly modern looking 1939 Chryslers.

Actually, there was a 1938 Chrysler model called New York Special. Offered in business coupe and trunk sedan only, it was a deluxe variation of the Imperial. As such it rode on a 125 inch wheelbase chassis, and was powered by a 298.7 cid. straight eight engine that developed 110 hp.

The first New Yorker was a 1939 series which was the price leader in Chrysler's eight cylinder lines. Like the Imperial New York Special of the preceding year, the new New Yorker had a 125 inch wheelbase. However, the motor was larger. With a 3/4 inch longer stroke, the displacement was 323.5 cubic inches, and produced 130 hp. That was the biggest straight-eight engine offered in 1939. Only Cadillac, Lincoln Model K, and Packard Twelve had larger motors.

There was a higher priced Chrysler in the 1939 lineup. It was the Saratoga, which was also making its premiere appearance. But did eight-cylinder bargain hunters chose the New Yorker because it was \$100 to \$150 less than the Saratoga? No, they went for the Imperial (not the Imperial Custom limos) because

as it did. This business coupe was the most expensive of that body type during 1946 to '48.

When Chrysler introduced their first V-8 engine for 1951, the New Yorker was the main recipient. This modern short-stroke, over-head-valve V-8 was unique because of its hemispherical combustion chambers. The 331 cubic inches, identical to Cadillac, was significantly more powerful at 180 hp. It has been said that this engine started the horsepower race. Actually, the horsepower race had been going on long before there was a New Yorker, or even a Chrysler. However, this engine did mark the beginning of a hot performance era, which lasted until the muscle car demise in the 1970's.

The late Tom McCahill did zero to 60 time in just 10.9 seconds in a 1951 New Yorker. Compare that with 13.3 seconds he got from a 1951 Olds 98. The New Yorker weighed 4,250 pounds, while the 98 was only 3,780 pounds. Top speed for the Olds was 96 mph, but in the New Yorker he reached 100.13 mph in an officially timed NASCAR two-way average on wet sand at Daytona Beach.

Another all-new body was introduced by Chrysler for 1953. Beginning then, the New Yorker was offered in two versions — standard and Deluxe. The Saratoga was not available for a time, starting with the '53 models.

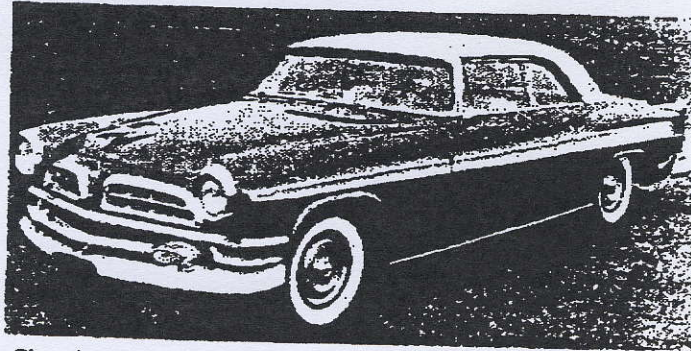
The 1953 New Yorker set a production mark that has never been equalled in the 30 years since. Over 75,500 New Yorkers

Yorker's engine was overbored to give a 354 cubic inch displacement. Horsepower was consequently raised to 280.

Both bore and stroke were increased in the 1957 models to yield 392 cubic inches. Advertised horsepower was 325 for '57, then 345 for the 1958 New Yorkers.

Production was disappointing, however. From the '53 high, it had slipped to 34,620 for '57, then was cut in half to 17,411 for 1958. It slid even further for 1959 to 16,326, which was a post-war low until very recently. Even the boost to a 413 cubic inch engine and 350 hp. was of little apparent help in sales. Those engine specs held steady through to the end of the 1961 model run, while production recovered some to the 20,000-plus level.

By 1962, the long standing Windsor name had disappeared, and the on-again, gone-again Saratoga name was gone for the



Chrysler's 1955 New Yorker St. Regis hardtop. This was Virgil Exner's complete corporate style change heralded as the most extensive and expensive styling and engineering change in history.

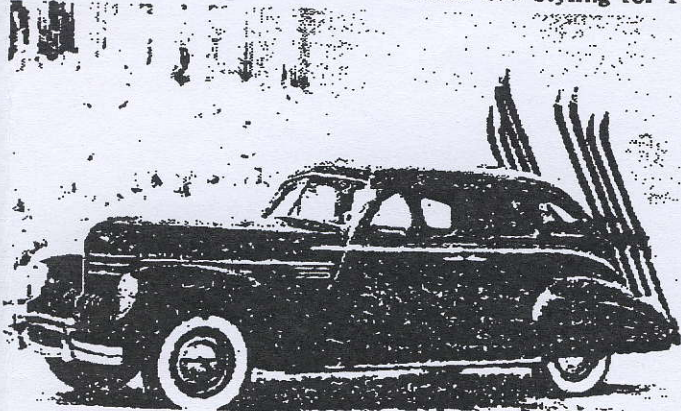
the front fenders. It came loaded with 44 items as standard equipment, usually offered optionally on other cars. They ranged from air-conditioning to a map light. The Salon's price of \$5,860 was \$1,729 more than the regular New Yorker 4-door hardtop. Just 1,621 were built.

Brand new styling for 1965

ing these tough years was the Imperial. In fact it was discontinued in 1975. But it was not completely gone. The Imperial body was given to New Yorker. The new 231 inch body was the longest New Yorker ever, including the 8-passenger models of 1953 and '54. Priced at \$6,737 for the 4-door hardtop, it was \$2,107 less than the 1975 Imperial. It was 1979 before New Yorker prices, even with a healthy boost from inflation, reached Imperial's '75 price level.

By that time, New Yorker had a new body that was 10 inches shorter, and 800 pounds lighter than before. Called the Fifth Avenue, it was available as a 4-door sedan only. The 318 cid. 135 hp. V-8 was standard, with 150 and 195 hp. 360 cid. V-8's optional.

The next New Yorker downsizing took place with the 1982 models. Labeled the Fifth Avenue Edition, it took over the former LeBaron body and mechanics, which LeBaron had abandoned in favor of an even smaller body, front-wheel-drive, and four-cylinder engine. The



The 1939 Chrysler was the first to use the New Yorker name — a name which has been used continually ever since. It is the oldest currently in use.

last time. But New Yorker kept going. In the 1962 through '65 models, New Yorker power rating, from the 413 engine, was dropped a bit to 340 hp.

Meantime, some noteworthy changes in New Yorker body

included a town sedan (in addition to the regular sedan) which featured six side windows. New Yorker production was recovering steadily to just under 50,000. Even though Town & Country totals were no longer

