



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

As many as 10,000 people traveled from as far away as Norway to attend an auction of vintage Chevrolets in a muddy field west of Pierce, Neb. last weekend.

One of those was Bob Colson of Imperial, who bought a 1962 Chevy Impala with 50,000 miles on it.

The blue baby is a 327 cubic inch 350 horsepower four speed two door hardtop, similar to one he drove in his youth.

As a matter of fact, Colson and his wife Elaine were dating in high school when he owned a '61 Chevy Impala.

Colson said he purchased the car "probably because of the nostalgia factor, plus this auction is a one-of-a-kind. You'll never hear about it again."

Most of the 500 old cars and pickups had barely been driven. They were owned by Ray Lambrecht and his wife, Mildred, who ran a Chevrolet dealership in downtown Pierce for five decades before retiring in 1996.

Unlike most dealers, Lambrecht stashed many of his unsold cars in a warehouse, at his farm and other spots around town if they didn't sell in the first year.

The first vehicle sold, a sky-blue, 1958 Chevy Cameo pickup driven 1.3 miles, secured the largest bid at \$140,000.

The 50 most high-profile, low mileage vehicles sold Saturday, with more auction on Sunday. Six of the most valuable models sold for a combined \$545,000.

Colson declined to comment on his bid price for the Impala. It was put in covered storage in 1967.

In a bit of coincidence, Colson had called ahead and asked a Pierce resident if he could park his truck and trailer at the man's house.

After he bought the Impala, he discovered that the man who gave him the parking space had been the one who traded the Impala for another vehicle in 1967.

He'll have to lube the engine and exchange fluids. There's a lot to do on a vehicle that's been stored for 46 years.

"You take a certain risk on the engines," Colson noted.

Monday he washed and took the Impala off its trailer and added it to his collection of six vintage cars.

The Lambrechts, who still live in Pierce, decided to sell the collection so others could enjoy the cars and pickups, according to daughter Jeannie Stillwell, who lives in Florida.