

# Mansfield Memories: Car dealerships thrived in 1950s Mansfield

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MANSFIELD - Do you need a new car? If you lived in Mansfield in the 1950s, that was no problem.

The New Car Dealers Association of Mansfield was formed in February 1954. At that time Mansfield had eight franchised dealers selling nine different brands of new vehicles: Oldsmobile, Dodge, Plymouth, DeSoto, Pontiac, Ford, Chevrolet, Buick, and International Truck.

In 1954 there were 7,200 residents and 2,900 registered vehicles in town. Some claimed that Mansfield had the highest ratio of residents to car dealers in Massachusetts. The new car business represented about \$2 million in annual sales.



*Everett Carpenter and Ernie Strople at Mansfield Motors at North Main and Pleasant Streets.*

The New Car Dealers Association of Mansfield was formed to promote automotive sales in town. The association was dedicated to “quality products, efficient service, and sincerity of purpose.” Ernest Strople, manager of Mansfield Motors, was elected president.

The association's inaugural event was a two-day open house across all eight dealerships on Washington's Birthday weekend. At the end one lucky visitor would win a \$100 gift certificate. The theme of the open house was "New Cars on Parade." The goal was to encourage buyers to purchase their new cars in Mansfield.

If we wished to visit each dealer, we could start our journey at Vickery Motors, 515 South Main St. There we would find three brothers, Donald, Bruce and Norman Vickery selling a complete line of DeSoto and Plymouth vehicles.

Just up the road at 95 South Main we could test drive a new Pontiac at Perry Motors, where Francis Perry, Jr. and James Q. Clemmey had recently relocated the franchise. In later years the dealership was known as Savini Motors.

Our next stop is 77 West St., where Fred Sarro and Anthony Porfido would greet us at Old Colony Motors, our local Dodge/Plymouth dealer. At North Main and Pleasant streets was Mansfield Motors, an Oldsmobile dealership with Russell Carleton as president and the aforementioned Ernest Strople as manager.



*Williams Ford on Rumford Avenue was owned by Walter Williams of Raynham and was among the oldest locations for car sales and service in Mansfield.*

Then it's on to Williams Ford at 175 Rumford Ave. Recently purchased by Walter Williams of Raynham, the location was built around 1914 by Leon Cobb and was among the oldest locations for car sales and service in Mansfield.



*Fred Sarro and Henry Briggs at Old Colony Motors on West Street.  
The dealership also once sold gasoline.*

A similar claim could be made by John Connor at the Mansfield Garage. Located at 91 Chauncy Street, the garage opened in 1917 and was an International Truck franchise in 1954. Hopefully you are not tired yet, because there are two more stops to make. At 12 Pratt St. was Pedini Motors. It was operated by Attilio Pedini, who had been involved in car sales in Mansfield dating back to the 1920s. In 1954 Pedini Motors was a Chevrolet dealership. Our last stop takes us to Vicino Buick at what is now 2 Chauncy St.



*Here Nick Vicino, and in later years his son Joe, would sell Buicks to  
thousands of area residents.*



*Ray and Tony Savini at Savini Pontiac on South Main Street.*

Provided by the Mansfield His “The response to the open house was good,” reported president Stropole. “We believe it was a good start,” he said, noting that some of the dealers made sales during the event.

Mansfield’s dealerships were small compared to what we might find on an “Automile” today. But they had a loyal clientele that appreciated their personal touch. As the years passed six of the dealerships closed their doors. Only two remain open, the former Vicino Buick and the former Mansfield Garage, now known as Station Buick and Station Jeep respectively.