

The Evolution & Genealogy *of the* **Chevrolet “Model H”**

by Don Williams
(with grateful acknowledgement to Ken Kaufmann)

What’s in a name? “Model H” was Chevrolet’s official name for its brand new 1914 car series introduced in mid-July 1913. But they also carried the new names “Royal Mail” and “Baby Grand.” These new names were something different, something that made them much more memorable than the commonly heard names of the day, which were typically generic sounding names like “Big Six” or “Model S,” or “Type 30.” These catchy new names implied, maybe subconsciously, that there was something Grand about a Baby Grand, and something Royal about a Royal Mail. These were names that people remembered: and the very first in a long line of legendary names that would eventually include Belair, Impala, and many more. The difference between these two cars is simply the body style. The sporty Royal Mail is exclusively a roadster bodied car, with only a “front” seat for the driver and a single passenger beside them, with no provision for passengers in the rear. The more sedate Baby Grand is a touring car, with a full back seat behind the driver and capable of carrying 5 people in total. “Model H” describes both of these cars, which share a common chassis and sheet metal from the windshield forward. These wonderful cars were the first broadly successful product created by the Chevrolet Motor Company in its infancy. A few earlier Chevrolet products had come before, as the new company created its identity, but none of them lasted very long, nor were remembered very long. And none of those earlier efforts sold remotely as well as this new Model H. The Royal Mail and Baby Grand were absolutely critical in establishing the recognition, legacy, and reputation of the company that would build more automobiles than any other in the century that followed. Fittingly, they were the very first to wear the unique new blue Bowtie across their proud radiators, announcing with its bold white block letters that a CHEVROLET was coming...

The story of the birth of the Chevrolet Motor Company and the Chevrolet brand of automobile is a complex and convoluted tale with many players, many companies, and many false starts. This article is only an overview, focusing primarily on the path that led to the Chevrolet “Baby Grand” touring and “Royal Mail” roadster of 1914-1916, with some necessary background and sidelights. It seems the story of these early years has never been told with a specific focus on the development of the Model H, and how it came to be.



William C. Durant

It is fair to say that the driving force that created Chevrolet was one man - William C. Durant, a remarkable man in many ways - brilliant, driven, ahead of his time; the ultimate salesman, and an honorable man much admired and respected by his associates. Yes, Louis Chevrolet gave his name to the company, but relatively little else. The story of Chevrolet’s founding is truly a story about Billy Durant. Let’s start at the beginning.

Years before the Chevrolet Motor Company was conceived, Durant was already a self-made millionaire in Flint, Michigan. He earned his fortune in

the carriage manufacturing business in the 1880's and '90's. It was due to this background of proven accomplishment that a small group of nervous investors behind a faltering new enterprise called Buick Motor Car Co came to Mr. Durant late in 1904, and pleaded with him to take over control and ownership of Buick. This group notably included a man named James Whiting, and other Directors of Flint Wagon Works (a former competitor to Durant-Dort Carriage). Remember those names. Durant wasn't at all sure he wanted to enter a whole new, albeit related, industry - but eventually, they convinced him. Once he took that fateful step, his energies were unleashed in the automobile business. Thanks to Durant's business skills, leadership and experience, the Buick Motor Company very quickly grew into a dominant player in the emerging automobile industry, with a well engineered and highly respected product.

Building on this strong foundation, after just 3 years William Durant founded General Motors in 1908. With Buick as his base, he rapidly acquired control of Oldsmobile, Cadillac, Oakland, and very nearly The Ford Motor Company (yes!), as well as several other auto related enterprises. That same year, Durant's Buick Motor Company produced more cars than any other brand in the world. Also in that same memorable year, Henry Ford introduced his inexpensive new Ford Model T, and quickly expanded his production. The auto industry and America would never be the same, of course. One more fateful event took place during this hectic time period: early on while creating and expanding General Motors, Durant made the acquaintance of Louis Chevrolet, a recent immigrant to the USA. Louis was a "car guy" and a very respectable self-educated engineer - addicted to speed, racing cars for various manufacturers. He was a little rough and reckless. Mr. Durant employed Louis Chevrolet as a race car driver for GM, campaigning formidable, purpose-built Buick race cars. With an amazing series of racing successes in short order, Louis gained considerable national fame, much like a highly successful NASCAR champion today. Things were going quite nicely in 1909 and 1910.

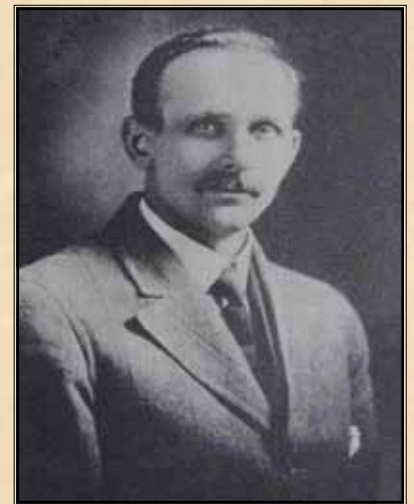
Then, quite suddenly, Durant lost control of his burgeoning GM empire to the bankers in a national financial downturn in 1910. By early 1911 Durant found himself essentially unemployed, but not visibly discouraged. He simply started over: creating a new enterprise that would ultimately become Chevrolet. Remember, this is entirely separate from GM, of which he has lost control.

So in 1911 he boldly began reassembling several of the key people he had used to create General Motors just a few years earlier (obviously they were loyal to him), also now bringing in Louis Chevrolet - primarily because Durant liked the sound of his exotic and widely known name - and he put various teams to work. Many avenues were explored, seeking to develop potential products. Many seeds were planted, not knowing which might ultimately bear fruit.

Some of the primary players in the new effort included William ("Big Bill") Little who had served as the Buick Works Manager from 1906 on, and A. C. Mason who was the Buick Motor Plant Manager. Remember that Buick had been the dominant core of General Motors; and these men and their respective capabilities were well known to each other.



William H. "Big Bill" Little
Namesake of the Company



Arthur C. Mason
Engine man responsible for the
new Chevrolet 4 cyl OHV

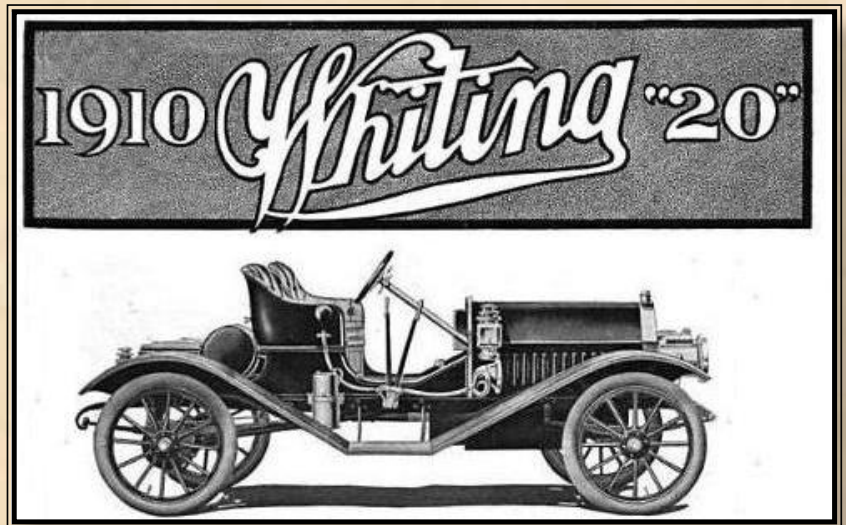
Durant had established a pattern of creating semi-independent manufacturing companies, each dedicated to one product line, and then overlaying them with a "parent" marketing umbrella, or holding company. He did this

very successfully with General Motors, and utilized a similar structure at Durant-Dort Carriage Co before that. He doubtless intended to use this same structure again as he started this new effort, visualizing separate but related enterprises that were intended to be semi-independent car brand "divisions," as he had done at GM earlier. Within several months, "Republic Motors" was created to serve in this "parent company" role in 1912.

One such "seed planting" endeavor was setting up Louis Chevrolet in charge of a small shop in Detroit in March 1911 to see what he could develop, including some plans to go racing again. By June, Bill Little was put in charge of this to expand it into more of a full scale manufacturing operation. Per the original thinking, this would have become essentially the "Chevrolet Division of Republic Motors." Louis primarily wanted to build a luxurious, fast car to bear his name. He tinkered along, working on his vision of what his prestigious namesake car should be, as well as other projects. A few prototypes were rejected. (Ultimately, a large, very high quality touring car would appear as the "Model C" - the first car to be branded as a Chevrolet product. Only approximately 400 of this vehicle were ever built, not going into production until the 1913 model year, and discontinued in early 1914. This model never wore the Bowtie, but rather featured the script Chevrolet name. But we're getting away from the Model H story...) One product of interest to us that was developed at the original Chevrolet Detroit location in the later part of 1911 was a smaller prototype that was intended to be the "Chevrolet Four" runabout, pursuing one aspect of the original plan - a so-called French-type, stylish, low cost runabout roadster.

As he put Louis to work in 1911, in a separate endeavor Durant purchased the Flint Wagon Works in a complex transaction, very important to the new enterprise. Included as part of this acquisition was the "Whiting" auto-

mobile, one of the existing products of the Flint Wagon Works complex. Remember James Whiting and the Flint Wagon Works from the 1904 Buick Motor Co sale? The Whiting was a fairly ordinary vehicle of the day, and sold only in low volume. This car employed an L-Head engine with cylinders cast in pairs and removable from the crankcase, with no removable head. This was a common engine layout in the first decade of the century. It also featured a somewhat unusual large flywheel at the front of the engine. This Whiting engine was built "in house" at the Flint Wagon Works, so critically important assets and capabilities came with this acquisition. These facilities would initially be the new home base of the Little Motor Car Company, headed by and named for Big Bill Little. This would have become the "Little Division of Republic Motors," had the original plan survived.



During the evolution of the deal to acquire Flint Wagon Works, Durant agreed to certain terms that required this separate segment (Little Motor Co) of the new enterprise to avoid any development, design, marketing or engineering expense - just a contract manufacturing concern was envisioned. This was another contributing motivation for the creation of the Republic Motors corporate overlay as mentioned above. As a result of this limitation, the prototype Chevrolet Four being put together in Detroit was soon shipped (back) to Flint to become the pattern for the Little product instead; to be built essentially under license from Chevrolet in Flint, now to be badged as a "Little." The car was based largely on the existing Whiting, with several body design improvements. These consisted primarily of adding doors and a cowl, and making the top and windshield standard equipment. This revamped vehicle emerged as the first new product of the collective companies, and the



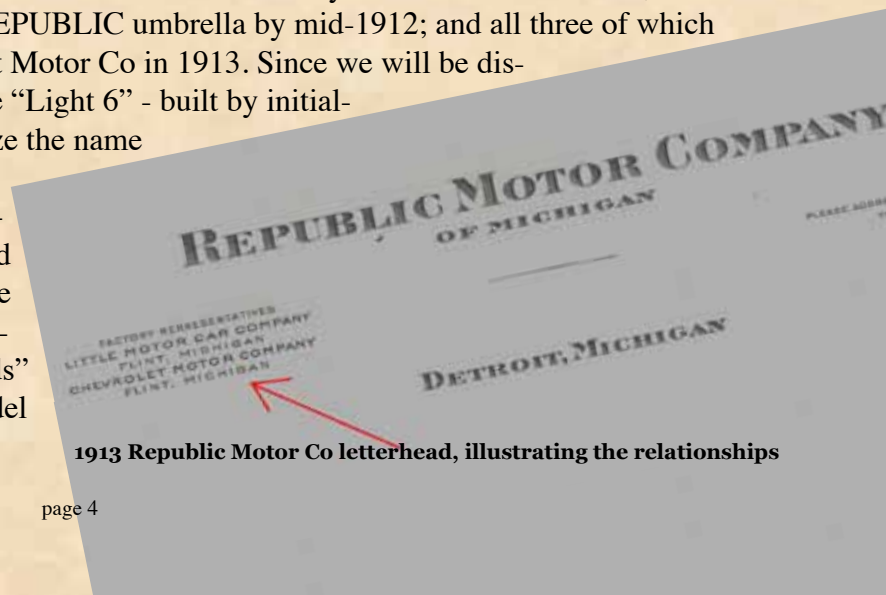
1912-13 "Little" Roadster

only one offered for sale in 1912. It had very rapidly evolved from the "Whiting" - via the Chevrolet prototype - into the "Little," still on a 90 inch wheelbase, same as the Whiting. So Chevrolet - both the company and the man - had a hand in the transformation of the Whiting into the Little. Although not branded as a Chevrolet, the Little is clearly introduced by the same group of men, and is under this group's control and part of the overall new Republic enterprise, which would consolidate and become Chevrolet within a couple of years. The Little 4 was offered initially only with a roadster body, still using the L-head 4 cylinder inherited from the Whiting. Most were built in calendar 1912, but with the first 500 being sold as 1912 models and the remaining 2,499 sold as 1913 models.

This "Little" production run is the source of the infamous "2,999 Chevrolets built in 1912." They actually were not badged as Chevrolets at all, they were Littles. Many earlier "revisionist" histories (including from GM in the 1950's) inaccurately claim these 2,999 vehicles were the big Model C (or Classic Six) - sometimes even calling them 1911 models. This is inaccurate, of course. The error arises from over-simplifying the story and substituting the number of Littles built in 1912/13 for the slightly later Model C as "the first Chevrolet." Remember that "Model Years" started quite early in those times, typically by July or August of the preceding year, which frequently further confuses the history. We also typically see a photo of the Model C ("Classic Six") being inappropriately associated with the statement that 2,999 Chevrolets were built in 1912. This error was first put forth in the 1950s, and has been picked up as being "true" and appears in many Chevrolet histories and references from the 1960's on forward, and is widely spread, now including on the internet and elsewhere. The Model C did not enter production in 1912. It came shortly later, introduced in the middle of the 1913 season as the first Chevrolet badged product; after the 2,999 Littles had already been built.

So it is important to note that although the Chevrolet Motor Company was incorporated on November 3, 1911 (development work had actually started some months earlier), there were NO Chevrolet badged cars produced in 1911, nor any sold as 1912 models. The LITTLE car was the first product sold, and the only product offered in 1912. It was vital to get something moving and generate some much needed cash flow, and the LITTLE was that first effort in 1912. It was first into production simply because it was based largely on the existing Whiting product, and used those same production facilities at the former Flint Wagon Works where the Whiting had been in production immediately before.

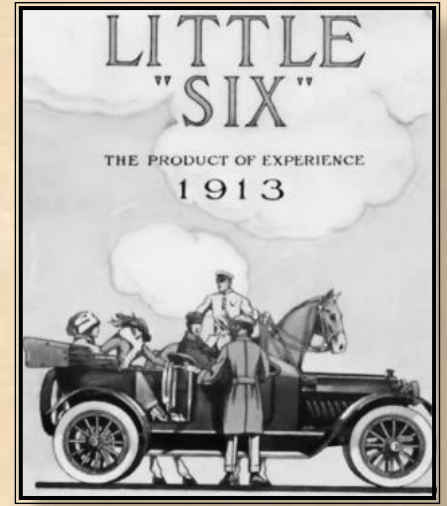
With this background under our belt, now we can have a look at the specific cars that lead directly to the introduction of the Chevrolet Model H. We are looking at car models built both by the LITTLE Motor Co, and the CHEVROLET Motor Company; both under the REPUBLIC umbrella by mid-1912; and all three of which entities will ultimately be combined into Chevrolet Motor Co in 1913. Since we will be discussing the potentially confusing "Little 6" and the "Light 6" - built by initially separate but related companies, we will capitalize the name of the manufacturing company to help add clarity to the following history. Remember that these various companies are related and ultimately controlled by Mr. Durant. They frequently share and exchange designs and personnel, and the overall sales organization of Republic Motor Co is selling both "brands" of cars. Let's look at the products offered on a model year basis during these formative years.



1913 Republic Motor Co letterhead, illustrating the relationships

As stated above, the only product offered by this new family of companies during the 1912 model season (in which they got a late start) was the LITTLE 4 roadster, featuring the Whiting derived L-Head engine.

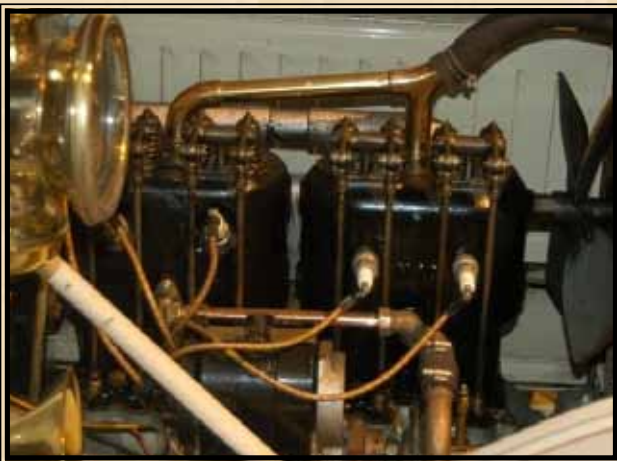
As the 1913 model year began in the late Summer of 1912, the low priced "LITTLE 4" (only available as a roadster) initially still stood by itself, alone in the line-up at \$690. But in January 1913, half-way through the selling season, two additional models finally arrived. The first was truly all new from the ground up and not mechanically related to the small 4 cylinder roadster - it was the 6 cylinder "LITTLE 6," offered only in a touring car body style. Substantially larger than the LITTLE 4 roadster, the LITTLE 6 rode on a 106" wheelbase and employed a new 6 cylinder Sterling-sourced engine (another related company). The new LITTLE 6 touring had electric lighting as standard equipment, but not a self-starter, which was available optionally. Selling at \$1,285 this was a mid-range car, much more expensive than the LITTLE 4 roadster. The LITTLE 6's short production run was only in the few hundreds of units, and it was only to be offered this one year, but it plays an important role in the continuing evolution of the product line! The second newcomer for 1913 was Louis's large, expensive 120" wheelbase CHEVROLET Model C, which had finally gotten into production, albeit slowly (also later known as the "Classic Six"). The big car was only offered in a touring body, and at \$2,100 it was nearly twice the price of The "LITTLE 6." These 3 above models then were the entire product line for the balance of the 1913 model year.



The all new 6 cylinder LITTLE touring

As the 1913 season ground away, it was very clear that a less expensive touring car, and an updated power plant were sorely needed to flesh out and improve the product line. The products to fill these gaps were being rapidly developed.

Former chief Buick engine builder Arthur Mason had busily been taking charge of the foundry and engine work, building from and expanding the former Flint Wagon Works & Whiting facilities, using his vast experience gained while at Buick. A new engine was to be created, and we can certainly see much of the Buick's DNA in the final result. Some of the credit has to go back to at least 1904 and a man named Walter Marr, who was David Buick's excellent primary engineer even before Durant became involved with Buick. Having quite recently been in charge of its ongoing development and production, Mason and Durant of course were intimately familiar with the Buick power train layout, including the critical concept of Over Head Valves (OHV).



1910 Buick "Model 10" OHV engine

The Buick engines had used this OHV arrangement, with the cylinders cast individually and later in pairs, bolted to the crankcase but without removable heads. Rapidly advancing manufacturing technology, by 1913, now allowed casting the block as a single piece - with all 4 cylinders and the crankcase cast in a single unit, and using removable heads - much friendlier for service work. By mid-1913, Mason was ready with what might very reasonably be called a "new and improved" version of what he had previously been building for the Buick Model 10 up through 1910 - a really good, rugged yet simple OHV 4 cylinder engine. In short order this new engine would become the primary power plant for virtually all Chevrolets, and would remain in production largely unchanged through 1928.

A very long run indeed in the rapidly developing automobile industry at that time - 15 years in production.

As this new engine was being readied, we know that LITTLE Motor Co was working on the development of a smaller 4 cylinder touring car. They wanted to be able to offer a less expensive touring-bodied model than the LITTLE 6, closer in price to the LITTLE 4 roadster. The prototype was naturally built as a LITTLE. This prototype car almost certainly used a modified "LITTLE 6" chassis and body, but with the new Mason OHV 4 cylinder engine installed for the first time, in place of the more expensive 6 cylinder engine. It retained the hooded or "notched" style cowl arrangement from the production LITTLE 6, and as also seen on the big CHEVROLET Model C. It also retained the electric lighting. But this model was never to make it into production. Let's call it the "LITTLE 4 TOURING prototype" for now...

Another Durant friend and associate was a man named A.B.C. Hardy. He had served as manufacturing manager and later President of Durant-Dort Carriage Co, the firm that made Durant wealthy in the 1890's. Hardy had also followed Durant into this new Little/Chevrolet/Republic endeavor, and by 1913 had become the general manager of manufacturing at both Chevrolet and Little. He strongly disliked the "Little" name for an automobile, feeling it conveyed the wrong image to the public. He was joined in this opinion by other influential people in the organization, and by the summer of 1913 they convinced Durant that the name had to go. Durant was smart, and listened. So that summer (to simplify somewhat) the various organizations of Republic, Little, and Chevrolet (and others) were combined into simply "The Chevrolet Motor Co" and public announcements were put out to the effect that "all cars made or sold by any of the previous companies would hereafter be known as Chevrolet Motor Cars" (possibly this announcement contributes to turning the 2,999 Littles of 1912 into Chevrolets? - but they certainly were not Model C's, as later publicized.) And, it was felt, along with the corporate renaming, snazzy new "trade names" for the individual models would be needed.

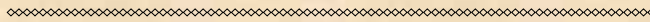
So as the 1913 season draws to a close in the summer of 1913, we see the total discontinuance of the "LITTLE" brand, and its complete consolidation into CHEVROLET. Ready for introduction is an entirely new product line for 1914, originally envisioned as the new 1914 LITTLE line-up before the name was dropped. An exciting new roadster, based to some considerable degree on the preceding LITTLE, but definitely a brand new model, emerges - now powered by the excellent new Mason 4 cylinder overhead valve engine under its hood. It is quite significantly larger (104" wheelbase versus 90"), and clearly more refined. This new model features a brand new logo in the shape of a Bowtie, and a catchy new name as well - the CHEVROLET ROYAL MAIL has arrived!

To complement this new roadster, the new touring model is also freshly reworked. The LITTLE 4 TOURING Prototype - described above - is rebadged from a LITTLE, and announced as the CHEVROLET BABY GRAND, also with the new Bowtie design on its radiator. To help get the selling price down, the Baby Grand has surrendered the electric lights of its prototype (the LITTLE 4 TOURING prototype) and once in production reverts to the less expensive gas lights like its roadster companion. The Roadster and Touring are both available with electric lights and starter, but as extra-cost options. The now cheaper Baby Grand also loses the fancy curved front fenders of the LITTLE 6 ancestor, and appears with the roadster's straight line style front fender. To make the sheet metal the same from



Missing Link early production 1914 Baby Grand with zig-zag windshield taken from the roadster

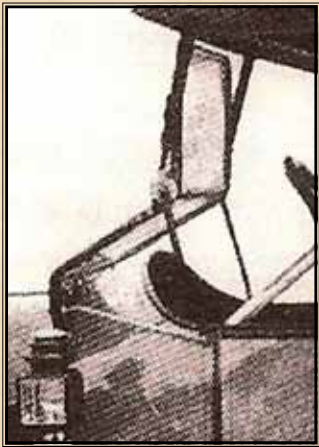
The Evolution & Genealogy of the Chevrolet "Model H"



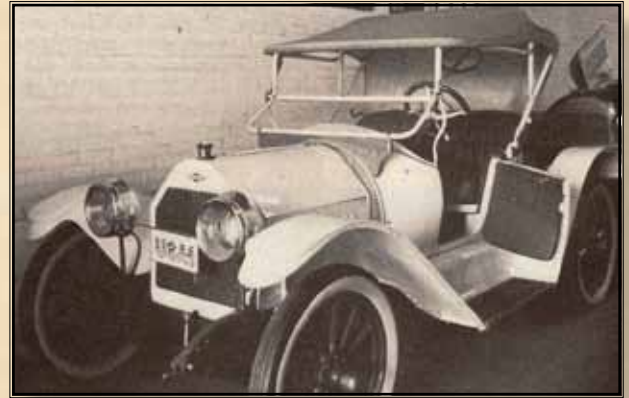
Notched cowl design as seen on Little 6 and the pre-production prototype "Old Number One" Baby Grand

the windshield forward, the Baby Grand also adopts the same cowl as the roadster, eliminating the notched cowl of the prototype inherited from the LITTLE 6. These two siblings now share the same 104" wheelbase chassis, dramatically improving production efficiencies. Together, both are to be known as the new "Chevrolet Model H."

At their introduction in the summer of 1913, and only for the first 2 or 3 months of production, the new H Models were built with the earlier "Torpedo" style hooded cowl and zig-zag windshield arrangement inherited directly from the LITTLE 4 roadster. The zig-zag windshield is that style which begins at the front of the cowl and comes back at an angle, then goes vertical as it reaches the rear of the cowl. Note that for the Baby Grand touring, this was a change in cowl design from its direct ancestor, the LITTLE 4 prototype car which had employed the notched cowl style of the LITTLE 6, from which it borrowed its body. These first few hundred units of the H Model are essentially a "Missing Link" between the LITTLE products they replace, and the truly finalized CHEVROLET Model H cars to which we are accustomed. A total of only about 400 of this early style were produced, counting both roadster and touring versions. A very few of this early production Missing Link cowl version exist, including Royal Mail car # 179 now owned by Tom Meleo illustrated here. We only know the Missing Link type Baby Grand touring from its earliest advertisements, as shown on the previous page.



Hooded cowl showing Zig-Zag windshield



Missing Link style cowl and windshield, as seen on Tom Meleo's early production Royal Mail car # 179

In a very interesting footnote, the old Whiting Model Log for the earlier L-Head engine used by the Whiting and later by the Little, began with the "Whiting Model A," and progressed through version "G." Thus, when the brand new Mason OHV engine came along, built at the very same facilities, it was naturally enough labeled as the "H." Once it was applied to the new vehicle as a model identification, the designation was further refined to indicate the seating capacity. Therefore, a Royal Mail is an H-2, and a Baby Grand is an H-4. It all started with the Whiting Model A!

The original "LITTLE 4 TOURING prototype" described and shown above was rebadged from a LITTLE to a CHEVROLET, and simply sold to an early customer. Repurchased by General Motors about 1920, it still exists in the collection of the GM Heritage Center, with Mason OHV 4 cylinder engine #1 under the hood. General Motors has called it "Old Number One" for decades. The true prototype Baby Grand! And it began life as a LITTLE.



The LITTLE 4 TOURING Prototype - later re-badged as a CHEVROLET and known as "Old Number One" (shown)
The very first Chevrolet Model H!

It is again important to note that these cars were clearly and absolutely introduced as 1914 model year cars, although production began in mid-calendar year 1913, just as is done today - there is properly no such thing as a 1913 Model H. Let's keep our history straight. In comparison, they started building the "all new 1955 Chevy V8" in the fall of 1954, but nobody calls the early ones 1954 Chevys - it's exactly the same idea.

And before 1913 ends, Louis Chevrolet has left the firm that bears his name.

So what does the product line-up look like at your local Chevrolet dealer for this exciting 1914 model year? It's all Chevrolet now, no more Littles. Mr. Durant's rapidly developing enterprise (still in no way related to GM) proudly offers the new "entry level" Royal Mail Roadster and the Baby Grand Touring, priced at \$750 and \$875 respectively, with gas lights and a hand crank. Electric lights and starter are a \$125 option for either version of the H Model. For just the first few months of the year, these new models are supplemented by a remaining few of the big expensive "Classic Six" Model C's at the top end, for \$2,100. Only a few dozen Classic Six's are sold in this, its final few months of production. And as the year continues, the H Models are joined by another new product, the intermediate "CHEVROLET Light 6," also known as the Model L. Like the Baby Grand touring, this new car is also derived somewhat from the previous year's "LITTLE 6" tooling. But instead of a smaller and less expensive version (which the Baby Grand was), the CHEVROLET Light 6 is a significantly larger and up-market version of its LITTLE 6 ancestor - and of course it is a CHEVROLET. Priced at \$1,425 between the new Model H and the big Model C, the Model L "Light 6" rides on a substantially larger 112" wheelbase, and has electric lights and starter as standard equipment. Only about 500 of the fairly expensive Chevrolet Light 6's are built. Only one survives, housed in Pinky Randall's collection. But the Model H "Baby Grand" and "Royal Mail" really take off! Production of the Model H takes place both in Flint and also now in New York City. By the end of this 1914 model year, the successful new Model H is essentially the only product Chevrolet offers, with the low volume 6 cylinder models to be shortly discontinued. Chevrolet Motor Company is coming into its own, with a solid, respected product that is now freshly Chevrolet designed and built; and solid profits are being earned with some 6,243 H Models built for 1914.

For 1915, the Model H is essentially the only vehicle being sold (Model L "Light 6" production continued for a few months into the 1915 model year). The Model H now rides on an increased 106" wheelbase, apparently accomplished by a simple relocation of the axles on their spring mounts. They also feature demountable rims and other improvements. Virtually all now also feature the cutting-edge new Auto-Lite electric starter and lighting system and Connecticut ignition, which is technically optional for \$110. With small and large "lamps" inside the headlights, the need for cowl lights is now eliminated. The Model H production is still divided as per the previous years' body styles - Royal Mail (Model H-2) and Baby Grand (Model H-4) - but is now also joined by a snazzy new version of the roadster, all dressed up, known as the Amesbury Special and designated the Model H-3. Interestingly, the H-3 reverts to the earlier "notched" cowl style as seen on the LITTLE 6 of 1913 (and the prototype Baby Grand / Old Number One).

As the successful 1915 season progresses, back at headquarters Mr. Durant is working feverishly on two fronts: he is developing a new, smaller (i.e. cheaper) car to be a Chevrolet price leader to compete head-on with old Henry Ford; and he is striving to once again regain control of his earlier creation, General Motors. 1915 is a very good year, with increasing volume and profit (6,757 H Models for 1915), even though the Model H is the only product in the line-up by year end. A path to success is now visible to Mr. Durant, and he brings all his energy and genius to bear on achieving it, once again.

By the end of 1915, William Durant has regained control of GM, acquiring it through some very sophisticated stock manipulation and a brilliantly executed plan. Essentially, the Chevrolet Motor Company "bought up controlling interest" of GM, but remained separate. It was not fully integrated into GM until 1918. This is a very

long and complex story, but was in many ways Durant's greatest business achievement. Chevrolet Motor Company is further consolidated as the (previously technically separate) 'Chevrolet of New York' and 'Chevrolet of Michigan' are merged, together with other entities; and Mason Motors, which was a captive supplier of engines and foundry products, is fully acquired by and integrated into Chevrolet Motor Company.



1913 Little 6



The 1913-14 prototype "Little 4 Touring," re-badged to pre-production Chevrolet Baby Grand, and "Old Number One" - all one and the same car



1914 Baby Grand "Missing Link" very early production



1914 final production style Baby Grand

**The 4 stages of Baby Grand evolution 1913-14
Study the evolving cowl and windshield styles**

1916 was largely unremarkable for the Model H cars, now entering their third, and final, year of production. The Model H graduates to the "top-of-the-line" for 1916, with no 6 cylinder cars left in production. The Amesbury Special H-3 is gone, replaced by a new Model H-2-1/2 "Special Roadster," which featured a modern style rear turtle deck with integral trunk. Sales were brisk, with the largely unchanged H Model delivering more units (16,390) than the preceding two years combined. Anticipating additional new products, several new Chevrolet assembly plants are readied, including Fort Worth TX and Oakland CA.

But the new inexpensive Four-Ninety model is the big story for Chevrolet in 1916, generating previously unheard of sales volume and profits. The new Four-Ninety is powered by none other than a slightly modified and simplified version of the Model H engine. At the end of the year, the Model H fades into history. It is replaced for 1917 by a somewhat larger car, the Model F, which carries on the Baby Grand and Royal Mail names for a few more years. The public affectionately continues to use these names for the bigger Chevrolet models - especially clinging to "Baby Grand" - well after the company stops using or promoting them officially.

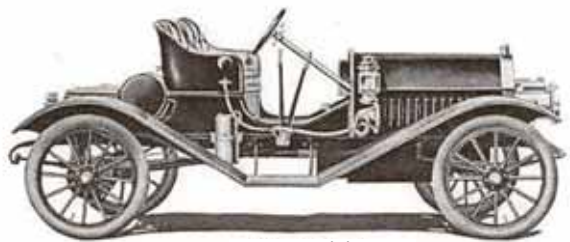
So to summarize the direct genealogy, the CHEVROLET BABY GRAND touring car evolved fairly quickly. It begins clearly with the "LITTLE 6 TOURING" introduced as an ALL NEW design for 1913 - no previous version at all - with its Sterling 6 cylinder engine and notched cowl. While this LITTLE 6 TOURING is on the market, the prototype "LITTLE 4 TOURING" is under development, primarily by substituting the newly available OHV Mason 4 cylinder engine into the existing car. This first one is the prototype Baby Grand (and it would have been a LITTLE product, if that brand name had survived). This LITTLE 4 TOURING prototype is simply re-badged as a CHEVROLET 4 TOURING (thus becoming "Old Number One"). Then, as it enters early production, the cowl design is initially changed to that of the LITTLE 4 ROADSTER, to match the new companion H roadster product - and it is introduced for sale as a 1914 model CHEVROLET BABY GRAND. The wheelbase was shortened slightly to match with the Royal Mail chassis, thus putting them both on the same 104" (first year) wheelbase. Very shortly after production begins, the cowl style is updated to the "normal production" style.

The CHEVROLET ROYAL MAIL path starts earlier, and is perhaps a bit more complex. We will start at the 1910 Whiting roadster (obviously it had a previous evolution of its own, too). When Whiting was acquired by Durant, this existing product was shipped to CHEVROLET in Detroit for updating. Because of the terms of the deal to buy Flint Wagon Works, there was a need to have a "ready to manufacture" vehicle in Flint at those facilities. So the CHEVROLET 4 product still under development in Detroit was instead returned to Flint, to become the production LITTLE 4 roadster. It now had doors, splash aprons, a zig-zag windshield above the hooded cowl, a stylish oval gas tank, better seats, and a tweaked version of the pervious Whiting L-Head 4 engine. As the Baby Grand is being readied above, the LITTLE 4 roadster gets an injection of "LITTLE 6" style DNA - its chassis gets stretched and refined to match its new sibling - and the old L-Head is replaced by the same new OHV Mason 4 as the Baby Grand. And it turns (back into) a CHEVROLET - the Royal Mail is born.

The very separate and distinct evolutionary paths of the touring product and the roadster product finally converge to produce the Chevrolet Model H, bringing significant attributes of each to the new common shared chassis, and jointly using for the first time the brand new Mason 4 cylinder engine, and the Chevrolet Bowtie logo.

A visual comparison of the sequence of the roadster vehicles below can show us much about their more complex evolution into the Royal Mail, and brings home the fairly amazing similarities. These illustrations are taken from sales

documents from each vehicle, flipped and re-sized as necessary to make the comparison easier. Looking first at the "ancestor car," the Whiting:



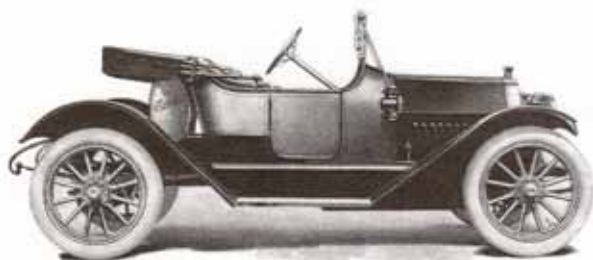
1910-11 Whiting

This is what was in production at Flint Wagon Works / Whiting Automobile Co at the time Durant acquired that firm in 1911. Actually, Durant's people continued to sell the remaining inventory of these cars until it was exhausted, while developing the Little.



1912-13 Little

Still employing the Whiting engine as described earlier, the new Little gains doors, a cowl, and splash aprons above the running boards. The windshield and top are now standard equipment. You can easily see it is very much the same car. Look at the rear springs, the lights, the fender line, etc. The Radiator shell is now painted black, and hood louvers removed. And a larger oval gas tank is employed.



1914 Royal Mail

The greatest difference in the Chevrolet Royal Mail is the hugely improved power train, with the new Mason-built over head valve 4 now under the hood. The wheelbase has grown to 104" (note the longer running board) and larger tires are used. The windshield has moved to the rear edge of the cowl from the front.

So, while it is fair to say that the Model H was an "all new" car, due primarily to the entirely new drive train and enlarged dimensions, we certainly have to give significant credit to the vehicles that went before - their essential contributions are absolutely unmistakable in the later product!