The following article explains the procedures required to restore the doors of the 1961 and 1962 Bel Air & Biscayne two-door Sedans: outer weatherstrip, trim panel whisker strip and window channel. The procedure is the same for the rather rare 1961 Impala 2-door Sedan, but the kit is a little different. The procedure is quite similar for other Late Great Chevy 2-door Sedans. All disassembly photos show the right door and all assembly photos show the left door. This month we will show the disassembly procedures. Next month in Part 2 we will complete the restoration and installation.

Tools Needed:
- Door Handle Clip Tool
- Phillips Screwdriver
- Flat-blade Screwdriver
- Gasket Scraper
- Electric Drill & Bits
- Flat-nose Punch
- Needle-nose Pliers
- Needle-nose Vice Grips
- Box Wrench : 7/16”
- Ratchet & Socket : 7/16”
- Ball Peen Hammer
- Sheet Metal Shears

Parts Needed:
- 563564 Inside Door Handle Clip Tool
- 564201 Door Window Channel Felt
- 563572 3M Super Trim Adhesive Spray
- 563537 Window Channel
- 534040 Window Channel Rivet Set
- 564199 Door Window Channel Clip Set
- 56136 Window Felt Kit
- 561305 Door Panel Retainers

To order parts call 1-800-683-1961 or visit LateGreatChevy.com

Time Frame:
3-Hours

Photo #1: Remove the two screws which secure the armrest to the door. Remove the door lock knob. Using a Phillips screwdriver, remove the four interior trim panel screws with large built-in washers that secure the lower part of the door panel. Using a handle clip removing tool, remove the door handle, vent window handle and window handle. (See Photo #1) Remember to slide the tool between the handle and the large plastic trim washer.

Using a large flat-bladed screwdriver or paint scraper, pry the door panel “nails” from the plastic retaining clips that are pressed into the door. These are the nails and plastic clips secure the door trim panel to the door. These nails will run from the top to the bottom along the front and rear edges of the door panel. Lift the door panel assembly up and off of the door. Make note that there are two large springs which keep the door panel away from the window handle and door handle. (One of these large springs will not be located at the vent window handle.)
Photo #2 & 3: Using a 7/16-inch socket, remove the hex-head bolt with built-in washer which secures the vent window frame shaft to the vent window crank mechanism. (See Photo #2.) Using a 7/16-inch wrench or socket, remove the three bolts with built-in washers which secure the vent window crank mechanism to the door. Since the vent window crank mechanism is usually stuck on the vent window frame shaft, use a flat-nosed punch and hammer to drive the crank mechanism off of the shaft. Through one of the access holes in the door, remove the vent window mechanism. (See Photo #3.) Inspect the vent window mechanism to make sure that the lower and rear covers are in place and that it turns smoothly.

Photo #4 & 5: Using a Phillips screwdriver, remove the pan head sheet metal screw which secures the vent window assembly to the upper edge of the door. (See Photo #4.) Using a 7/16-inch wrench remove the special nut which secures the lower vent window channel assembly to the inner door skin. (See Photo #5.)

Photo #6: Using a Phillips screwdriver, remove the three chromed sheet metal screws which secure the vent window frame assembly to the forward/top part of the door frame. (See Photo #6.) These are special screws that have an oversized flat head. One of these screws is at the top of the vent assembly, another one is located towards the middle of the vent assembly and the lower screw faces toward the front of the car.

With the door window in the “down” position, slide the lower vent window channel adjusting stud out of the hole in the lower part of the door towards the outer door skin. Tilt the vent window assembly towards the rear of the door and inward, and then slide the complete assembly out of the door.

Photo #7: With the door glass in the “down” position, use a Phillips screwdriver to remove the two flat-head Phillips machine screws with built-in star washers which secure the lower channel of the window regulator to the brackets that are spot welded onto the bottom of the door glass channel. One of these will be accessed through the large access hole to the front of the door and the other one will be removed through the large access hole to the rear of the door. (See Photo #7.) Slide the lower channel to the rear to free the forward door glass bracket and tilt the front edge of the door glass downward. At this point the door glass should be free of the channel and you can slide the door glass assembly up and out of the door by tilting it inward.
Photo #8 & 9: The chrome-beaded weatherstrip that runs the length of the door is secured to the outer door edge by two flat-head sheet metal screws - one at the forward end and the other at the rear end. Using a Phillips screwdriver, remove these screws. (See Photo #8.) This weatherstrip is also secured to the outer door edge by four “pinch” clips. Use your hands to push the chrome-beaded weatherstrip downward so that the clips are released from the door metal. You may have to use a flat-bladed screwdriver to help push the weatherstrip downward so that the clip will release. (See Photo #9.) (Note: the forward end of the chrome bead is bent inward so that it matches the contour of the door. When it comes time to install the new weatherstrip, you will need to bend the bead inward on the new weatherstrip.)

Photo #10 & 11: The next piece to remove from the door is the window channel that runs across the top of the door frame and down the rear of the door. So that you have some kind of idea of how long the window channel needs to be, mark the forward upper end of the window channel where it met the vent window assembly. Using a 7/16-inch socket with an extension, remove the hex head bolt which secures the lower part of the channel. This bolt is accessible through the large rear access hole. (See Photo #10.) After removing the bolt, begin to pry and pull the window channel out of the door frame. Use a large flat-bladed screwdriver or paint scraper to pry the channel out of the door. (See Photo #11.) The channel is held into the door with seven to nine special clips which are secured onto the backside of the channel. Try to keep the channel in its basic shape because you are going to use it as a pattern for the new channel.

Photo #12: The lower part of the window channel which is down inside of the door, has a bracket which is riveted to the channel. On most 1961’s, this bracket is sixteen inches long and is riveted in three places along the channel. The window channel runs almost the complete length of this bracket almost down to where the bolt is located. On most 1962’s, this bracket/channel is also sixteen inches long but is secured to the window channel with two rivets at the top of the bracket/channel. The window channel ends near the top of the bracket/channel. On 1962’s, the lower bracket/channel has felting installed in it and it acts as a channel for the glass.

Using a 1/4-inch bit, drill off the heads of the rivets which secure the lower bracket to the channel. Using a small flat-nosed punch, drive the rivets out of the bracket and channel.

Although both 1961-1962 brackets are sixteen inches long, the amount of channel that will be used is not the same because of how the channel is secured to these brackets. If you are restoring the 1961-type brackets, bead blast and then clear coat. If you are restoring the 1962-type bracket/channel, check the condition of the felting material. If the felting material is almost gone you will probably want to scrape it out of the bracket/channel, then bead blast and then finally clear coat.
If you are using the 1961-type lower bracket, skip to Step #15. To restore the 1962-type bracket/channel, use some felting material to line the channel. This felting material is available as P/N 564201. The best product used to install this felting material is 3M's Super Trim Adhesive, P/N 563572. After determining how long the felting will be in the bracket/channel, cut it to that length so that the overall length will not have to be trimmed. (See Photo #13.)

So that the installation of the felting material is made a little easier, I “spread” the bracket/channel a small amount so that the channel was a little more accessible. Spray some trim adhesive into the channel and also spray some trim adhesive onto the back of the felting material. After allowing the trim adhesive to set up just a little bit, carefully position the felting material down into the channel. “Work” the felting material down into the bottom and along the sides with a large flat-bladed screwdriver. If you have a couple of paint mixing sticks, you can use these to push the felting material into position. Allow the trim adhesive to dry for several hours and then very carefully trim the excess felting material with a new razor blade.

The window channel brackets will now be secured to the window channel. The procedure is a little different depending on if you have 1961 or 1962-type lower brackets. The sedan window channel is available as P/N 563537. These channels will be secured to the brackets with some oval-head semi-tubular rivets. (See Photo #14.) Ten of these special rivets are available as P/N 534040. The procedure will be explained for the 1962-type brackets, but the procedure is the same for the 1961 except that the new channel will run almost the complete length of the bracket and will be secured with three rivets rather than two rivets.

Since it is such a tight fit, I trimmed a little bit of the black cloth away from the end of the new window channel so that the fit will be better. Position the bracket onto the end of the channel and mark where the two holes will be drilled. After drilling the two holes in the new channel, position the rivets into the holes with the heads on the inside of the channel where the glass will ride. (Again, refer to Photo #14.) To flare the rivets, I used a 1/4-inch thick piece of steel plate which was held in a vise. If you have an extra “set of hands” available, have them help you hold the bracket, the channel and the rivets over the steel plate. Use a ball-peen hammer to flare the rivets.

The window channel clips will now be installed onto the new window channel. A set of fourteen clips are available as P/N 564199. I suggest installing nine clips to the channel on each side, as a result you will need two sets of P/N 564199. (See Photo #15.) It appears that the original clips were not installed at a uniform distance between them and the spacing even varies from one side of the car to the other. As a result, I suggest laying the old channel next to the new channel and determine the basic positions of the clips. Carefully determine and mark where the upper rear corner of the channel will be located so that you don’t put a clip any closer than about one inch from the very sharp corner of the window channel. You will also need to determine where the forward clip will be located. The forward clip should be about 1-1/2 inches from the end of the channel. (You will not use the full length of the channel.)

After marking the location of the clips on the new window channel, position a piece of 3/8-inch thick wood into the channel so that the clips can be installed. (See Photo #16.) The strip of wood that I used was a piece of 3/8-inch plywood that was about 1-inch wide by 5-inches long. This piece of wood will support the
Position the whisker strip along the metal rail at the top of the door panel and then use a pair of needle-nosed vise grips to clamp the whisker strip in place. (See Photo #22.) The top of the whisker strip should be about 1/16 of an inch below the top edge and the rear end of the whisker strip should be about 1/8 of an inch from the end of the metal rail. Remove the staple from the whisker strip and drill two holes through the top rail for the staple. (See Photo #23.) Position the staple through the whisker strip, through the vinyl and then through the top metal rail. (See Photo #24.)

Photo #21: After the door panels have been done, the new whisker strip can be installed onto the top rail. A weatherstrip & whisker strip kit is available for the 1961/1962 Bel Air and Biscayne 2-door Sedans as P/N 536136. (See Photo #21.) This kit has the correct weatherstrips and whisker strips, as well as the staples and a bit to drill the holes for the staples. The staple holes are even drilled in the strips and the ends are also formed. New pinch clips are installed on the weatherstrip pieces. Everything else is there, ready for installation. It is a very good kit and the manufacturer, RePops, has worked with us to get the kit so that it is correct.

As mentioned above, you will notice that the holes for the staples have already been drilled in the whisker strips. From the backside, use an awl to open up the holes for the staples. (When these holes are drilled, the whiskers backing material fill in the holes and you sometimes have a hard time finding the holes.) So that you have a reference point, you may want to position the staples in the holes of the whisker strip.

Photo #22, 23 & 24: Position the whisker strip along the metal rail at the top of the door panel and then use a pair of needle-nosed vise grips to clamp the whisker strip in place. (See Photo #22.) The top of the whisker strip should be about 1/16 of an inch below the top edge and the rear end of the whisker strip should be about 1/8 of an inch from the end of the metal rail. Remove the staple from the whisker strip and drill two holes through the top rail for the staple. (See Photo #23.) Position the staple through the whisker strip, through the vinyl and then through the top metal rail. (See Photo #24.)

Disassemble the door panels so that the top metal rails can be prepared for the new door panel material. There is a 31-inch whisker strip secured to the top metal rail with some very strong staples. Notice that this whisker strip runs from the rear edge of the door panel forward. Notice how the whisker strip is finished off at a 90-degree angle at the rear and at a 45-degree angle at the front.

Photo #19 & 20: Working from the backside of the metal top rail, use an awl to pry the ends of the staples. As soon as you have the ends of the staples free, use a pair of needle-nosed pliers to further straighten the ends of the staples. (See Photo #19.) Use a flat-bladed screwdriver to pry the staples out of the metal top rail. (See Photo #20.) Repeat this procedure until the whisker strip is free of the top rail. Keep the old whisker strip. The metal rail should be sand blasted or bead blasted and clear coated before it is used to make the new door panels.
Clamp the needle-nosed vice grips in the center of the staple. Using a flat-bladed screwdriver and hammer, tap the ends of the staple inward. Use a pair of needle-nosed pliers to finish bending the ends into place, once the ends are bent inward. After finishing the staple, reposition the whisker strip along the top of the rail and secure it in place at the next staple position with the needle-nosed vise grips. Repeat the above two steps for the complete length of the whisker strip.

From the backside, bend the staples over. Since the staples are so strong, here is the procedure I used to bend the staples into place.

Photo #25: At this point the chrome-beaded rubber weatherstrip will be secured to the outer edge of the door. The correct weatherstrip will have the flat rubber part pointing towards the inside of the car and the chrome bead end that is notched will go towards the front of the car. Using some needle-nosed pliers, bend the chrome bead towards the center of the car so that it matches the contour of the door at that position. The end of the bead may be just a little too long and you may have to trim it with some metal shears or diagonal cutters. (See Photo #25.)

Photo #26: Work from the outside of the door and use your hands to “pull” the rubber weatherstrip onto the metal lip of the door. The four pinch-type clips are very strong and quite a bit of pressure must be applied to pull them into place. (See Photo #26.)

Photo #27 & 28: Once the rubber weatherstrip is in place, the forward and rear screws can be installed. I used a grease pencil to mark the location of the rear screw which will secure the rubber weatherstrip to the door. This mark will help you find the hole in the door. (See Photo #27.) Mark the position of the forward screw in the same manner. When you use the awl to find these holes, this mark will come in handy. It takes a little pressure to press the awl through the metal backbone of the rubber weatherstrip piece. (See Photo #28.) After making the hole in the weatherstrip, find the hole in the door and then reinstall the special flat head #8 x 1/4-inch Phillips sheet metal screw. Repeat this procedure for the forward hole.

Photo #29: After the rubber weatherstrip has been installed onto the door, the window channel with the lower bracket can be installed. Determine where the sharp bend will be in the new window channel and carefully begin to work the bend at that position. (See Photo #29.) Don’t make the bend too tight at this time in the installation. As seen in Photo #29, one of the clips is quite close to the bend. Do not get the clips any closer than that. If by some chance one of the clips is at the bend, remove the clip and reposition it about an inch away. Temporarily position the vent window assembly into the door and determine where the new window channel will end. Place a mark on the door frame just behind the vent window assembly. The new window channel will come right up against the vent window assembly.
Using some metal shears, trim the new window channel at the mark that you have made on the door frame. (See Photo #33.) Continue to use the small strip of wood to work the channel up into the frame. The window channel is now in place. (See Photo #34.)

At this point the door glass and vent window assembly can be reinstalled. Follow Step #7 in the reverse order to reinstall the door glass. Follow Steps #3-#6 in the reverse order to reinstall the vent window assembly. After the vent window assembly has been installed no more than an eighth of an inch gap should be left between the window channel and the rear part of the vent window assembly as pointed out in Photo #35.

The door panel can be reinstalled by following Steps #1 & #2 in the reverse order. New plastic retainers for the trim panel “nails” are available as P/N 561305 for a bag of 20. This finishes the procedure for the left side of the car. What a nice job. Repeat the procedure for the right door. Good Luck!