

# Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany  
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## Bodies — and Books

HERE'S PART 3 of our series about body, door, and window repairs. Usually some of these repairs and adjustments are necessary on an older collector vehicle even when there is little or no rust or accident damage; and often the 2-door models may require extra attention, because of the greater size and weight of the doors, windows, trunk lids, etc. Many repairs of this kind are best done by the owner before the car is taken in for repainting, and then checked again when trim and other parts are being reinstalled after painting. Suggestions here are written for the Hudson stepdowns, but will often apply to other models as well, from the mid-1930's on up.



DOOR LATCH STRIKE plates or blocks are perhaps the body parts which most often need minor adjustment (and lubrication). They are practically interchangeable on Hudsons 1948-1953 (and front and rear), although three types were used in production—first, die-cast alloy with a straight diagonal slot; second, die-cast with curved slot; and third, pressed steel with curved slot. All are held in place using the same arrangement of three screws threaded into a tapping plate which fits in a metal pocket inside door pillar, to permit adjustment. Door latches and strikes on Jets and all 1954 models are of somewhat different design (see Hudson Body Service Manual, now available in reprint form).

For best results, be sure that doors and hinges are in correct alignment before latches and strikes are worked on. (See manual, and August *WTN*.) Strike plate should not be required to force a misaligned door into position each time door is closed, or the result will be excessive wear, noise, and hard closing. With car parked on a flat surface, adjust door strike plate a small amount at a time until the best combination of easy closing and snug rattle-free fit is obtained. Finally, tighten the three screws carefully to ensure that plate will stay in place.

No part of door should rub against face of strike plate. In a few cases, one of the three screws holding latch mechanism in door may need to be installed slightly deeper, with its conical lockwasher removed. Also, if necessary, a cast strike plate can usually be ground about 1/16 inch thinner (mostly from front face) without serious weakening. At same time, check plate for visible signs of wear. If these are minor, they can be cleaned up with a file. Top surface of 1948-53 plate must be flat (and slightly sloped), or spring-loaded wedge in latch will not work properly. The three holes in door pillar allow a generous range of adjustment, but if slightly more is needed, they can be enlarged a bit using hammer and small chisel, or a rotary file (with strike plate and screws removed). It is rarely necessary to remove the tapping plate from behind door pillar and grind it at one edge.

Badly worn strike plates must be replaced, particularly on 2-door models. Curved-slot type plates were normally used for replacement, but with some doors it is well to try both straight and curved types, retaining the one which gives smoother results.

HUDSON DOOR LATCHES 1948-53 are the same on all front doors (note the different lock-button linkage on sedan rears). The latch itself bears the trademark "Swiss" (Toledo, U.S.A.), and is designed so that release mechanism is simply disengaged (but not immobilized) in order to lock door. As on many other older models, it is also designed so that keys cannot be accidentally locked inside car.

The roller-shaped latch bolt moves in a curved slot in door edge. This bolt is riveted to an internal lever in the latch, and it should not be slightly loose or free to turn. If it is, replace latch (or remove from door and tighten rivet).

Bolt is in fully-latched position when at the top of its slot. The half-latched or "safety" position is usually at center of slot, but on some early-production latches c. 1948 this position may be slightly higher, about two-thirds of the way up. These latches seldom wear significantly, but when old should be checked for broken springs and for possible wear at the two ratchet teeth which hold bolt in the safety-latch and fully-latched positions (give door a hard outward pull or push while it is latched). Replace any unreliable latches or strikes.

Exterior door handles are not quite the same front and rear (see manual for details), but can sometimes be modified to fit if base is carefully filed by hand. Note that the shoulder or push screw is made in three lengths (the longest is used on 2-door models). On most 1948-50 Hudsons the external push-button is a molded-in part of the handle shape, and a thin washer added to push screw (at threads or at neck) may be necessary to ensure exact alignment with rest of handle. On later models with free-standing button this is much less critical; and also, this later type button uses a push screw with self-locking threads so that it can be adjusted to exact length without need to grind the head or add a small sheet-metal screw at that point.

Interior door handles on these cars use a remote-control linkage, which is quite long on 2-door versions; and the handle is held in place either by a crosspin (as on window crank), or a chromed screw, depending on model. At base of shaft for handle, behind trimboard, there is usually a small flat-coiled return spring. Check to be sure it is well-greased, and not broken or missing. Note that far end of linkage is held to door latch by a small safety-pin shaped retainer that serves as a cotter pin and spring washer combined. This type retainer (plus the flat washer) is also used on cowl vent door linkage and elsewhere on car.

(More hints about body detailing and trim in a future issue.)

BOOKS FOR RESTORERS are an essential part of the old-car hobby. Very seldom is it possible to do all needed work correctly on an old model (or a new one) without referring to appropriate printed materials, either from the car's own era, or perhaps published at a later date. We hope that most H-E-T members preserve their old issues of *White Triangle News* for the tech and other information therein, and that they also have access either to Hudson factory repair literature or to some of the general auto-repair manuals of their car's time (see listing in December '83 *WTN*). In addition, as a special feature for those most interested in the older Hudsons, we have been fortunate in being able to borrow and xerox an early Hudson Super Six service manual, circa 1916, and are planning to present excerpts and a resumé in this column early in 1985.



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**TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME.  
STOP MAIL FRAUD.**

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There are many kinds of automotive history books. The usual large "coffee table" volume is spectacularly illustrated, and sometimes may even have an accompanying text worth reading; but it tends to be very short on the details needed to keep a favorite old car authentic and also a faithful performer in regular use. Another type of book, after perhaps, an introductory nod to industry pioneers such as Chapin, Ford, Olds, Leland, et al., devotes nearly all of its space to the "social significance" (or the economic or corporate or political significance) of the automobile, and bypasses mechanical realities as being probably beneath the author's notice. There is also the "automotive" type of book which, while trumpeting a concern about energy supplies or accident statistics or the Smog Menace, exhibits mainly an ill-sublimated desire to force all of us to return to the bicycle or oxcart.

Original repair and advertising literature can still be found for most old cars, but—especially if in good condition—it has assumed nearly the same collector's-item status as the cars themselves, if one can judge by present-day asking prices. Such literature, because of its increasing scarcity, also needs to be handled with special care, particularly when it must be used for a repair job, and there is the usual quota of dirt or grease on hands and work surfaces. One method is to lay a heavy sheet of glass over the opened book or folder for protection while working. Another is to make work xeroxes of needed pages beforehand (especially those with step-by-step instructions), and use these copies instead. When reading any original service literature, of course, it is also usually necessary to make some allowances for present-day conditions, such as the limited availability of new parts.

However, a growing number of publications today are directed mainly toward the old-car owner or restorer. Many are club publications but not all, and they include both newly prepared material and reprints of scarce original literature. There are also the lists and catalogues of parts and supplies available to restorers.

Members have suggested in the past that the national H-E-T Club offer supplementary publications such as a parts interchange manual (Brand X to Hudson), or a comprehensive index to the *White Triangle News*. This has not been done, but books on these two subjects are available, published independently by club member Louis Backhus of California, who has also presented much of this material in the Northern California Chapter newsletter (of which he is editor).

*WTN TABLE OF CONTENTS*, first issued in 1976, has since been updated to cover all of 1963-1983 and part of 1984 (nearly 70 pages in all). Listings for the earlier issues are fairly brief, but in the later years are quite detailed (up to about a full typewritten page per issue); and special attention is given to the inclusion of tech and mechanical material, pictures, etc., which will be useful to restorers later. Also included

in the earlier pages is an interesting assortment of car illustrations, cartoons and comics, trademarks and emblems, H-E-T chapter mastheads and logos, etc. *WTN Ad Supplements/Tech Service Bulletins* are listed along with the regular issues. A preface gives suggestions for obtaining back issues, or xeroxes from them.

Some readers may be curious as well about the very earliest *WTN* issues, 1959-1962, which are not included here; but this is more a matter of Club history (and nostalgia) than of use for reference. Also, for those interested in these earliest issues, a separate publication is now offered (see review at end).

*HUDSON SWAPS MANUAL* (Interchangeable Parts Book) was also first issued in 1976, and revised in 1983. The updated edition has more than 50 pages, including a few reproduced from *Motor's*, Echlin, Hudson literature, one glass and channel supplier, and other sources. Book has about twenty sections—Bearings and Seals, Brake Cylinders and Shoes, Generator and Starter Systems, Power Window Cylinders (for convertibles), Fan Belts, Universal Joints, Suspension Parts, Exhaust Systems, and more.

Some of this information was also presented by Lou Backhus in several *WTN* columns during the 1970's; and some has been supplied by others. The book includes a note of thanks and acknowledgement to those who have helped—Ed Brown, Dave Kava, Jim Fortin, Meritt Marks, Harry Peverill, and many more. There is also a note of caution, reminding us that any interchange part should be carefully compared with the original before installing, and that Hudson was sometimes known for making mid-year changes. An even greater problem for Hudson (and Brand X) restorers is sometimes that the previous owner of a car has made non-authentic changes which must be corrected before original-type parts will fit properly.

Both the *Swaps Manual* and the *Table of Contents* have pages 8½ x 11", reproduced mostly from typewritten material, and come in colored looseleaf binders. Price per book is \$16 (postpaid), or slightly more than a year's membership in H-E-T. Although the circulation of these two books has probably been limited somewhat by the price, many members may find them good value, as interesting reading and even more for the possible savings in restoration time, cost, and troubles. This writer suggests that copies should at least be included in every H-E-T chapter library, even if the "library" is simply a boxful of books and magazines which can be carried along easily in a Hudson trunk, so that members can consult it when they attend local meets.

*WTN TECHNICAL SERVICE MANUAL* is a set of Hudson repair bulletins by Art Adams—the first series of these, originally published January 1977 through September 1978, and included as part of each of the *WTN* classified-ad supplements then being sent to members on the alternate months between regular issues of *WTN*.

(Bulletins in the second series, October 1980 to the present, are inserted into the centerfold of each regular *WTN* issue).

Bulletins in the manual are written and arranged very much in the authentic style of original factory service bulletins, and like them are reproduced from both typewritten and printed material. Since each supplement contained three or more, there are over forty of them in the set, totaling more than 75 standard looseleaf-size pages.

Many topics are included, ranging from production figures, paint and upholstery colors, and rear axle ratios, to brake cables, Drive-Master, flushing of cork clutch, dash gauges, headlight mountings, engine valve adjustments, and wheel and tire sizes. Information is mostly for postwar Hudsons, but some is for models as early as 1928. There is also an index page for these bulletins, plus condensed index listings for the regular *WTN* issues of 1976 and 1977.

This book version, in looseleaf binder, was published in 1981 and was available until recently from the H-E-T Club Store. Priced at \$5, the book was certainly a bargain, and copies may again be available if reader interest warrants. Write to the Club Store (or to Art Adams).

*WTN—THE ORIGINAL NEWSLETTERS*, 1959-1963 (Vols. 1-4) is a reprint project, issued in book form by the Hudson-Mowhawk Chapter, New York, to mark the 25th anniversary of the national H-E-T Club. This book contains the monthly newsletters (about 200 pages total) from the club's first four years of existence. Pages are 8½ x 11" (same as the originals), in a looseleaf binder with clear front cover. Price is \$13 (see classified ad in May/June '84 *WTN*, p. 36). Most of the reproduction of originally typewritten and mimeographed material is surprisingly clear (some "enhancement" was necessary, editor Bob Dybas says), although reproduced photographs are not as well detailed.

The *White Triangle News* name has been used by the club since December 1959. Editor during these early years was club founder Meritt Marks, to whom the book is dedicated. Copies for reproduction came mostly from the collection of Roy Powers.

There is plenty of nostalgia in a perusal of these early issues (note, for instance, the low, low advertised prices for cars and parts); but there is also more than that—the story of the beginning and early growth of a "one-make" car club (then still relatively unusual), reports of the first several National Meets, tech tips ranging from the authentic to the purely empirical, a serialized "History of Hudson Motor Car Co.," notes about U.S. and foreign members, an article by Wilbur Shaw about the '52 Hudson Homet (reprinted Feb. 1963 from the February 1952 *Popular Science* issue), periodic reminders to pay club dues of \$2 per year, and countless other short items. Offset printing appeared with an "experimental" issue of January 1963; and the paper finally was given a printed-style (typeset) masthead later that year.