

Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany
by George Schmidt
Mishicot, Wisc.

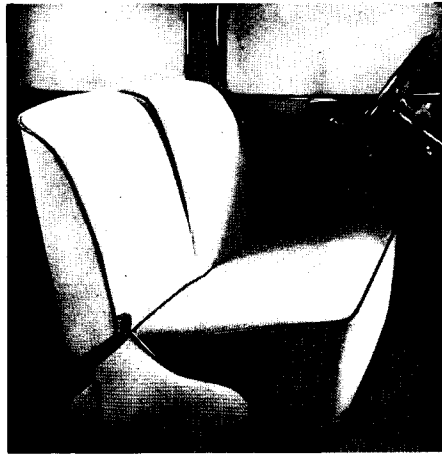
Automotive Add-Ons

THE VARIETY of accessories and add-ons available for automotive installation over the years is nearly as astonishing as the number and variety of automotive models produced during the past century. Probably no book detailing all of the options and gadgets and extras offered for autos during those years will ever be written, although it would certainly be an aid to authentic old-car restoration. At present the best references available, for factory-authorized extras, are the parts books, accessory sales folders, etc., published by Hudson and other manufacturers when the cars were new. The H-E-T Club Library has a fair selection of these, and xerox copies are available.

As for aftermarket items, it is probably fortunate that so many were marketed via mail order, since older catalogues from a firm such as J.C. Whitney, or the automotive pages of catalogues from Montgomery Ward or Sears, Roebuck through the years, can give a good idea of what was available (especially at budget prices) at a given time. Old magazine advertisements, whether aimed primarily at dealers (in trade publications) or directly at consumers, can also provide much information.

CATALOGUES CAN BE somewhat of a disappointment, it's true, in typically offering an oversupply of parts and accessories for Big Three models of the time (or in the earlier years, for Ford alone), and relatively very little for the independent makes such as Hudson, or for luxury vehicles, though a wide selection of "universal" items, tires, maintenance supplies, etc. was usually also included. Here is a sampling from Montgomery Ward's fall and winter 1936-1937 edition, published just fifty years ago:

Locking exterior door handles, stainless steel, matching original equipment designs, incl. screws and 2 keys, for 1929 Essex and Hudson, 98¢ each. (For 1928-30 Chevrolet, 69¢.)



Seat covers for all cars (specify exact model when ordering), in nine styles priced from \$1.19 to \$9.45 for complete set, front and rear. A variety of woven-fiber and cotton fabrics was offered, some of them also available by the yard. The costlier sets included covers for interior door panels as well as for seats.

"For Winter Safety: POWER GRIP--America's First and Best Extra Traction Tire." This tire had a knobby or button-type tread design, and was available in most sizes for cars, trucks, and farm tractors. Price for the 6.00-16 size, 4-ply, was \$9.15 (shipping and inner tube extra). Tires with standard street treads were also offered, in several price ranges from the low-cost Riverside Rambler to the top-of-the-line Wards Supreme (\$12.75 for 6.00-16 size, including a full road-hazard guarantee); but apparently all were available in plain blackwall style only. Owners of older models were not forgotten (\$3.55 for the clincher-type Trail Blazer, size 30 x 3½).

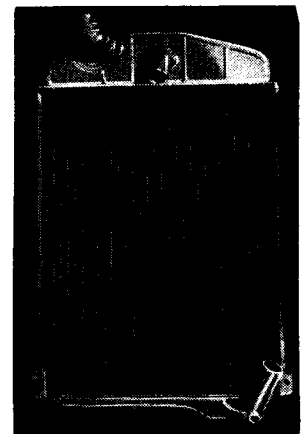


Replacement radiators in two qualities were available to fit many cars including 1920-35 Essex and Terraplane and 1923-35 Hudson, at prices from \$14.90 to \$23.95 (and \$4.75 for 1917-23 Ford T). Trade-in allowance for old radiator was 75¢.

Batteries were offered in four qualities, and in sizes to fit practically all cars of the era including 1917-36 Hudson, at prices from \$3.45 to \$16.25.

It is impossible to list here all of the replacement parts shown in the catalogue, but all of the following were offered to fit Hudson-built vehicles: convertible tops, engine valves, pistons and rings, piston expanders (spring devices to fit inside piston), flywheel (starter) gears, timing gears and chains, spark plugs, light bulbs, carburetors, wheel and differential bearings, front leaf springs, brake linings in three qualities, some starter drives, and a few engine gaskets.

On the other hand, many items were listed for Brand X's only, including wiper motors, clutch discs, wire wheels, hub-caps, bumper guards, radiator caps, engine heads, generators, water pump kits, fuel pumps and kits, universal joints, shock absorbers, brake cables, and oil filters.

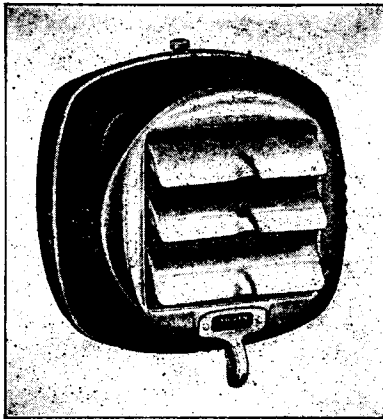


ADD-ON HEATERS and defrosters of many kinds were offered in Montgomery Ward's 1936-37 catalogue. Hot-water type heaters, for underdash installation, complete with electric fan, switch, and all fittings, were priced from \$3.19 to \$9.95. An add-on engine thermostat or "Heater-stat" (usually fitted into upper radiator hose) was suggested for use with these heaters, if car did not have a standard-equipment thermostat. To conserve additional heat, cloth "winter fronts" or radiator covers were also available, at prices from 19¢ to 98¢ each, fitting most popular cars including the 1928-31 and 1932-36 Essex and Terraplane.

However, none of these heaters had provision for attaching a conventional windshield defroster hose, and perhaps that is why Wards offered two unusual "tube defroster" kits (prices: 65¢ and \$1.39), which featured a nozzle with



suction cups to hold it to glass, 2½ feet of defroster hose, and a bag or mask which fitted over most underdash hot-water heaters. This arrangement probably worked, but since the hose hung outside the dashboard, it was much less convenient than Hudson's and Terraplane's optional defroster of the era, which had hose and nozzle fitted to emerge handily from the driver's-side glovebox door when needed. Apparently most cars were not built with pre-cut defroster slots at top of dashboard until about 1937.

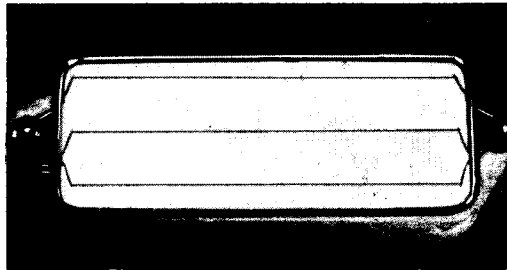


A much more popular defroster/defogger accessory during the 1930's was a small motor-driven fan which clamped to the steering column. Wards offered this in three models, two of them 6-volt electric type (at \$1.49 and \$1.95), and one powered by a Trico vacuum turbine motor (at \$3.39). Each included an extra clamp for alternative mounting at upper corner of windshield if preferred.

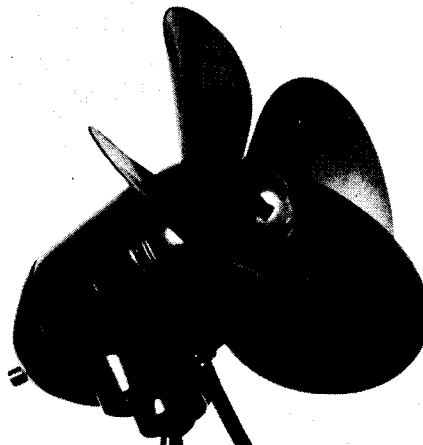
The vacuum-driven fan was capable of surprisingly high RPM (4500 claimed), and it has become a collector's item today for use on cars of the 1930's. The small electric fans of this type, however, for supplementary defogging and/or car ventilation, have continued available through the years in 6 and 12-volt versions, along with larger models for

buses and vans; and some (1950's and up) having molded rubber blades for added safety without need for the usual wire guard. A few also have weighted bases instead of clamps.

A useful location for one of these small fans, on Hudson or any other postwar car which has no rear-window defroster, is on the rear shelf. Some models plug into cigar-lighter socket; others can be used with accessory switch (preferably 2-speed, with pilot light, as for heater). Note that some later accessory heater switches, though made for 12 volts, have an adjustable clip-on resistor at back which can be reset to give proper speed control of a light 6-volt load such as one small motor.



One other type of add-on defroster/defogger which many people remember from the 1930's (and even later, especially on trucks) was an oblong clear glass or plastic panel which fastened inside windshield, using adhesive edging or rubber suction cups. Plastic versions were unheated, but did provide an insulated area to reduce condensation (a few were also used on rear windows). Glass versions usually contained fine electric heating wires, and Wards in 1936-37 offered this style in four models, at 69¢ to \$2.98.



DURING THE 1920's, most car heaters were of the hot-air type utilizing heat from the exhaust manifold on engine. They were quick-acting, and were usually clean and safe provided the manifolds, gaskets, etc. were free of leaks. Such heaters were still available in the 1930's, and Wards in 1936-37 listed five or six varieties. Most of these, including the "Francisco" brand, were in the form of a long cast or sheet-metal box which fitted over the exhaust manifold, with air inlet in front, at engine fan; and outlet at rear through hole (usually with control damper) in firewall, under dash. Francisco heaters were offered to fit many cars including 1928-29, 1930-32, and 1932-36 Essex and Terraplane, and could be special-ordered for many more including 1927-36 Hudsons. Prices ranged from \$1.59 to \$2.45; and an extra-cost blower kit with hose and electric fan was also available for these units. A few other manifold-type heaters (for Ford, Chevrolet, et al.) included a special replacement exhaust manifold, or else bolted between manifold and engine.

Another famous type of accessory car heater, from the late 1930's into the 1950's (and even later for air-cooled cars such as Volkswagen) was the gasoline-powered "South Wind." It was safe and nonexplosive and could produce enormous quantities of heat, but it is not shown in Wards' 1936-37 catalogue; and apparently, too, this heater was very seldom used on Hudson-built vehicles (which certainly needed it less than some familiar Brand X's). We would like to hear from any H-E-T member who knows of a Hudson which was equipped with a South Wind or other unusual heating or defrosting device, particularly if he can also tell us about how well the installation worked. Please write to this columnist or to the Editor.

Also, has anyone a Hudson equipped with Underseat Heater? This was a hot-water unit with its own fan and switch, available as a Hudson dealer-installed accessory during the stepdown era 1948 and up, and no doubt earlier. While some Brand X's offered similar units factory-installed, Hudson featured it mainly as a second or auxiliary heat source, and apparently this was seldom really required, although these heaters were surely more considerate of rear-seat passengers than were most of the other types.

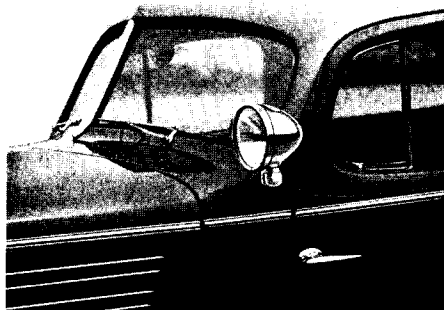
NOT MANY DEFROSTING devices of any kind were used on cars of the 1920's or before. One hears of various substances (fresh-cut onion?) being rubbed on glass surface in an attempt to reduce the formation of droplets or crystals. Trico, however, in the middle or late '20's, offered its accessory "Sleet Wand," handsomely nickel-plated, which had a 6-volt heating element inside a slender 9-inch bar, and a bracket for mounting at side or top of windshield, with the two parts joined by a 4½-inch pivoting arm which also included contacts so that current was turned on as soon as bar was swung down to a working position on windshield surface. Stated purpose of the Sleet Wand was to flow a moderate heat through the glass to loosen sleet and ice, enabling the windshield to clear effectively. When not in use, the wand was turned up out of the way. Your columnist acquired one of these wands, still in its box, unused, at an antique-shop clearance a few years ago.

Some "frost melter" wands, of similar design but much more cheaply made (with plain enamel finish and suction-cup mounting) were still available in 1936-37. Wards offered them in 11" and 14" lengths. Whether spot application of radiant heat in this way to a modern "safety" (laminated) glass windshield would be prudent is not certain. Most cars at the time still had plain plate-glass windshields.

A few car heating devices of the 1930's were evident attempts to combine the hot-water and exhaust-heat principles. They were designed to add some exhaust-manifold heat to the warm water which was routed to car-heater unit under dash. McAleer's "Steam Heater" was sold as a complete outfit, including underdash unit with fan, and special exhaust manifold containing water passages, to fit Fords and Chevrolets. Wards also sold a special manifold of this type separately for Ford V-8's, and a smaller "heat booster" which bolted between standard manifold and exhaust pipe, in versions to fit Ford, Dodge/Plymouth and 1932-36 Terraplane and Hudson. The booster could be used with any standard hot-water heater in car, and was said to raise water temperature about 15 degrees. Price was \$1.19 (not including 3 extra feet of heater hose for hookup).

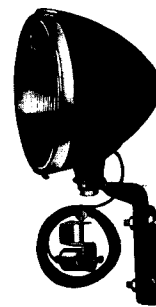
BECAUSE THE OLD-CAR hobby today is almost entirely a warm-weather activity, there is a possibility that most of these special winter accessories (if any survive) may end up quite forgotten, or perhaps on the scrap heap. However, it is hoped that at least a few samples can be preserved in working order, for they too are a part of automotive history, and in fact had much to do with changing the automobile from a summertime toy to a comfortable year-around necessity.

Generally, of course, Hudson factory-authorized or factory-installed accessories, if they can be found, and were available in the car's model year or as a specific retrofit shortly afterward, are preferred when restoring a Hudson-built vehicle; but if these are not to be had, aftermarket items may be a very good second choice, if they fit in appropriately, and belong to the car's own era. A few were especially made for H-E-T, and many were universal" for most cars of the time.

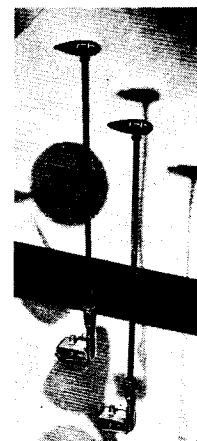


Of the latter type were the fog lights offered in Ward's 1936-37 catalogue, apparently as a new item, with 6" amber lens and separate bulb, plus mounting clamp, for \$2.69 each (chromed shell), or \$1.95 (black enamel). A smaller "driving light," 4½", with black shell and chrome rim, was also shown, at \$1.29. There was even a small spotlight of the older clamp-on style, for 69¢. A foot dimmer switch for headlights, to fit Essex and many other cars, was available for 28¢. Special fog-type bulbs for headlights, uncolored but with a blacked-out ring on front face of bulb, were offered along with standard replacement bulbs in that pre-sealed-beam era. Decorative headlight visors in two sizes, chromed, with three glass jewels, sold for 39¢ and 45¢ per pair. Plain aluminum ones were cheaper--17¢ and 20¢.

As with nearly all other catalogue items, however, these prices did not include shipping. A small additional charge was made for mailing, based on shipping weight and parcel-post rates. Prices for the same items were usually also a bit higher at Montgomery Ward retail stores.



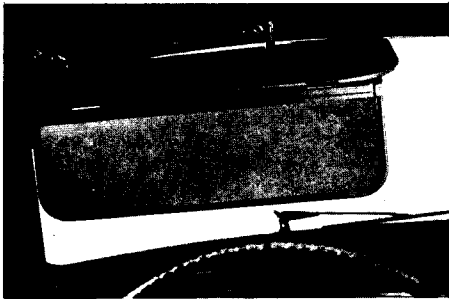
ONE CATALOGUE PAGE is headed: "107 Aids - to Better Driving - Smarter Looks - at Big Savings." Front fender guide ornaments or wands of the 1930's did not all mount at outer edge of headlamp. Most of them, including those from Wards, clamped to edge of fender above wheel, and some contained a separate small bulb for night illumination. Four styles (two lighted) are shown on the page, priced from 55¢ to \$1.19 per pair, in 16" length. Next on page are the "newest 1936 styled" cigar lighters (11¢ to 85¢ each), but these are quite different from the later type, since they apparently have the electric heating element facing forward, deeply recessed in a large plastic knob for safety.



"Handy Little Things Every Car Needs" is the subheading for part of the catalogue page. Five accessory car clocks are shown, all 30-hour springwound type, for installation above the windshield. Several have

convenient pull-cord wind, and three are built into rear-view mirrors.

Also shown are five other rear-view mirrors, including two exterior ones at 53¢ and 59¢, designed to clamp to exposed front door hinge on car. There are interior sunvisors for cars not so equipped; also translucent glare shields and a 27¢ vanity mirror for use on visors.



There are novelty gearshift knobs, including dice-shaped ones (not fuzzy, however), and one style with transparent top for insertion of picture. There is also a clamp-on "necker's knob" (though not called that) for use on steering wheel, priced at 37¢. This knob and some of the other items are made of "Catalin," evidently a plastic composition of the time, usually with an onyx-like or marbled appearance. It would be interesting to know how this plastic has survived the years.

Included on the same page are spare-tire covers for cars with exposed spare, priced from 54¢ to 98¢. Anti-rattle devices for doors and windows are offered (remember the type with miniature roller against glass?). Chromed license frames (adjustable) sold for 59¢ per pair; jeweled license bolts (green or red), four for 11¢. A clothes hook with rubber suction cup for glass sold for 5¢; a chromed exhaust extension (with red jewel ornament) for 33¢.

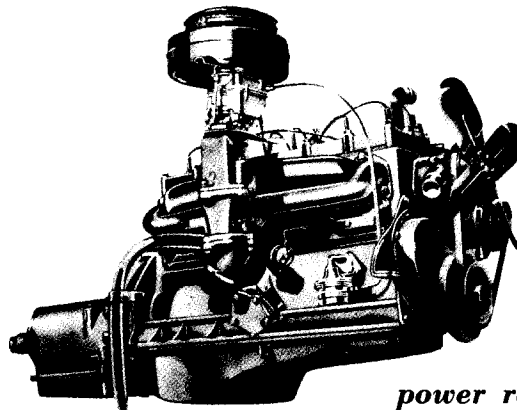
The list could go on--Wards' automotive section, fifty years ago, covered no less than forty large pages--but perhaps the selection noted here will suffice as a typical sampling.

THE YEAR 1986 also marked the fiftieth anniversary of another mail-order firm known for automotive accessories and parts--J.C. Whitney & Co., Chicago; and

despite financial difficulties a few years ago, the company appears to be holding its own at present. Founded in 1936, Whitney distributes its catalogues in large numbers, and many issues have been notable for their inclusion of items to fit older models. We regret not having one of the early or prewar editions at hand, since it would offer some extremely interesting comparisons with the Montgomery Ward offerings already mentioned.

Sears, Roebuck and Co., in its catalogue for the year 1900, included no automotive items whatever, though carriages, wag-

ons, and harness were well represented. However, this was soon to change, since Sears around 1910 marketed its own complete car, the Sears Auto Buggy, for several years. Later catalogues included an automotive section in direct competition with Wards and others. We would very much like to hear from any H-E-T member who has a period Sears, Whitney, or similar catalogue, and can perhaps tell us something of the automotive items offered. This will be reported in a future issue of *WTN* if possible. Also planned for the future: more about unusual Hudson accessories.



INSTANT ACTION ENGINES

with Super Induction

for the quickest power response you've ever seen!

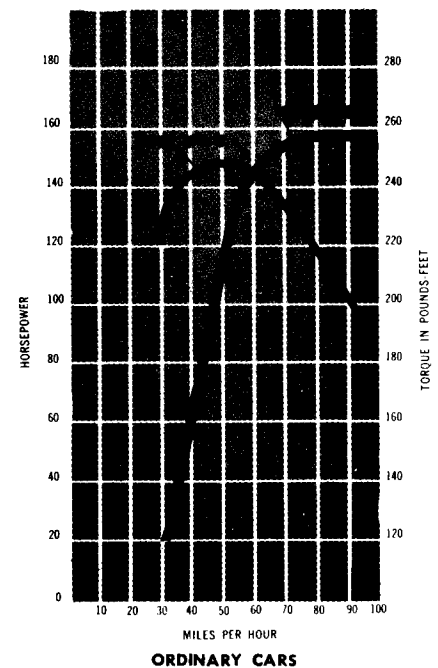
INSTANT POWER RESPONSE, A SAFETY FACTOR

Have you ever driven along in your car at around 40 miles an hour and had to pass another car . . . suddenly to find the instant power you needed completely lacking? It's a tense moment trying to get into your lane again. Emergencies like this spring up constantly on today's crowded highways and congested city streets. You can readily appreciate the fact that sluggish power response can be a dangerous thing; instant power a major safety factor.

WHAT IS POWER?

A popular misconception is that a car's power is determined by its horsepower rating. But the facts are: *Horsepower is not the measure of a car's performance—engine torque is!* Horsepower is the time-rate at which work is done; torque is the twisting force that does the work. It is the same twisting power you use to take a lid off a jar. Torque turns your driving wheels;

torque is responsible for the fast getaway, for climbing hills in a jiffy. Torque gives you the spurt needed to avoid danger. If you want performance, you've got to have plenty of torque.



WHAT CAUSES SLUGGISH POWER RESPONSE?

Delayed and sluggish engine response is dangerous. Let's see what causes it . . . torque ordinarily reaches a peak at about the *half-way* mark in engine speed, then quickly falls off as engine speeds increase. This is shown on the chart above.