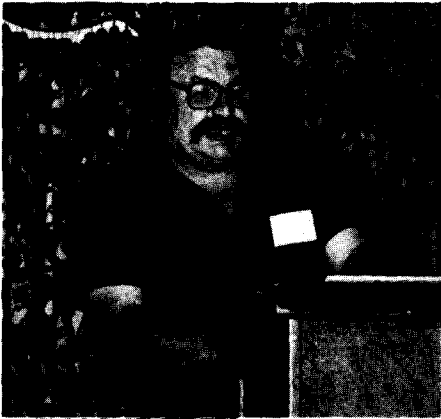


Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany
by George Schmidt
Mishicot, Wisc.



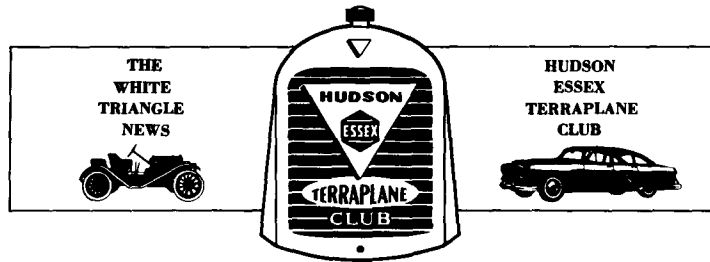
Accessories and Authors

(part 13 of a series)

THIS YEAR marks the tenth anniversary of the "Hudsonotes" column, which first made its appearance in the March/April 1978 issue. However, it was not the first technical column of this kind to be published regularly in the *WTN*. An earlier one was "Mechanic's Corner," which was written by Roger Davis, New York, and appeared in ten monthly *WTN* issues, April 1969 through January 1970. It included topics such as parts interchanges, motor oils, and winter storage, and a series about solving starting problems (compression, carburetion, ignition, etc.). If you have access to early issues of *WTN*, there is much practical information in these columns which is still pertinent and well worth reading.

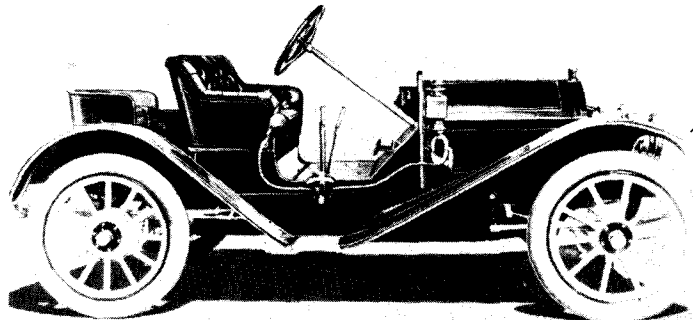
Before that, Ken Krueger (who was also H-E-T Secretary and Ads Editor) wrote a "Technical Talk" column which appeared in many of the monthly *WTN* issues from June 1962 through November 1965. Often the column featured brief tech tips sent in by readers (Hudson Comments), but there were also a few longer articles. Earliest of these (in August 1962, when *WTN* was still in mimeographed form) was Ken's article about repairing the Stewart "Vacuum Feed" tank.

This tank was a device used on Hudson and many other pre-1930 cars in lieu of a



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1909 MODEL 20

fuel pump or pressurized fuel system. It operated silently and without need for any external power except vacuum from the intake manifold, drawing gasoline from the fuel tank at rear and then gravity-feeding it to the carburetor. Occasionally the vacuum tank was subject to internal leakage or other problems, and repair or rebuilding was needed. Today it is sometimes disappointing to be standing near a "fully restored" antique car when the ignition is switched on and one hears the throb of an obviously ersatz modern electric fuel pump, indicating that at least one original part of the car has not been restored. Modern pumps may also supply excessive pressure to early carburetors.

A question-and-answer column (mainly tech and historical) by D.J. Kava appeared in a number of the monthly and bi-monthly *WTN* issues from December 1974 through January/February 1976, and a "Swaps" (parts interchange) column by Lou Backhus also appeared in most issues December 1974 through May 1975. Then, in January 1977, Art Adams began his series of factory-style "Technical Service Bulletins," and a new set of these continued to appear in most alternate months (usually with the *WTN* Advertising Supplement) until the end of 1978. A second series of bulletins (containing tech and other material) appeared in most *WTN* centerfolds

October 1980 through October 1982.

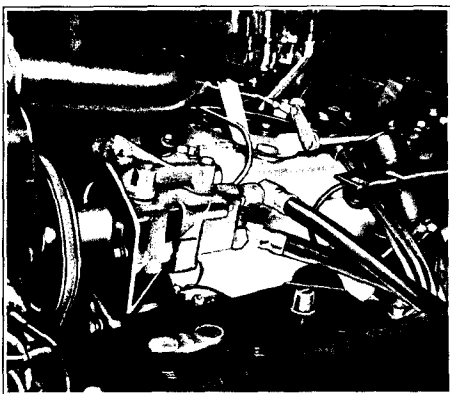
In addition to the regular columns, many single tech articles and tips sent in by readers have been published from time to time in *WTN* ever since the beginning in 1959. Nearly all of these are still valuable at present, but can be a problem to locate when needed. The *WTN Table of Contents* book, published a few years ago by Lou Backhus, may be of help here, as may the H-E-T Club Library. Possibly an alphabetical index of tech materials in *WTN* would be a next logical step, if anyone is willing to undertake it.

LETTERS FROM READERS have been an important help in writing columns and articles ever since the beginning. Without occasional comments and information from members, in fact, it becomes very difficult to continue a column on a regular basis. One topic which has brought several reader responses is Hudson power brakes and steering (July/August '87 *WTN*). John Miesner, Missouri, writes:

"When I received my driver's license in 1963, it was my pleasure to take over the keys to a 1954 Hudson Hornet Hollywood hardtop . . . The Hollywood was black over yellow, and had Twin-H-Power, power steering and brakes, and a Borg-Warner automatic which we replaced with a Hydra-Matic from our

parts car. In October 1964 I got into my car to go to class at college. As I approached a stop sign I stepped on the brake pedal, for the first time that day — and found nothing. Repeated applications produced no results. I criticize myself now for not pulling the Hydro into low and going for the handbrake, but all I could see then was the Comet at the stop sign ahead of me. Rather than hit it, I took my car off the road into a field. Unfortunately a small building once had stood there, and the remains of the foundation beat up my car pretty much. . . . Our investigation afterward showed no brake fluid in the master cylinder. There were no obvious external leaks, and we finally concluded an internal leak has caused the fluid to go into the booster.

"I know my car had a good, functional handbrake, but there was no hint of any back-up connection to the brake cables from the pedal . . . it's my opinion that when Hudson went to the suspended brake pedal to accommodate the power brakes, they had to eliminate the hookup to the rear cables. . . they could not come up with a practical way to make that type of pedal arrangement actuate them. With the standard brakes, everything was under the floorboards, and much more handy for the safety hookup.



"My comments about power steering are limited by the fact that I did not have a lot of 'Brand X' experience back then for comparison, though I remember that other cars that I did get to drive had very light power steering when compared with my Hudson. Also, *Hot Rod* magazine in 1963 did a feature about Jack Clifford and his 1954 Hornet coupe, a very successful Stock class drag racer; and after reading that, I felt obligated to exercise my Hornet at the local track

(Alton Dragway in Alton, Illinois). On these occasions I removed the power steering drive belt to avoid any power loss. With the belt off, the car handled well while moving, but at low speed or stopped it was a bear.

"My Dad was a Hudson mechanic for most of his working life. That's the reason we didn't have any other car until 1962, and he drove his 1954 Hornet sedan until 1968. He's been gone since 1984, but I wish he were here to see the 1954 Hornet Hollywood I picked up in November 1986. It's not running yet, but at 71,000 miles it's tighter than my first one ever was. The body was Lipstick Red originally, and will be so again. Twin-H-Power and Hydra-Matic round out the picture.

"As someone has said in the *WTN*, 'They all come back, eventually.' I came back at a good time — I found a possibly unique Hudson, got to be a charter member of the new Gateway Chapter of H-E-T; and the first two *WTN* issues I received [Nov./Dec. '86; Jan./Feb. '87] spotlighted the 1954 model year. It's been fun."

Thank you, John; and thanks also to others who have written. More about these in a future issue.

AUTO ACCESSORIES and supplies over the years, it seems, were available in greater variety than can be covered in even a two-year series of *WTN* columns. Some small items were not specifically Hudson, but were designed to fit various standard components that were used both on Hudson and many Brand X models. For example, probably few parts have remained as nearly standardized as the Schrader air valve for tires (originally invented for bicycles in pre-auto days). Valve caps thus also remain interchangeable although made in various styles. The caps for many years were of metal (usually nickel-plated and with rubber gasket), and those used with threaded metal valve stems until about 1930 customarily also had a longer metal "dust cap" placed over them for added protection. Modern black plastic valve caps came into general use after World War II, and so look at home on nearly any postwar vehicle. Accessory chrome-plated or translucent-white caps may be preferred, however (and are also less conspicuous with beauty rings or full wheel covers).

On prewar cars, the nickel-plated caps are most appropriate — or for earlier models, perhaps plain brass ones, polished or dark oxidized, are more suitable. These metal caps were traditionally made with either a plain tip, or with the pointed tip designed for use as a wrench for removing or replacing valve cores.

The nickel-plated caps also remained a familiar option during the postwar Hudson years. In addition, during the 1950's a few novelty plastic valve caps were offered for dress-up or advertising purposes. Best remembered of them are probably the crown-shaped ones distributed to help promote Standard Oil's "Red Crown" (and later also "Gold Crown") gasoline. The red caps are not unattractive on a stepdown Hudson (especially one with 1948-49 Royal Red wheels), if a matching and unfaded set can be found. It is reported that someone in recent years has even marketed reproductions of these special caps. A few other novelty valve cap designs probably also were offered during the 1950's. Does any reader recall specific ones?

Chrome-plated dress-up accessories for the car's underhood vitals also became familiar during the 1950's. Some of them were standard parts which had been chromed, but others were add-ons to fit over the original parts. As an example, many Hudsons and Brand X's for years used an AC-type oil filler cap, with steel-wool vent filter built in, of 2½-inch diameter. A decorative chromed cap was available which would fit over this. A chromed covering sleeve for the ignition coil was also offered.

The foot dimmer switch button for headlights remained practically standard in appearance and size (1⅜-inch diameter) on most cars from the 1930's into the 1980's. Accessory caps, usually of black rubber, to fit over the metal switch button, have sometimes been available. They may make the switch somewhat easier to use, and (depending upon color of floor mat, pedals, etc. in car) may also improve appearance.

Replacement foot dimmer switches for most Hudsons can still usually be found which will look and fit in place about the same as the originals, but there may be a problem with the connector terminals, which on replacement switches are often of the flat-prong or setscrew

type, rather than the socket type required to match the bullet-shaped tips on most Hudson wire harnesses. To install new switch without modifying original harness, one method is to make three or four short adapter wires (use #12-gauge wire), with appropriate crimped-on or soldered terminals at ends. If new switch has screw connectors, small screw-to-bullet adapter pieces can sometimes be found, or else made from the terminals at rear of a discarded headlight (dashboard) switch or similar component. Clean old terminals carefully with steel wool; then apply a thin coat of grease when installing.

COAT HOOKS for the car interior were one of the small convenience accessories available since the mid-1930's or earlier. They were used mainly to prevent a few garments on hangers from becoming wrinkled during trips (especially important in the days before permanent-press). Some inexpensive early ones, for lightweight use only, were made with a rubber suction cup to adhere to window glass, usually at rear door or quarter. One variant of this (sometimes a free item from dry cleaners or others) had a base of flat metal which could be slipped over edge of window glass, and then the window closed to hold hook in place. This too was for light loads only.

A more secure coat hook was one attached to the B or C side pillar of car. A few Brand X's, including Nash, had the hook made as part of the buckle for assist strap at side. Separate accessory hooks, oval shaped and chrome plated, with simple one-screw mounting, were also available and were used on many cars. Those on Hudsons were usually of a plain smooth design (a ribbed style was more common on GM vehicles). Some Hudson models c. 1953 also included a pair of hooks as standard equipment (hanger #225790; screw #170177).

On Hudson stepdown models without assist straps (May/June '85 *WTN*, p. 31), the add-on hooks can be held solidly in place using a 1/4" fine-thread screw (chromed, with oval head), which will fit into the welded nut in pillar intended to hold assist strap buckle. Lift the trim panel slightly to locate this nut when installing. On those models which have assist straps, the hooks can be placed about 2 1/4 inches higher, using a #10 chrome oval-head sheet-metal screw about 1 1/2 inches long. A hole for this

screw can be drilled through trimboard into pillar metal, or the screw can be driven carefully through the center of topmost trimboard clip and into clip hole in pillar. Point of clip should not be removed, unless a clip-on "speednut" is placed on hole in pillar. The hooks are usually hollow, and will hold better against trimboard if a rubber hose washer is pressed inside each one. A few cardboard or metal washers can also be placed on screw, behind trimboard, if necessary for a level fit.

An additional accessory item available during the 1950's and since is a telescoping metal "clothes pole," with a loop fitting at each end, to be supported by the two coat hooks on side pillars of car. This provides a large amount of

space for clothing on hangers, although an outside rear-view mirror on car is essential if there is any blocking of vision through the rear window.

"Litter bags" of the disposable hang-on variety may be mostly a 1960's item, and sometimes an unsightly one on a dashboard knob, but the bag is often a convenience, and a better place for it can be provided on most cars by installing a hook (perhaps of wire or flat metal), or a spring clip, at the far right, at side kick panel under dash. The hook or clip can often be placed nearly out of sight, utilizing an existing hole or screw if possible.

In a future column: top cylinder and valve lubricants.



One Owner '47

by Glen D. Johnson

John and Beth Hoyem stand proudly next to their 1947 Commodore six of which John is the second owner, yet his name is on the original Hudson Motor Car Company title! How is this possible, you might ask? John's father, whose name is the same as John's, bought the Hudson new and John has never had the car re-titled. The car was purchased April 27, 1947 from Bill Wright Motor on South Main Street in Livingston, Montana.

John drove the Hudson home from the dealership for his dad, who was more familiar driving horses or a floor shift. It seems the column shift confused the older John. Two weeks later the father allowed young John to drive the Hudson to the Senior Banquet.

John's dad drove the Hudson until '58,

and then gave it to young John. The Hudson was last licensed in 1963 and for a few years after John drove it through and across the fields to open irrigation ditches on the farm. It was far more comfortable than using a tractor and John's dog could sit beside him! From 1973 until 1987 the Hudson was stored in a small shed with only the rear end sticking out in the weather. All in all it is a very presentable Hudson needing only minor work on the interior. As with many Hudsons of this period, the top of the dash needs touching up while the face looks factory fresh.

John only recently replaced the fuel pump, so he could attend the Big Sky meet in August and the 2nd Yellowstone Challenge in September. The Big Sky members can expect to see John's Hudson for many years to come.