

Hudsonotes

Column of Mechanical Miscellany
by George Schmidt
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Accessory Roundup

(19th of series)



curve or "tuck-under" at the lower portion of the body. While this was visually acceptable, it sometimes allowed added road splash, gravel, etc. from all four wheels to strike lower exterior body panels, especially on turns or with optional extra-wide tires. The usual remedy has been to install accessory mud flaps of the newer style, which are nearly triangular and about a foot in length, at both front and rear wheel openings. These are effective and not unsightly, but would be out of place on a pre-1960's vehicle.

OCCASIONALLY NEW PRODUCTS — including auto accessories — are developed and reported to the public as being ready for production, and yet are never manufactured and sold in any significant quantity. One accessory item mentioned in press reports at the end of World War II was a water-sensitive switch for convertibles which could automatically raise the top in the event of rain while the car was parked. Although such a device was entirely possible, apparently nothing more has been heard of it since the mid-1940's. This writer was reminded of it upon reading that some 1989 German cars may be equipped with a rain-sensitive switch to activate the windshield wipers automatically when needed.

On the other hand, a few "accessory" items which are not in production, and not wanted by motorists, continue to receive news coverage due to the activities of misguided pressure groups who seek to force these devices on all of us by making them compulsory equipment on new cars. The chief example at present is a very expensive system of exploding air bags, which are said to be a safety feature in the event of a collision (if they do not explode accidentally first). In past years there have also been occasional proposals to fit each car compulsorily with a governor which would prevent it from being driven above a pre-set rate of speed. It is reported that one version of this latter idea (featuring colored speed-warning lights on car exterior) has recently been suggested in Europe.

REAR MUD FLAPS are usually required on large trucks which do not have rear fenders to help control road splash. These flaps in smaller sizes have also been an occasional accessory on passenger cars since the 1930's or earlier — mainly as a

dress-up item, although on many models they can also help to protect the trunk floor, rear bumper, and other parts from flying mud, gravel, salt, etc. Usually of black rubber, the accessory flaps often had a molded-in design, and some were also trimmed with bright chrome pieces and/or red glass reflector jewels (or even small red lights). Later, white rubber flaps were also available; these required extra cleaning, but often harmonized well with wide-whitewall tires, white convertible top, or light-colored body paint.

On older models, the rubber flap was most easily mounted at the trailing edge of the fender itself, but on later cars with pontoon or teardrop fenders, or with flush-sided body styling such as that of the Hudson stepdowns, mounting was more difficult. Some models had a fender reinforcement rod located a few inches behind each rear tire, and this could be used to hold a mud flap of the usual oblong shape (plain or trimmed style). On many other cars, however, it would be necessary to add a rod or bracket to car frame in this position on each side in order to install accessory mud flaps. We wonder whether any Hudsons are thus adorned at present, and whether the flaps presented any special installation problems.

Post-Hudson body styling of the 1960's and later often featured a sizable inward

NOVELTY OR "FAD" accessories, usually short-lived, have periodically been a part of the automotive scene for many years. Remember the furry animal tails tied on cars just before World War II (or the phony tiger tails which were inspired by a familiar gasoline advertising slogan during the mid-1960's)? Also, during the 1960's and 1970's, bumper stickers apparently reached a peak of popularity, with an enormous variety of printed sentiments being available for display by motorists (as some still are today). Although many of the messages doubtless were seriously meant, the ones most likely to be remembered in later years were those with a comic twist. (Seen recently: SUPPORT ORGANIZED BINGO. KEEP GRANDMA OFF THE STREET).

In the past year or two, bumper stickers have been partially displaced by small signs held to side or rear windows with suction cups, and usually made in a square or diamond shape, yellow colored, to resemble standard road signs. Among the first of these to be seen was one proclaiming BABY ON BOARD (perhaps for the convenience of kidnappers?); but the variety of sign messages soon proliferated. However, your columnist searched in vain for one saying ENVIRONMENTALIST (or perhaps SEATBELT ADVOCATE) IN TRUNK.

Readers may wish to tell us of their favorite (or possibly their most-disliked) fad-type auto accessories of the past or present.

AN INSULATED UNDERHOOD pad or blanket helps to reduce audible engine noise and also to insulate the hood finish from engine heat. These pads have been an occasional accessory item since the 1940's or so, most often made of fiberglass since it cannot burn. Sometimes the pad



and attaching cement have been sold in kit form under a name such as "Car Hush," and sometimes the pad is simply cut from stock fiberglass batting an inch or two thick, and cemented in place. Though special cements are available, this writer has found that ordinary undercoating, sprayed or brushed onto metal surface, is about as effective for the purpose. A few models have also included the pad as factory equipment, usually holding it in place with special large-headed clips.

Surprisingly, an accessory underhood pad was also available much earlier. The 1929 Hudson accessory catalogue lists "Protectahood," a set of top and side insulating panels for the side-opening hood. (See illustration, November/December 1986 *WTN*, p. 30.) Pad material is not specified, but this accessory "safeguards the motor during cold weather driving" and "protects hood finish during hot weather," according to the catalogue.

A "MAP LIGHT" is usually a small shaded lamp which allows reading by the front-seat passenger without distracting the driver's eyes from the road at night. On many early-day Hudsons and other cars, the dashboard light, mounted in an external shell, served this purpose reasonably well. Later, one type of Hobbs accessory glovebox light available for Hudsons and others (July/August 1988 *WTN*) had a swiveling shade which made it also usable as a map light.

Some Brand X's have had a separate map light set into an overhanging edge on dash, or made bus-fashion as a "baby spotlight" in the ceiling. Several accessory map lights have also been designed to be plugged into the cigarette-lighter socket — usually for 12 volts, but the bulb (and the lighter element, if it is part of the same assembly) can be changed to 6-volt type if necessary. One style of light even had the reflector and bulb placed on a flexible "gooseneck."

Whether these plug-in map lights are practicable depends mainly on the location of the car's cigarette-lighter socket. Of course a small plug-in trouble light and cord can also be used — as can a small separate flashlight. One other accessory map light, with cord and bracket, was disguised as a telephone handset, to resemble the phone-in-car installations which became available during the 1950's.

Any of these map lights are obviously preferable to using the domelight (or an open-flame lighter or match) when checking maps or directions at night. As with other dashboard add-ons for a collector vehicle, however, one prefers to use only items which do not require visible drilling or defacement of dash, unless spare dashboard components are available from a parts car.

WE'RE GRATEFUL for the letters received from readers in past months. Two people (both from the state of New York) have sent added information about accessory "traffic light finders" (September/October 1988 *WTN*). Pete Youngers — who has a 1953 Chevrolet but is looking for a Hudson Hornet — says that his Chevy has one of these finders, a reproduction from the Guide (GM) original, with a chromed base and a thin ribbed plastic lens. These reproductions, he states, are still available from some old-car parts suppliers but are a bit expensive — about \$50. He has also seen the type of finder pictured in *WTN* (and originally used on many Pontiacs). Both types, he reports, work well at night, but not as well in daylight.

A clipping, apparently from the Christmas advertising section of *Old Cars* in a recent year, has been sent us by Philip Stock. This shows the Fulton traffic light finder (reportedly old stock found in the Fulton warehouse after 35 years), which was especially recommended for vintage cars which used a Fulton Sun Shield or any similar outside visor. Price in ad was about \$24, including shipping.

Thomas Gleydura, Ohio, has a 1949 Hudson coupe equipped with many of the authentic accessories. He tells us: "With the rear window Venetian blind, the vent shades, and the sun visor, I don't have to worry about the sun fading my interior! A friend of mine had the best description, 'It's like driving a house from the cellar.'"

An additional comment about accessory top-cylinder oilers (May/June 1988 *WTN*) comes from Gareth Jenkins, New Mexico. He states: "My first daily-use Hudson was a 1954 Hornet Special; it had an inverse oiler on it . . . and had 199,000 miles without an engine rebuild of any kind. I drove it for 6 years . . . without ever having any difficulties — and enjoying really ferocious Hornet

performance the whole way.

"More recently, I bought a 1946 Hudson pickup, which has a 1953 Twin-H Jet (202 cu. in.) engine. When I bought this truck it had some blow-by and tappet noise, but after installing a Marvel Oiler these problems disappeared within 2 months . . . I have the oiler adjusted — using the regulator on top — so that the engine uses about 1 quart of Marvel Mystery Oil for every 900 miles . . .

"I would say without hesitation that installation of a Marvel Oiler, and the use of the Mystery Oil, is definitely worth the expense and trouble, for Hudsons or for any car one may care about. Engine longevity, especially upper cylinders, rings, and valve train, is increased very significantly, as is overall performance and economy. (Mind you, I'm not a salesman for this company, though I may sound like one!)

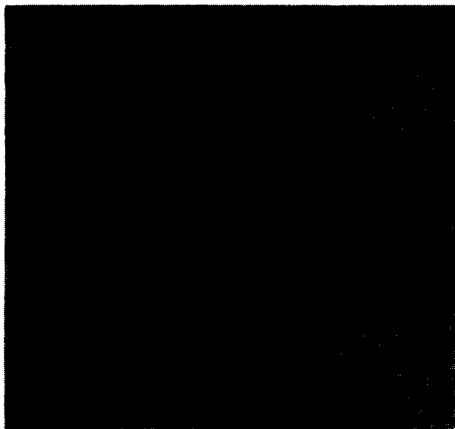
"Unfortunately, virtually all auto parts places do not carry the Inverse Oiler — and have never heard of it either — so it has to be ordered by mail from the Marvel Oil Co. . . . The price in August 1987 was \$49.50 postpaid; it may have gone up a bit since then."

ABOUT WATER INJECTION for engines (mentioned in November/December 1988 *WTN*), Allen Saffrahn, Arizona, writes: ". . . Sent two pictures of a water injection system which my father used on his '41C8, '42S6, and '47C8 Hudsons. It clamps on top of the carb, and the air cleaner goes back on top of it. It has a float in the bowl area which regulates the water. My father used a tank which was hung from the radiator rod over engine, and held about 1½ gallons of water. I can still remember him putting this on the car every spring, and removing it before winter (since he lived in Indiana then, 40 years ago when these cars were new).

"I still have this unit today. Its name is: Vanderpoel Water Carburetor, Model V-44 (Exola Products Co., Los Angeles) . . . Gas mileage was better with it, maybe 2 miles per gallon. Water flow was controlled by a metering jet; also the unit contained another metering jet which could be changed for larger engines."

Apparently this unit would fit any Hudson or other car having a 2½-inch carburetor air horn (and also having adequate hood clearance). A version to

fit smaller carburetors was available as well. Al also enclosed several xerox pages, including a copy of the original Vanderpoel instruction sheet (circa 1942). This states that the unit was normally set to deliver about one gallon of water for each ten gallons of gasoline; and it suggests that a mixture of half water and half alcohol be used in winter to avoid freezing.



Another xerox page shows another brand of top-cylinder oiler, the Ampco Vapor Lubricator, vacuum-operated, with bracket, glass jar, and adjustable visible oil feed, but Al says that he has no direct knowledge of this device. Perhaps other readers have seen one of these in use.

TWO MORE LETTERS were received just in time for inclusion in this column. Dick Crabb of Oregon writes: "In the January/February 1989 *WTN* you mentioned . . . a dealer or aftermarket installation of power brakes on Hudsons . . . All of these units that I have seen were the Bendix "Hydrovac." This was a piston-type, vacuum-suspended unit that tied into the hydraulic system between the stock master cylinder and the line to the wheel cylinders. It had no mechanical connection to the brake pedal, but operated entirely on hydraulic pressure and engine vacuum. Service information and details about it are available in older *Motor's Manuals*, of the 1950's. (It was still in the manuals as late as 1966; however, these later Third Series units differ slightly from the earlier ones.) Most of the units I have seen on Hudsons were about 6¾" in diameter, but they were available in several sizes to fit different applications . . . and they were also made in a tandem unit for trucks. There were also diaphragm-type Hydrovacs, but I

have never seen one on a Hudson. I hope this information is of help."

Regarding another Bendix-built accessory, Walter Streeter, Oklahoma, notes: "Have just finished reading your article in the January/February *WTN* in which you ask whether anyone has seen a Startix installed on a Hudson or other automotive vehicle. My first automobile, a 1932 Hudson 8 rumble-seat coupe with free wheeling and wire wheels, teardrop-type headlights, and spare mounted on the rear, had such an item for starting the car. I also have one that is to be used on a Pierce-Arrow. One of my Pierces, a 1936 model, had the item taken off and a push-button starter switch replacing it. However, the Startix unit was and still is in the trunk. Have never tried to repair it . . . probably wouldn't know how to replace it on the car should I manage to get it into working order. But I'll keep it anyway."

A CONCLUDING NOTE: The above has been written as my last column for *White Triangle News* for the present. During the eleven years past, the Hudsonotes column has usually been fun to write, and I hope that most of it has been of help or of interest to club members. Although the writing has sometimes required a disproportionate amount of time and effort, I've mostly considered it time well spent . . . until recently.

However, the recent announcement by the Northwest Chapter of plans for the 1989 H-E-T National Meet at Portland, Oregon has served as an especially pointed reminder that I, for one, am entirely out of place in the H-E-T Club of today — from an economic standpoint, and probably in most other respects as well. The world of ridiculous \$75-and-up hotel rooms, a \$19.50 banquet and a \$15 barbecue, not to mention the jacuzzi and the sauna and the \$21 bus tour (for a closer view of the local volcanic ash heap, no doubt?) is not my world, I am happy to state. Moreover, what on earth has all of this to do with Hudsons?

For myself at present, I can only say (in the words of oldtime film mogul Sam Goldwyn): "Gentlemen, include me out!" Possibly I shall be able to resume working for the *WTN* at some time in the future, especially if health and finances permit,

and if club events become a bit more affordable and responsibly planned.

Until then, goodbye, good luck, and thanks for the memories.

G. S.