

Lights

HUDSONOTES

by George Schmidt

Tributes

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CANDLEPOWER RATING

of most light bulbs on old cars, even into the 1930's, was remarkably small, no doubt to conserve battery power.

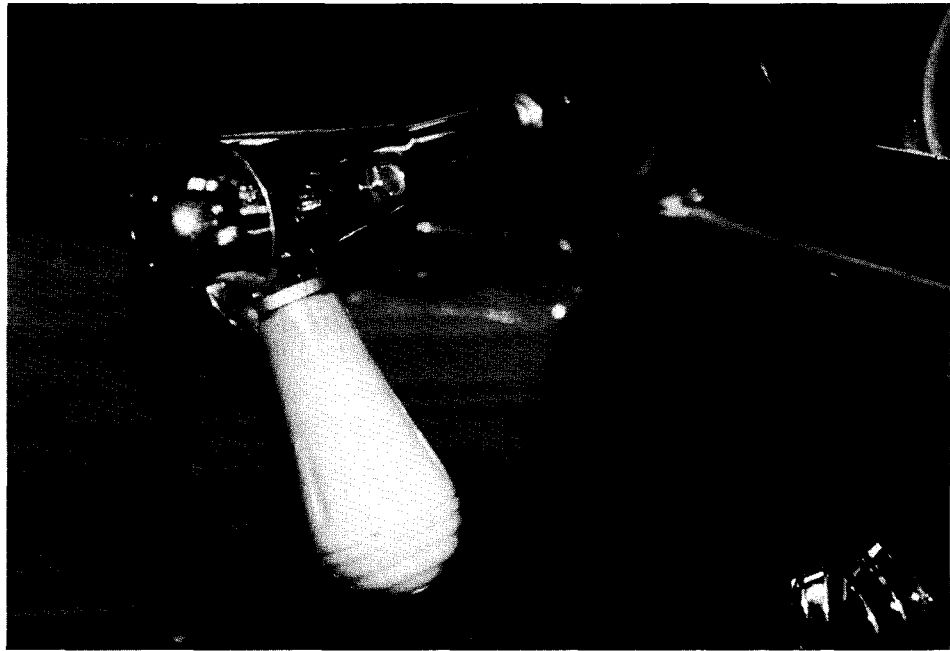
In some cases a brighter bulb can be fitted for better present-day visibility without modification to the car. Also, parking, tail, backup, and hood-triangle lights should be clean inside, and some can be lined with aluminum foil for best brightness.

Later models were more brightly lit. They also contained more copper, especially since all 6-volt lights and accessories need heavier wiring than do their 12-volt equivalents. For a 6-volt fog, driving, or spot lamp, #14-gauge wire is suitable; and 12-gauge wire for a pair (same as for most headlights). Backup lamps, too, can use these sizes; or at minimum, #14-gauge for the pair and #16-gauge for one. The lights also require a clean solid ground to body metal, preferably with a touch of heavy grease to keep out corrosion.

If the dimbulb appearance persists, check wire connectors and switch contacts (to test, bypass them with a heavy jumper wire from battery; or use a volt/ohmmeter). For head, fog, and driving lights, sometimes a 6-volt relay (non-stock, but an authentic accessory) was added to improve brightness and reduce switch load. This too requires its own fuse or circuit breaker, plus clean connections and an adequate feed wire (#10 gauge suggested).

SPOTLIGHTS of the usual type with shaft, bevel gears, and interior

Lights... and Tributes

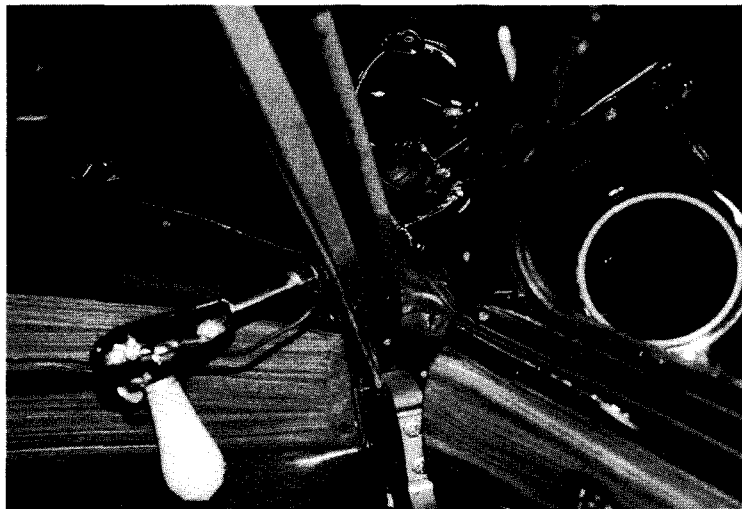


handle were offered for Hudson as the "Spotlight" (by Unity?) in 1929 and later. Among the other styles available earlier were the "Mobilite" (mid-'20's to early '30's), similarly shaft-mounted but with a split-ball interior handle; and before that, the Clymer type which had a pistol-grip handle and mounted through a hole cut in the glass windshield. There were also a few add-on types (both earlier and later) without inside control handle.

Although a 1936 Hudson accessory brochure does not show spot, fog, or driving lights, these were readily available from other sources, one being the 1936 Montgomery Ward catalogue (noted for its automotive coverage in those years), which offered both fog and driving lamps.

Auxiliary lights soon reappeared as Hudson offerings as well. Both Unity and Appleton spotlights were listed for 1940-42, all with separate bulb and reflector. Hudson spotlights for 1946-47 were by Unity, with choice of a bulb and reflector or a sealed-beam unit. All Hudson spots thereafter used sealed beams and were Unity-made, although aftermarket versions to fit most models could also be had from Guide or others.

Though nearly all spotlights were available in pairs, for the left or the right side or both (plus a few for center mounting in truck roofs!), the conventional—and usually best-looking—installation was of a single light, on driver's side only. Twin spots were generally reserved for emergency vehicles, and perhaps convertibles. Besides, not



Photos by M. A. Jackson

everyone wanted the extra shaft and handle placed inside the car on the passenger side. Some postwar catalogues even offered non-moving decorative dummy lights, for external mounting only, from Appleton—or one from Unity which was designed to match the working spotlight on opposite side of car.

Usually the hardest part of spotlight installation is the drilling of a neat 1/2-inch hole in the car's A-pillar. Hudson stepdown convertibles, noted for their pillar strength, have an added steel reinforcement inside which projects only part way into the spot being drilled. Some file work may be needed. Also, avoid damaging any of the electric wiring in pillar, especially on closed models.

The light bulbs in early fog and

spot lamps usually have a clip-on metal cap to help control the beam, though some replacement bulbs had a portion of the glass blacked out to give a similar effect. Sealed-beam units, too, usually have a similar smaller cap built into them. If "signal" (usually orange) or "hand

spotlight" units must be used for replacement, these will fit and work O.K. but will scatter somewhat more of the light since they lack the internal cap. Stock Hudson fog lamp sealed-beams were amber, but some clear ones were also used. Both included the cap to produce a wide flat beam with a distinct cutoff at the top edge. Spotlights, of course, produce a narrow "pencil" beam with parallel rays and minimal scattering.

FOGLIGHTS for Hudson and most other cars of 1942 and earlier were fairly large, with lens diameter of more than 5 inches. Hudsons 1948 and up used the smaller foglights with 4-inch lenses (and shallower shells).

For 1946-47, Hudson retained the older large size for spotlights (of both

types), but specified the smaller-size foglights in order to fit them into the center grille cavity which was a distinctive feature of these models. With the original parts for mounting in grille now no longer available, we'd like to know whether any owners have found an alternative method of in-grille mounting for the fog (or driving) lights.

Both the large and small Unity spotlights for Hudsons, along with several modernized styles since then, have used virtually the same mounting elbow, bevel gears, etc. (except for a variety of shaft lengths), so that replacement parts are seldom a problem—although costly if ordered new. Prewar Hudsons used the large-size spotlights; Hudsons 1948 and up used the smaller ones. Bulb numbers for sealed beams (small size, 6-volt) include #4515 (spotlight) and #4015A (amber foglight).

Hudsons after 1951 favored a through-the-door spotlight mounting (often with mirror), rather than pillar mounting. Extra care in installing was needed for models with crank-type windings, to avoid interference with winding gears. Careful routing of the lead wire was also needed. The 1953-54 Hudson Jet parts

book, however, does not list either spot or fog lights—although Unity and others doubtless had components which would fit. Fog lamps were somewhat less popular in those years, before their comeback in the mid-1960's.

Fog lamps can have their own in-line fuse (14-20 amperes, for the 6-volt pair); or on most 1948-54 Hudsons, they can most easily be wired to the taillight circuit breaker. A spotlight, too, can have an individual fuse (7.5-10 amperes, in-line) or can be wired to a circuit breaker (preferably not sane one as for foglights). Never connect accessory lights directly, without circuit protection.

Though fog lamps on a collector vehicle may be mainly decorative, they can be useful, combined with headlamps, in sudden adverse weather—or on the other hand, for twilight, overcast days, etc. when full headlamp glare is not needed (but parking lamps are not quite enough).

Foglight beams are generally aimed just below the low beams on headlights, and perhaps very slightly “cross-eyed” for better side coverage up ahead.

MOST FOG AND DRIVING LIGHTS before W.W.II were available with offset supports which clamped to the front bumper arms, without need to drill



either the bumper or the front fenders. Unity, for example, had a kit which included two horizontal cast-aluminum brackets about 3 inches long, two long carriage bolts with nuts, and a set of aluminum spacers which were notched at one side to grip the bumper arms or an older-style front bumper. This provided a simple and solid mounting; but on later cars which had a “stone guard” panel behind the bumper, it also required cutting two holes of about 1.5-inch size into panel. Rubber grommets were included for the holes.

Usually the stone guard panel alone is not rigid enough to support

added lights without allowing vibration which can be seen in the beam. Some later Unity fog lamps used on post-'47 Hudsons had a cast-aluminum base which was slotted to fit over rear edge of front bumper, and required drilling of one hole to install. If bumper metal was too thin for the slot, a shim could be added to avoid cracking the slotted base.

Foglights should have a switch and knob matching others on dash, perhaps with Hudson's chrome “FOG” tag (mid-'49 & up) added. Lacking this, there was also a standard “Unity Lights” underdash switch with a plastic knob like that on many Hudson heater controls (with space inside for a small pilot bulb).

A few Hudson/Cole accessory switches c. 1948-49 had “B,” “F,” and “H” terminals seemingly designed so that either head or fog lights could be used—but not both simultaneously. This is rather impractical, and we can think of no reason for it except possibly to meet strange local rules in some areas. These switches can also be wired to provide a simple on/off, however. If available, a 6-volt single-type headlamp relay may be added, either to brighten the foglights

slightly, or to coordinate tail and dash lights with them.

Note that early fog and driving lights—especially for cars with free-standing headlamps—were designed with an external shape (usually pointed at rear) to match typical headlamps of the time. The thinner modern style appeared in the 1940's because of limited mounting space between grille and front bumper on most later cars.

More illuminating facts next time.



A FEW DELAYED words of tribute to Club Founder Meritt Marks, who passed away just eight months

ago: Except for an exchange of letters, and hearing him speak at one meet, I did not know Meritt personally; but was aware of his continued interest. Some years ago he sent me a package containing several unusual NOS accessories including a large wirewound ignition resistor for center of distributor cap; also wiper arm helper springs, a magnesium "Neutra-Rod" for radiator (with chain end retainer under cap), etc.; plus a bundle of pages from 1952-55 auto trade magazines with information about early vacuum clutch mechanisms, "jumbo" tires, the Daimler fluid flywheel" also tune-up specifications, sales figures (not good), after-market parts ads of the era; and more.

I do not know how most of the other "one-make" car clubs were started, nor what their survival rate has been—but in our case we know whose enterprise and enthusiasm, along with well-chosen timing and a healthy sense of direction, must be credited. We may be sure that the HET Club will continue to thrive and grow...but it probably will not be quite the same without its founder.

Also no longer with us is Louis Backhus, California, who besides publishing his two books circa 1980—the *Hudson Swaps Manual* (based on reader contributions and his former *WTN* column); and the *WTN Table of Contents*—was also editor of the Northern California Chapter Newsletter; and he often sent complimentary newsletter copies to national HET Club people including Tech Advisors, *WTN* regulars, et al. It was a thoughtful gesture and a welcome one, much appreciated. ▼

AT A LOCAL old-car show

a few years ago, I enjoyed meeting the late Robert Kuehl (Jan./Feb.'03 *WTN*), and seeing his black '34 Hudson 8. Bob was a longtime HET Club member and former Hudson/AMC dealer...and like many others of his generation here in Wisconsin, he occasionally reverted to German to emphasize a point when speaking. I'm sorry to say that his comment about Hudson's Drive-Master was "Zu viel Kopfweh" (too

much headache)—which was not an unusual opinion among dealers who did not have at least one mechanic with *ein Geschick* for working on this vacuum/electric equipment.

Yet today, given patience, time (which not all dealerships could spare), and an understanding of the system, Drive-Master can usually be made to function very nicely, with a minimum of cephalalgia. (If not, please tell me of your problem, and I shall do my best to help!) Besides its total shock value for Brand X owners and mechanics, this rig is still a barrel of fun to drive.

A note to literature collectors: I have never seen Hudson service instructions—or sales materials—in German, nor in French, Swedish, Spanish or any other foreign languages; but we can be sure that they were published, particularly for exported vehicles. What can readers tell us about this? I'd much like to see at least a few sample xerox pages from a foreign-language Hudson repair manual, and perhaps to compare these with the English version. Foreign-language Hudson advertisements would also be of great interest, especially any which might be reproducible in *WTN*. ▼

MORE ABOUT the two-headed "Passing Eye"

accessory mirror (Jul./Aug. & Nov./Dec. '03 *WTN*): Gene Chapman, Georgia, tells us that a friend of his in the '50's who was a long-haul truck driver had one of these on his personal car (Buick), and liked it very much. It was mounted high (on top edge of door), and helped to show traffic up ahead which was not otherwise visible from the drivers' lane. Not intended as a rear-view mirror (a separate glass was still needed for that purpose), it was an item apparently marketed via truck stops and similar vendors.

As for finding replacement Kleenex-type tissues in a box to fit the Hudson/Auto-Serv dispensers (March/April *WTN*), M. E. "Red" Burke, California, advises that when staying at a hotel or motel, one can ask the cleaning lady (or man) for a box of tissues, and usually these will be of the right size and type. Box will probably

not have the Kleenex name — seems to me that Kimberly-Clark is missing a good publicity angle here—but it should fit the old-time dispensers O.K. Red also states that these dispensers have been reproduced for some Brand X's, and one with the Chevrolet blue "bowtie" now sells for \$95. An unbranded one sells for slightly less—but there is not much hope of a "Hudson" reproduction, since the factory insists upon a minimum order of 5000.

Concerning water circulation on Hudson 8's (March/April *WTN*), Charlie Dorsey (694 East Santa Clara Street, Ventura, California 95001-2959) has sent me a diagram suggesting that the 1" hole (second from rear) in the water distribution plate be moved an inch or more rearward, thus clearing the brace post in engine block; and perhaps the center (3/4") hole also be moved a bit rearward. It seems somewhat drastic to me. About "wrinkle" type paints, Charlie reports seeing a listing in Eastwood's catalogue—but for black only, so it would not be very helpful for our stepdown Hudson radio speaker grilles.

WTN's typesetting (or scanning) equipment has shown a distressing tendency somehow to print 5's where 3's were required. Most of them were caught at the proofreading stage, but two which got past us were in reference to *WTN* history (March/April issue). The early large-size mimeographed issues ran from 1959 to 1963 (not 1965), and are included in the reprint book. The smaller-size printed issues—lithographed, and including pictures—began with October 1963 (and brought an increase in annual dues from \$2 to \$3).

AGAIN THIS SUMMER,

best of luck to you for the season of shows, parades, and other old-car events in your area!



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