

THE FIRST "PARKING" or "driving" lights on cars were simply kerosene sidelamps or coach lanterns retained from carriage days. Electric versions appeared on some cars along with electric headlights and starters after 1912; but surprisingly, the 1916 Hudson Super Six, unlike other Delco-equipped cars at the time, did not have sidelamps, except perhaps as an add-on. They had been discontinued on the 6-54 Hudsons for 1914, columnist D. J. Kava reports (May/June '03 *WTN*).

Even a decade later, Gomery-Schwartz, Philadelphia (which issued a separate accessory catalogue for Hudson/Essex) in 1926 still offered two styles of add-on parking or side lights for cars not so equipped originally—plus a small colored-jewel "parking" or side-marker light for the rear, to be used as a parked-car warning at night.

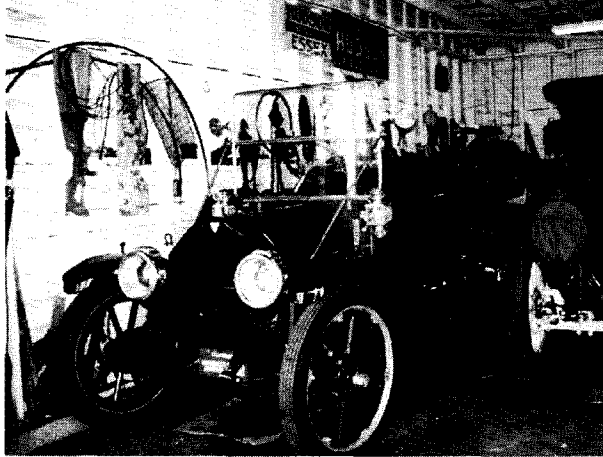
Also shown in this 1926 catalogue were add-on brake lights in two styles, a flower vase and bracket for car interior, several rear-view mirrors, a pair of auxiliary "fill-in" lights combined with front license frame (for states requiring a front plate then), and more. One style of the parking lights shown was a "no-drill" version which simply clamped to the windshield pillar at each side. A few 1920's spotlights (from other sources) also clamped to the post in this way—a handy location for everyone, unfortunately including thieves.

However, many cars of the teens and twenties were factory-equipped with small cowl or saddle lamps, styled to match the headlights. This included most Hudson and Essex models 1927 and up, with some fender-mounted versions later. Even the picturesque "Woodlite" or "cats-eye" headlamps, which were a distinctive option on a number of U.S. luxury cars circa late 1920's, had a matching miniature cowl-lamp version available. (These headlights were featured on a custom 1951 Hudson built for company presi-

Lights and Gaslights

HUDSONOTES

By George Schmidt



The first "Parking" or "Driving" lights on cars were simply kerosene sidelamps or coach lanterns retained from carriage days.

bulb or with the two-filament one required for front turn signals.

TURN-SIGNAL LIGHTS were optional, or standard, on Hudsons in 1940 and thereafter. They make the driving of a collector car in today's traffic far easier; but since few cars were thus equipped in the early years, and an original factory directional kit is not likely to be found these days, the proper fitting of signals into the car's parking and tail lamps—without the use of ugly external add-ons—can be problematical, and more so when attempting to retrofit a pre-'40 model. However, if the car has a second tail light and front eyebrow lights (which were optional parts in some years), it can usually be managed.

For some older cars, on the other hand, owners may prefer small add-on signal lights (perhaps bolted to the bumper, and no uglier than necessary), if they can be installed, and also uninstalled, with minimal mutilation of the car. A few accessory lights such as Auto Lamp's bullet-shaped #491's were attractive as backup lights on Hudsons

c. 1948-51, but were less attractive as turn signals even though many of them were sold in aftermarket kits for that purpose. Other kits c. 1950 featured signal lamps in oval or other shapes, but with these too it was almost impossible to avoid a patched-on appearance, I'd like to hear from HET Club members who will tell us what turn-signal arrangement...if any...they have found best for their collector vehicles.

Note that the 1940-41 Hudson directional switch used pushbuttons rather than a lever. If this cannot be found, often a later Hudson switch (with lever) can be fitted, since steering-post diameter on these cars was unchanged for many years. There also were aftermarket switches from Auto Lamp and others which clamped in place without drilling, and sometimes included a rubber friction wheel for the steering-wheel hub to make them self-cancelling. The switch can usually be painted to match car interior. Some models also included 4-way switching.

If the rear turn signals on your Hudson do not appear very bright for daylight use (viewed from straight behind), first check the sockets, terminals, body ground, flasher, switches (inducing ignition), etc.—using an ohmmeter if possible. If these check out O.K., with negligible voltage drop, you may also be able to use larger bulbs, perhaps #1133 instead of #1129, loosening the taillight backing plates to insert them if necessary. A heavy-duty type 6-volt flasher may also help, especially if flashes have been too slow. Normal rate is about 90 per minute.

When driving a car without directional lights (or brake light), be prepared to give the required hand signals: hand and forearm up for a right turn, straight out for a left turn, and down for a stop. Also watch especially for these signals when you see an old (pre-signal-light) car being driven on the road. Occasionally someone sig-



Running lights on Pete Laughon's 1912 Hudson.

dent William McAneeny, and perhaps on a few others—can anyone tell us of them? See July '76 WTN.)

Later, from the mid-1930's through 1939, many Hudsons and Terraplanes, and many Brand X's, had parking lights which were simply a small extra bulb and socket fitted inside each headlight. The small separate front-fender or "eyebrow" lights were usually an option. With sealed-beam headlamps 1940 and up, all cars needed separate parking lights, often available with either a single-filament

Photos by M.A. Jackson

nals a right turn by pointing vigorously rightwards with hand and arm above car roof; this is unofficial, but the meaning is clear enough.

SOME 1940-47 HUDSONS used both #1158 and #1154 bulbs for tail, brake, and signal lights. Both were 2-filament, 6-volt, and identical except that the newer #1154, like some 12-volt bulbs, had one bayonet pin placed to prevent reversed installation. Cars after '47 used #1154; those before '40 used #1158 (if proper replacement is not available, file one pin); and the earliest brake lights had a separate single-filament bulb.

One late-1920's accessory unit had the Hudson or other car name along with separate tail, brake, and manual backup lights, and was made in styles to fit either above the license plate or in the middle of the rear-mounted spare tire.

Backup lights reportedly had been invented earlier in the '20's by C. Harold Wills for his new Wills Sainte Claire automobile. As for directional signals, the first ones (mechanical, cable-operated) appeared in 1915, and something called the "Protex Safety Signal" was available before 1920. Electric turn signals date from 1925 (Germany). Early directional signals were used mostly on trucks, and the early flashing-light types were usually for the rear only. An optional "Tell-Turn" unit, with twin lighted arrows—amber on Hudson—and with control switch usually on the gearshift lever, was offered in 1956 and possibly earlier. Another version had one blue arrow and one red (or perhaps both red). However, we have not discovered when front signal lights were first used along with the rear ones. Readers?

Tail lights of course have a longer history, and those used on the earliest Hudsons (c. 1909-12) were kerosene-powered. Sidelamps, too, were standard equipment on these early models, and were kerosene type.

These lights still require periodic attention, if they are to be anything more than cute non-functional ornaments on an old car. They should be clean inside (and shiny if possible),

with fresh kerosene (not fuel oil) and no leaks, unobstructed air vents (no mouse nests), a clean non-gummy wick which adjusts properly, and a tip-proof mounting (on or off car).

Work outdoors if possible. In most cases the flame should be turned up no higher than a square shape. Urbanites who have never used kerosene lamps or lanterns may wish to seek help from someone who is familiar with them.



PROBABLY MUCH the same advice should apply to the headlights. These can produce a surprisingly good light when working properly, so that there should be little need, even today, to regard 1909-12 Hudsons as cars for daylight use only. The headlamps were fed either by an acetylene storage tank (with suitable pressure control) or by a gas generator which used water and calcium carbide to produce the acetylene as needed. The supply line on most models was copper tubing with rubber hose connections, all of which needed to be unobstructed, tight-fitting, and free of leaks.

Fuel cost, however, was higher than for electric lighting. Hudson for 1910 included the acetylene headlamps and generator as standard equipment, but listed the "Prest-O-Lite" tank (also used on many brand X cars then) as a \$25 option. Typically the lights could be used (if not turned up high enough to crack the reflectors) for about 40 hours on one filling of the tank. A refill cost perhaps \$2 or so in those years, but was not readily found in some areas. Today, with acetylene, regulators, and tanks available from welding-supply vendors, these may be the logical source for fuel...unless someone in the HET Club knows how to re-generate old generators, and where to buy carbide these days. We'd

like to hear from anyone who has worked successfully with these acetylene lights, and who perhaps can give us some added suggestions and safety tips.

Lights and Gaslights

Side light on Buzz Stahl's '20 Limo.

Photo by S.Jackson

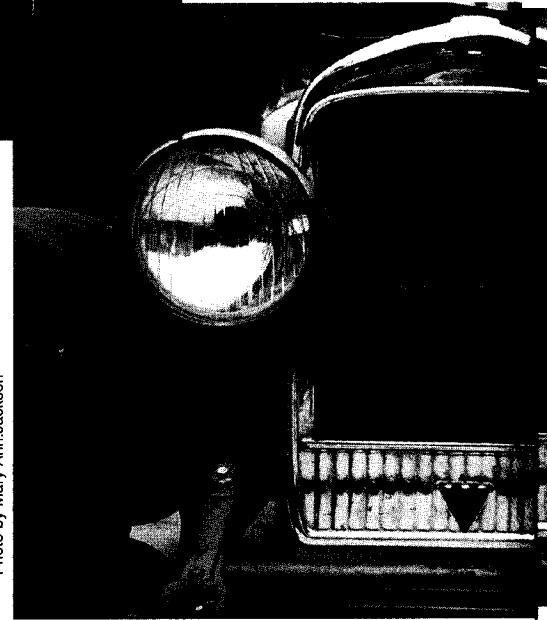


Photo by Mary Ann Jackson

Possibly we can forgive owners for converting some of these gas and kerosene lights to electricity—if it can be done with realistic appearance, good light output, and no damage to original parts—since this was occasionally done even back in the Teens. Still, much of the car's genuine historical interest is lost in this way. A few old-car owners, I'm told, have compromised by carrying with them a battery, wire harness, and electric bulbs which can be temporarily clipped in place for nighttime driving.

Probably some of us wish that electric converter sockets, which look and fit like the original burners, were available for these old lights, as they are for household kerosene lamps. These adapters also allow a quick conversion back to the real thing (as hap-

pened here in one past emergency). Now if I could find one to fit our old Dietz barn lantern.

I'M ALSO LOOKING for one of those swing-out auto cup holders which fit on most Hudsons and other old cars that have a flat (not sloping) bottom edge on dashboard. Nope, it ain't original equipment—but it was a popular accessory item during the stepdown era, and installed easily without disfiguring the dash. It would be a real convenience for me since I like to drink and drive (cold milk or soda, that is, usually). Most current Brand X vehi-



Headlights on Perry Spring's Murphy-bodied 1927/'29 Hudson

cles, even farm and garden tractors, seem to include some form of in-dash cup holder; but the idea isn't new.

Another accessory gadget from the stepdown era, now hard to find, is the small flat spring which attached to door frame and could be swiveled over the courtesy-light switch, when the light was not wanted. Door-operated lights (on standard car bodies) were reportedly introduced by Buick in the early '30's, and were offered by Hudson in 1938 and up, but have sometimes been a mixed blessing. The postwar spring clips were originally promoted mainly for use at drive-in theatres, where the flash of light during the show could be quite annoying (or revealing); but the clips also were helpful battery savers at home whenever car doors needed to be left open for an extended time (repair work, drying out car interior, etc.).

One possible alternative for this same purpose might be to install an

added manual cutoff switch for the courtesy lights (also including trunk, under hood, and glovebox lights, but not the hand-switched dome lights.). On some models it can be a spare matching Hudson dash switch and knob (space permitting)—or less conspicuously, a spare rear dome-light switch or similar one placed at lower dash edge, especially if a pre-punched hole is found there for it.

However, as with all non-stock changes to a Hudson, please remember: you didn't read it here. Note also that all courtesy and dome lights are wired through a circuit-breaker (or fuse)—and this will also apply to any added ones.

WHY ADD EXTRA lights — authentic ones, that is—to an old car which was born without them? Even though it will be mainly for their dress-up value, please note that they can add much to convenience and safety as well, especially if the car is driven regularly. Also, they help demonstrate to late-model owners that there really is not much new under the sun, accessory-wise... unless you count power mirrors and exploding air bags.

It may be startling to realize that a Hudson Commodore or Hornet (fully equipped, but with authentic items only) uses more than thirty light bulbs. Many later cars, of course, have even more, not to mention light-emitting diodes (LED's) or the like.

Ken. Krueger, Illinois (former HET Club secretary & Tech Editor) recently sent me a photocopy of Hudson's original 1937-38 factory instructions for fog lamp installation. Though single lamp installation is mentioned, the recommendation is for fog lamps in pairs, and it is suggested that these be used in fog without the white light from headlamps. Today this use would probably be unacceptable, and in fact my circa-'90 Pontiac has its factory-installed fog lights (uncolored, and not very powerful) wired so that they can be used only along with the headlamp low beams, which much limits their usefulness. Tail and dash lights, of course, are always used with the fog

lamps in either case, and normal adjustment for fog lights is to bring their beam just under the headlamp low beam.

Thank you, Ken...and special thanks too to Terry Johannes (Milwaukee, Wis.) for his gift of the one item needed to complete a 1950 Hudson Drive-Master-plus-overdrive installation: the chrome Supermatic Drive insignia which fits on trunk lid, just above the handle. This contrasts with the 194&-49 Hudsons, which had no external marking for Drive-Master (nor for Super/Commodore, nor 6 or 8 cylinders) — and with the '42-47 models, which had Drivemaster lettering placed lower, just above the rear bumper.

Some automotive extras do not require any change to the car itself. We'd especially like to hear from any owner who has an unusual 6-volt plug-in accessory for his car. Does anyone have the original Hudson (or other brand) auto/home electric shaver combination? And can one obtain replacement cutter heads for it? Has anyone an aftermarket 6-volt electric baby-bottle warmer? Were any small auto-type vacuum cleaners—or electric tire pumps—made for 6 volts rather than 12? Those are a few examples. Also, auto timing lights which can operate on 6 volts (without requiring outside 12-volt power supply) are becoming harder to find. Even rarer is the original 11/16" magnetic socket wrench designed to help avoid dropping the plug from flywheel when changing clutch fluid.

HAPPY EASTER and a good springtime to all of our club members, their families, and their pet Hudsons!



George Schmidt is recovering from recent surgery. You may wish to drop him a cheerful note.



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