

DRIVING OLD CARS

1938 PACKARD WIRING HARNESS, Part III Pg 4

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41st YEAR!

SOUTHERN WHEELS MAGAZINE



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- ANSWERS TO CAR QUIZ : 1. True, 2. True 3. false (wire wheels) 4. False (Roadmaster & Super had new V-8 but Specials retained the straight 8) 5. False (1953)
- 6. True 7. True 8. True 9. False (Hydratics) 10. True
- ANSWERS TO MATCH GAME: 1-B, 2-A, 3-D, 4-C, 5-G, 6-F, 7-E, 8-J, 9-H, 10-I
- ANSWER TO POP'S GARAGE: Damaged Speedometer gears.

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SOUTHERN WHEELS 1



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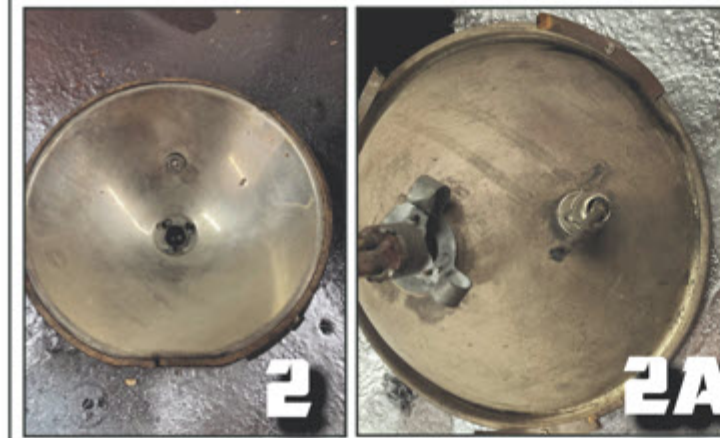
1938 Packard 6 *It Found Me* “Wiring Harness” Part III by Ron Carpenter

Last month I gave a preview of what I was going to do with the wiring for the front of the car. How I was going to use LED lights for the turn signals and the parking lights. In the first and second series of these articles I detailed how I figured out the original manufacturer of the harness and the wiring codes in order to install the harness. I have previously installed all the wiring from the dash to the taillights which includes all the wires under the hood. I have tested all the lights that were for the front of the car, under the hood, so this is where I am going to start with this final article on the wiring harness. Basically installing the wiring, headlights and lenses and then I am finished.

One of the things, about the pre-1940 Packard cars, is that the wiring just lays on top of the frame rail, under the hood, on the left side of the car. I don't like this so I am going to use the terminal strips, from the 1940 cars that Packard used for a number of years.

I have more wires to add to the terminal strips than the 1940 models as the 1938 cars had a special headlight switch and the way the headlights work that I am going to probably bypass that. I have explained this system at the bottom of my article. This adds more wires to be added to the terminal strips. The turn signals are not incorporated in the harness so there are extra wires for that also.

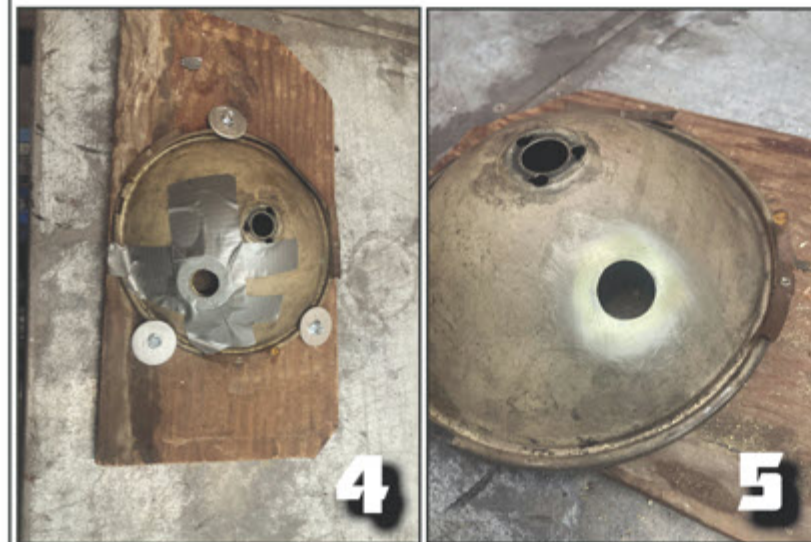
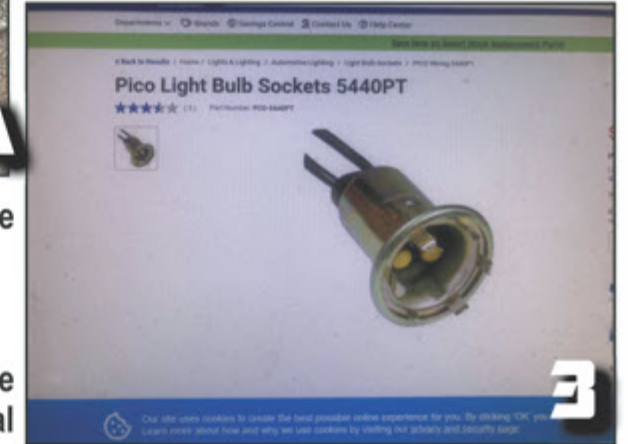
Number 1
This is the complete headlight system on the 1938 cars. It is the reflector, headlight lens (and there is a left and a right lens) and the chrome trim that holds the lens to the headlight bucket. There is also the headlight bulb socket and the cork that seals the lens to the reflector.



Number 2, 2A
I am going to start with the front head lights. On the pre-1940 cars they used a headlight reflector and a small bulb for the parking light inside the reflector. One of the problems that the reflectors have is that

they tarnish and the light would be dull. You have to polish the reflectors when that happens.

Number 3
I found a new light bulb socket that I wanted to use to add another bulb to the reflector. This is a dual

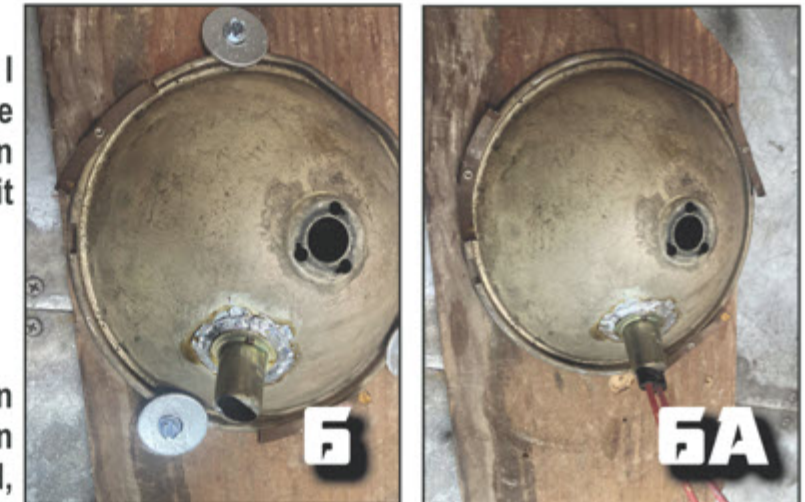


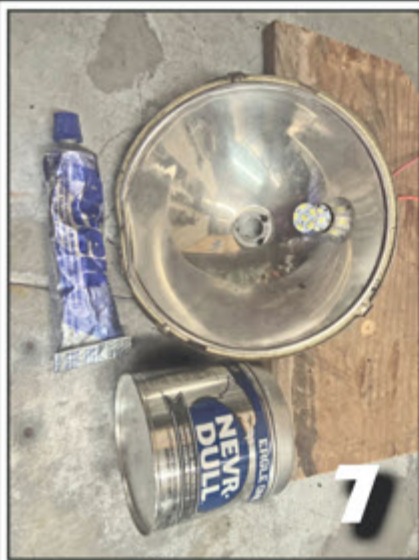
element socket, and then use another LED bulb just like I am already using in the tail lights.

Number 4
I have removed the small light bulb and socket from the reflector. I taped a large washer over the hole and then I just took my Dremel and rounded out the hole. When I got the hole large enough I could install the light socket.

Number 5
I have cleaned up the hole so that I can solder the new socket into the reflector. Once I have the hole clean I can install the socket and solder it into the reflector.

Number 6, 6A
I have soldered in the socket and then I put the wires into the socket so I can make sure everything is aligned,





making sure that wires inside the socket fit the LED light bulb terminals and that they work.

Number 7

I have installed the LED bulb (and tested it) and I have polished the reflector. I always like using Never Dull and then I use a paste polish called PEEK, which claims to polish metal plastics and other products. It works very well.



Number 8
Just wanted to show the difference between the cleaned reflector and an original reflector.



Number 9

I have plugged the Parking lights headlights in so that I can test out the lights.

Number 10, 10A



I have the LED parking light/Turn Signal light in and I have the actual headlight bulb installed. The thin cork that is laying there will be to seal the headlight glass lens. I have some NOS (New Old Stock) light bulbs so this is the bulb and package that they come in.

I have all the wiring complete for the front lights and I can proceed with securing the loose front wires.

Number 11, 11A

I have pictured the terminals that were on the harness on the right side and they don't look like the ones on the left side that I get from Y-N-Z. The terminals don't hold in the phenolic



connectors that I get from Y-n-Z. So, I changed the ends of the harness that needed the connectors and on the fender panel I changed to eyelid terminals. The other picture shows the connector that fits the terminals.

Number 12

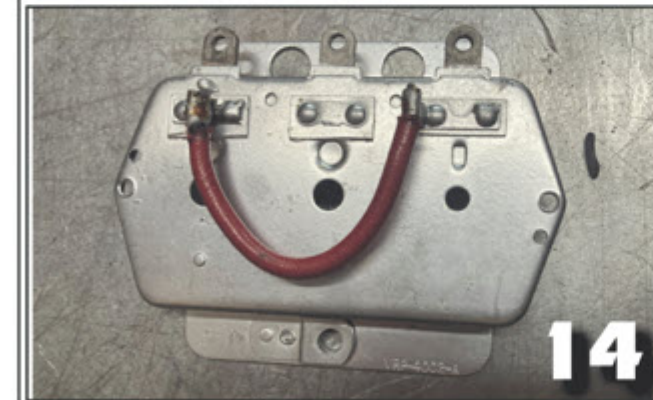
I have installed two of the terminal strips on the inner fender panel and I have identified the wires that I want to attach to the terminal strips. I have to take the butt connectors off the wires and add the new eyelid terminals so I can attach them to the terminal strips. The wires sticking up on the fender are, all marked with yellow masking tape, are the ones that I need to change the ends on.



Number 13



I have attached the wires to the terminal strips but I have more wires to attach so I need to install one more terminal strip for the additional wires.



Number 14

I have decided to run an alternator instead of a generator and regulator. To start the wiring for it I have gutted a regulator and this will allow me to just leave the original wiring on the car. Once I put the cover back on it will look just like it is suppose to look. This connects the harness to the alternator. The alternator is a one wire system and has an internal regulator. If someone in the future wants to go back to a generator and regulator system all the wiring is there.



Number 15
I have all the wires located on the inner fender panel now and you can see the 60 amp fuse holder I have installed. One of the advantages of the terminal strips is that I now have a point to attach wires for a solid ground. One terminal has a dedicated wire to the ground for all the wires up front under the hood. I used a separate wire inside the headlight bucket and screwed a wire to the bucket. That wire is attached here and the headlight bucket has a solid ground.



Number 16
When I made the mounting bracket for the alternator it is bolted solidly to the engine block. The bottom bolt for the alternator is my ground point and one lead goes to the fender. The alternator is a one wire system and has an internal regulator. So this is all you need and the red wire goes to the regulator which has already been gutted.



Number 17
I just wanted to show the headlights now installed on the car and except for the change I want to make on the Country lights the wiring is finished. The "I'M OLD" is actually a birthday card that is made to look like a license plate so I just had to put it on the car.

I figured that since I have the most of the wiring harness already installed and all the LED lights figured out that I should just finish writing up the article on the wiring. I actually have the car almost finished now and so I put the headlights on and finished the write up the last of the wiring.

More information on Fuses:

I get my 60 amp fuses and bracket from Y-N-Z and the instructions say that you should install fuse the at the point where the power from the battery comes in to the electrical system, in the Packards case it is at the starter. That way any short will be caught before it burns the harness. Now I don't disagree with that but 30 years ago when I put the alternator in my 1949 club sedan I put a fusible link it it and I have never had a problem. I am old school but when I was researching the alternator installation I talked to several people and they told me to go to the starter. I found one person that told me he was an aircraft mechanic (talked to him at National PAC meet) in his other life and that they always fuse the alternator at the alternator source. He said that should the battery fail then the alternator would try and put out as much power as it could and that could exceed the 60 amp alternator I am using.

Now to have a battery completely fail sounds strange and unlikely. TODAY'S battery technology is so different from what we are used to that this is a REAL concern. I have an Optima sitting on the shelf that if you measure the battery with your VOM (Volt Ohm Meter) you will get 6.4 volts. That sounds great BUT when you try and use it there is no electrical power. If you take a wire from the Negative to the Positive terminal it will not flash or arc. It will light an LED and that is all. My wife was at the store and she came out to start her KIA and it would not start (no clicking or anything) so she called AAA and they came out and started the car. Told her that she needed a battery. Well she proceeded to back out of the parking spot and the steering started BUCKING in her hands when she tried to turn the steering wheel. The car is like most cars today and has electric steering. Called another tow truck (AAA came out once and we did not buy the battery so you're on your own) and had the car towed to the repair shop. At the shop they told us that the steering works with both the alternator and the battery to steer the car. Since the battery had nothing left in it then only the alternator was left to steer the car and that was not enough electrical power. A new battery solved the problem.

For me, I see that MAYBE in the future I may add another 60 amp fuse to the electrical system at the starter but I definitely going to continue to use the fuse at the alternator.

One final thing I am going to make a change to how the lights are working on the car. The 1938/9 cars (as well as the earlier cars) had a unique headlight system. If you were traveling on a country road with the headlights on bright lights and you meet another car on the road they would only dim the left headlight. This is done via the headlight switch which has one more stop on it (than most switches) and that directs the power differently. I saw a Packard Service Bulletin that told how to rearrange the wires to make the headlights more conventional and do away with this system. I will be doing that next.

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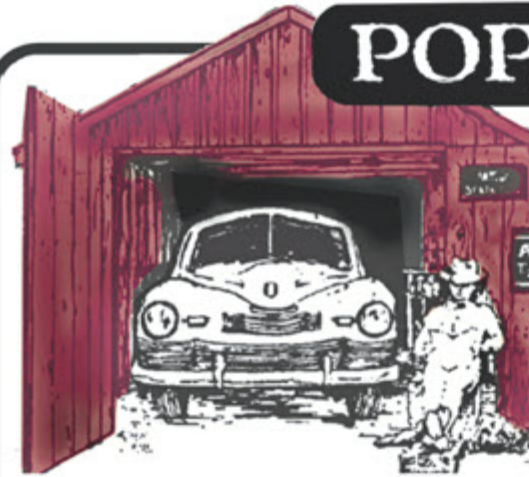
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POP'S GARAGE



The small rectangular tail lights glowed a deep red as Mick's '41 Chevy Coupe came to a stop inside Pop's garage. "Boy! This takes me back!" Bill said. "Our family lived in Montgomery, Alabama in 1954. I was five years old and, of course, loved cars! There were a lot of great cars in our neighborhood. We had a '52 Chevy, my buddy Butch's dad had a '53 Chevy Bel Air hardtop, the man down the street had a '48 Packard, and across the street Mr. Treadwohl had three 1941 Chevys! They were parked down behind his house and I don't think they ran—at least I never saw them being driven.

Butch and I would go over there and play in them. Mr. Treadwohl liked to sip a little spirits, and he would hide a bottle or two in the trees around his house. We had sort of an unspoken agreement with him, that if we could play in the Chevys, we wouldn't say anything about the hootch in the trees! When I look at this old '41," Bill mused as he got in and slid behind the wheel, "it brings back a lot of great memories! I remember this steering wheel, the woodgrained dash and circular speedometer and clock, and there's the floor foot starter! I remember one of the cars had a circle horn ring, and the others just had a horn button."

"The Special Deluxe had the horn ring," Mick said, "and the woodgraining. They also had special door panels and the front floor mats had carpet inserts. They all had the 216 6 cylinder with a three-speed manual transmission."

"There was a popular TV show at that time called *Dragnet*. Do you remember that, Pop?" Bill asked. "Yes," Pop answered. "Jack Webb played Sergeant Joe Friday and his sidekick was Officer Frank Smith played by Ben Alexander. I think in the early years of the series they drove a '53 Ford."

"Anyway," Bill continued, "we would get in the old Chevy and pretend we were tracking down the criminals. I would drive because Butch never got the concept of gear shifting. He would start in first, making a high-pitched 'm-m-m-m' sound, and never changed the pitch. I kept telling him that he should make a lower pitched 'm-m-m-m' in second and third; if he didn't, he was going to blow up the car! It's funny how these old cars bring back such vivid memories."

As Bill got out, he asked Mick to show him the rest of the car. It was Black with Tan wool cloth interior with imitation leather accents. "It's the Special Deluxe Five Passenger Coupe," Mick told him. "This one has the front fender 'washboard' trim, radio, and trim rings. It has Chevy's dependable 216 and the horse power was bumped to 90 in '41—five up from 1940. It also has the 10 mm spark plug—not a real favorite at the time. But it's easy to drive and service, and I love the design and the new-for-'41 concealed running boards."

"I like your car," Pop said. "I heard that you're having some transmission trouble."

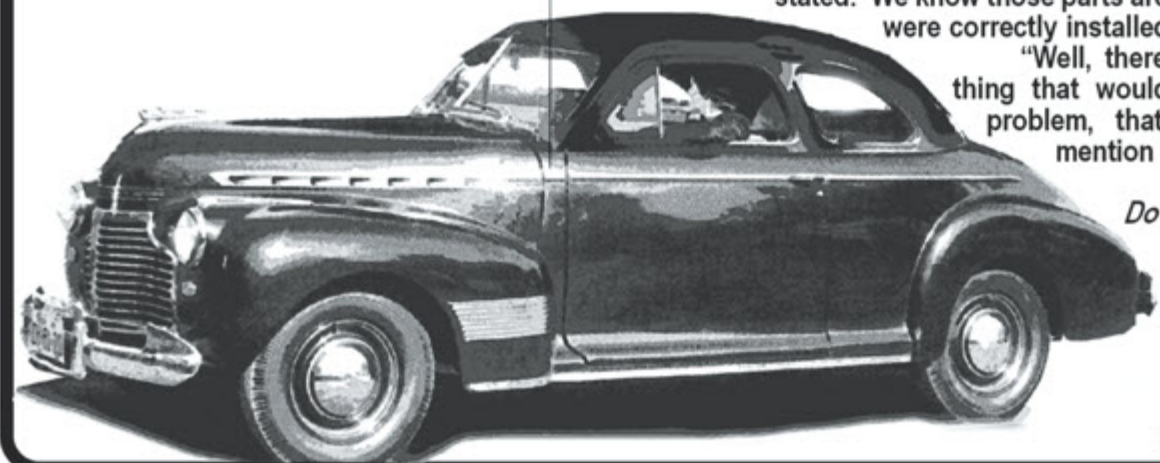
"Yeah, Pop," Mike replied. "The transmission is noisy in all gears."

"Do you have enough lubricant?" Pop asked.

"Yes, we refilled it after we replaced the counter gear, clutch gear, counter shaft drive gear and main shaft ball bearings. We refilled it with 1 ½ pints of SAE 90 transmission lubricant, as the manual stated. We know those parts are correct, and were correctly installed."

"Well, there's one more thing that would cause this problem, that you didn't mention replacing."

Do you know what it was?



(Answer on Page One)

EVENTS

TX: Salado, April 3-6, 2025, the 46th Annual Texas Packard Meet will again be held in historic Salado in the heart of the Texas hill country, sponsored by 4 Texas regions of the Packard Club. Welcoming party, early bird tour, parade to the public, show & swap meet, much more! Details and forms can be found at texaspackardmeet.org.

IA: Monticello, May 4, 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM, Fairgrounds parking lot, 700 North Maple St., Monti-

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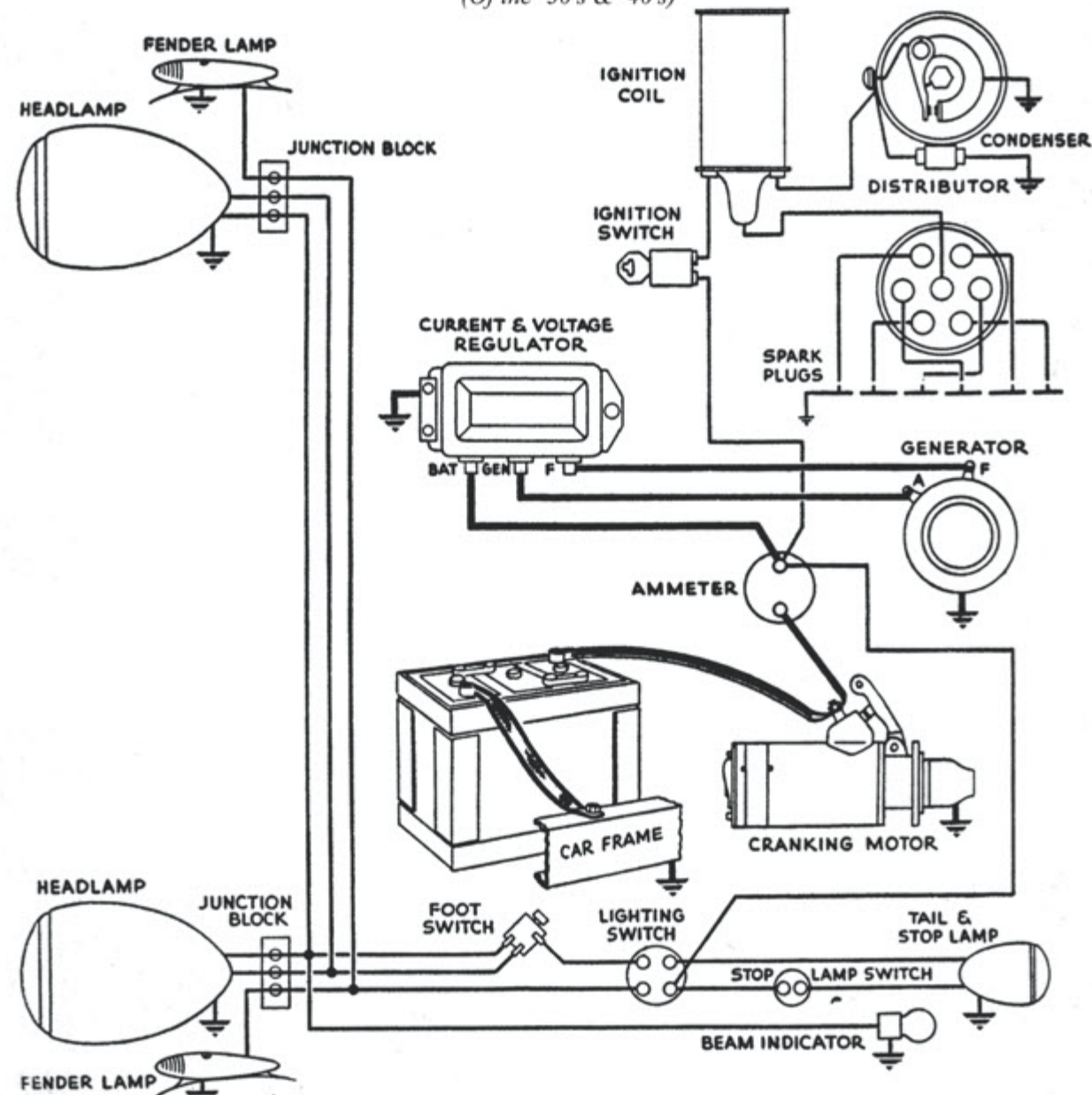
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