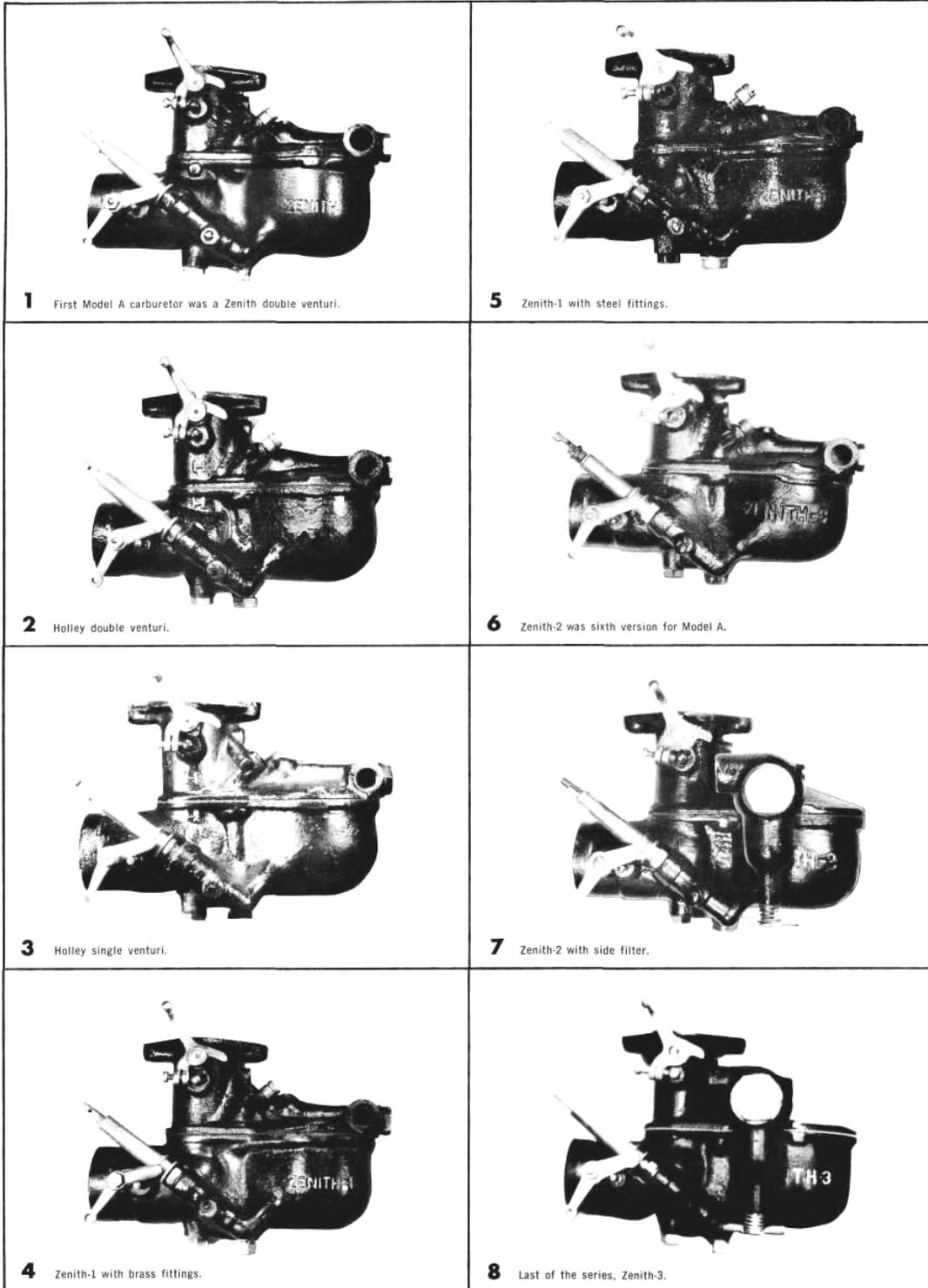




From the Garage

by Paul Hunter

MODEL A FORD CARBURETORS



This is intended for the restorer of trophy winning cars and for those simply interested in the various styles of Model A Ford carburetors used during the four production years of 1928 through 1931.

We are primarily concerned here only with external appearance. In other words: (1) what does a particular model carburetor look like, (2) when was it used on the Ford, and (3) how do they differ as we follow the succession of eight models used in those four years from 1928 to 1931. That's right, there were eight models.

The first model, a Zenith double venturi, was seen in September of 1927 on the first 1928 vehicles. Few of these are currently seen as they were only made for a few months. The name "Zenith" is seen on the bowl of the lower body while a letter "Z" is found on the throat of the upper body. All external fittings were made of brass. External fittings include the choke driver, the filter screen hex nut, the drain plug, air adjusting screw and cover, throttle lever, and the short choke lever. The gas adjusting needle housing is brass for all models. The bolt for the cast iron upper and lower bodies is steel along with the spring for the idle air adjusting screw and the idle speed adjusting screw.

Holley took over as a major supplier of carburetors for the Model A early in 1928. This the second model (Photo No. 2) continued until September 1928, duplicating the Zenith double venturi. Zenith markings changed to a letter "H" on the throat of the upper body and a letter "H" on the throat of the lower body.

The third model, also by Holley, retained the outer styling with a steel choke driver and internal changes made for single venturi operation. As the major changes are internal it may pass for the earlier double venturi model. However, the double venturi carburetor has a noisier rush of air as it enters the air horn of the carburetor. Experienced ears can detect the difference between the single and double venturi carburetors.

Our fourth model is identical to the Holley single venturi except for the marking "Zenith-1" on the side of the bowl and the letter "Z" on the throat of the upper body. These single venturi carburetors continued in use until May 1930. Zenith-1 is seen frequently because a great number were produced. It seems to be an excellent carburetor when properly restored.

1930 found Zenith-1 continued as the fifth model in the series of eight. While a few internal changes were made, the external appearance was changed by the use of steel (cadmium plated) external fittings in place of former brass fittings. The idle -

speed adjusting screw was increased in length from 1/2 to 5/8 of an inch, finishing the year 1930. 1931 brought Zenith-2 as the sixth model. Design remained the same as Zenith-1 with some internal change. The bowl of the lower body carried the "Zenith-2" marking while the letter "Z" remained on the throat of the upper body.

The seventh model is also marked "Zenith-2" but is only used on vehicles with the indented firewall to mount the gas shut-off valve inside the engine compartment. All earlier A's had the gas shut-off valve inside the car under the gas tank and the gas filter sediment trap mounted on the firewall inside the engine compartment. This second model of Zenith-2 had the upper body modified to mount the gas filter-sediment trap outside the upper body, eliminating the separate filter screen found inside earlier carburetors.

The last and eighth model is the Zenith-3. This carburetor duplicates Zenith-2 except for the marking "Zenith-3" along with thinner castings for the upper and lower bodies. It is not known if this final model was used for cars in production or simply sold as a Ford replacement part.

A study of the changes in carburetors as the various models appeared must lead to speculation that many changes were made due to a cost factor while some were aimed at improving performance.

This data is presented to help identify the proper model carburetor for use on your particular year Model A Ford. All the cast iron upper and lower bodies are painted black. The first four models used brass fittings except for the few steel items noted. About December 1928 a lower leg was added to the choke lever for a wire to be attached extending to the radiator, making it possible to operate the choke while cranking the engine by hand.

The last four models used cadmium plated steel external fittings. None of these fittings were painted and no carburetor should be considered as correct for judging at a trophy meet if brass and steel fittings are mixed; as would be the case with, say, a brass throttle lever and a steel choke lever or steel plug and brass filter screen hex nut. All carburetors use a steel bolt for the upper and lower bodies, a steel idle speed adjusting screw and a steel spring for the idle air adjusting screw. Except for very early models, a steel choke driver is used.

While many internal changes were made, only the external appearance has been considered here. Zenith and Holley carburetors are the only models which should be acceptable for judging purposes.

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