



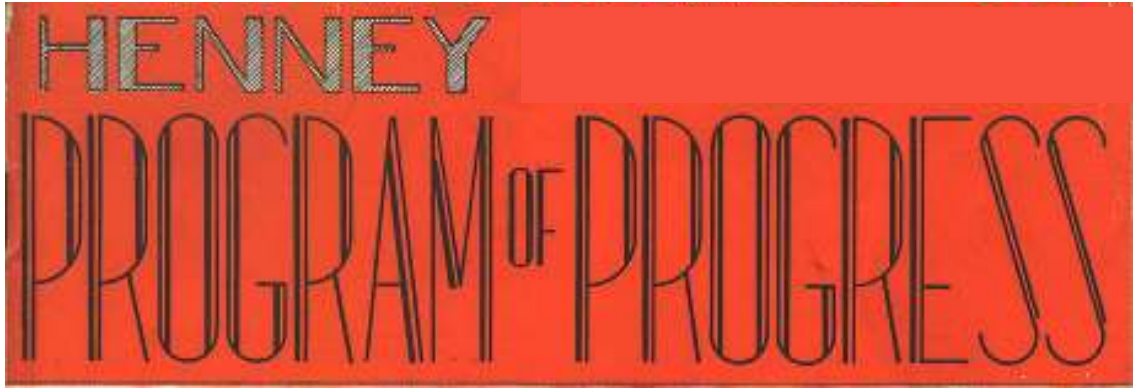
VOLUME 9, ISSUE 4

FOURTH QUARTER 2024

Published by the Henney Chapter, Professional Car Society, and dedicated to the history and products of the Henney Buggy Company and the Henney Motor Company

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## A major development for this hobby: AACA features hearses in its latest issue

Long-timers in the old-car hobby will recall that the most influential club of all, The Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA), began in 1935 with a limited view of what cars were acceptable. For a long time the age limit stayed prewar, eventually growing to 25 years; and there were just some cars they didn't like. Primary among those: hearses and ambulances. We have seen stiffnecks bar such cars from shows in the past.

Clubs have formed over the years due to AACA's unwillingness to include their cars: The Classic Car Club of America, the Milestone Car Society, the Contemporary Historical Vehicle Association and...The Professional Car Society.

As years went by, professional cars began to be admitted to shows: ambulances first, then hearses. This year the AACA museum has a special display, "Professional Vehicles: 100 Years of Service" at its museum. And what do you know: the Sep/Oct 2024 issue of *Antique Automobile* has an in-depth six-page feature, "Rest in Peace," tracing funeral-car history done by Matthew Hocker, AACA's librarian.

Much of the credit for AACA's change of opinion must go to our late President Bill Alexander, who spent some time seated on a Henney running board with a past AACA president, explaining our cars to him at a show a few years back.

## On the cover: a 1936 Henney for Colchester, Illinois

This 1936 762 Henney 120BA Packard is shown outside the Williams Funeral Home in Colchester, Illinois. The proud owner is Lindsey Williams at the time of the photograph's being taken.

The feature we noticed immediately on this coach is the left sidemount spare. That means dual sidemounts, as the standard location was starboard.

And yes, it is a sidemount spare, not a church-truck cover; we don't think that accessory had come out yet in 1936.

Normally in this space we cite the present status of the establishment; for the first time in a long while, we find no corporate descendant of the funeral home. There are 10 establishments on the Internet in Colchester—none of them is a Williams.



### THE HENNEY PROGRAM OF PROGRESS

George Hamlin, Editor

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Address all correspondence and contributions to the Chapter at:

P O Box 123  
Fulton MD 20759-0123

For further information on PCS, visit

[www.theprofessionalcarsociety.org](http://www.theprofessionalcarsociety.org)  
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## Welcome new member

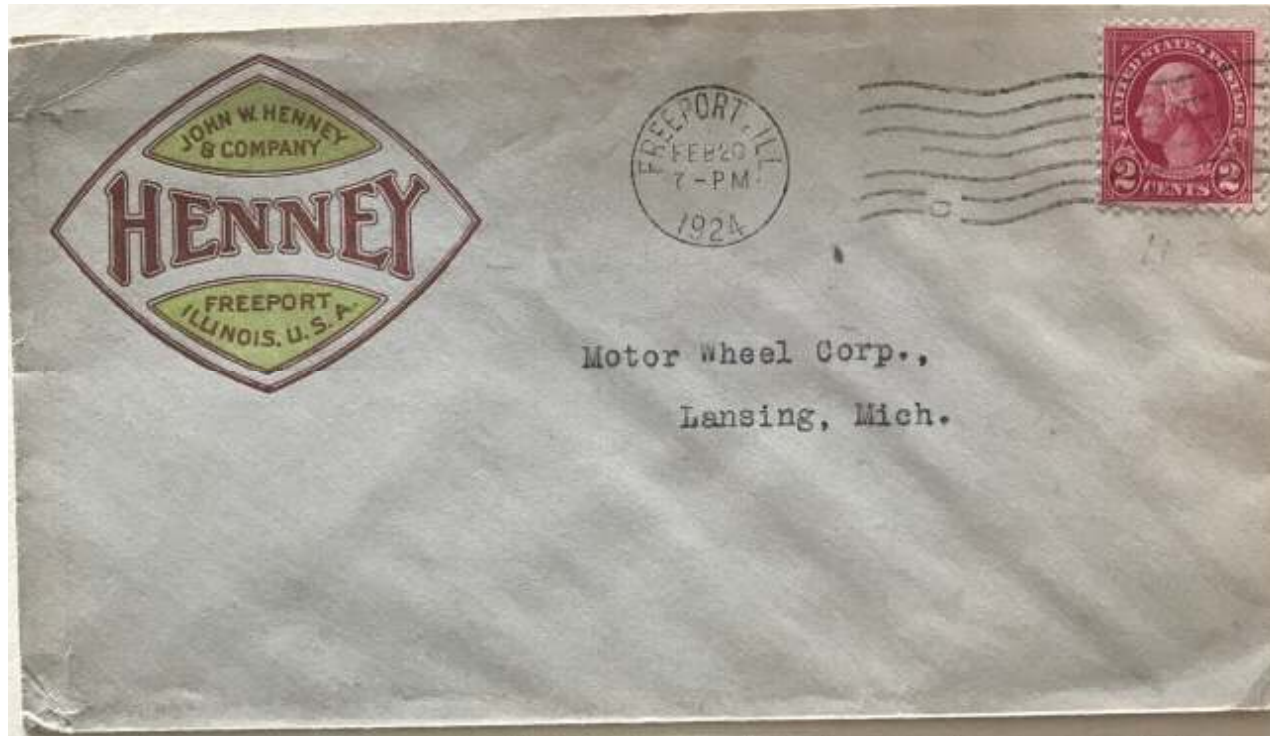
We don't get the chance to welcome new members to this organization (if that's the right word) all that often, so let's give a warm Henney welcome to:

Gary Comer  
P. O. Box 277  
Stanley VA 22851  
(640) 325-6012

Mr. Comer does not have a Henney (at the moment), though we noticed that his business card has a 1941 Henney on it—surely putting him in the upper echelon with all our other members, car owners or not.



## Envelope of the quarter



Betcha go to bed every night wondering where Henney got the wheels it used in its chassis, at least in 1924 when this envelope was post-marked. Everyone seems to think of Kelsey-Hayes first, especially in the Packard community, because it's an often-heard name. But in both

cases the answer is: Motor Wheel. Interesting that the company had sufficient presence that no further address was needed than "Lansing, Mich." Gee, postage costs 2 cents now; we've heard that they raise it to 3 cents soon, and that will really cost the company money.

## Letters

The flower car in the 3Q issue is a 1942, and was photographed at Stinson Funeral Home, Detroit.

Cary Livingston

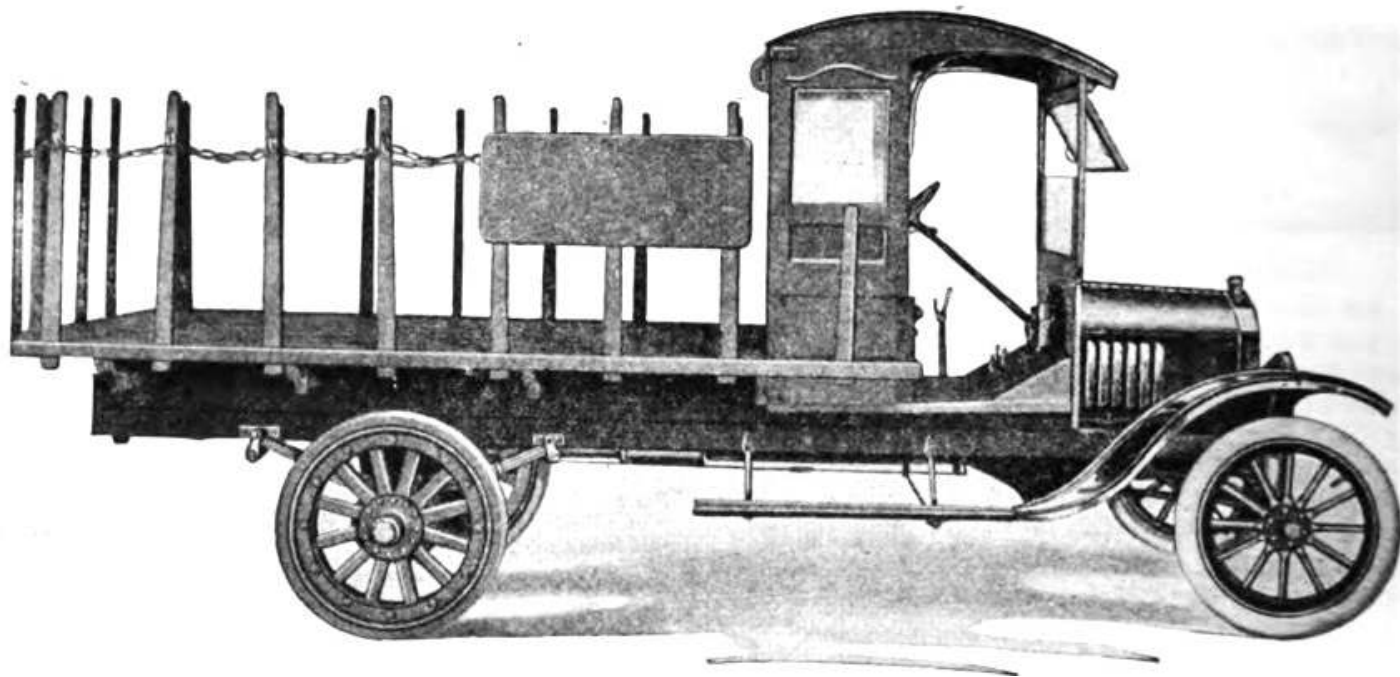
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Okay, 1942 makes sense to us when we look at the wheel covers. The two years 1941 and 1942 are pretty much identical from the side otherwise. Thanks.

Now for one that is definitely a 1941, and which blew us away, turn the page.



## Henney's new advanced truck bodies for 1917



Above is shown body no. 315, one of the many serviceable and convenient bodies manufactured by the Henney Buggy Branch of Moline Plow Co., Moline, Ill. This is one of the new bodies manufactured by the concern at the request of dealers from all parts of the country for a heavier truck body than any of those manufactured heretofore by the concern for the Model T Ford chassis. The line has been so standardized that one cab will fit all styles of Henney bodies. The attractive appearance and sturdy construction of the all-season cab top make it especially popular at this time of the year.

## Over-the-Transom Department a reeely long 1941



Okay, we'll admit to not having the slightest idea where this came from, what history accompanies it, what it was used for, whose it is now, or the condition it's in right this moment. It just came in through a lunch companion's email and he knew the Henney community would be impressed by the car. We are, for sure.

We should share the story, for newcomers, about the fact that the Henney factory's elevator wasn't large enough to bring these things down from final on the top floor, as they did with other (more, um, compact) cars; they brought down *body only and assembled these monsters in the front street.*

## From Jeremy Ledford: a long-ago Henney dealer

Was recently looking through Tom McPherson's book [Henney the Complete History](#) and saw a name listed within the dealer listings from the 1940s. Something I'd actually been meaning to do research on for some time now. It was for a one R. P. Gibbs listed as being a Henney Packard dealer located here in Lebanon, Tenn. So I decided finally to jump on this and see what I could find! Did a few quick simple Google searches, one being *R. P. Gibbs Lebanon, TN Henney Packard*. And lo and behold, I quickly had a solid hit! The hit was a copy of a Packard-issued General Service Bulletin dated September 20, 1948 with a subject line of Henney Distributors List. Within this listing on page 2 was information on Mr. R. P. Gibbs with the following information listed, R. P. Gibbs - 220 Cumberland Drive - Lebanon, Tennessee - Telephone: 633- (Eastern Kentucky to the western boundary of the following counties: Daviess, Muhlenberg, McLean and Todd.) All of the State of Tennessee with the exception of the following counties: Claiborne - Union - Knox - Sevier - Cocke - Jefferson - Grainger - Hamblen - Hancock - Hawkins - Sullivan - Washington - Unicoi - Carter - Johnson and Greene). Now that I had an address I thought I'd set out to see if I could find it, and I did! I found that the Gibbs home still stands today at 220 Cumberland Drive in Lebanon and ironically less than 200 yards from the site of the former Bland Casket Company and Dixie Coach Compa-

ny location sites! Kinda makes me wonder though with the proximity if Mr. B. W. Bland, owner of the casket company, may have had a silent hand in the Gibbs Henney dealership/agency? At this time, Bland was a dealership/agency for The Meteor Motor Car Company. Also I was able to find the final resting spot of Mr. R.

P. Gibbs and his wife Johnie Fae Gibbs in the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Lebanon. Mr. Reagan P. "Bob" Gibbs, a World War II Veteran, was born August 10, 1904 in Grimes County, Texas and passed away on September 5, 1975 in Nashville at the age of 71. His wife passed away in 1993 at the age of 88. Figured

this information, along with photos of the Gibbs home, along with photos of the final resting spot of Mr. Gibbs, would be of some historical interest being he was for a time the dealer and agent for the Henney Coach Company in Tennessee and Kentucky.



## Henneycare: vapor lock

We know: shoulda run this particular topic in the last issue, while the heat wave was upon us. Henneycare:

Your editorial staff first noticed vapor lock in 1950, during a travel up Pike's Peak. The roadside, after a certain altitude, was littered with Ford products. Okay, not littered exactly, but Ford products were the only ones stopped along the road up with their hoods up. What can this be, we asked. Vapor lock, was the answer. One of the leading automotive magazines treated this same topic a few years later, advising owners of such products to pull over, have a snack, and leave the hood open "to let the cool mountain air at the engine."

Now vapor lock is gasoline boiling away inside the fuel pump. These things can pump liquids readily, but not gases. Old Henry obviously located the fuel pumps in those products where they got too hot. Pouring cold water over the pumps would help, as will squirting gasoline right into the carburetor—as if everyone carried a little squirt jar of gasoline, although a recent issue of *Old Cars* did suggest that.

We had a 1940s Packard in high school that would occasionally pull that stunt—Iowa summers can be quite hot. This Clipper had the same engine as is in lots of the Henneys in this organization. A tip from another magazine cured it, if you're ready for it: put a wet grapefruit rind on the fuel pump, let it dry; it

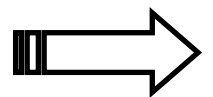
will stick there permanently and banish vapor lock. Having nothing to lose, we tried it—and never had vapor lock again.

If you cannot bring yourself to do something like that to your Henney: first make sure the deflector between the fuel pump and the exhaust manifold has not gone missing. Second, find something less makeshift than a grapefruit rind and stick that to the top of your fuel pump—a professional-looking layer of insulation maybe.

And finally: lose the clothespins and foil around the fuel line between the pump and the carburetor. Once the gasoline is pumping into that line, vapor lock isn't an issue. Vapor lock does not occur there; it occurs in the fuel pump.



## 1927 Henney catalog: the rest of the story



In our last issue we paused the feature-car program for a hard-to-find 1927 Henney catalog. Reaction to this feature was overwhelming to put it mildly, with some asking about the rest of the catalog. We did not have enough room in that issue for the whole catalog, so we concentrated on the pages showing

finished products; those shown this time present the manufacturing process.

The views presented in these factory photos truly give an impressive insight into the industrial operation that Henney created in Freeport.

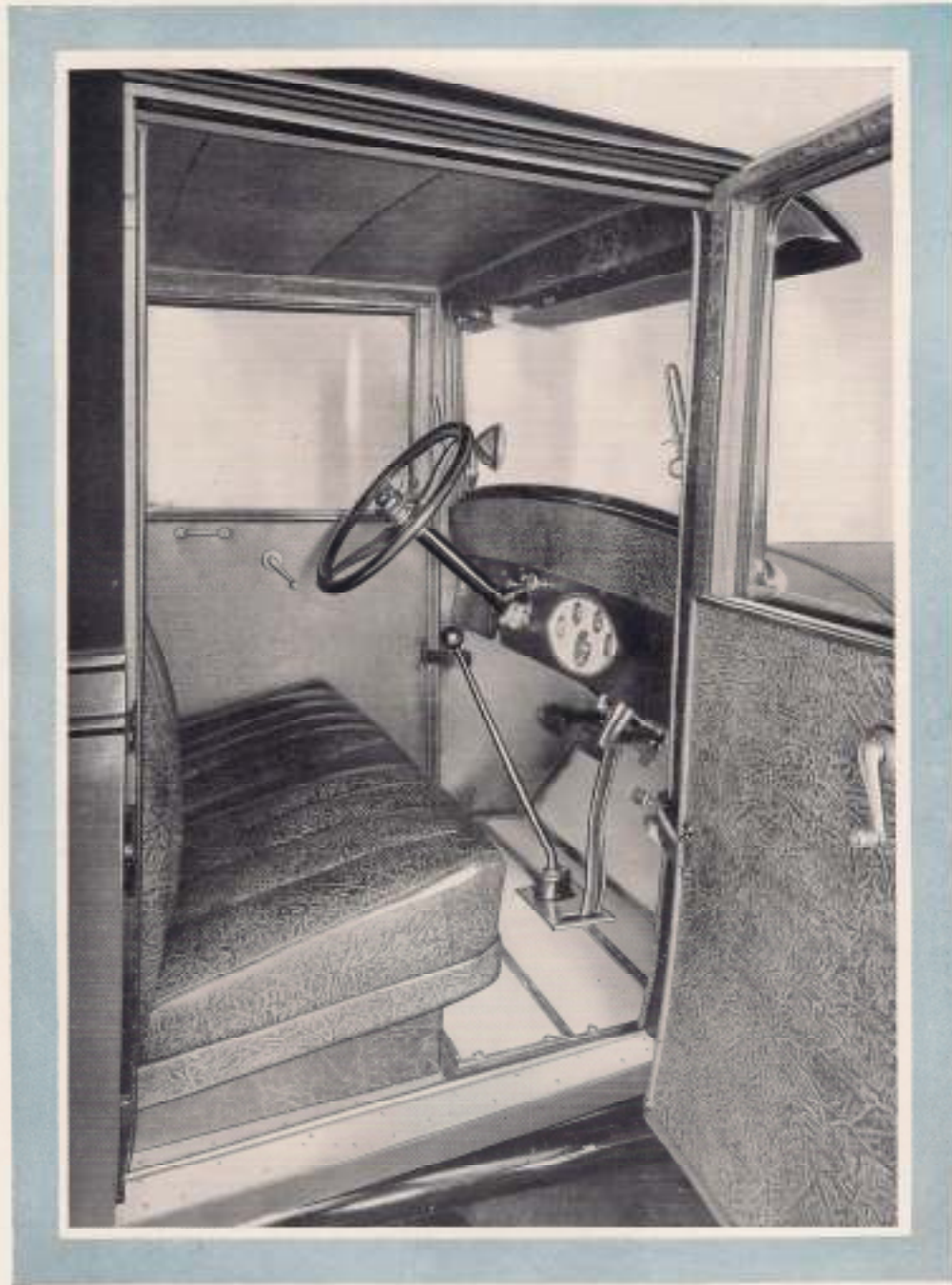
To the right is a partial view of the Final Chassis Assembly Department.



Center view below is a reception of the Body Equipment Department. Here Henry bodies are completed ready to be mounted on chassis.



In view on the left is a completed body being lowered onto the finished chassis—and made ready for final test and inspection.



*The driver's compartment of all Henney Cars is large and roomy, and provides the maximum of luxurious riding comfort. Any driver who has owned or driven other makes of funeral cars and the invariable answer will be "For comfort and convenience to the driver, Henney Cars excel any I have ever driven."*



Here is a view in the new and enlarged Henney plant showing a battery of Dry Kilns.

A view showing a corner of the Mill Room—modern woodworking machinery denotes the craftsmanship of Henney coachwork.



View at the left shows only a small section of our large Body Frame Assembly Section.



The view below shows the Peppery Mill Room—arranged to assist in Henney coachwork.

THREE important railroads have side tracks direct to the factory. The new Henney plant is specially designed for quality motorized vehicle manufacturing. The views on this page and the three pages following show only the most important departments.



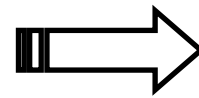
## See this hearse today in your Chevrolet

A recent issue of *The Professional Car* featured Chevrolet products, and at about the same time, a couple of pages from the *Chevrolet Dealers News* of July 1927 turned up. The lead article was, "There is a Hearse Prospect in Your Territory," and it admonished Chevrolet dealers to go after these prospects with a stunning product: the new Henney Chevrolet.

Now unfortunately the ravages of time and limitations of the copiers used in the transfer render the

story content illegible, but never fear: on a facing page was an ad run by John W. Henney & Company in that issue which uses the same car and IS legible. Obviously Henney knew this story was in the works and someone in Freeport was astute enough to place the ad.

We'd say, offhand, that even in 1927dollars, a new hearse for \$1509 wasn't a bad deal. A Ford Model A town car was \$1400, after all.



July 1927 CHEVROLET DEALERS NEWS 11

### There Is a Hearse Prospect in Your Territory

Are you going to wait until the undertaker calls you for a Chevrolet hearse or are you going to call on him? Perhaps you never knew that one of the biggest hearse body manufacturers was making Chevrolet hearses, perhaps the undertakers don't know a better. It's a beauty, too. Such a job being done in a community is an ever-

the completed job is comparatively low in price. Well within the average prospect's reach.

**Build Complete**

The Henney Company build the job complete and build there is sufficient volume to permit the low price and special terms they have adopted. There are possible pros-

its which is neither a truck chassis nor a pleasure car chassis, but a chassis that is suitable for this work, having the proper spring arrangement, proper wheelbase and, of course, the fine proven Chevrolet power unit.

It would be physically impossible for us at any other manufacturer to build complete such a unit at the price you can buy with fitted body. The chassis were purchased and the production arranged via volume buys.

The Chevrolet chassis are purchased from the local Freeport dealer, the frame retainer is made and the body mounted and shipped complete. We wish to make this price clear, so that if a dealer finds a prospect, he will understand the hearse complete is shipped, P. O. 4, Freeport, Ill. The continual advertising value of a Chevrolet hearse cannot be over estimated.



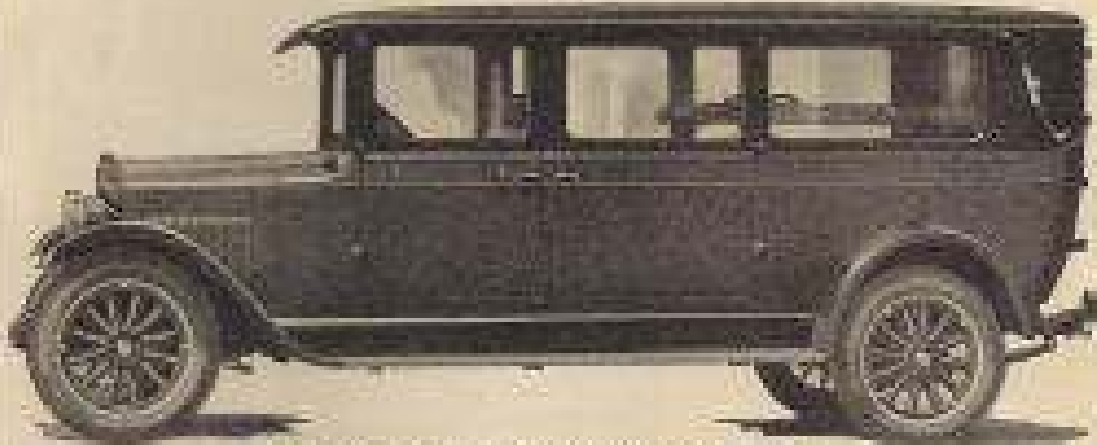
Chevrolet Hearse Body made in the shop, mounted on special chassis

July, 1927

CHEVROLET DEALERS NEWS

47

## Henney Limousine Hearse Mounted on Chevrolet Commercial Chassis



Price \$1,500, F. O. B. Freeport, Cash

*Deferred payments can be arranged at a slight additional cost*

**T**HE Henney limousine hearse mounted on a Chevrolet commercial chassis was developed by us after a very extensive study of the needs of the profession to which it is offered.

The advent of the limousine hearse has created in the smaller communities the desire for up-to-date equipment, but owing to the fact that their business is somewhat limited, the higher-priced model such as manufactured by us and other companies, has heretofore been out of their reach. Through volume, and volume only, we have now produced this equipment which places it within reach of all.

*There is a prospect in your city, town or territory.*

*Write to us for full information upon  
this wonderful selling opportunity.*

**JOHN W. HENNEY & COMPANY**  
FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

*Builders of Equipment of Distinction since 1868*

Printed by The Sun & Co. Freeport, Illinois, U.S.A.

## Raleigh was a good place to be from in 1941

If you needed an ambulance in this part of North Carolina in 1941, you had a choice: Mitchell's or Yelverton's. Either establishment offered the finest in ambulance transportation.

Mitchell, owner of the white 1941 at right, is still there, located next to Raleigh Memorial Park.



Yelverton's two-tone job at left cuts a nice picture too. Yelverton, now Thomas-Yelverton, is still there as well—as have been nearly all the decades-old funeral homes we have visited through their Henney ownership.

## You want one? Henney's got them

Geoffrey Hacker found this ad, from the *Freeport Journal Standard*. It is worth more than a glance because it shows a few things.

To start with, Henney was opening a new car showroom to bolster the bottom line. Secondly, this ad was dated 1949, which is VERY early to be selling imported cars. Thirdly, it presages Henney's future relationship with Renault—the car from which Feldmann made the Henney Kilo-watt over a decade later, after the professional-car business had failed, using a Dauphine with all its running gear stripped out.

A 1949-ish Renault 4CV is shown below.

*We invite the people of Freeport and Community  
to inspect the latest model*

**RENAULT**

**Saturday, March 19, 1949, 10:00 A.M.**

*These Cars On Display In*  
**Henney Delivery Building**  
Corner State and Spring Sts.

*Easy to park . . . Easy to handle . . . Easy to drive*

A motor car of modern design  
Direct from FRANCE

We shall exhibit two four-door sedans  
Engine mounted at rear  
Low gas mileage—40 to 45 miles per gallon

Models on display ready for immediate delivery and orders will be accepted for early delivery of a limited number of additional cars.

F. O. B. Freeport price including Federal and State Tax

**\$1395.00**

**Henney Motor Company, Inc.**  
Freeport, Ill.



## An insight into Henney's position in the 1940s

Alice Horner is one of our most valuable correspondents. An avid historian, she has been researching every aspect of Henney due to her father's position with the company, and sometimes we are lucky enough to receive some of what she finds.

Recently she came across some remarks Reid Horner made on 11 July 1946 to a group in Freeport known as the High-Twelve Club. This luncheon presentation dealt with the challenges the company faced when World War II suddenly upended the automotive industry.

Henney, like so many other firms, suddenly found itself making war materiel when its experience lay

almost entirely in automobile manufacturing and the traditional Henney products were not going to be made for the duration. Henney became, in essence, a machine shop. Packard helped, sending Henney some subcontracts, and the company found itself making trailers, bomb parts, and other unfamiliar products—not to mention, quickly training employees for skills they had not previously used.

After the war ended, it was suddenly back to the automobile business—but Packard's commercial chassis, last used for the 1942 models, was not in production because their product line had all gone to the Clipper design and Henney could not catch up until the 1948 models.

"The company," he told the High-Twelve Club, "is now producing the Packard limousine and has a large supply of orders. For the building of this car, a new 750-ton hydraulic press has been installed to press out door and other panels. Dies for these were made in the Henney plant.

"Doors are pressed out with a single die, although engineers had assured us two or three operations would be required. Packard cars probably will be in steady production by September, and hearses and ambulances in 1947."

Packard's giving Henney the limousine contract was an example of mutual cooperation, because otherwise Henney would not have had a product for close to two years.



## Stuff

Seems like, every day, we see more new cars that are high-polish gray. A look around the parking lot has produced up to 50% shiny gray cars sitting around. Times change; if you had painted your Henney gray a few years back, the next step would have to have been stenciling “U.S. NAVY” onto the doors.

£ @ ¥ Σ Ø †

Wasn't all that long ago, drivers were told to go down the road with hands at 10 and 2 o'clock on the steering wheel. Now, if you see someone doing that, the feeling is it's some coot with a death grip on the wheel; airbags now can break your arms if you do that, so the advice has become, 8 and 4 o'clock. But the fuzz would still prefer drivers they stop to have hands at 10 and 2.

‡ œ € ¥ ± Œ

We don't often discuss other makes of cars in this publication but this one is worth a chuckle. The Ford Mustang was introduced on 17 April 1964 *as a 1965 model*. Some car folks insist on calling it a “1964½ model” when Ford didn't; yes, they did some minor revisions in the autumn for the rest of the 1965 model year, but they were all 1965s. Trust us, we were there when the 1965 Mustang came out in April 1964. Comes now Hamilton Collection, which has invented a new mistaken terminology: “1964.5.” Sigh.

Hang onto your Henney: owners of 2005-10 Dodge Magnums and Chrysler 300s were recently told *not to drive their cars* pending an airbag fix. That directive was followed a few days later for certain 2004-14 Ford Fords, Lincolns, and Mercurys, then certain 2003-2015 Mazdas. The devices, they say, can cause serious injury with shrapnel. Sheesh.

♪ ♠ ♥ ♣ ♦ ♠

Observation: there was only one Henney at this year's Packard National Meet - and, interestingly enough, the same car turned up shortly afterward at the Studebaker event. But at the PCS International, the same low count: one (1) (uno) (1<sup>2</sup>) Henney. Mercy.

↔ ® ⊕ ∠ ζ № ∅

Allstate Insurance wins our “ridiculous commercial” contest once again. One of their current ads shows their spokesidiot going down the street suspended in midair, holding a trailer hitch in one hand and the trailer connector in the other. And lest you be tempted to do this, they warn: DO NOT ATTEMPT.

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We continue to solicit contributions for our feature-car segment. If you have a Henney you'd be interested in our featuring, get ahold of the editorial office; we'll tell you what we need.

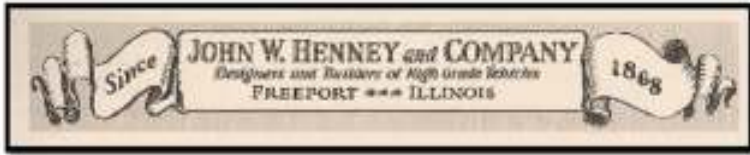
We are awash in commercials telling everyone to sign up for vehicle coverage if the car has fewer than 200,000 miles and is out of warranty. No age is specified in most of them, though some are now talking about a 20-year limit. We are waiting for someone to sign up a Henney in this program. Let us know what happens if Henney of you do.

§ # & ^ ¶ ¥

We are *so proud* of General Motors! For years they (and other car companies) have been advertising their engines' torque in foot-pounds. Now a foot-pound is a unit of work, not torque. That would be, pound-foot. The new GM commercials are now all citing their torque *in pounds-feet*. And to think it took only two letters to their advertising department.

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Under the heading of outrageous: a collector we know in California recently drew a ticket from the state fuzz for having an illegible license plate on the back. That would be, the plate issued by the state's licensing authority, manufactured for them in such poor quality that the California sun has caused it to fade. The owner is appealing the fine (!), but there have been many bureaucratic roadblocks and delays in getting a replacement plate. At this writing the owner has resorted to a sign in the windshield for the heat, saying, please don't ticket this car, we are trying to get a new plate.



HENNEY CHAPTER PCS  
P O BOX 123  
FULTON MD 20759-0123

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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