

The Tudor Basement

by Tom Endy, 2023

A number of years ago there was a company that offered a device called a Tudor basement that fit in a Model A Tudor and provided storage space under the rear floorboard. The storage compartment was made of sheet metal and straddled the torque tube. The floor board had to have a trap door cut into it that would open to allow access. The item was discontinued when the Model A overdrive came into being. The Tudor basement conflicted with an overdrive installation and fell out of vogue. Many Tudor basements were removed in favor of an overdrive.

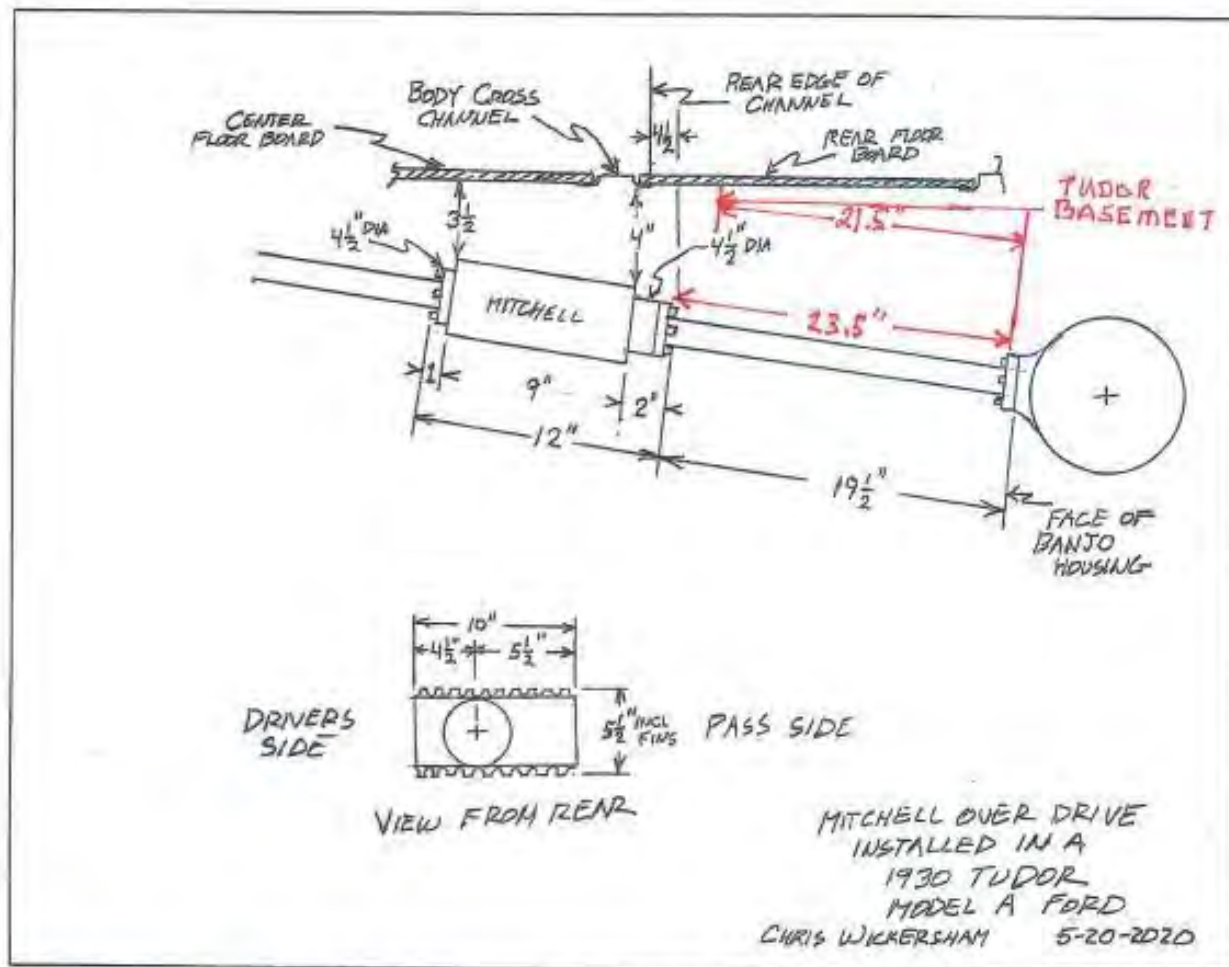
During the restoration of my grandson Ben's 1930 Tudor we definitely wanted to install a Tudor basement, we also wanted a Mitchell overdrive. It occurred to me that we could have both with a little ingenuity. A Mitchell overdrive configured for a Victoria body style has the gear box positioned in the drive train 4.5 inches further forward in order to clear the rear dropped floor pan. There could be enough room behind the gear box to fabricate a Tudor basement that would be compatible with the overdrive.

Chris Wickersham, the technical director for the Santa Anita A's, has a 1930 Tudor with a standard Mitchell overdrive in it. I asked Chris to send me some measurements, instead he sent me a detailed engineering drawing of the installation. The drawing is seen below. From his drawing we concluded that a Tudor basement installation with a Victoria configured overdrive was possible. We then constructed a basement out of cardboard to fit in the car and to clear all the other obstacles. When we were satisfied with the cardboard construction we took it to a sheet metal shop and had the Tudor basement fabricated from sheet metal, and hoped it would be compatible with a future Mitchell overdrive installation. When the overdrive was eventually installed we were pleased to see it fit as desired. In fact there was two inches of clearance at the front, we could have increased the length of the basement by one inch and still have had enough clearance. In Chris' drawing below, the red lined dimensions show how the gear box of a Victoria configured Mitchell overdrive and the fabricated Tudor basement relate.

March 9, 2020

Ben's 1930 Tudor when it was first acquired and the restoration began. By December 31, 2022 the restoration was complete and the Tudor has both a basement and a Mitchell overdrive.





This diagram sent by Chris Wickersham shows the dimensions of a standard Mitchell overdrive installed in a 1930 Tudor. We are anticipating installing a device called a Tudor basement in Ben's car, which is essentially a dropped floor pan tool compartment. It would be located under the floor board in front of the back seat. The concern is if it would conflict with the eventual installation of a Mitchell overdrive.

My conclusion is that if a Mitchell overdrive was ordered for a Victoria it would position the housing 4.5 inches further forward (25 inches instead of 19.5 inches) and it would be well out of the way of a basement installation.

Photo of a Tudor basement that was marketed some while back.





This photo shows the sheet metal fabricated Tudor basement installed in Ben's 1930 Tudor. The basement is sitting on the metal rails that the floorboard attach to. The floorboard was placed over it and the mounting screw holes were marked on the basement. With the holes drilled out in the basement, the mounting screws go down through both the floorboard and the basement. The basement was later painted black inside and out.



This photo shows the floorboard installed with the trap door cut into it. The piano hinge and the pull handle were procured from Home Depot.

The rear axle assembly with Victoria configured overdrive can be removed and installed with the Tudor basement in place.



This photo shows the trap door open. The Tudor basement is a great place to carry tools, some spares, and a place to hide things. A carpet will cover the floorboard.



After the car was reupholstered the basement is completely hidden by the carpet. If prohibition ever comes back it will be an excellent place to hide booze when transporting it across a state line.