

The Transmission Hook

by Tom Endy 2023

The early Model A's had a U-joint housing design that incorporated a "hook" in the top clamshell casting. It was discontinued in March of 1929 for reasons unknown. The hook curves over the top of a cross section of the frame, but does not touch it, it sits a small distance above. Model A enthusiasts have debated its purpose ever since. Some believe it was to keep the drive train from bottoming out going over a bump, others believe its purpose was to allow the engine to be removed from the car at the bell housing and the hook would drop down and engage the frame section and keep the bell housing and transmission in position. Some even believe it stops the engine and transmission from bouncing up and down when you let the clutch out.

I have my own theory. I think old Henry did it for one reason only, to confuse and confound the next 100 years of Model A enthusiasts. The early U-joint housing with the hook has an off-set bolt pattern so they can only be bolted up to the transmission rear bearing retainer with the hook facing up. The early rear bearing retainer also has an off-set bolt pattern. When Henry discontinued the hook he made the bolt pattern symmetrical on both later components. This has caused confusion in the Model A kingdom ever since.

All early and late transmission rear bearing retainers will bolt up to all early and late transmission housings, but you have to know which U-joint housing you are bolting up or all the holes won't line up. This is why a set of U-joint housing gaskets have two of the holes elongated, to accommodate either installation

It does not matter what year your car is, the thing to pay attention to when replacing the transmission is to make sure the rear bearing retainer on the replacement transmission matches the U-joint housing installed on the car.

I have pulled countless rear ends out of Model A's over the years and found only four of the six mounting bolts installed because the rear bearing retainer on the transmission did not match the U-joint housing installed.



The early transmission hook.