



WHAT THE HECK  
YEAR IS MY Willys,  
Anyway? ®

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## To All Willys ENTHUSIASTS . . .

The following booklet you are holding and the accompanying tape is meant to be a guide only in determining and deciphering the car, parts, and pieces you may have for your 1937 - 1942 Willys project. It is not meant to be a "cast in stone" rule sheet for a 100% correct restoration. Willys information has been difficult for me to obtain. I hope this provides you with needed assistance and that you have a lot of fun with your project.

Tom

THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED AS A GUIDE ONLY,  
TO DECIPHER WHAT YEAR WILLYS YOU MAY  
HAVE FOR THE 1937 THROUGH 1942 FAN.

## ===== 1937 - 1938 =====

1937 Willys are probably the easiest to determine. They had no exterior drip rails. With the exception of some early 1938 Willys, only this year had a larger rear wheel opening than the 1938 through 1942 Willys. Only the 1937s used a one piece inside windshield frame. 1938 through 1942 models all used a two piece upper and lower frame with a small metal connector clip covering the split on each side. Also, in that split on the 1938 - 1942 models there is a wood splint to line up the frames.

The 1937 model used a dual scissors type hood hinge built into the cowl on each side. They tended to rust and stick. 1938-1942 Willys used the single piano hinge in rear center of the hood.

1937s used internal trunk hinges. 1938 through 1940 used internal and exterior hinges. All coupes used internal hinges.

The 1937s had smooth exterior door handles with no character lines stamped in.

The 1937 to 1938 models all use 100" wheel bases.

Exterior door handles to door skin mounting bases are round in 1937 to 1940 Willys.

The 1941 - 1942 models used tear drop shape in this area.

1937 to 1942 Coupe doors will interchange. Also, all 1937 to 1942 sedan doors will inter-

change with the exception of the rear 1941 - 1942 doors. They have a small radius near the back lower edge that earlier models do not have.

Pickup taillights in 1937 - 1942 were actually car taillights turned sideways and mounted under the extreme rear box corner posts. Standard pickups used one only. Deluxe trucks used two, one on each side.

1937 through 1938 rear license plates mounts are located on the extreme left side of the deck lids actually hanging over the top of the drivers side taillight for illumination of the plate. This held true for coupes and sedans.

Front sedan doors for 1937 to 1942 models will fit on pickups if the top rear corner of the sedan door skin is rounded off to fit the pickup opening. The rest of the door is the same door.

1937 - 1938 Willys had the so called "frog eyed" front fenders with the round headlights. Also, the front fenders bolt together and touch under the front point of the hood. If the hood latch is still on your car, it should be a T-handled affair with the word "Willys" cast right into it. 1937 - 1938 pickups also used this front end.

1937 - 1938 dashes were quite curved both left to right and up and down. They used two large round gauges in the center of the dash. They had two opening glove box doors on both sides. They are very large and come up very close to the bottom of the windshield frame.

All 1937 to 1940 models had the windshield wipers above the windshield.



The 1937 to 1942 Willys had VIN # tags located on the right cowl just ahead of the passenger door. The numbers on this tag should correspond with the small tag centered on the front frame cross member facing forward located below the radiator.

1937 to 1940 coupe and sedan rear fenders are inter-changable. These fenders will fit on a 1941 - 1942 coupe body, but with some differences. Note: some of the mounting holes are slightly different in location. The gas filler is in the body on 1937-40. On 1941 - 42's the filler is located in the rear fender.

In 1937 - 1940 rear body sections there are relief notches for the rear bumper brackets to clear. On 1941 - 1942's these notches are in the very bottom inside corners of the rear fenders.

1938's I believe, first started using character lines stamped in exterior door handles.

1937 Willys were available in a coupe, pickup, four door body style. 1938 was available in a coupe, pickup, four door sedan, and a two door sedan version which basically was a four door with the rear doors welded shut in the factory. I believe these were also offered in the 1939 and 1940 models.

Flat trunk lids were used on 1937-38 sedans. These models also had cable operated mechanical brakes. The wheels used 4 bolts, Vega wheels bolt right on. In the 1937-38 Willys line, the pickup front ends are the same as the cars.

The 1939 model Willys were called "Willys Overland" or just "Overland." Both the 1939 and 1940 models sported a 102" wheel base.

The 1939 models are sometimes called the "Sleepy Eye" Willys because of their triangle shaped headlight lenses.

They used no side chrome except for an unusual model manufactured for two years in, of all places, Van Nuys, California. It was supposedly cheaper to send pieces of Willys by rail to the coast, then finish assembling them there for sale to western dealers. Willys produced 1939s and 1940s at this plant and a special model called a "California Special" that had quite a bit of chrome on it. I believe the plant was closed in early 1941.

The front end design on the 1939s was used for only one year. They had a very small center section located between the front fenders and below the hood. The center section contained two rows of horizontal louvers with a square spoon handle for a hood latch and also a crank hole to turn the motor over by hand!

1939 model front fenders were actually two piece units with the headlight pod being separate from the fender, but spot welded permanently into it.

The 1939 pickup front ends are of special note in that at first glance they look like the 1937-38 car front ends except they also use a special two piece fender as was described above. However, the pickup only used the round headlight lenses. Most people do not realize these fenders, even though they appear the same as the 1937-38 car fenders, are a slightly longer fender to accommodate the 102" wheel base of the 1939 models.

Dashes in the 1939 - 1940 models are identical in shape, but the 1939s had two large round gauges in the center, much the same as the 1937 - 38 dash gauges. The deluxe 1939s had a rectangular instrument cluster in place of the round gauges. I believe all 1940's used the rectangular cluster. 1939's and 1940's used two square small flat glove box doors on each side of the dash. Only the passenger side opened.

The 1939 - 1940's came standard with flat decklids on sedans, but a bubbled decklid was offered by Willys supposedly for more luggage carrying capabilities.

Rear license plate mounts in 1939 - 1940 models are located in the center of all decklids with a small housing under the plate with a light inside to illuminate the plate. This held true for all coupes and sedans.

1939 - 1940 models used hydraulic brakes.

The 1939 to 1942 models used 5 bolt wheels. Ford and Plymouth wheels bolt on, 4 1/2" bolt circle.

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## 1940

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1940 front ends are similar to 1941's and 1942's and, I believe, the front fenders are interchangeable. The grill center section between the fenders is different. It supports two small individual chrome grills with horizontal bars. The 1940 hood is different in the latch area than the 1941's - 1942's. 1940 pickups also use this front end.

The headlights on 1940's are oval tear dropped shaped.

1940 model pickups shared the car front sheet metal.

For the most part, on 1940's all other features are the same as 1937, 1938's and 1939's.



## 1941 - 1942

The 1941 to 1942 Willys were called "Americars."

They are virtually the same. All had the windshield wipers below the windshield. Also, the coupes and pickups had a character line stamped in the body below the windshield. On four door sedans the character line goes all the way around the windshield. The 1941 - 1942 sedan windshields, for some reason, are taller than all other 1937 - 1942 Willys.

Front ends on the 1941 1942 models are the same and use a one piece grill in the center section with vertical grill bars. Pickups also use the same front, but the vertical chrome bar on the hood front says "Willys" instead of "Americar."

The 1941 - 1942's use a 104" wheelbase.

Exterior door handles to door skin bases on 1941 - 1942 models are tear dropped shaped.

1941 - 1942 Willys were available in coupe, pickup, or four door sedan.

The 1941 - 1942 sedan rear doors, rear fenders and deck lids fit no other Willys models.

In the 1941 - 1942 models the gas filler is in the rear fender.

Sedans from the dash rear-ward are all by themselves in the 1941 - 1942's. Nothing off the back section of these bodies fit anything else .

## ===== MISCELLANEOUS =====

1. All Willys of this era had flat across windshields. I.E. Ford, Chevy, Mopar had two piece peaked windshields.
2. All years four door sedans front doors will fit pickups if you radius the top outside rear corner door skin.
3. Front clips will interchange, but wheel bases may not line up.
4. Firewall fronts had slightly different shapes year to year.

I hope this helps you with your present or future project. I do not claim to be a Willys expert, but I have made note of the ones I have come in contact with and would like to share my knowledge with you.

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