

It's all about the NUMBERS.....

1968 was the 1st production year of the Hurst/Olds. 500 of these special cars were to be built. 500 was the magic number to be considered a production car to allow racing at the dragstrip in those classes. This number was increased at some point of production. An additional 15 H/O's were built to satisfy the sales orders from the "world's largest Oldsmobile dealer", Story Oldsmobile in Lansing, Michigan.

Karl Sarpolis, the H/OCA 1968 H/O advisor has done a fantastic job of collecting data on these cars through the years. He has written several articles providing valuable information on correct casting and part numbers, what options were used, etc. If you have any questions about those details OR you have a 1968 Hurst/Olds and haven't contacted him with the details of your particular car, please do. His contact information is on the back cover of the Thunder & Lightning. The more information we have, the more we learn about the cars.

A few years ago the complete Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) list surfaced. This was located at the Demmer facility where the Hurst conversion was completed. The list not only included the VIN but it also had the dealer and state to which the H.O was shipped, the date it was shipped and the order the cars were completed at Demmer. This information has been entered into a computer program (sometimes computers are great!) that allows us to sort the data.



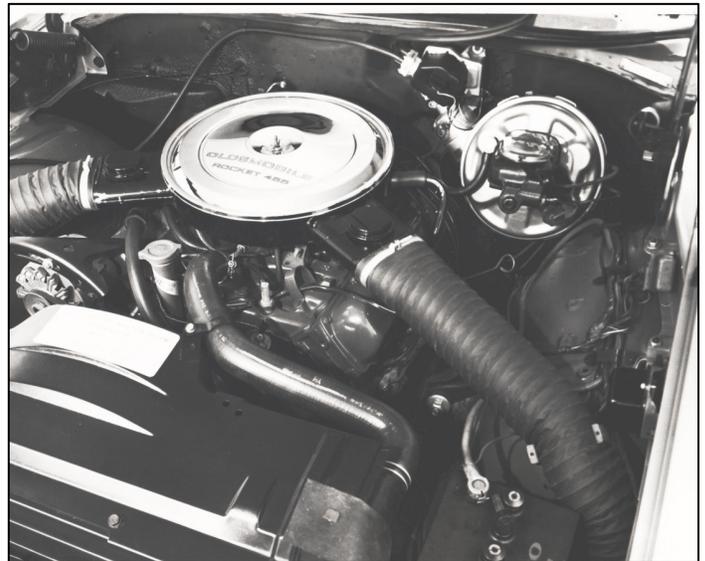
68 H/O's getting converted at Demmer

The first car was shipped 5-24-68 and the last car was 7-12-68. There is 1 exception to the "last" date. One car, car #225, wasn't shipped until 9-13-68. This could have been a typo, but we have no way to confirm the information. During the 48 day period of the

conversions, H/O's were shipped out on 33 days. Weekends and the 4th of July would account for the remaining 15 days. The most cars were shipped on July 3, 1968. A total of 29 were shipped on that day.

Back in 1968 it was easier to accomplish projects at GM than it is now, or so it appeared. There is a lot of organization that goes into a project like the conversion of the H/O. Some facts were obvious:

1. The Hurst conversion would not take place at the Oldsmobile assembly line. Olds was in the business of making cars quickly, not doing extra "conversion" work. The local (Lansing) Demmer facility would fit the needs and of course John Demmer was very willing to participate in the project.
2. GM had a corporate policy of NO engines over 400 cubic inches in the "A" body (Cutlass for Olds) cars. The H/O's were all to be fitted with 455cid engines. The paperwork called for this conversion to be done at Demmer, off the GM land. Demmer was not equipped to handle this kind of work so..... while the corporation looked the other way, the 455 BIG BLOCK was installed in 515 special cars.



455 engine in a 68 H/O

3. Before any of this could happen, the "bean counters" had to make sure this was going to benefit the company. Cost estimates were prepared on 3-28-68 by the Hurst group with a target profit of \$50 per car. The estimates below are based on 500 units (the original number of H/O's to be built).

DESCRIPTION	COST
A. facility requirements	\$ 8100
B. equipment requirements	6385

C. supply requirements	7709
D. personnel requirements	18,700
E. automotive components (parts)	65,600
F. promotions and advertising	10,350
G. outside labor (strips/shipping)	17,000
H. target profit (based on 500 units)	<u>25,000</u>
TOTAL COST	\$158,840
COST PER UNIT	\$317.68

Hurst further promised in this proposal that no car would be outside of the Oldsmobile lot for more than 6 days. They also guaranteed they would be 100% inspected before leaving Demmer. The conversion at Demmer would include the following:

1. Remove the factory shifter
2. Assemble and install Dual-Gate shifter
3. Drill emblem attaching holes in fenders NOTE- this was changed to applying with double-sided tape.
4. Attach cold air induction scoop extensions NOTE- this was later eliminated.
5. Mask car for custom paint
6. Prepare body surface for paint
7. Remove wheels and tires
8. Paint vehicle including brakes (Hmmm!!!!)
9. Re-install wheels
10. Remove masking material
11. Rub-out paint
12. Pin-strip vehicle
13. Install emblems
14. Install instrument panel decoration
15. Clean vehicle
16. Place vehicle literature in glove compartment
17. Place dealer brochures in trunk compartment
18. Check engine tune and transmission function
19. Final inspection
20. Ship vehicle



Hurst/Olds decal being applied to dash

Hurst planned to convert a minimum of 10 vehicles per day, with the total project lasting 2 ½ months. Now wasn't that easy!!!!!!

For the final bit of trivia, where did they go? We were always told only the BIGGEST dealerships would get 2 cars. However, the list shows several dealerships got more than 2. Story Olds was the exception with a total of 15. If you look at the list you can see he only got 3. BUT, I know Story owns several dealerships in the country under different names. I can find where he had 15 H/O's sent to his many dealerships. He may have even had more than I can determine. Additionally, Yates Olds in St. Louis, Missouri and Bob Moore Olds in Wichita, Kansas each got 10 H/O's delivered to their dealerships. As for the state breakdown, here we go: AL -3; AR -2; AZ -3; CA -37; CO -11; CT -7; FL -18; GA -10; IA -13; IL -18; IN -24; KS -11; KY -4; LA -10; MA -4; MO -3; MI -29; MN -16; MO -16; MS -3; MT -2; NC -9; NE -8; NJ -19; NM -4; NY -34; OH -31; OR -11; PA -26; SC -6; TN -9; TX -45; UT -5; VA -9; WA -10; WI -15; WV -4. 10 cars did not have their destinations listed. 12 states did not get any H/O's and Texas received the most at 45.

As a final note on the subject of the 1968 numbers, a discussion via email took place last year about the emblems used. A new set of original emblems appeared and they are different from the current reproductions. The originals have a different number of grid lines than the reproductions. The question was why did they make them different. This concerned me since the current reproductions were made from my original emblems off our car. A lot of emailed photos were exchanged but no definitive answer was reached. Both sets of emblems in question appear to be originals. Fusick Automotive did an excellent job replicating the emblems from our set. The only answer I could come up with was they used 2 different vendors to make the emblems. Perhaps multiple vendors submitted samples and that could be the difference. The possibilities are numerous. One set of emblems has 11 grid lines and one set has 14.



And there you have it, it's all about the numbers!