

It's All About the NUMBERS.....

By Judy Badgley

The 1969 Hurst/Olds hit the streets and the strips 40 years ago this year. They were as outrageous to see as their predecessor, the 68 H/O was understated. Their bold hood scoops and spoiler along with the gold stripes made them a "head turner" and people everywhere noticed them. The same is true today. They are the most recognizable H/O on the road.



When Oldsmobile builds a car they have some identifying numbers attached to the cars. Then in 1969 you add in the numbering used for the Hurst/Olds. The H/O's were not built in consecutive order. They were built mixed in with the other Cutlass's, 442's, etc. Some of this numbering is confusing and has caused some questions over the years. I would like to use this article to clarify some of the procedures for numbering the 1969 Hurst/Olds.

In Lansing, the Oldsmobile car assembly starts at the Fisher Body plant. This is where the bodies (not including the front-end assembly) are built and assembled. Anything that affects the body is done there. This includes brackets for bucket seats, floor shifters, T-tops, interior trim, etc. At this plant, there is a tag attached to the firewall. The Fisher Body tag is located in different places in different years. The 1969 tag is located on the driver's side on the upper cowl. These are not always easy to see, remember they are put there before the front-end assembly, including the hood is attached. The information on this tag is related to paint, interior trim, some options, etc.

for the assembly work done at the Fisher Body plant. An example of a 1969 H/O cowl tag reads as follows:

Body by Fisher
 ST 69 33687LAN 340175 BDY
 TR 930 50 50 PNT
 03E

Decodes as:

ST 69	1969 model year
3	Oldsmobile
3687	Cutlass V8
	Holiday Coupe
LAN	Lansing plant
340175 BDY	Body sequential #
TR 930	Trim, bucket seats
50 50 PNT	White paint upper & lower body
03E	Build date 3 rd month (March), 5 th week (E)

The Fisher Body sequential NUMBER in this case is 340175.

The Fisher Body trim shop also applied the Vehicle Identification NUMBER (VIN) on the dash with special pop rivets and installed it before the windshield is installed. The VIN was not the same number as the Fisher Body sequential number because the VIN is a sequential number for the Main Assembly plant. From the point the dash with the VIN was installed in the body, the cars

remained in the sequential position they were in for the remainder of their assembly.

During the assembly at Fisher Body, the body was attached to the frame / chassis. The frame was also stamped with the VIN. The location for this stamping was usually on the outside edge of

the frame, on the driver's side, and behind the rear wheel. It was not uncommon for the factory workers to stamp the frame several times, but there was a mandate in each year to have a stamping in a particular designated location. Police use this stamping to help with identifying stolen cars.

In 1969, the Hurst/Olds was based on the 442 model. However, the 442 line did not require anything different from Fisher Body from the regular Cutlass, so the 442 numbering code was not on the Fisher tag but is in the Oldsmobile assembly VIN. That is where the 442 components were installed.

DECODING THE VIN TAG 1969 Hurst/Olds

3 4 4 8 7 9 M 3 4 0 9 4 4

- 3-** designates Oldsmobile Division
- 44-** designates the 442-hardtop body style
- 87-** designates Holiday coupe, a 2-door hardtop,
- 9-** designates the year, 1969
- M-** designates the assembly plant Lansing, MI
- 340944-** Oldsmobile sequential numbers assigned to the car for final assembly

Once the body is completed, it traveled by truck to the Oldsmobile Main Assembly Plant. This is where

most vehicles finished being assembled. Many of the major components for the vehicle also carried the VIN and all of these components arrived to the assembly line in the correct sequence to be installed in the vehicle. This includes the front-end assembly complete with the hood.

Confused? Keep reading....

The finished vehicles that were designated to become a Hurst/Olds were then trucked to the Lansing Demmer plant for the rest of the Hurst conversion by Hurst Performance. The white-bodied cars that arrived from Olds were unloaded into a parking lot and not kept in any particular order. Then they went into the building for their transformation. Here they were scooped, spoiled, striped, the shifters installed and any other items that were part of the Hurst conversion.



'69 H/O's at the Demmer facility

Twelve years ago, an employee of Demmer came to our auto repair shop. He was carrying 2 shoeboxes of shipper receipts. They were the paper receipts used when the 69 H/O's were shipped to Demmer and when they left Demmer. They had the VIN on the receipt, but were not in any order. The man said we could have the boxes for 2 weeks, but then he had to put them back in the closet at Demmer where he had found them. Does this sound like a secret plot or what?!!!! Kurt Karch and Kevin Korff came to the rescue and organized them by the VIN listed and recorded them. There were VIN's for 553 cars of the 906 built. As it turned

out, there must have been another shoebox of receipts someplace. At any rate, we have positive proof of the VINs for most of the cars.

These shipper receipts also had a NUMBER on them that Demmer assigned to them to track the car's arrival, progress and departure. Kurt, who is the 69 H/O advisor, organized a registry of the 69 H/O's owners. He supplies those people with the Demmer number of their car if it is on the list. He also has a form for those owners to fill out with the numbers of various components from their car to study how these cars were assembled. Kurt has written several interesting articles for the Thunder & Lightning about his findings.

When the completed vehicles left Demmer, Hurst included printed information with the cars on how to use the shifters and where to get service parts. There was also an index size card included. This was to

be filled out by the original purchaser and sent to Hurst Performance, in Warminster, PA to register the car. In exchange for sending the card to Hurst, the owner received a 1"x 4" brass plaque with their name and a number.

The information asked for on the card was pretty complete, however when Hurst recorded this

information that didn't take the time to record ALL of the information. The non-recorded information included the VIN. The purpose of the registration card was to create a mailing list for Hurst Products.

Registration card included with a 69 Hurst/Olds

The H/OCA Research Library has a copy of the compiled registration list and the original owners. Upon examination of this information it is apparent that the procedure for registering the cars was as follows.

1. Collect all of the cards that arrived during a designated time period.
2. Alphabetize the names of the owners on the cards.
3. Assign a sequential NUMBER as they were alphabetized for that period.
4. Engrave the plaque and mail it.

This numbering procedure had no relation to any of the previously assigned numbers.

Are you still with me? Now, the 1969 H/O's had 4 NUMBERS assigned to them. The Fisher Body numbers, VIN sequential number, the Demmer conversion order and finally the Hurst registration number.

NOTE- The numbering used in this article is from our own 1969 Hurst/Olds which is currently displayed at the R. E. Olds Museum in Lansing.

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|-----------|---------------|
| 1. 340175 | Fisher body # |
| 2. 340944 | Olds VIN |
| 3. 76 | Demmer # |
| 4. 31 | Hurst # |

Next time you see 1969 H/O with a number 236 (just an example) for sale, you can ask them which NUMBER they are referring to!

Dear Mr. Hurst/Olds Owner:

Congratulations on being one of the select few who owns a 1969 Hurst/Olds. Please fill out this card so we can send your personalized owner name-plate by return mail.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dealer Name _____

Vehicle Serial Number _____