



From the Garage

by Paul Hunter

THE QUAIL

Many of the Model A cars you see may have a quail on the radiator cap. Where did they *come* from? Who made them? Why is it a quail?



In the beginning of the 1920 years having some sort of mascot or logo on the radiator cap of cars became popular. There were many kinds made from horses to bull dogs on large trucks to windmills to bows and arrows and even figures similar to the ones on the front of ancient sailing ships.

Henry Ford can be credited with selecting the quail as the Model A mascot. He told Irving Bacon, who worked for him. He wanted something that would depict a quick getaway the way

he was advertising his cars. Bacon suggested a rabbit but Ford wanted something better than that. He suggested that a quail flushes out of the brush just like a firecracker going off. He thought a quail would be just right. So a quail it was, designed with wings down as though it was just starting to fly off.

Of the 5,000+ parts in the Model A, Ford seemed to be involving himself in every step in the design process of the quail. Hundreds of drawings and samples were made until he was satisfied. He was not an easy man to please before he got to what is familiar on the Model A today.

The Ford factory did not make the quail. It was made by the George Stant Machine Works that had been making other radiator caps for many years. They were located in eastern Indiana at Connersville. It was Model A part number A-18385. It cost less than \$1.00 to make and sold for \$3.00. In one year over 250,000 were made.

This accessory is cherished by the people that restore cars. Even though an original quail was inexpensive, one might sell for \$150.00 or more today, if it is in good condition.

The patent on making the quail radiator cap was never renewed so it is possible for factories to make reproductions today. Most dealers that have Model A parts sell a reproduction quail, but for much more than the \$3.00 it originally sold for. Most of the time if you see a quail on the radiator cap of a Model A today it will be one of these reproduction quails made recently.

This article is reprinted from Frank Rosin Willamette Valley Model A's