

# Corvair 95: Stock was. . .

## 5 - Outside Rear View Mirrors

By Steven Spilatro

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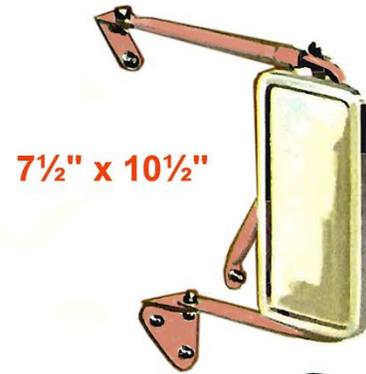
Mirrors were never a standard item on FCs and were either a factory or dealer installed option. Larry Claypool gave an excellent accounting of FC outside rear view mirrors in the issue of his "Stock Is" series published in the April, 1989 CORSA Communique. Some of this information comes from there, but with some newer insights. Much thanks also to Dave Newell who helped sort out history of the round mirrors.

Like so many features of modern cars, outside rearview mirrors were not deemed essential in 1960. Until the introduction of RPO 210 in late 1961 there was no factory installed mirror, and if you wanted an outside rear view mirror, it had to be installed by the dealership. As described below, GM did not have much to offer, and that may be one reason many FC owners opted for mirrors from aftermarket sources. We'll discuss the mirrors in order of their introduction.

### Dealer accessory 7½" x 10½" West Coast Junior mirror.

The 7½" x 10½" mirror was the only option available for FCs until the middle of the 1961 model year, when RPO 210 round mirror became available (see below). These were rugged, utilitarian mirrors, with a diagonal arm reinforcing the mounting bracket. Many people consider them large and gaudy, but units mounted on both sides provided an excellent view of the road already traveled. However, the width they added to the vehicle made them somewhat prone to side swipe accidents.

The mirror assembly was #988355 in 1961, superseded in '62 by #985285. Some parts catalogs give #985246, but most sources assign that to mirrors for other C10-C30 series trucks. Although the mirror head (#988183) was painted gloss black in 1961 and cameo white in later years, both styles were identical with a pair of mounting brackets on the back side secured with 6 rivets. Original mirror faces can be distinguished from later repros by the rubber seal which lies within the metal frame rather than being pressed onto the front of the frame.



7½" x 10½"



Chevy bowtie



RPO 210/D32



RPO D29

This mirror was discontinued after the '63 model year when it was replaced by the smaller (RPO D29) mirror.

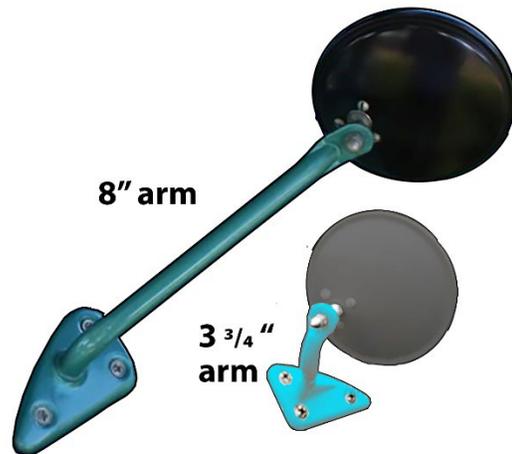
**RPO 210/D32 – 5” Round mirror**

The first factory optional mirror for the FC was RPO 210. This is the small 5” diameter mirror with an off-center swiveling posts for mounting to either left or right side brackets. The heads of these mirrors were black and attached to arms painted the main body color. The introduction of RPO 210 was a somewhat messy affair, and I thank Dave Newell for helping to sort out some of the details.

RPO 210 was initially scheduled for Fall, 1960, but internal GM documents show a manufacturing problem necessitated postponement. When it was finally made available, in February, '61, the mirror came with an 8” bracket shared with other C10-C30 series trucks. The mirror head (#3765480) is recognizable by the off-center mounting bracket secured with three standard drive screws. The parts catalogs confusingly state the 8” arms (#3773367-8, superseded by 3778719-20) are for the “short mirror”, but this is because a longer arm bracket was available for other trucks. Thus, it would seem a factory stock early 1961 FC would not have a mirror, but a later build could have a round mirror with an 8” arm.

The production delay apparently was in the manufacture of the 3¾” arm intended for the FC, and its delivery date was delayed into the 1962 production year. Later versions of the '61 assembly manual show the 3¾” arm (#3795373-4), but a mirror with 8” arm was still being listed in early versions of the '62 Truck Data Book. The short-arm version of the mirror eventually made it to the assembly lines around January 1962.

Then, in late 1962 or with the 1963 production year, when the mirror became RPO D32, the mirror head was modified (now #3838535). The new mirror head had some modifications to the stamping of the sheet metal, was slightly thinner than the earlier



version, and used two rivets and a screw used to secure the mounting bracket. [Thanks to Thomas Pedigo for providing the pictures.]

This was the only mirror to become standard equipment for an FC, when in 1963 GM made rear door windows an option for the Corvan. Absent rear windows the inside rear view mirror was useless, so a left side D32 mirror was substituted. For all other FCs an ORVM was always optional, and if a '63 or '64 Corvan was ordered with the rear windows (RPO A12), the ORVM again became optional.

### **Dealer installed accessory chrome "Chevy Bow-tie" mirror.**

This is essentially the same chrome mirror as used on the cars with a face diameter of 4 ¾ inches. The availability – and suitability – of this mirror for the FC has long been a mystery, and once again I'm indebted to Dave Newell for helping with the research.

Maybe this mirror should have been designated a "DPO" (Dealer Phantom Option), since it is not identified as a Corvair 95 option in most resources the typical sales person would have at hand. You will not find it listed in the Custom Features booklets, Showroom Sales albums, Fingertip Facts, customer mailer nor dealer incentive brochures. Nor are they listed in the Truck Data, Truck Specification, or Truck Engineering Features books. However, the Chevy bowtie mirror is annually included for the Corvair 95 in the Accessories Installation manuals, regularly in the Parts Catalogs, and periodically in the Confidential Prices and Options booklets.

The earliest listing of bowtie mirror (#988471) for the Corvair 95 is in Section 16 of the Feb '61 P&A 34 catalog. 988471 was superseded by 985169 in Feb 1962, which was also paired with the FC in the March '62 Confidential Prices and Options booklet and the Oct '62 P&A 34 catalog. Under subsequent part numbers, the Bowtie mirror is listed for the FC in 1963 (#985434), 1964 (#985878), and 1965 (#986046). The part numbers likely changed because the installations instructions changed.

In 1961, the instructions for installing the right side are to, basically, flip over and use the left side template, placing the mirror in the same position on both sides. But beginning in 1962, different installation dimensions are given for positioning the mirror on the right side door, and those measurements were changed in 1963. Thus, the mirror was moved around on the right side, most likely to improve visibility. Possibly it was moved around on the left side also, but we would need to see the templates to know; however, only in 1961 were both mirrors placed in the same position.

Considering they were poorly suited for the Corvair 95, why was the bowtie mirror an option? Larry Claypool suggested this mirror may have been offered by default for the Greenbrier since they were classified as a passenger suburban vehicle. However, Accessory Installation Manuals identify them for all "Corvair 95" models. I suggest an alternative explanation.



The timeline for the introduction of RPO 210 with the 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" arm began around 10/5/60 but it was not released in 1/2/62. I suggest that along with the substitution of the 8" version mirror as RPO 210, there was a (half-hearted?) decision to offer the Bowtie mirror for the FC. For whatever reason it continued to be available, but never seriously promoted and little used. Thus, the bowtie mirror would be correct for concours, but certainly not a desirable option.

#### **RPO D29 - West-Coast Jr Mirror:**

This mirror (#3818422) was introduced in 1964 and available as either a factory-installed RPO (D29) or a dealer-installed accessory. Compared to the '61 –'63 west coast style mirror, this was a smaller (10" X 6") less accident-prone version, but also less ruggedly constructed, with no diagonal brace. Unlike its larger predecessor, both the mirror face and the bracket were shared with other Chevrolet trucks. According to the truck engineering specifications book, as an RPO the bracket would have been painted the body color and the head was black, but both were cameo white as a dealer-installed accessory. The same accessory mirror (#985410, superseded by #985771 in '64) was used for the Corvair 95 and C10 – C30 Chevy trucks.