

Corvair 95: Stock was. . .

7 - The Dash

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Let's look more closely at what's in front of us (and confronts us) every time we drive our FC – the dash. By and large, there was little change to the overall layout of the dash during the Corvair 95's 4½ year run. The placement of the instrument cluster and Powerglide transmission control lever, ashtray and glovebox, the arrangement of the controls in the cluster, even the design of the instrument knobs never wavered. As the Corvair 95's fortunes dimmed, undoubtedly so did the impetus for unnecessary engineering. Yet changes were occurring every year, even for the last gasp '65 Greenbriers.

Only in 1961

Colors

A few features of the dash were unique to the 1961 model. For example, only in 1961 did a vehicle with standard trim have a solid color dash. The standard dash was solid charcoal gray color and the two-tone version with a silver instrument panel came with RPO 431, Custom (deluxe) Equipment. In later years the instrument panel was always cameo white and the surrounding dash was fawn or, with Deluxe trim, color-keyed to the exterior body. As mentioned in a previous article in this series, 1961 was also the only year that the heater control unit was painted silver versus black in later years.

Choke Call-Out Knob

Although few '61 FCs retain carburetors with a manual choke, that's how they were originally equipped. The manual chokes were operated via a cable that extended from the engine compartment to a black call-out knob mounted to the bottom of the dash. Labeling of the "CHOKE" to the right of the wiper was unique to the '61



instrument cluster trim plate since the manual choke was replaced with an automatic choke in 1962.

Windshield Wiper/Washer

Only in 1961 would a two-speed windshield wiper without a windshield washer be stock. A single speed wiper unit without a washer was standard all years, but only that first year could a two-speed wiper (RPO 355) and the washer unit (RPO 130) could be ordered separately. Beginning with 1962 models, RPO 130 was discontinued and RPO 355 was a 2-speed wiper with the washer.

While not part of the dash itself, a larger, horizontally-mounted wiper motor (mounted on the cowl wall below the dash) was used only in 1961. From 1962 onward, the smaller black wiper motor was used - the same as for the car, although the electrical and plumbing connections were different.

Ash tray

In '61 the black plastic handle of the instrument panel ash tray was embossed "ASH TRAY". Possibly deciding that the use of this container could be discerned without a label or that it could hold more than just ash, or more likely as a cost savings, the lettering was removed for future production years.



Changes in later years

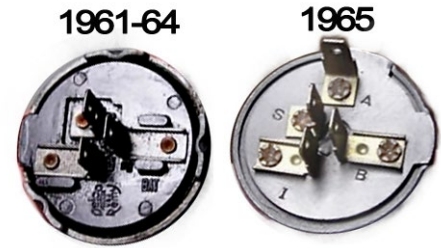
Gas Gauge

Visually, the gas gauge never changed, although different versions are needed for different models years. Gauge #5643525 was used from 1961 into '63, at which time electrical alterations were made. The late style gas tank, with the pass-through hole for the shifter control, needed both a new sender unit and instrument panel gauge, which was #5644545. Parts catalogs from the early 60's consistently identify gauge #5643032 for non-FC applications, but catalogs from the late 60's onward list this unit for use with the early style FC gas tank, possibly as a substitution when #5643525 was discontinued.



Ignition switch

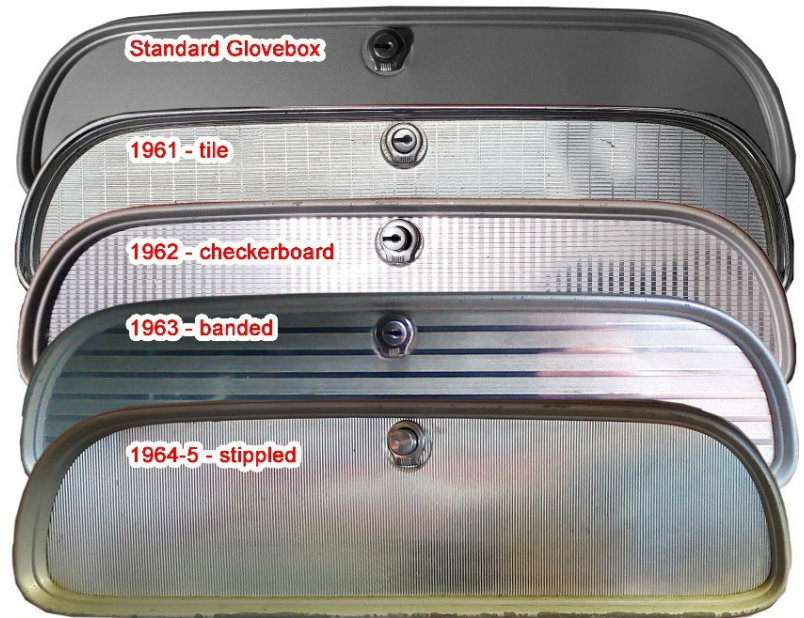
Unaltered for most of the Corvair 95's production, the ignition switch was... er, switched, for the limited run of '65 Greenbriers. The early style switches had three contacts which was increased to four in 1965, a change related to the replacement of the generator with an alternator that year. Rather than providing a much desired "Accessories" position for the ignition switch, the additional contact connected to the circuit that energized the alternator field coils as the engine was cranked.



Instrument cluster, dispatch box, and Radio Trim

The embossed pattern of the anodized aluminum trim plate of the instrument cluster and glovebox door was changed annually from '61 – '64. The picture shows the pattern for each year. The pattern of the embossing mirrored that of the cars each year: 1961 – tiled, 1962 – checkered, 1963 – banded, 1964 & 65 – stippled.

Standard trim vehicles always received a glovebox (called the "dispatch box" by GM) with a plain, painted metal front panel. The glovebox door of FCs outfitted with deluxe trim (RPO 431/Z60) had a trim plate (front metal panel) with a pattern matching that of the

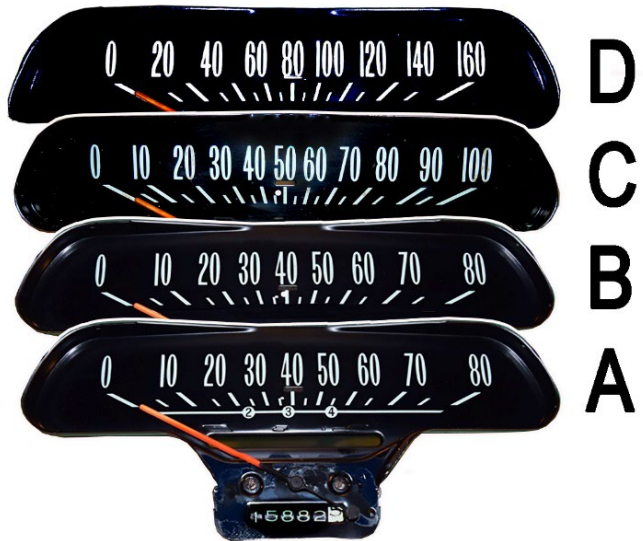


instrument cluster. However, unlike the cars, the edge trim around the instrument cluster and glovebox door was painted metal, not chrome.

Should a radio have been ordered, the front bezel would have had an embossed pattern that matched the instrument panel. And the housing was painted to match the color of the dash.

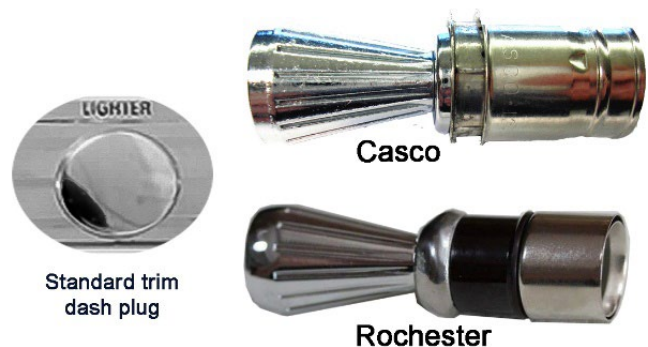
Speedometer

From '61 - '63 all FCs, including those with a powerglide transmission, had 80 MPH speedometers with the three shift points (A). Early in the 1964 model run, Greenbriers began to receive a 100 MPH speedometer (C; same as in cars); Corvans and Rampsides continued to receive an 80 MPH speedometer sans shift points marked on the dial (B). FCs destined for European highways received a speedometer and odometer calibrated as kilometers per hour (D).



Cigarette lighter

While the design of the cigarette lights did not change noticeably, I thought I would include some information about them. Cigarette lighters did not come with a standard trim package and were included with the deluxe (RPO 431/Z60) trim package. Vehicles with standard trim had a bright metal cap that covered the hole. A complete cigarette lighter unit consist of four parts: a cylindrical retainer secured to the dash by the bezel, the element that inserts into the retainer, and the knob. The knob was the same for all FCs.



Two manufacturers provided cigarette lighters for Corvair cars and FCs, Casco and Rochester. The lighters can be distinguished most easily by the design of the element - the Rochester has a black plastic band and the Casco has a spring-loaded mechanism - and each cannot fit into the other's retainer.