

FARES

Internet Checker Taxicab Archive



Volume 7 Issue 1 Jan. – Feb. 2021

“Annual Dues.....Your Friendship”



Editor's Notes

Welcome to our first issue for 2021, of the ICTA newsletter, "FARES".

Free of charge, feel free to print this Newsletter and place in your own binder. Please forward to all your Checker friends and share the fun.

Closing out a very difficult years, we look forward to the new year 2021. As always, the Fares newsletter is packed with Checker related content.

In this issue you'll be presented the story of the Fiberglass Checker! Emerson Zentz just purchased this unique Checker. You'll also find a story about how ICTA members pitched in to help sell a Checker.

As usual we present a historical Checker story. Have you ever heard of the Chicago Milk Wars? If you like to collect Checkers models in various scales, you'll love the

article about Checkers produced in 1/87 (HO) scale.

Checker parts sourcing is always a challenge. In this issue we present a new source for Checker parts: Automobiles produced by Kaiser-Willys. In this issue we also present three Checker WIP updates.

As usual, we present classified Checker advertisements. Please enjoy issue: volume 7 issue 1.

Post Script: We just want to thank all who have supported the ICTA over the last five years. We are very proud of the Internet Checker Cab experience we have created. We look forward to our fifth year of producing six content rich newsletters annually. While other Checker clubs no longer produce quarterly newsletter, we're happy to fill the gap



Editor: Joe Fay
Drivermatica8@yahoo.com
Owner 1949, 1950, 1952, &
1957 Checkers

Cover Photo: CMC Promotional



Recently Emerson Zentz and his partner in crime Laddie Vetech proved that you can still have fun with a Checker in the cold season of mid November. Emerson and Laddie trekked up to Ohio where they paid a visit to Ben Merkel's Twilight Taxi and took delivery of a very special Checker. A New York City taxi! But wait! There's more: A New York City fiberglass taxicab!

Before we discuss the intriguing story of the fiberglass Checker, let's frame out the story of the New York City Checker. The New York Checker Model A11's are actually very different than any other Checkers sold in any other city between 1964 and 1982. Differences can be found in many of the Checker Engineering Change Orders found on this website. Here are just a few of the distinctly different features of the New York City Checkers

Key areas of differentiation:

- Front seating requirements*, seat back upholstery must be pulled tight to obtain 18 inches of cushion depth.
- Auxiliary seating*, a 14 inch wide seat is required
- Roof lamp wiring*, an additional roof light is required, this change for NYC would allow Checker to meet new NYC top light rules enacted for 1965.
- New card case*, with two lamps.
- Claxon horns that created sounds no more than 88 DB that could be heard more the fifty feet away from the standing vehicle. All Checkers sold in NYC post 1974 would sported these quieter horns.
- Increased durability for severe taxicab duty cycle in the New York City environment frame assembly, for 1981 Checker had reinforced: rear shock mounting brackets, side rails, bracket to body frame center, X-frame member, engine supports, upper control arms, chassis skid bar and steering gear brace.
- Straps for the radiator overflow bottle.
- Windshield washer bottle location would be moved to the firewall.
- Front fender cross rods, hood reinforcement and cowl brackets. The cowl brackets had increase thickness in order to increase strength.



Now the fiberglass lesson. Back in the mid 1970 Checkers started to experiment in the use of fiberglass. This was primarily an exercise to reduced weight in order to improve gas mileage. Replacing steel panels, hoods and trunk lids with fiberglass would reduce the 4000 LBS Checkers by as much as 250-500 LBS. The resulting Checker had significant improvement in mileage, but taxicab operators likely challenged the impact of the overall Checker strength and tank like toughness.

Fiberglass never made it into production Checkers, but fiberglass ultimately had a major impact on keeping Checkers on in the road long term after Checker production stopped in 1982.

As we all know Checker rust very easily, operators who continued to operate Checkers post 1982, needed a cheap way to keep their Checkers in service.

Several independent companies produced Fiberglass Checker panels for after market use for taxicab operators. As one would expect major parts like Fenders, hoods and decklids were offered. Surprisingly, other major sections were also offered: door panels, rockers and even front floor sections were available. This allowed operators to keep their rusty Checkers in service by removing rusted panels or cutting out rotted floors and adding lower cost fiberglass parts.

Which brings us to Emerson Zentz' latest acquisition, the New York fiberglass Checker. This Checker had been in Ben Merkel's personal collection for many years. One of Ben's most interesting Checkers, this one has an extensive amount of fiberglass body parts. One could claim its more fiberglass than steel!



Laddie Vitek, Emerson Zentz and Ben Merkel in Middlefield, Ohio



Checker Friends helping Checker Friends

At the ICTA are motto is "Annual Dues.....Your Friendship".

We at the ICTA are a tight bunch, we love Checkers and we do whatever is necessary to pull together as a group of hardcore Checker fans to get the job done. Whether it's saving a lone Checker, finding parts or helping another member

sell a car, we unite. We're not about Facebook memes, dues, or any other BS to show everybody how wonderful and witty we are, we're just a bunch of Checker fans.

Our classified "Checker For Sale" tab on the ICTA website is free to all. Its easy to submit a listing. Just click on the email link on the top right section of the website and send us your information.

A perfect example of how we all help each other happened in mid October. ICTA member Milton Horowitz sent a request and some photos for a classified listing. The following is his advertisement.

"Former Taxicab. Turns over and ran strong when it did... has an intercooler added to the transmission to help prevent over heating Needs new plugs and oil change for sure will probably fire right up".

As with all of our listings, we always post the ad on the ICTA Facebook page. With close to 1000 members, the posting immediately reaches our Checker focused member base. We typically post three to five ads a week. To date we have posted almost 500 advertisements on our Facebook page over the last four years.



With most cases the interest generated via the post will result in further posting activity that winds up on our ICTA Facebook pages. Case in point, Milton's Checker for sale listing generated comments and additional posts.

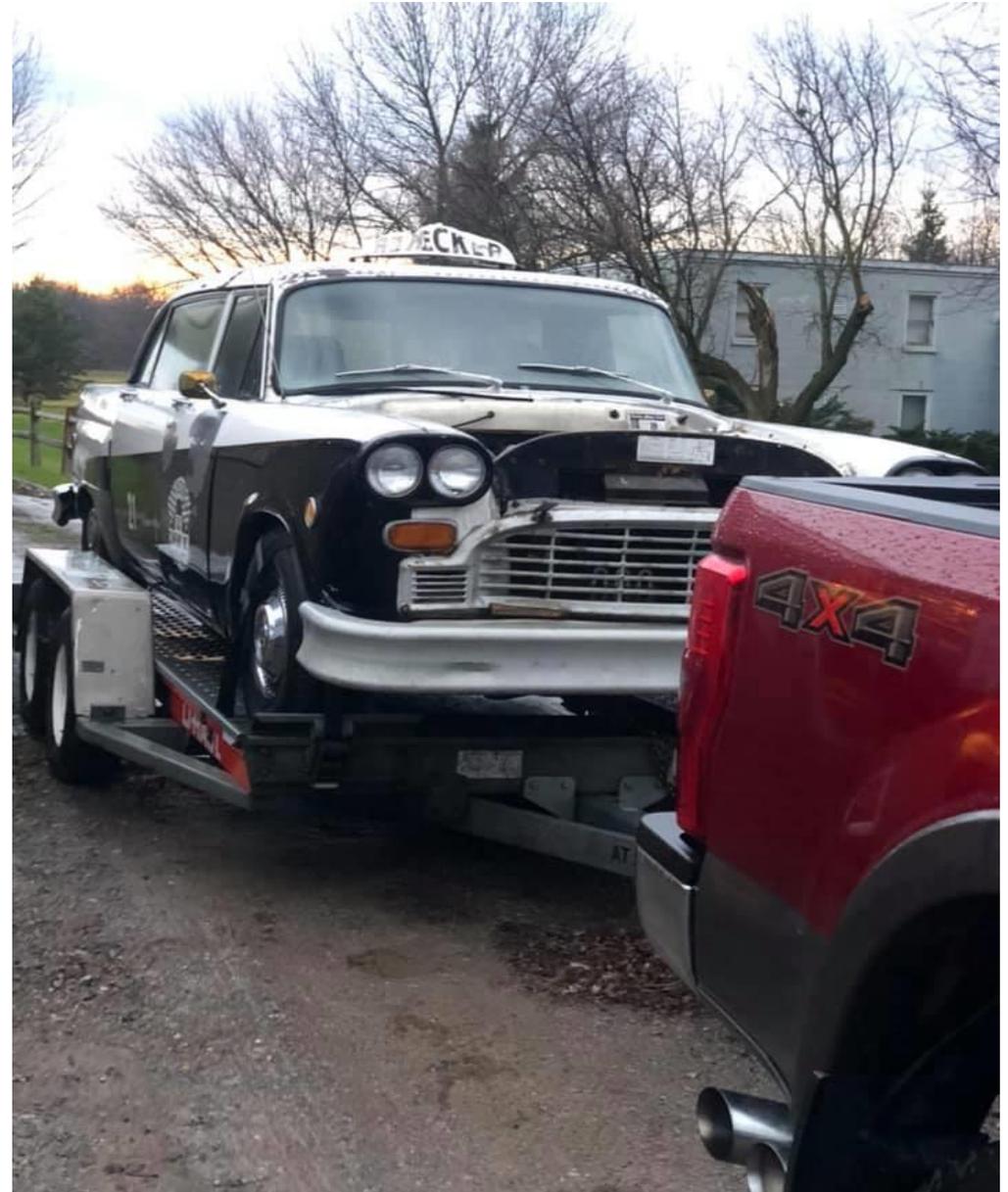
About a month later ICTA member Emerson Zentz posted on the ICTA Facebook page *"So the last trip to Ohio we stopped and looked at this a11e."* Additionally

he posted *“Trying to find this thing a home as it has many good parts, 1,000 obo. Can get you in touch with the owner if you're serious.”* A perfect example of ICTA members helping each other.

From that post about 25 additional comments were generated that provided more insight on the car. Most interesting was the discovery that the Checker A11e once belonged to Ben Merkel. A 25 year old photo popped up of the actual car taken at Ben’s Twilight Taxi headquarters circa 1995. (See article header)

As is the case with virtually all ICTA Facebook activity, the story about the car sale ended with a happy ending. On December 12th, ICTA member Mike Fricano posted *“Brought home something today....”*. A picture depicting the A11e was on a trailer heading to East Tonawanda, New York. We look forward to Mike's updated on Facebook/

So there you have it, Checker friends helping Checker friends and finding a new home for an A11e





Kaisers, Willys and Jeeps, Oh My

Curious about the title to this article? This writer had been having a difficult time restoring the Checker A3 until making an interesting discovery. While sourcing parts for the Checker, it became clear that many of the parts Checker used between 1946 and 1964 are compatible to Kaiser and Willys Jeeps!

Below is a list of the core Checker components that are consistent Kaiser and Willys vehicles.

The Continental 226 Jeep Super Hurricane

The 226 engine had been incorporated into the Jeep lineup as the Super Hurricane in 1954, and it had an enviable reliability record. It made 105 horsepower, and when it was introduced it was a welcome addition to the horsepower-starved Jeep engine lineup. Like all flatheads, it had breathing and cooling difficulties, but the Continental-sourced engine became almost legendary for durability in Jeeps and the many other applications in which it served until 1973.

Warner Gear T86 Transmission

The **Borg-Warner T-86** is a three-speed manual gearbox manufactured by Borg-Warner. The T86 is a top loaded, top shifting, three speed transmission and is fully synchronized in the second and third gears. The T86 is very similar in appearance and build to the Jeep T90, and these gearboxes can be confused with each other on first glance. The T86 will typically be cast with "T86AA" on its case. Also, upon internal inspection, one can confirm it as a T86 in that all gears are helically cut, including the first mainshaft gear.

Borg & Beck Clutch

Flywheel - The flywheel provides a friction surface for the clutch disc, a torque buffering mass, a mounting surface for the pressure plate, a mounting for the starter driven gear, and on some engines the flywheel is a factor in engine balance.

Pressure Plate - mounts on the flywheel. It consists of four main parts and is more correctly called a clutch cover assembly.

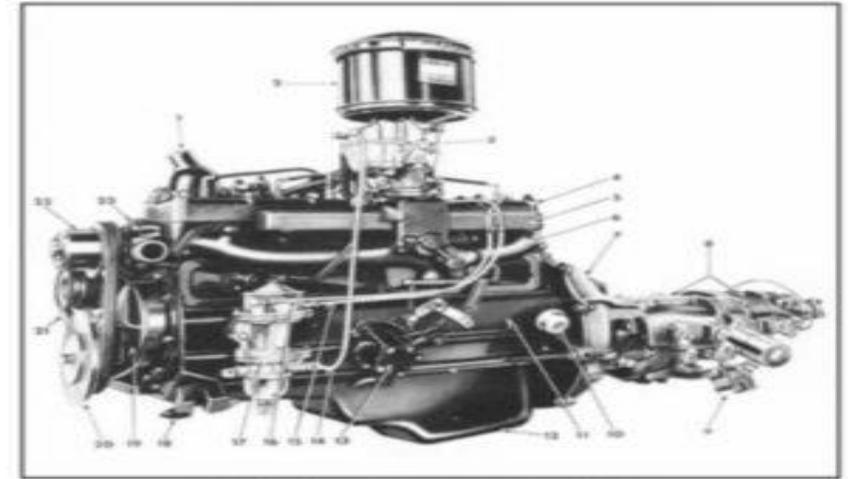
These parts are the pressure plate itself, the springs (or spring, if a diaphragm type), the clutch cover, and the release arms.

There are two basic designs of clutches usually referred to by the spring type

Clutch Disk - This is the "driven" part of the clutch. It has a friction material riveted to each side of a wavy spring (called a marcel). This is attached to a splined hub that the transmission input gear protrudes into.

Clutch Release Bearing - As its name implies, this is the bearing that releases the clutch. It is often referred to as a "throw-out" bearing. They come on a number of different style carriers. The carriers, in some cases, vary considerably with the particular engine.

According to ICTA member Doug Klauck his Checker A8 uses both the Borg-Warner and Borg & Beck clutch.



6-226 "Super Hurricane" 16 L Motr-



1955 Willys Jeeps Station Wagon

Other Major Parts

This writer has discovered that the radiator used for the 1950 Kaiser Manhattan will fit the Checker Model A2-A3! This past weekend, I was able to insert a new Kaiser Aluminum radiator into the A3. (see headers photo)

The A3 currently has a 1963 OVHD Valve Continental engine sourced from Lawrence, Mass. The Kaiser radiator water inlet and outlet are both on the driver side of the radiator, this is different when compared with Checkers standard center mounted radiator inlet.

By simply reversing the Continental engine water outlet from facing right to left, the engine water feed can easily meet up with the Kaiser radiator. Grinding the radiator opening in the cross member a small quarter of an inch on each side of the member allow for bolting the radiator right into the A3.

This writer just procured a Jeep 12 volt starter, it mates perfectly to the 130 tooth Jeep Station wagon flywheel. Fuel pumps and carb for the Kaiser and Jeeps should also work for Checker Continental engine applications. Pretty much, any part for the Jeep Super Hurricane Six will work for a Continental equipped Checker.



The good news is that all these parts are readily available at Kasierwillys.com! Restoring autos are both fun and challenging. Restoring a Checker is very challenging given most retail outlets no longer list Checkers in the systems. Tough too since all third party Checker supplies have exited the business. Thankfully, Checker owners whose Superbas or Marathons are equipped with Continentals still have a source for drivetrain parts! Here is a direct link for Kaiser-Willys parts

Willys Jeep Parts | Kaiser Willys Jeep Parts and Restoration



Steve Sumner standing next to his 31 Armored Checker Model M

The Chicago Milk Wars and a Checker

We have all heard of the Chicago Taxi Wars, but what about the Chicago Milk War? Yes indeed there was a milk war and believe it or not, there's a link to Checker Cab! In Chicago, flashes of violence punctuated a conflict between Dairies, Milkmen, the Milkmen's Union and the mob during the 1930's.

Over several years, the region's milk wars, was the cause of violence, milk dumping, price manipulations and frustrated attempts to bring peace to the industry.

During the dairy farmers

walkout, “some 200 strikers and their sympathizers were taken prisoner and scores of National Guardsmen and strikers were bruised” on one day in May 1933, the Chicago Tribune wrote. “The farmers caught the gas bombs as the (Guardsmen) tossed them into their ranks and tossed them back.”

Early on, in 1932, a union guard leaving home to go to Union office was shot by a passing car with shotguns sticking out its windows. In 1938, a milk wagon driver faced charges after a grocery store was torched for selling milk at cut-rate prices.

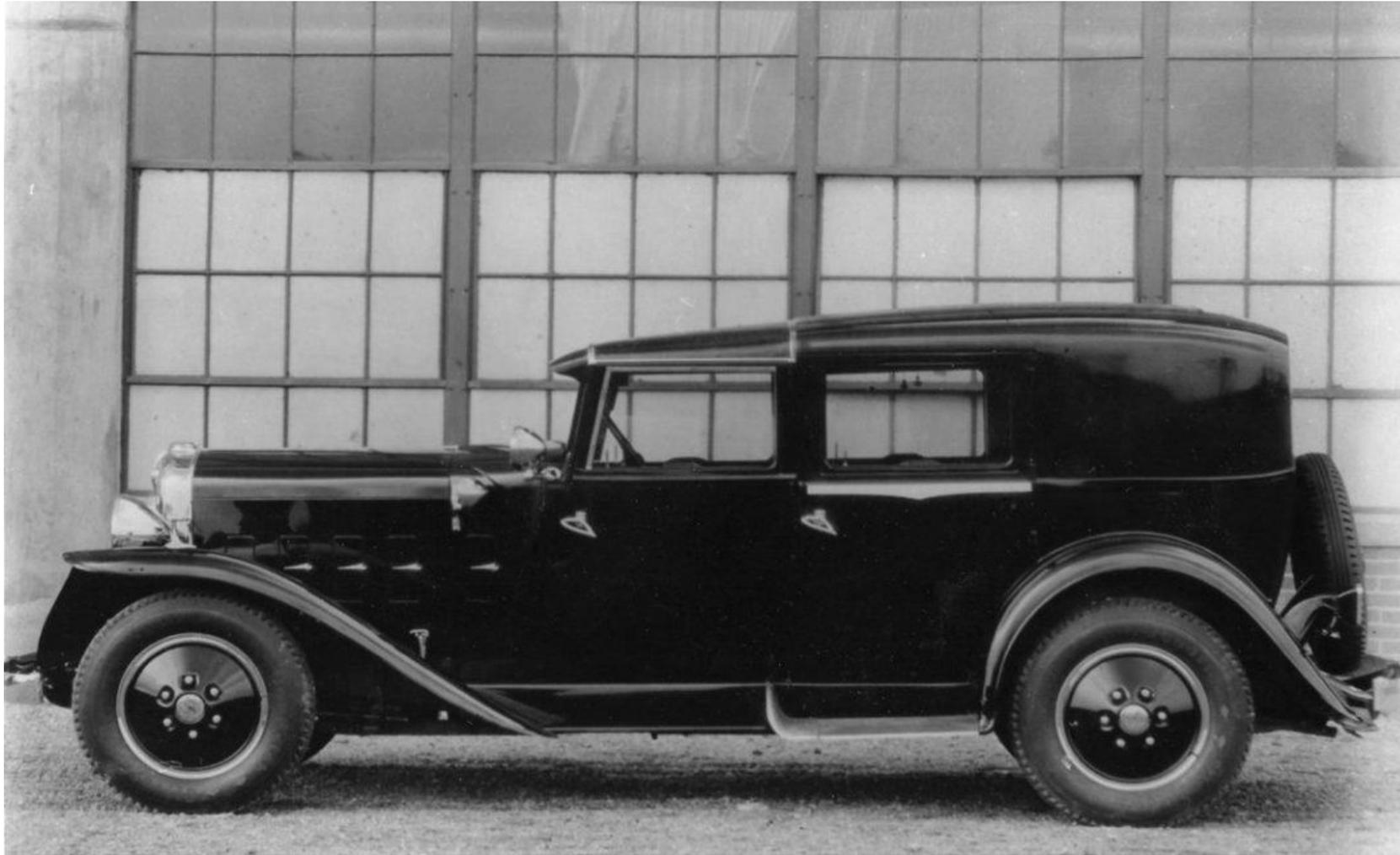
Over a period of just 18 months in the city, there were 11 bombings, 22 window smashings, two sluggings, an incident of acid throwing, one truck stolen and another tipped over, according to federal investigators.

Robert Fitchie, the union’s president, was kidnapped and tortured by gangsters in late 1931 and released only when the union paid a \$50,000 ransom. After that, Steve Sumner, a Milk Wagon Drivers' Union Local 753 boss drove “a rolling fortress,” a 3-ton armored car built for a utilities tycoon (note header photo). That car was the famous Checker armored car built for Samuel Insull.

Checker was always ready to fulfill its consumers with special needs, case in point: utility magnate Samuel Insull ordered a bullet-



Steve Sumner armed behind the armored door of the Milkman's Union Hall



proof seven-passenger limousine with a landau top on a 1931 Checker Model M chassis. British-born Insull had been an assistant to Thomas Edison, he had relocated to Chicago in the twenties and built an electric utility empire that was eventually valued at \$3 Billion. After the market crash, Insull's once valuable utility network became worthless, resulting in death threats, hence the Checker was order to protect his family.

Insull fled the country initially to France. He was later arrested and extradited back to the United States by Turkey in 1934 to face federal prosecution on mail fraud and antitrust charges. Apparently when he fled the country, he sold his Checker and it eventually wound up in the hands of Steve Sumner.

Its not clear what happened to the armored Checker. Steve Sumner passed away in 1946.

The America Mercury titled Sumner's obituary "**Too Tough For Capone**". In memorial Sumner was heralded as an honest union man who stood up to Capone and the mob. Its nice to know that a Checker played a part in Sumner's crusade to protect the union and end the Chicago Milk wars.

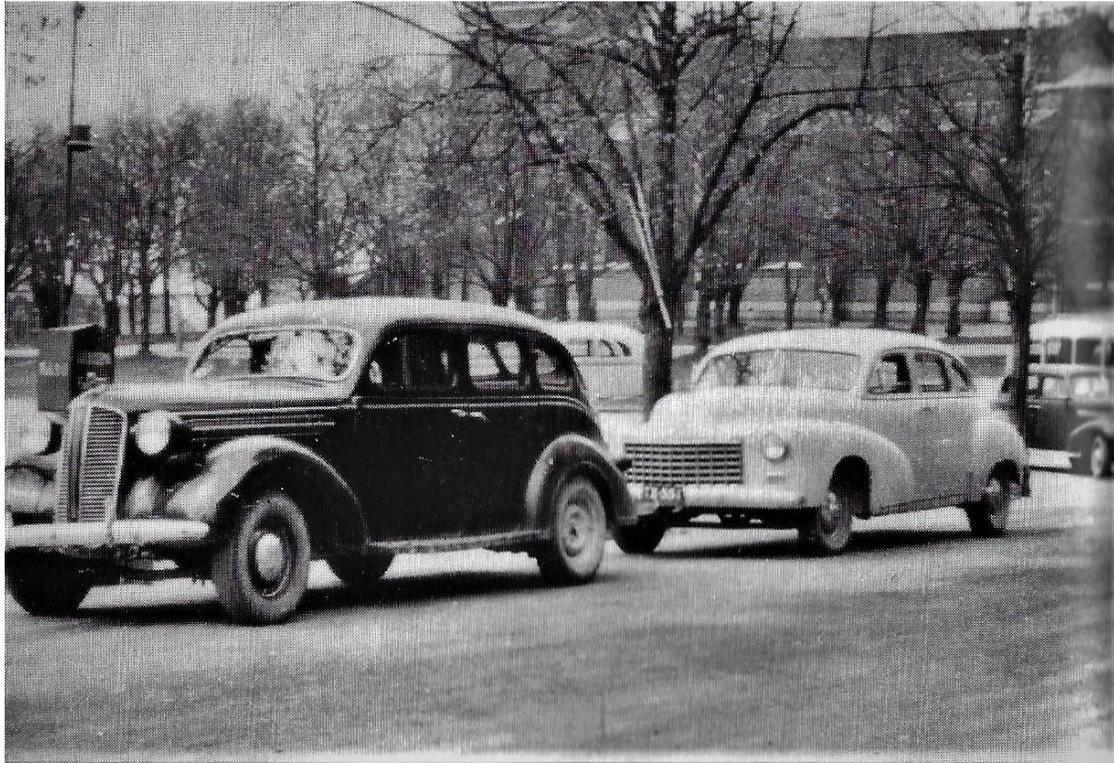


Long Serving Checkers of Finland

Uusikaupunki, is a medium sized city in Finland, population about 15,000 citizens. According to Wikipedia the municipality is unilingually Finnish. Both its Finnish and Swedish names translate literally to "New Town".

The town of Uusikaupunki was founded as a town with the rights of commerce in 1617. By decree, Gustav II Adolf in 1721, the signed the Peace of Nystad in Uusikaupunki, ending the The Great Northern War between Sweden and Russia. During the Crimean War of 1853, Uusikaupunki was attacked by the French and British Navy in 1855 during the Aland War. Uusikaupunki was an important port for commerce and fishing, and up to the latter half of the 20th century, it retained an important ship-building industry. The city has a long and rich history.

Today, Uusikaupunki is the home of Valmet Automotive, a third party contract automotive production company, producing cars and vehicles for brands such as Mercedes Benz. The company was founded in 1968 as Saab-Valmet for manufacturing Saab cars. As of June 2017, Valmet has been assembling Mercedes A Class and GLC cars.



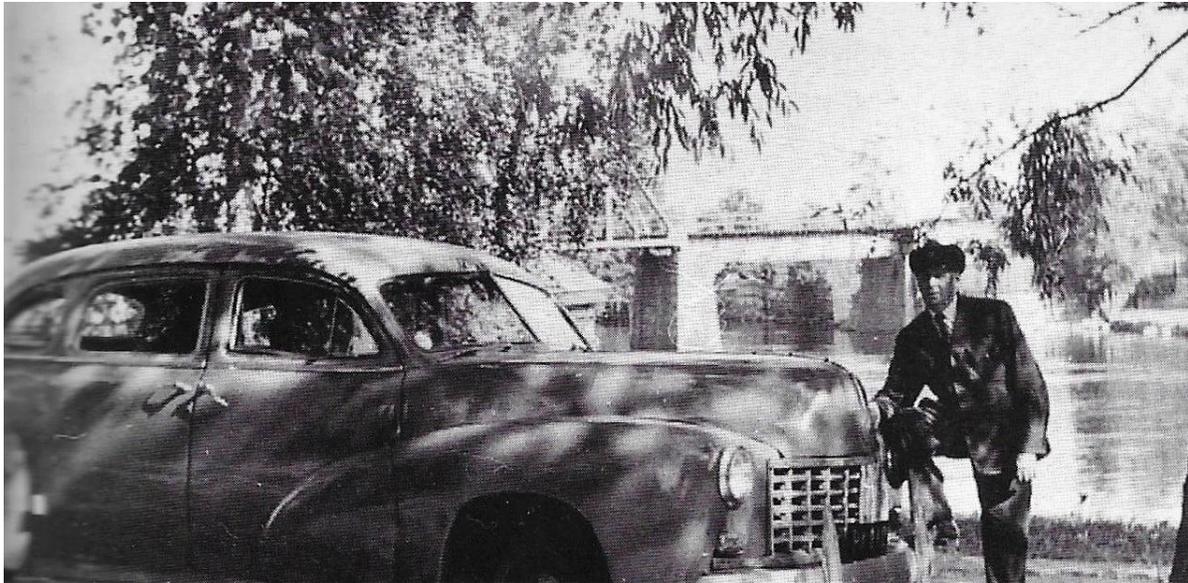
An automotive town, one would imagine that when it came to sourcing taxicabs, makes like Mercedes, Volvo and Saab, might be the first choice of taxicab operators. Believe it or not, Checkers were once popular in Uusikaupunki!

ICTA member Juha Kaitanen sent photographic evidence of the use of Checker. According to Juha *“Mr. Aaro Lehtonen*

has published a small history book about taxis and taxi drivers in that town. Also the taxi drivers association has collected photos of the taxis used in Uusikaupunki. Enclosed photos are from Yhay archve. The total number of Checkers in Uusikaupunki was four.”

The pictured Checkers A2 migrated to Uusikaupunki from Helsinki. The Helsinki taxicabs were originally imported to Finland in preparation for the 1952 Helsinki Olympic. The imported Checkers were not new, but well worn Chicago Checker Cabs. Significant repairs were required to put them into service in Helsinki. Apparently once service was complete in Helsinki the Checker saw a third run of service in the small fishing town.

Research indicates that only six Checkers were still registered in an operational in 1960. One could only imagine how many miles were put on the imported Checkers. Research indicates that only six Checkers were still registered in an operational in 1960. One could only imagine how many miles were put on the imported Checkers.





Checker Taxicab in HO Scale

As most Checker owners know, we all love our 1/1 big Checkers as well as little Checker toys and models that most Checker fans collect. The article will showcase some of the models of Checker taxicabs available on the market. In this blog we'll cover Checkers produced in HO scale. An HO model is about 2 1/2 inches in length, with a small footprint, HO allows for the creation of large collections with limited space.

Brekina was in 1979 in the southern Germany town of Umkirch and specialized in 1/87 HO scale automobile and truck scale models. The company diversified into cars, trucks, and busses from the 1950s through 1970s. Brekina grew into one of the world's biggest manufacturers of 1/87 scale models. The company offers a small variety of American prototypes and thankfully, Checker Taxicabs are represented in their current lineup.

Brekina has a long established reputation for created extremely accurate and realistic HO scale models. The quality, details and appearance of Brekina's Checker Model A11 model released in 2019 certainly meets and exceeds the standards established in 1979.

The current offering includes ten taxicab operator liveries and municipalities. Cities covered: Atlanta (Checker Cab), Boston Metrowest (Natick Cab) Chicago (Checker Taxi Co.), Dallas (Checker Cab), Los Angeles (Yellow Cab Co.), New York (NYC TLC Compliant Marking), San Francisco (Bay Area Cab), two liveries from Washington DC (Capital Cab & Diplomat Cab Assn.) and a City of Chelsea,



Mass fire chief unit.

Each model is painted to a high gloss, all graphics are crisp and accurate. Bumpers are chrome plated as is the two rearview mirrors on each front fenders. The interior is black and little detail visible.

All models are excellent with limited flaws, two flaws that this authority can see is the inaccurate wheel covers and the roof light that is placed forward close to the windshield. Authentic Checkers typically have their roof lights centered over the door post. The NYC car does not utilize proper aluminum "medallion" lamp and the Chelsea fire wagon, displays the a bizarre taxicab roof light (this writer removed and replaced with a light bar). All models display whitewalls, easily reversed to create a more acceptable appearance.



Athearn Models has a long history in producing model railroading models and supplies. Started in 1938, by 1946 production settled in Compton, California. Athearn was purchased in 2004 by Horizon Hobby of Illinois. In 2009 all production was moved to China.

Full disclosure, this writer was involved with the development of the Athearn Model A8 series 1 and is somewhat bias. It's my favorite Checker model. My personal A8 was used to develop the

original prototype model.

The model is painted in a semi gloss finish, this was done based on the US model railroading standards for realism. Semi flat tones typically reduce a toy like shiny appearance. All color schemes are authentic, right down to the rate car fonts.

Series one produced four prototypes: Chicago Taxi, Springfield Missouri Yellow Cab and two Checker Cab Manufacturing fleet colors typically used by independent operators yellow/green and yellow/red. The two fleet variations are consistent with what was used in New York city from 1956-1959.

Detail is very good. Unlike the Brekina model, the Athearn models sports accurate hubcaps and roof light placement. The chrome details are also more advanced than the Brekina model, utilizing 10 separate chrome pieces versus 5 chrome pieces on the A11 model. Both models have chrome plated hood ornaments. Interior detail is fantastic on the Athearn models and easily viewed via the molded in an authentic gray three parts: tub, dashboard and steering wheel.

Unlike the Brekina, the Athearn model is no longer in production. That said it is easily found on Ebay and the purchase prices seem to be coming down.

If interested in the Brekina model, here is a general link to ebay listings

[Brekina Checker Taxi | eBay](#)

Likewise here is a link to the Athearn model on ebay

[Athearn Checker Taxi | eBay](#)

All seem to be trending at around \$20.00





Christian Hutter's A11 Work-In-Progress

- Took the plunge and pulled the engine and trans out of the cab. Both will be rebuilt and I'll be sprucing up the engine bay over the winter. Took lots of pictures so I can remember where everything goes when I reverse the process. My son took a time lapse video with his go pro of today's fun.





Chris Monier's A11 Work-In-Progress

Joe Fay's A3 Work-In-Progress



BELL TRANSPORTATION



SYSTEM, INC.

"Ride in a Bell Cab"

629 WEST 57TH STREET
New York City

COLUMBUS 5-6878
December 16, 1952

FACEBOOK MARKETPLACE Advertisement effective 12/28/2020

Checker Marathon Taxicab For Sale \$17000.00



New Uphostery, New paint, New tires, No rust, Non-op registration, Clean title, V6, Automatic.

For details call (818) 812-0540



1979 Checker Original Chevy 6 Clynder \$20K

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/623286845219296/>



Transmisión good motor good runs and drive,Arizona title
Linked to advertisement

[Chevy checker marathon 68 for Sale in Carrollton, TX – OfferUp](#)



This is a 1964 checker marathon runs and drives great ready to cruise 230 cid and 4 speed hydromatic transmission have to many cars ill let this one go for \$8,000 test drive it today. I have the original keys and original title in hand.

Check out the link on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/2766257726957820>



Selling this old taxi cab, it has the limo seats in the middle. Kinda a cool different rig. Has a Perkins 4cyl diesel. Was told it runs but needs the fuel bowl.

Link to OfferUp

[Checker marathon for Sale in Tacoma, WA – OfferUp](#)



Checker Tax Cab. Needs some TLC. GOOD RESTORATION PROJECT!

Fun for bar hopping with friends (DD of course)
Mileage is unknown at this time

Link to Facebook Marketplace

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/2751131011838398/>



Hard to find . Decent condition v8.

Link to Offerup Advertisement

[81 Checker Marathon for Sale in Berwyn, IL – OfferUp](#)

1971 Checker Aerobus 9 window station wagon project car said the same owner for the last 30 years and it's been garaged all but two of those years bodies good it had new tires put on it very rare car asking 2500. Or best offer all offers will be considered contact [hidden information] price has been reduced. Make an offer the cars got to go

Link to the advertisement

[1971 checker aerobus project car for Sale in Denver, CO – OfferUp](#)

Checker Marathon Wagon to be Auctioned



Seller's Description: – 350 CI engine

- First year for front disc brakes
- Upgraded gauges
- Maintenance history
- Receipts

To be sold at the Kissimmee 2021 auction, Kissimmee, FL, January 7-16, 2021. To consign a car or to register to bid, visit the Mecum web site: www.mecum.com or call (262) 275-5050



You are looking at a very rare and hard to come by 1979 CMC Checker motor corporation, Marathon car. The car comes with a Factory original chevy 350 motor with 4 barrel carb. The car has automatic transmission. The car has a salvage title for minor fender bender accident. As you can see in the pictures, there was no major damage done to the car. The motor and transmission are in great condition. The car runs and drives and has 23k miles. Will come with custom 22" rims. The body does need tlc as the paint job is not the greatest and has come surface rust that needs attention, but overall its a great car. The car is nice and has that classic 1950s style. Very big and roomy inside . If your looking for a rare classic car, then this is the car for you. Im looking for serious buyers with cash on hand. so Call me (626) 409-3000

Aerobus Ready for Finishing For Sale by Haverhill, Mass. Company

It appears that the Haverhill, Mass based company continues the process of exiting out of the Checker Parts business. Owner Steve Contarino posted on Facebook an advertisement for a Checker Aerobus. Many may remember Mr. Contarino, as the man who bombastically told the world in 2015 that he was going to restart Checker Marathon production.

As we approach 2021 it's been almost six years since the announcement and Checker fans worldwide still eagerly await the official introduction. Don't hold your breath. A recent review of Contarino's website identified only 17 Checker parts still for sale. The following is a list of parts currently for sale.

1. Under Hood Cowl Seal	20.00
2. Hood	No Price
3. Chrome Side View Mirror	49.95
4. Clear Back-up Lens	29.00
5. Fender Seam w/Chrome Top	59.95
6. Fenders	No Price
7. Gas Tank (New)	700.00
8. Poly-Carbonate Chromed Grille	299.00
9. Rear Quarter, Outer	No Price
10. Red Tail Light Lens	22.00
11. Replica Front Hood Emblem	85.00
12. Rocker Panels 120" wheelbase	499.95
13. Unleaded Fuel Only Decal	8.00
14. Vent shade Deflectors	139.00
15. 2-1/2" Checker Motor Cars Emblems	39.00
16. Windshield Gasket	175.00
17. Gas Shocks	114.00



Mr Contarino is several thousand parts short of the actual full inventory needed to build a new Checker. It's interesting to note that many of the parts listed above are priced far above current market values.

Since failing to introduce a new Checker, Mr. Contarino has been selling cars and parts to reduce his investment. According to Mr. Contarino " We have this one with a complete new paint job for \$2500.00 Needs to be completed"

For details please find the contact information below.

Steve Contarino

45 Research Drive,

Haverhill, MA 01832

Phone: Inside U.S. 866-223-1832

Outside U.S. 978-222-3158



End Photo

1960 Checker Superba
Promotional Photo. Photo
taken in the Cab Services
Showroom. Checker Motors
Corp, Kalamazoo, Michigan