

Repair and Installation Help from

Willcox Inc,

Corvette Parts, Service and Sales

800-588-3883 Orders

For technical assistance email us at

Willcoxcustomerservice@willcoxcorvette.com

I wrote this about ten years ago and thought it might help some people understand a little history about the luggage racks. I think as I get older it might help to put this in print before I forget it, or lose it!

Luggage racks, boy I remember these. One of the best selling items we had in the early 80's and early 90's. If any of you remember us at Bloomington, you'll remember that we would take around 50 – 70 racks to the shows with us. We would always sell out of them every show! For years end, hands down the best selling part we had!

Here is the history of the rack as I remember it:

When purchased new, the luggage racks (Called a Carrier Unit by GM) came with an installation sheet showing the location of the holes. I remember we had a guy named Richard W. xxxxxxx that did the installations in what was called the New Car Get Ready area of the dealership. He was the tech that installed the spoilers, the luggage racks, and just about any other thing that was not installed on the cars when they came off the trailer. (He always said the W stood for Weird. . .) I've known this man most of my adult life and still don't know what that stupid W stands for. **Note: Richard is still alive and well and just a weird now as he was then!**

The original GM racks were made by a company called Duer Tube Bending Co. in Bellwood, IL (I still have the receipt from them shipping them direct to us). In the 70's and 80's accessory items usually shipped from the manufacturer and not the local PDC (GM parts distribution centers) distributors or the parts plants (Lansing, Saginaw, etc).



From what I understand, around 1978-79 the owner of the business died and the business was closed. The racks were instantly discontinued. The original GM racks came in a large white box and had the GM accessory sticker on the end of the box. Part numbers 994628 1968-1976, 995271 1977 only and I don't remember the part number on the 1978-1982 rack. (Repro racks used the same box and had a blue and white label on them and carried an X at the end of the part number). Original label is pictured below.



The tooling for the luggage racks were sold to a company in Florida called Auto Crafters in Merritt Island. (It has since been sold off to another company). How do I know this. . . My father was the person the hooked up Auto Crafters with the original manufacturer. For ten years we were allowed to purchase these racks at the whopping cost of 18.00 per luggage rack with hardware! We used to sell these to M. A. by the pallets in the 80's.

For some reason when Auto Crafters started making the luggage racks, the holes were not in the correct place, spacing changed and other changes happened to these luggage racks!

I've seen some people in the past that said GM used two different luggage rack suppliers. I've even seen a vendor advertise this. GM only used one manufacturer (That I am aware of) on the luggage racks, not two! Anyone that has info about a second supplier please contact me.

Original luggage racks only came with one hole dimension and I have never seen a car that had an original rack that could not have an original rack put back on it. The holes in the factory racks did not vary enough that you could not put it on the car. Customers that had six hole racks and wanted eight would simply bolt the eight hole rack to their car and drill the additional two holes.

To my knowledge I've never seen an original 1976 car with an 8 hole rack. I'm sure there are some 76 cars out there with 8 hole racks but I was there in 76 and I just do not ever remember seeing one. Cars in 1977 that came with the luggage racks also came with the accessory roof panel carrier bracket assembly for installing the T-tops on the car. This carrier bracket kit was also offered as an accessory item from GM, I don't remember the part number but if anyone needs it I can look it up for you.

The bracket kit when purchased new as listed to fit 76-77 cars but would also work on any car 1968-1976 if needed. How would this kit work and why was the bracket kit listed this way? Simple,

It came with tiny spacers, and screws for installing the nipples on a luggage rack that had none! This kit also came with two clear rubber insulators and a strap for locking the tops down on the car. The brackets attached to the center of the luggage rack only and the

brackets included rubber guides in them to allow the tongues of the t-tops to rest in place while strapped to the car. Each bracket kit came with an instruction sheet on how to install them on the luggage rack. I still have one of these original kits here (not for sale) with the installation instructions, add on nipples, and brackets with tubes (tubes shown below) and a strap.

Nipples for carrier convert on 6 hole rack and rubber tubes (Included with the Carrier Bracket Kit when available from GM)



Bracket tubes



Lastly, how do you tell a GM factory luggage rack from the Auto Crafter reproduction? Easy, original luggage racks had a weep hole in the bottom of the tubes right at the end of the rack. This hole was very tiny and when new passed slightly in to the tube to allow moisture out of the rack. It is located just in front of the black cap on the bottom of each tube. All the GM racks had these holes 1968-1976 77 and the god awful ugly 1978-1982 racks. The reproduction racks that were made by Auto Crafters only had a slight depression in the tube at the end and there was not a hole. Now go and check your racks and look for the holes. Please note: Not all GM racks 1968-1976 had the second weep hole in the last tube (as illustrated in the LH picture below. We have found variations both ways.

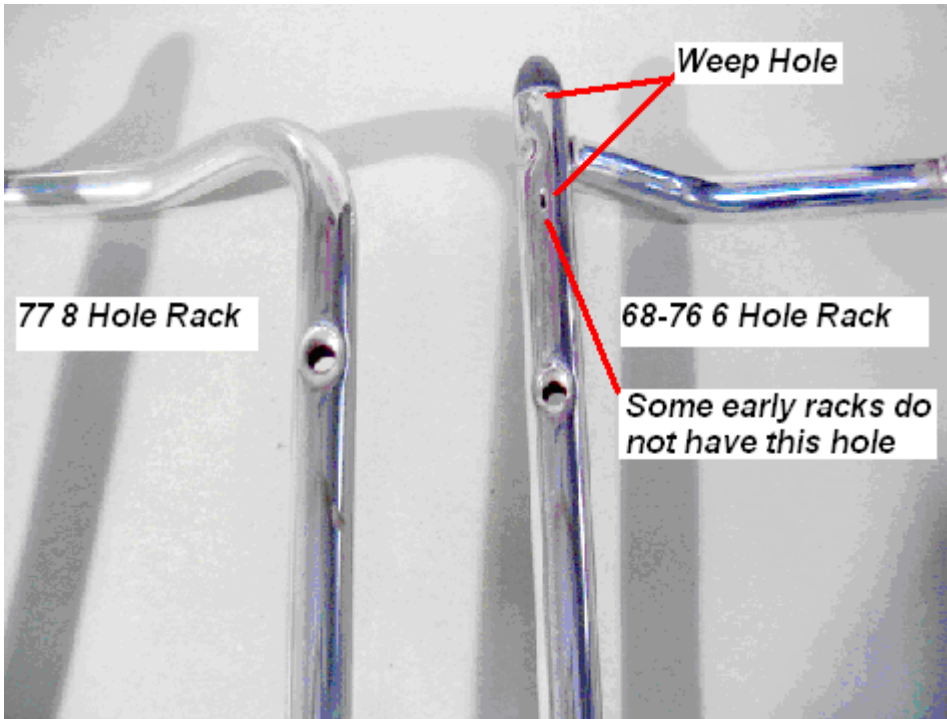


68-76
NOS
Corner
Note: Weep
Holes

68-76
Repro
Tube Note
Dimple only

68-76
NOS
Tube Note
Weep Hole

1977 end compared to 1968-1976 style rack. Note



Regards,

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