

Restoration of Model T Top Sockets:

Model T top sockets are generally one of the last items restored on an open car. Original top sockets are usually very rusty and bent and required a considerable amount of work to restore them to perfection. The steps to restore any top sockets are:

1. Straighten and align the socket. Reinforce and weld any cracks. Top sockets are under considerable stress from wind and the elements, and it is imperative the sockets be as structurally sound as they can be. Tops that are of the "one man top" variety should be disassembled as the straightening takes place. Rivets will need to be ground off and reinstalled as the top assembly is put back together.

2. Clean the socket. Bead blasting is the best way to go because the socket can be cleaned inside and out. If bead blasting is not an option, use a wire brush, by attempt to clean the inside of the socket as well as possible.

3. Make the curved wood reinforcing strip that goes on the corner of each bow. This strip can be made using 1/8th inch strips of yellow pine 1 1/4" wide. Take the 1/8th strips and bend them to match the arch of the bow. Use the curved portion of the socket as a guide. Place waterproof glue on one side of each strip and laminate the strips together. Insure the wood strips go at least 4" into the socket for strength. Allow the glue to dry overnight, or place the socket/wood strip into the oven and bake the glue. Once dry, remove the wood strip and sand and fit the wood strip to the socket. This strip will be held in place using the tabs on the socket and a rivet that will go through the wood and the metal. The laminated strips are extremely strong and durable.

4. Fill the socket with fiberglass resin. The resin will provide additional strength to the socket. A metal dowel (can be a straightened coat hanger) can be inserted into the resin after the resin has been poured into the socket to add more strength. Place tape over any opening so the resin does not ooze out. Insure the socket IS NOT overfilled with resin. Once the metal strip and the resin have been placed in the socket, the wood strip can be installed as the resin dries. This will bond the resin to the bent wood strip.

5. Sand any area where the resin has protruded. Re-rivet the bows as required, prime the sockets and install the wood bows. The wood bow must be riveted to the socket. Paint the bows and sockets with high gloss black paint.

6. Following this procedure will insure a strong and straight top. Good Luck.