

1917 VIM HUCKSTER

1917 VIM Huckster Canopy Delivery Truck

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original price: \$715.00

Number made: Unknown

Engine, etc.: 4 cyl.; 14.4 hp.; 3 forward gears; 108 in. wheelbase (1918 models)

The VIM half-ton truck was made by the Touraine Company in Philadelphia. The company began building passenger cars in 1912 and switched to VIM trucks the next year. They assembled trucks from purchased parts from 1913 – 1915.

The company was founded by Harold B. Larzelere and reportedly built 13,000 trucks a year at one point. During a reorganization in 1915, the name was changed to VIM Motor Truck Co. Production dropped quickly after 1917. It was acquired by the Standard Steel Car Co. of Pittsburgh in 1921 and shut down in 1923. (It was still listed in various directories until 1926.)

VIM built their own engines, known as Philadelphia, for a time and used Continental and Hercules engines after the war. Headlight assemblies were purchased from Ford Motor Company. They were available with or without rear fenders; side curtains were also an option.

The company made twelve models on the VIM half-ton chassis in 1917. The trucks got 20 or more miles per gallon of gas. One satisfied customer who owned a florist company said: "Owing to our city being so spread out, it was a difficult thing for us to make all our deliveries with two horses. The VIM Truck does it now with the greatest ease and comfort, and we have never recommended anything with so much delight as we are doing the VIM Truck." –Valentine Burgevin, Inc., Kingston, N. Y. (*The Florists' Review*, May 24, 1917, vol. 40, pg. 9)

An advertisement showed how much time could be saved by using a VIM versus a horse and wagon for delivery stops: a VIM could make 250 stops in a 20 mile radius in four hours. It took a horse and wagon six hours to make 200 stops within the same distance. (*Vintage Truck*, vol.15, no. 4, Oct. 2007, pg.53)

Another ad states that the "casual observer will instantly understand why the brutal strength shown in the oversize axles, motor, transmission, etc. of the VIM delivery car compared with light, delicate parts of the cheap pleasure car, absolutely disqualifies the latter for delivery service." Cars converted for delivery service were "certain to fail, had mileage three to five times greater and ten to fifty times worse when used for stop and start deliveries". Chassis price was \$635 or \$725 for the complete truck, Model D. The VIMs were "handsomely designed and strongly built, suitable for a hundred lines of business."

In the *Saturday Evening Post* (April 15, 1917, pg. 40), an ad was aimed at businesses still using horses and wagons for delivery. It stated "that this lost the businesses money, caused higher prices, and cheapened quality..." and "more that 22,000 merchants have converted to the VIM Delivery Car...which would be on the job 24 hours a day if necessary and built to stay out of the repair shop". It will "ride a load of eggs or china as easily as a boat rides".

Sources: <http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z17213/Vim-Type-S21.aspx>

https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8188/8133579352_3ed613710d_b.jpg (Original ad)

https://books.google.com/books?id=81c-AQAAMAAJ&pg=RA2-PA9&lpg=RA2-PA9&dq=VIM+truck&source=bl&ots=2lyRdkqmi2&sig=zCYbNm_9ym76KGICqaCUV7n4z9s&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VS6gVcmBJcu5-QG6oJ6lAw&ved=0CDgQ6AEwAjgK#v=onepage&q=VIM%20truck&f=false

Lost Annals of Transport, *The Day* (New London, Conn.), April 4, 1916; <https://lostannalsoftransport.wordpress.com/> (Search "VIM" in search box)

https://books.google.com/books?id=a_wiAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA538&lpg=PA538&dq=VIM+truck&source=bl&ots=hnV1pCdljy&sig=Zk7I1dVA3qXVfFU1Ny3WCZ6EcYQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=TDmgVeTiHcrm-QHE97nwBw&ved=0CE0Q6AEwCDge#v=onepage&q=VIM%20truck&f=false

<http://forums.justoldtrucks.com/Topic13772.aspx>