

# BATWING AIR CLEANER GUIDE

(with a Pontiac emphasis)

by Len Sokol, February 2006 (revised February 2012)

## DISCLAIMER:

The information provided herein is not guaranteed to be 100% correct. It was assembled from recollections and notes from the 1970's, based on observations and data gathering at the time, with some current info added (the author should be notified regarding any errors, corrections, or updates to be made). The author is in no way responsible if you acquire the wrong batwing, but will gladly take it off your hands for his own investment!

Also, there is no attempt here to document carburetor, choke, linkage, or other part (such as brackets) info. The only point worth noting regarding other parts is a warning to check clearances carefully between batwing and hood. Certain combinations are known to present problems, e.g., a Caddy batwing under a Pontiac hood, using WCFB carbs with certain spacers.

## Batwing ID Table

The following chart illustrates major recognition points for all(?) batwing-style air cleaners used in the 50's. It is meant for helping with quick ID's at flea markets, etc., or just for reference in finding the correct one. But given some of today's asking prices, it might be worth acquiring no matter what it fits. (*Eldorado Brougham line and footnote added February 2012.*)

Vehicle	Top Surface	Air Stack Height	Oil Bath Mounting <sup>1</sup>	Carb (c-c) Spacing	Factory Color
'56 Pontiac	Smooth	Tall	B	9"	Black
'54-'56 Caddy	Smooth <sup>2</sup>	Tall	C	9"	Gold
'57 Caddy Eldorado	Smooth <sup>2</sup>	Short	R	9"	Gold
'57 Cad.Eldo.Brougham <b>only</b>	Recessed <sup>5</sup>	Short	B	9"	Gold
'55-'56 Chrysler 300	Ribbed	Short	C	9"	Gold
'55-'57 Chevy <sup>3,4</sup>	Smooth	Short	C (55-6) R (57)	7-1/2"	Black

<sup>1</sup> C = Centered mounting hole on top of both oil baths; B = Off-centered mounting hole on both oil baths; R = Off-centered mounting hole on RH one only. (When mounting stud mates the off-centered hole thru the underside opening of the batwing, rotation of the oil bath enables it to be positioned in the proper orientation based on clearance requirements.) *Feb.2012 Keep in mind that over the years, oil baths may have been mixed and matched incorrectly with their batwing shells.*

<sup>2</sup> Also has chrome 'V' emblem mounted on surface

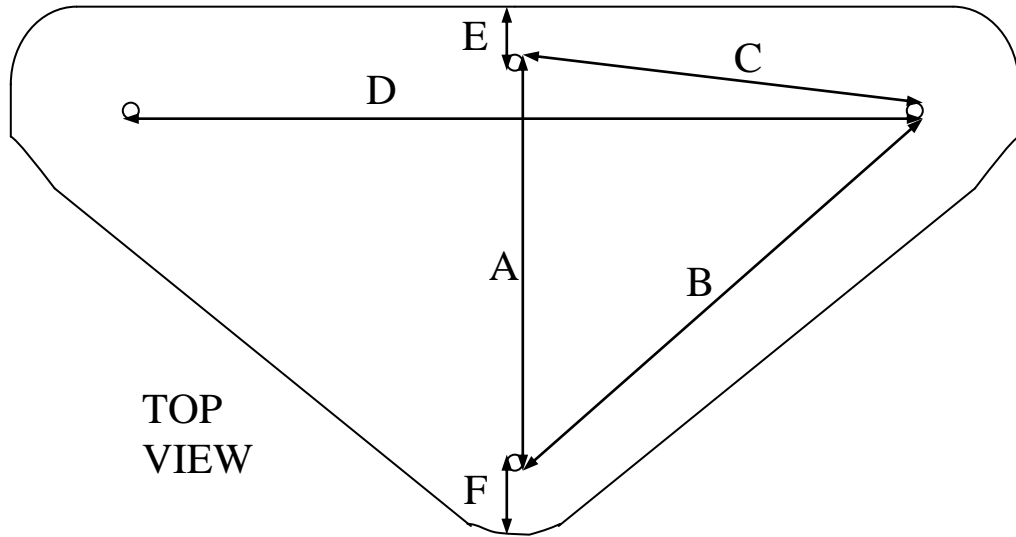
<sup>3</sup> When mounted, the Chevy batwing points toward the rear due to clearance requirements, primarily the battery on the firewall in '55-'56. (NOTE: If you know your Pontiac and Caddy units well, and you encounter your first Chevy batwing on a car, please refrain from telling the car owner he has it on backwards.)

<sup>4</sup> Some '57 Chevy batwings, including repros, have been seen pointed toward the front, and have also been pictured as having the tall carb stacks, contrary to the on-car pictures shown. It is also unclear whether some '57s without deluxe heaters may have been equipped with 2 centered baths.

<sup>5</sup> *Feb.2012* Top is smooth with a large recessed area in the center due to lowered body and hood on Brougham models only (see picture on page 11).

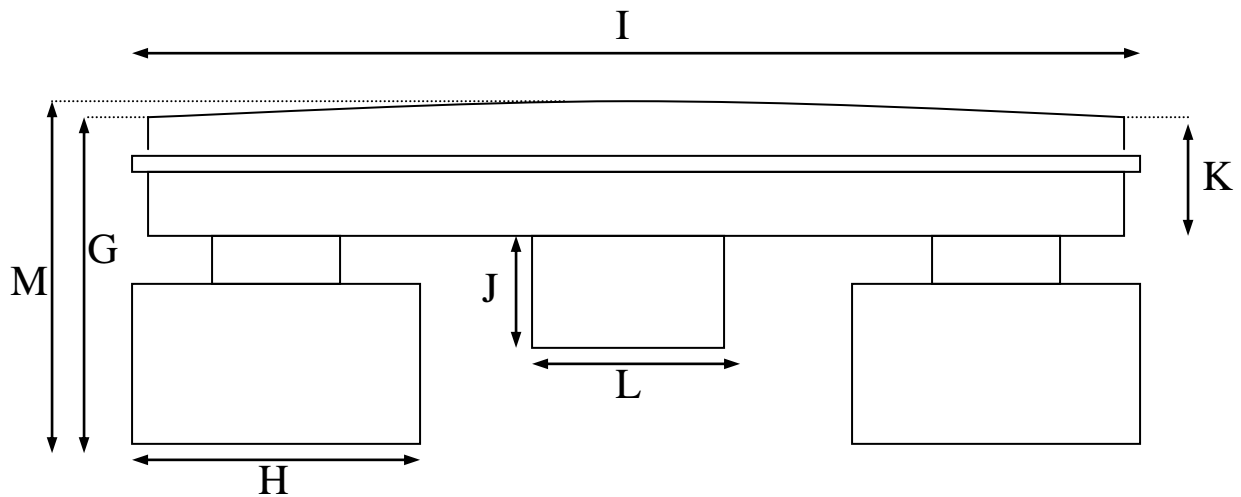
**Batwing Measurements**

Below are illustrations and corresponding measurements, which were made for comparison purposes over a number of years, the Cadillac one being recent. The Caddy has basically the same sizings as a Pontiac unit. On the Chevy unit, the front carb stud hole (which is the one near the *flat* end, not the *pointed* end, due to its reversed mounting position) lies just on the inner side of dimension line 'D' due to the shorter carb-to-carb distance.



	Cadillac	Chevrolet		Cadillac	Chevrolet
A	9	7-1/2	G	7-3/4	7-3/4
B	12	12	H	8	8
C	9-1/8	9-1/8	I	26-1/4	26-1/4
D	18-1/4	???	J	2-3/8	1/2 (est.)
E	2-7/8	4-5/8	K	3	3
F	3-1/4	3-1/4	L	4-5/8	4-5/8
			M	8-1/2	???

Dimensions in Inches

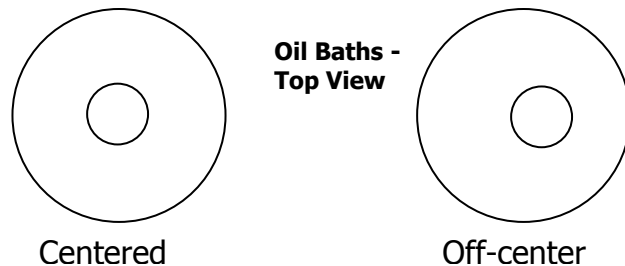
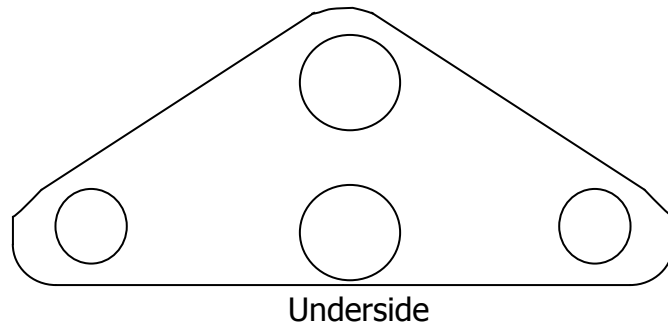
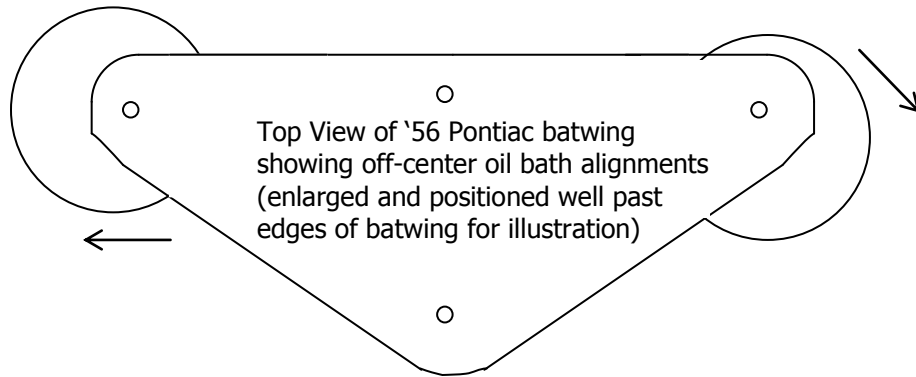


REAR VIEW

### **Batwing Modification for '56 Pontiac**

Since a number of early Cadillac batwings find their way on to Pontiacs, there is a modification that may need to be done for a better fit, depending on vehicle setup. The proper batwing for a '56 Pontiac with a defroster and Rochester carburetors required the oil bath units with off-center mounting to be positioned as follows: The right oil bath needed to be positioned slightly outboard (toward the right fender) to clear the correct choke tube running from the rear Rochester carb to the manifold, and the left oil bath needed to be pointed in a direction toward the left headlight in order to clear the inner defroster tube/hose/clamp assembly.

A left oil bath with centered mounting (early Cadillac unit) can clear the defroster with a small margin of error. A centered right hand one can only be used with the original Rochester carbs either if it receives some metalwork modifications or if the choke tube on the rear carb is repositioned by using a different choke housing which orients the tubing in a position other than straight out to the side.

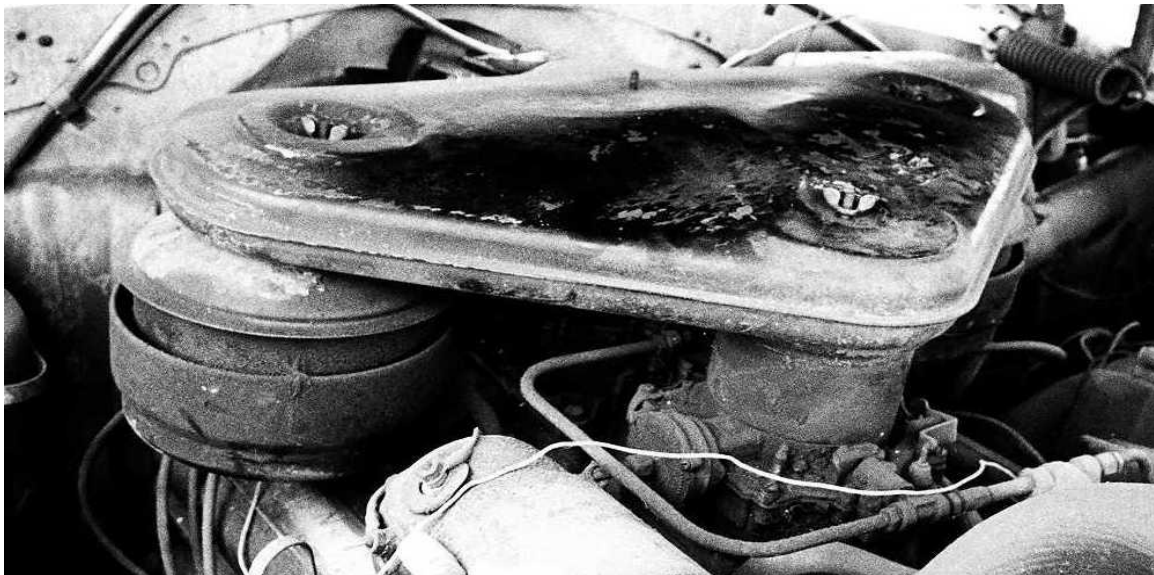


## Various Batwing Photos



Original '56 Pontiac setup (c. 1979), 1 of 3

*(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*



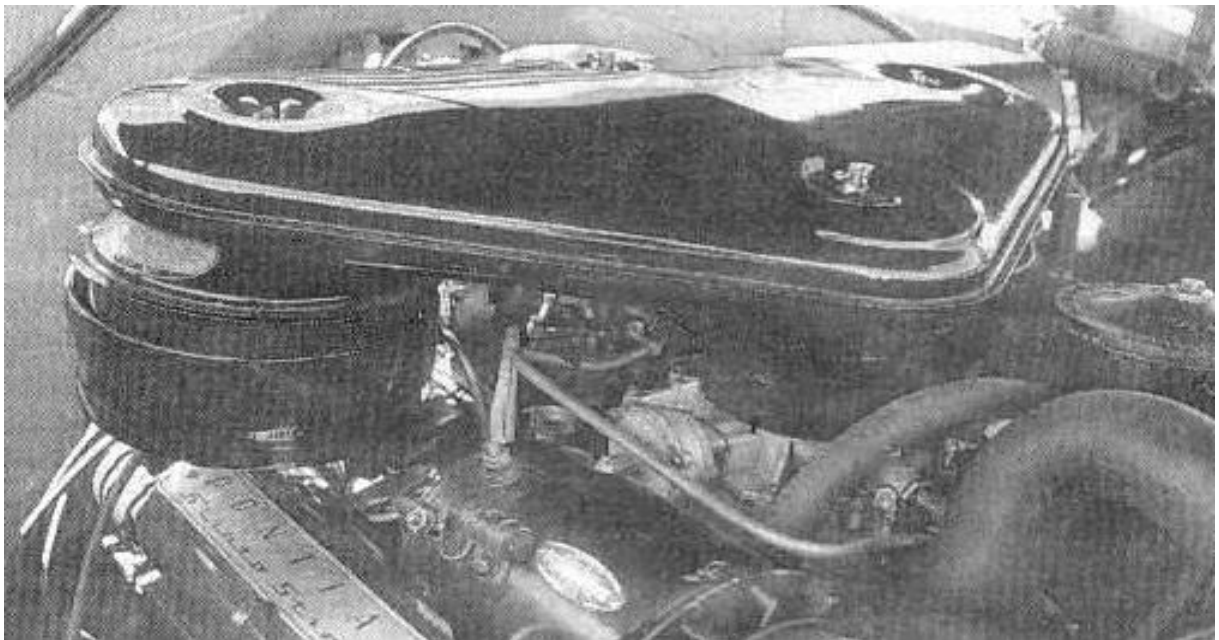
Original '56 Pontiac setup (c. 1979), 2 of 3

*(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*



Original '56 Pontiac setup (c. 1979), 3 of 3

*(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*



'56 Pontiac setup from old news article (Note: RH oil bath does not look like an off-center one as it should be. It could be mis-positioned to look centered here or this may be a Caddy unit.)

*(Photo credit: Old Cars Weekly)*



Pontiac unit on a restored '56 at 2001 POCI Convention *(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)*



'56 Caddy batwing modified for '56 Pontiac (c.1979) *(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*



Another Caddy unit on a '56 Pontiac

*(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)*



Unmodified '56 Caddy batwing

*(Photo credit: Gene Orsi)*



'56 Caddy unit undergoing restoration

*(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)*



Another '56 Caddy - interesting view

*(Photo credit: Internet Photo)*





Original '57 Caddy setup

*(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)*



'56 Chrysler batwing

*(Photo credit: Internet Photo)*



'56 Chrysler batwing disassembled

*(Photo credit: Internet Photo)*



'56 Chrysler batwing disassembled

*(Photo credit: Internet Photo)*



'57 Eldorado Brougham batwing *(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*  
Notice large recessed area in center. This was needed due to lowered body and hood on only the Brougham models. Unique and extremely low in production quantity.



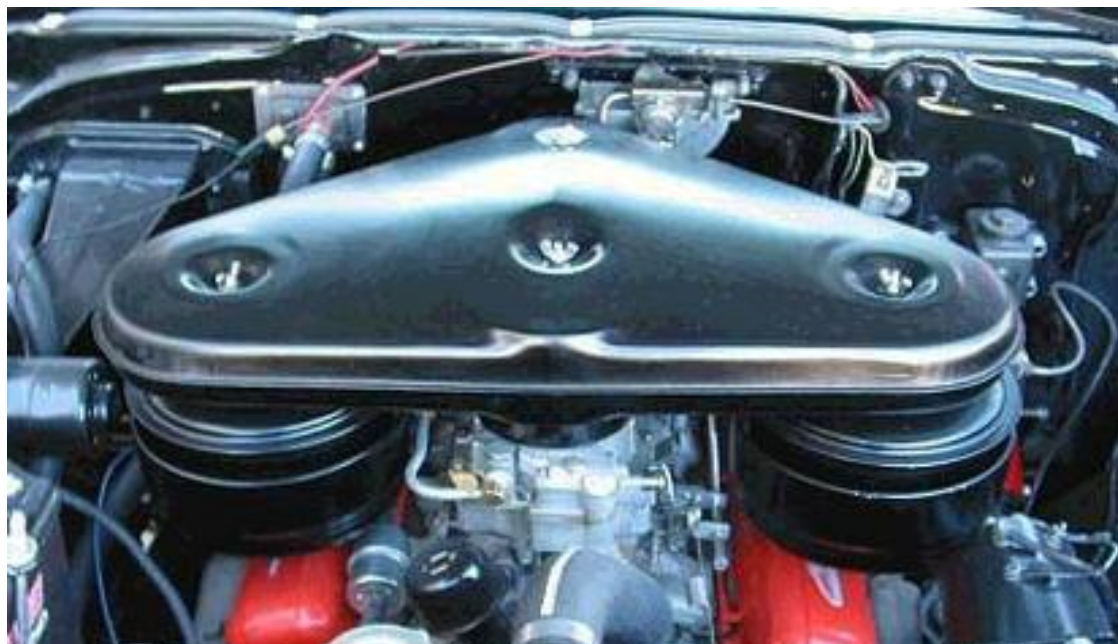
Off-center oil bath viewed from the top *(Photo credit: Internet photo)*

*(This page was added February 2012)*



'56 Chevy batwing (c.1978)

*(Photo credit: Len Sokol)*



'57 Chevy with correct batwing  
(Note off-center RH oil bath -- '57 only)

*(Photo credit: HotAutoWeb.com)*



Another '57 Chevy with correct batwing

(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)

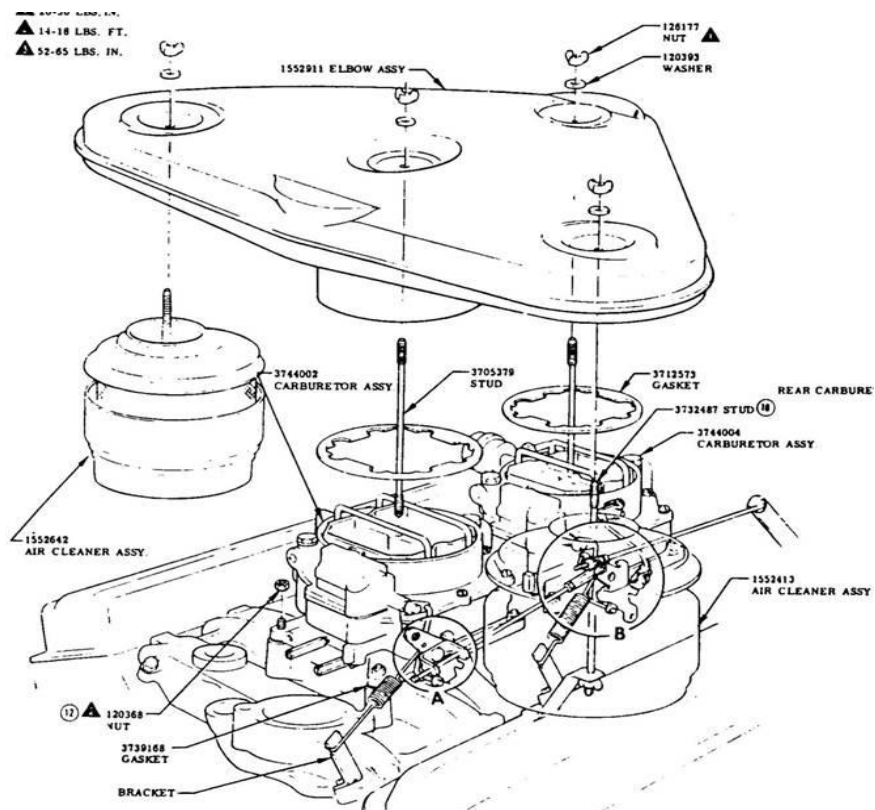


Illustration of Chevy batwing from '57 service manual  
(Note off-center oil bath on RH only; though not legible,  
part numbers are different also)

(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)

## Some Batwing Wannabes



Air cleaner used on mid-50's Buick, Olds, Caddy

*(Photo credit: Internet Photo)*



Mid-60's batwing wannabe: '67 Corvette 427/400 3x2

*(Photo credit: Rick Gonser)*