Chapter 4
Job Numbers & Body Panels

What is the meaning of those hand-written grease pencil numbers on the underbody of my Corvette? For years, factory hand-written marks have been the study, discussion and publication among Corvette enthusiasts. A frequent topic in Corvette forums, restorers are always encouraged to clean the chassis lightly, document with photography, and spare if at all possible.

Body panel marks, or job numbers for C2s,[1] and likewise early C3s, have been interpreted and described by John Hinckley.[2] The practice by factory workers of using grease pencils to mark fiberglass was to coordinate the assembly of body panels, prior to trim tag and vehicle identification number (VIN) assignment and plate attachment. At the point that body assembly began, the VIN plate and the trim tag had yet to be attached. In fact their purpose was not to inform workers of vehicle identification or paint and trim but rather document buyer options and comply with federal requirements. Therefore, workers depended on other manual methods to track assembly of body panels that were being prepared for buyer ordered options that would come later in assembly.

Chapter 4 describes how this manual method evolved and was used for the late-model C3 years. It will also discuss how this method adapted to the integration of data processing and the GMAD landscape style manifest, or buildsheet. In this Chapter, data is used from 1973 (Figure 4a) through 1982 to show the quality of original factory marks and how they reconcile with available build records, typical of this period.

1 Terms used are consistent with the works of Al Grenning and John Hinckley, published in the *The Corvette Restorer* that described C2 scheduling and assembly processes and production documents.

2 Hinckley, J., Numbers and the "Missing Link" the Broadcast Copy, *The Corvette Restorer*, Spring, 2003

Figure 4a:
Job Number 195 on a 1973 underbody panel

Discussion begins in the order in which manufacturing documents would have been prepared, distributed and used each day beginning with the run sheet. Next, the role of the build sheet is explained that documents this process and, finally the link between body panel and build sheet is illustrated…the hand-written job number.

The Job Number: Run Sheet

So, how did the St. Louis Corvette assembly plant schedule, track and build each day's 100 plus Corvettes sequenced on the production schedule for a given day? The run sheet, a rarely seen but decades-old production method! As dealer orders were processed by the St. Louis assembly plant, Scheduling and Production Control Departments would prepare the daily production schedules based on material and supply availability, options and balancing assembly line workloads. Each day, the schedules were distributed to the body shop showing the orders, their options and assigned a schedule sequence number. These schedules were called run sheets. Other schedules were also used that were a derivative of the run sheet called a low-run sheet, none of which survived the St. Louis plant era.

Believe it or not, quite similar methods are still used today in the Bowling Green Corvette assembly plant. Figure 4b is an example of a 2008 low-run sheet, displayed in an Excel spreadsheet format for the chassis and shows model, paint, order-related RPOs and of course, the pre-assigned VIN.

The Job Number: Body Panel

The manifest used box 10 with the caption SCHED NO DATE to print schedule related information and an expected date of production. The use of box 10 to display this data was consistent throughout the 1973-82 period.

Figure 4e shows schedule code 10-0195 for job number 195 (See Figure 4a). The schedule

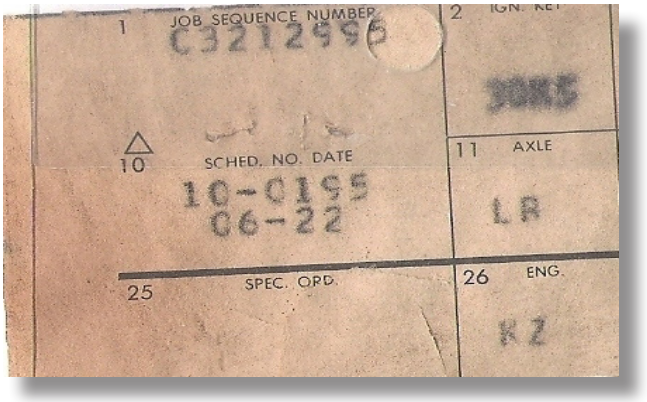

Figure 4e: Build Sheet 1973

shows the estimated date of production 06-22. The trim tag date code is K21, a day earlier than the estimated date. In 1973, trim tag attachment was installed at the end of the Body Shop as the vehicle was readied for the Trim Line.

PVI	MODEL	PAINT	TOP	THOOK	EXP	T90	T93	TRANS	O/COOLR	K05	BRAKE	F55	EXH	VZ3	VIN
11111	1YY67	85U						AA			J55	F55			110174
11112	1YY07	89U	TWO					AA			JL9		NPP		110175
11113	1YY07	87U	PTD					MM	KPS		J55				110176
11114	1YY07	41U	PTD					AA			JL9				110177
11116	1YY87	45U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110178
11117	1YY67	45U						AA			J55		NPP		110179
11118	1YY07	74U	PTD					MM			JL9			VZ3	110180
11119	1YY07	74U	CLR					AA			JL9		NPP		110181
11120	1YY87	74U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110182
11121	1YY67	83U						AA			J55	F55			110183
11122	1YY07	83U	CLR					MM	KPS		J55		NPP		110184
11123	1YY07	85U	PTD					AA			JL9				110185
11124	1YY87	85U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56			VZ3	110186
11125	1YY67	89U						AA			J55				110187
11126	1YY07	89U	CLR					AA			J55		NPP		110188
11127	1YY07	41U	PTD					MM			JL9				110189
11128	1YY87	87U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110190
11129	1YY67	10U						AA			J55	F55	NPP		110191
11130	1YY07	10U	TWO					AA			J55		NPP		110192
11131	1YY07	87U	PTD					MM			JL9				110193
11132	1YY87	87U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110194
11133	1YY67	10U						AA			J55		NPP		110195
11135	1YY07	10U	CLR					AA			JL9				110196
11136	1YY07	10U	PTD					AA			JL9				110197
11137	1YY87	41U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110198
11138	1YY67	85U						MM			JL9		NPP		110199
11139	1YY07	85U	TWO					AA			J55	F55	NPP		110200
11140	1YY07	74U	CLR					AA			J55				110201
11141	1YY87	85U	Z06					MM	KPS		J56				110202

Figure 4b: Low-Run Chassis Sheet, Bowling Green 2008 Model Year
Document courtesy of Terry McManmon