

## SERVICE STATION ATTIRE IN THE MODEL A ERA

*By Lois Przywitowski*

In the early years of the automobile, getting gas for the horseless carriage was no small feat. Dispensing gasoline evolved from bulk depots on the outskirts of towns, often requiring three people to fill the tank, to curb side pumps. As the popularity of the motor car increased and technology allowed larger quantities of fuel to be refined from the same amount of petroleum, merchants of all stripes, from bicycle shops, general stores, garages, and automotive dealers, installed gas pumps in front of their establishments. By 1920 approximately 15,000 gas stations were located in the United States. They were rudimentary at best, some little more than shacks, with advertisements littering their walls and the roads leading to them. They were considered by many to be an eyesore, and even worse, there was little confidence in the product they offered.

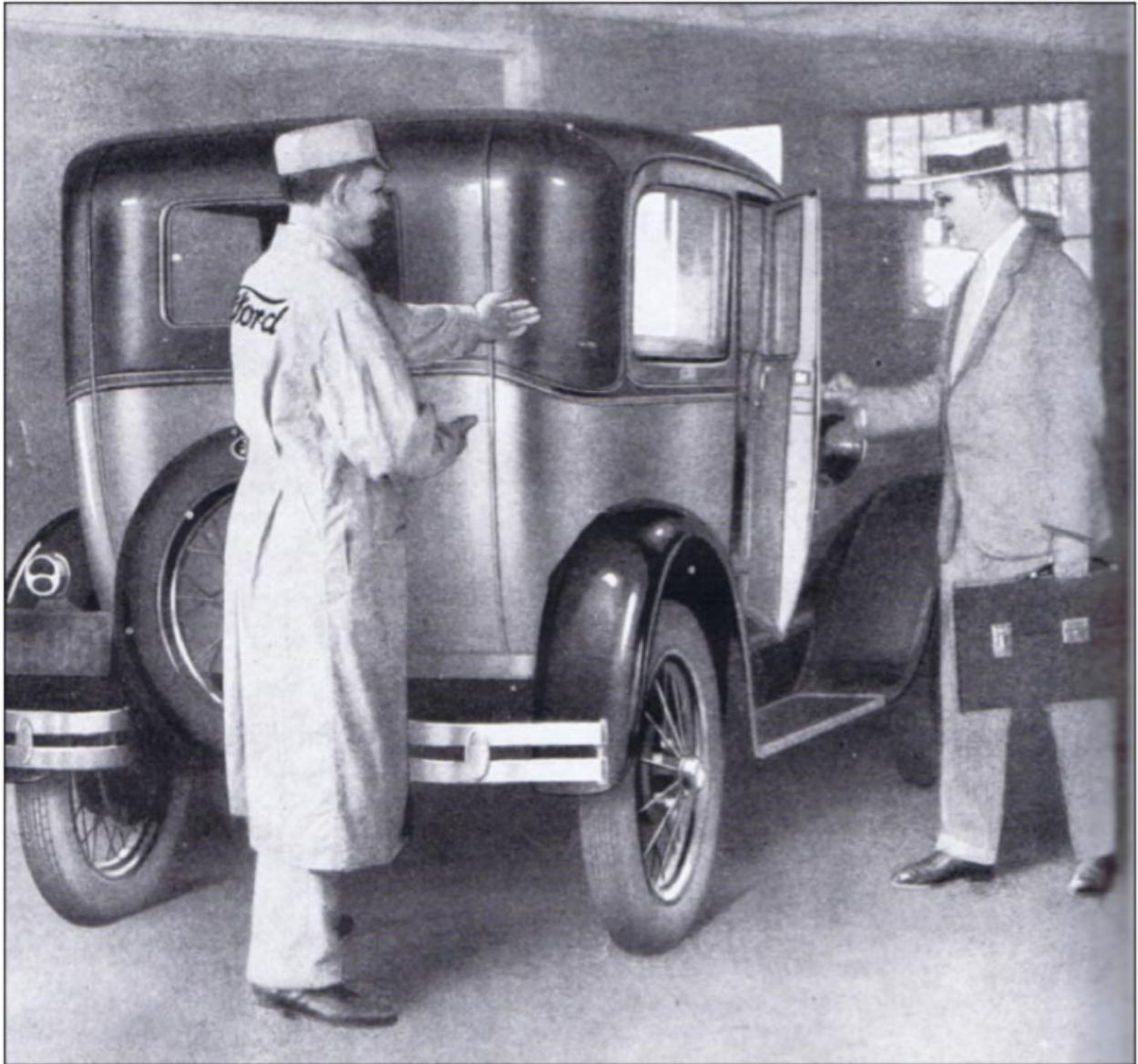
Major oil companies took note and began to standardize their stations, making them visually appealing to the motorist. Not only did the station need to look good, the service employees needed to project honesty, integrity, reliability and quality. What better way to do that than through the clothing they wore?



*Ford Service Bulletins emphasized service, shop cleanliness, and the appearance of the employees. This illustration, from the July 1928 Bulletin, shows the serviceman in a shop coat, with the Ford Logo, shoes polished, and cap in hand.*

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*This mechanic also wears a shop coat, with the same type of cap.  
The shop coats were designed to promote ease of movement  
through the use of pleats in the coat.*

Ford Service Bulletin, August 1928",

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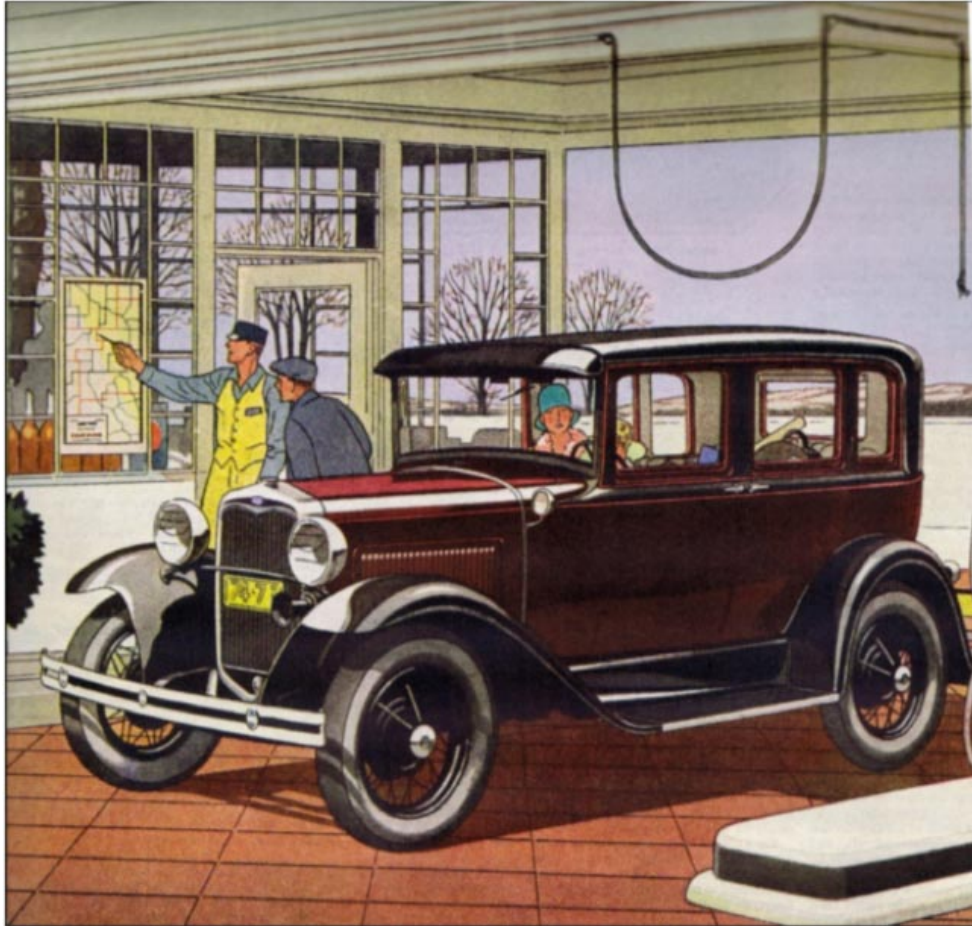
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*In this advertisement from the April 1930 issue of the Country Gentleman, the attendant is wearing jodhpurs, a matching button down waist length jacket, and either boots or shoes with shin guards.*

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*This advertisement for the "new Ford" shows a man getting directions from the attendant. The attendant is wearing a five-button vest with matching trousers, a long sleeved shirt and cap. The Country Gentleman, November 1930*

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*This April 1931 Saturday Evening Post advertisement shows the attendant in a long sleeved shirt, with a crisp, black bow tie. Both his hat and shirt bear the Texaco emblem.*

Source: Witzel, Michael Karl, *The American Gas Station*, Motorbooks International, 1992