

Facts on the 1980 Little Express Truck

Recently there has been a lot of discussion about the “Supposed” 1980 Dodge Little Express Truck.

What are the facts? Were they really produced? What colors were they painted? How many were made? How can you tell by the VIN?

I have done extensive research on the 1980 Dodge Little Express Truck and I think I can explain what has happened.

Dodge had to have pictures of the truck for the media, magazines, TV adds, Showroom literature, etc., months in advance of the actual truck. Since they were not producing any 1980 models that early, they just took a production 1979 Li'l Red Express and painted it either black or blue, changed the door decal, painted the grille black and “presto”, they had a 1980 Little Express Truck. It was easy to do, because the only difference between the 1979 and 1980, was the center section of the grille was painted black for '80. Dodge even had the door decals printed up in advance, for distribution to the factory and the dealer parts departments, part # 4211552. (some still exist)

However, the powers to be determined that it was not profitable for the truck to be produced and the program was cancelled.

I have seen the VIN for the Blue, 1980 Little Express Truck, and it was a 1979 VIN. The way to tell is, the 1979 Li'l Red VIN will read: D13JS9Sxxxxxx. The 1980 VIN would have read:

D13JSASxxxxxx. 1980 was the first year that U.S. Automakers were required to start using letters for the year designation, instead of numbers and the 6th digit for 1980 was “A”.

I am not sure how many 1980 Little Express Trucks were made, but I have seen color pics of the black one and what looks like a dark blue, with beige interior. Since most of the pics for magazines were in black and white, it is almost impossible to tell the actual color.

So, there were never any production 1980 Little Express Trucks ever produced. They were 1979 Li'l Reds, made up to represent a 1980 Little Express Truck.

Hopefully, this will clear some of the mystery about the 1980 Little Express Truck and stop all the stories about somebody having a 1980 Little Express Truck.

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PREVIEW:

'80 CHRYSLER TRUCKS

PICKUP TRUCKS EXPAND OPTIONS; OFFER NEW FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE SYSTEM FOR 1980

A new part-time, four-wheel drive system that provides greater fuel economy and a greater selection of options and exterior/interior trim highlight

Dodge/Plymouth pickup trucks for 1980.

Pickup trucks are available in a variety of models (gross vehicle weight ranges) with three different cabs, two types of pickup boxes and two and four-wheel drive configurations. Cab types include the three-man Cab, the Club Cab with an additional 34 cubic feet in inside room and two optional

rear jump seats, and the Crew Cab with seating for six adults.

The Sweptline pickup box has a double-wall construction with unbroken side lines, while the Utiline pickup has smooth interior sidewalls, exterior fenders, and handy exterior side steps. Both box styles are available in 6½ and 8 foot lengths. Cab and box is more available without a pickup box.

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Factory photos of the 1980 Little Express Truck

