

America Needs a Mustang Museum

by Rick Mitchell

"Gee, Grandpa, you once owned an early Mustang?" my young grandson asked me.

"Sure did! A real pretty one, too. Your grandmother and I used to drive it to local car shows. Sometimes we'd see as many as 150 Mustangs, all at one time".

"Wow, Grandpa. That's incredible! Especially now since we've passed the turn of the century. There aren't many of them left anymore. I once saw pictures of them in an old magazine you had in the attic. It's a shame there's nowhere to go to see a bunch of them".

"I know. We should have done something to put a few of them away in a museum. If only we had thought of that back in the '80's. Maybe we'd have a nice collection of them somewhere to go see".

Hold on, "the turn of the century"? Is this the ghost of Mustangs in the Future, or Mustangs Past? Will there come a day when our grandchildren will only hear about our beloved Mustangs, and never see them, like today's grandparents describing their Model T Fords?

Our hobby needs an individual, or group of individuals, to start planning now, for a *National Mustang Museum*. Presently, Shelby enthusiast Rick Nagel is years ahead of us. He soon plans to open his *Museum of Shelby American History* in Dallas. Rick has spent years preparing an assortment of beautifully refurbished Shelby models, from the GT350 to the GT40, and beyond. *Why aren't we Mustangers doing the same thing?*

Is there anyone today willing to undertake such a noble challenge? Would Mustang clubs across the country support the building of such a showcase? This would be the ultimate labor of love in our hobby: Build a living memorial to Ford's original ponycar. Wouldn't it be fantastic?

Imagine this for a moment: Over the doorways as we enter our new museum are three foot high pony and tribar emblems. As we walk inside, a bright red early 1964½ Mustang convertible attracts our attention. Signs greet us, "Welcome to the National Mustang Museum, erected by those who owned and loved America's pioneer ponycar". Walking through the turnstiles, we soon see examples of each year Mustang and bodystyle. Lit placards in front of each Mustang de-



scribe its special characteristics. On nearby video monitors, early television advertisements are showing the more memorable Mustang commercials. Finally, in the center of our museum is an area resembling a Ford dealer's showroom, with original factory banners promoting each Mustang year. Suddenly, the visitor is transported back to the mid-sixties or early seventies! The idea is mind boggling!

How could this be done? Initially, a steering committee would be formed with individuals capable of handling such an enormous task. Fund raisers within our hobby would generate the needed start-up funds. And later, a reasonable admission fee would be charged by the museum itself to maintain its expenses and a small caretaker staff.

What about the museum's Mustangs themselves? To solve this problem, the

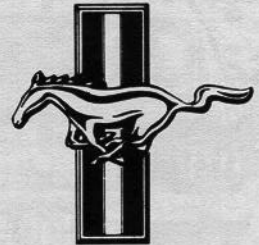
museum would create several methods for obtaining an initial 50 to 100 cars. For example, Mustangs could be loaned on a six month to two year basis, with the museum providing fire and theft insurance. The museum would buy some cars eventually, and some would be outright donated. Finally, private owners would rotate cars in and out of the museum on a short term basis, such as for one or two months at a time. This would mean there would always be something new and different to see at the museum.

It's an interesting plan, and certainly could become a reality. If the museum had a large enough parking lot nearby, it could host one or two of the national Mustang shows each year. Perhaps the administration of the museum could be partially handled by one of the larger Mustang groups. Club volunteers could then help man the museum on

weekends to further reduce expenses.

Perhaps this brief article will be the cornerstone for a wonderful new showcase for our proud ponies. With so many talented people in our hobby today, perhaps a few special people will turn this dream into a brick and concrete reality.

If not, many years from now, I'll be showing my grandson an old editorial I wrote way back in 1986, while only showing him pictures of Mustangs in dusty old magazines.



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