

## IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS

A Project Update from Jim Smart

A lot of folks have begun to wonder what ever happened to the IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS registry project. If you're a long time MCA member, you no doubt remember those IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS monthly updates that appeared in the *Mustang Times* from 1979 through early 1984 when I assumed the duties as Editor of *Mustang Monthly Magazine* here in Lakeland, Florida. With this new position came a lot of responsibility that demanded a lot of my time. As a result, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS became a back burner project until the free time was available.

Over two years later, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS is back in full swing, now being entered into the vast computer system here at *Mustang Monthly*. As a result of this new system of gathering information, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has become a more informative project because it's all right there for easy access.

While IN SEARCH was on the back burner, quite a number of you never gave up on the project, continuing to send me an abundance of dealer files, vendor lots, and your own collections. For this, Mustangers, I say "thank you!" Thus far, IN SEARCH sports well in excess of 10,000 Mustangs from all over the globe — and Virginia Mustanger Jim Haskell just submitted 1,100 more! All 1965 Mustangs from his research into the 1964½ Indy Mustang Pace Cars. Many thanks, Jim.

For those of you just tuning in, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS is a worldwide Mustang registry, dedicated to all 1964½ through 1973 Mustangs and Shelby's. This means we're looking to gathering information on each and every Mustang ever assembled, including those that no longer exist, those from Ford dealer new car files, used car lots, Mustang parts vendors, collectors, you name it. We want them all! All you have to do is submit the complete information from the vehicle identification plate (1965-69) or sticker (1970-73) that's located on the left hand door

near the latch. Just pencil it down on a sheet of paper and send it my way to be included in the project's information battery. We'll need the serial (warranty) number and all the codes that tell us the make-up of the Mustang in question. The build plate, located under the hood of Dearborn and Metuchen built units assembled from 1966-on, is especially handy if you're able to provide the information.

Since the monthly updates in the *Mustang Times* came to a halt two years ago, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has unearthed literally dozens of new, exiting finds. Not so long ago, we found 5F08F100173 over in England with a scheduled assembly date of March 5, 1964. According to its new owner, Frank Middleweek of Essex, it was a promotional car for the Mustang's debut in England. The DSO code of 91 proves it was meant for export. Many other early 1964½ Mustangs have joined this one in our line-up. Many of you remember 5F08F100006, owned by Ed White of South Georgia, one of 12 1964½ World's Fair Mustang convertibles used on the Rotunda exhibit in 1964 — all Wimbledon White with red vinyl interiors and 260 V-8s. To our knowledge, Ed still has this junkyard find tucked away in a barn. There were 12 more in 1965 like these.

One of the biggest obstacles facing IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has been the never ending flood of mail requiring answers. Many of the letters request a vehicle identification plate decoding which is simply impossible anymore — even with a self-addressed stamped envelope. There are quite a number of publications today in the Mustang marketplace that provide complete warranty plate decoding information that will benefit you better than waiting several months for the reply. To date, there's still mail sitting here from last fall, simply due to the slow pace of getting it all answered. At any one time, there are no less than 300 letters waiting for replies, so you can

well imagine the workload. The letters are answered in sections as the time permits.


So what of the future of IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS? Over the past seven years, Mustangers have been promised time and time again a finished product of the IN SEARCH project called *The 1964 1/2-1973 Mustang Production Guide*. To date, we still don't have a finished product. The reasons behind this have been simple — money, getting a computer program we could live with, and finding a publisher to put it all together. In the past two years, we've managed to find all three. Attempting to publish a book by one's self is nearly impossible today because of the sheer expense involved. A 500 page book at 5,000 copies can cost the individual nearly \$20,000 — something not within my grasp. As a result, IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS has remained a bank of information still not completely available to the public. And this has been too unfortunate.

Now we're moving on to the future, keypunching a battery of information into a fine computer system that's enabling us to reach inside the project for important information. Soon, we'll be to a point where your build date will be available at the punch of a button. Many of you have written, asking for build dates for your Mustangs. Currently, your letters are on hold until we have nearly 100 percent of the information keyed. Then those letters will be answered. To date, we have over 5,000 Mustangs entered, with nearly 7,000 to go. It's a long and involved process that will pay off for all of us in the future. Asking the Mustanger to be patient is probably a bit much, especially after waiting seven years for the finished product. But good things take time — and a finished product is in the making. Meanwhile, I'm counting on everyone to take time to participate in IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS — just as I have since December of 1979 when the first request appeared within these pages. Your efforts are never in vain

and each Mustang deserves to be counted, no matter the condition. Should you desire information or an IN SEARCH application to fill out on your Mustang, simply drop me a self-addressed envelope to the address accompanying this update and an application will be in the mail soon.

In the coming months, IN SEARCH updates will appear in the *Mustang Times* on occasion as the time permits. Meanwhile, I invite those interesting finds out there and your letters. Again, please understand the unusual delays that go with waiting for a reply. There simply hasn't been enough of me to handle it all — so I greatly appreciate everyone's patience.

IN SEARCH OF MUSTANGS  
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