

THE FIRST RACE WAS CONCEIVED WHEN THE SECOND CAR WAS BUILT

On a rainy Saturday, October 17th, the KSC crew toured the Simeone Foundation Museum near the Philadelphia airport. WOW!!! The founder and head of the foundation, Dr. Fred Simeone, gave us a personally narrated and directed tour. Check out the museum website: www.simeonemuseum.org

The museum's theme is "Come Celebrate The 'Spirit of Competition'" and the focus is on "sporting cars" and sports car racing. You can see cars such as a 1909 American Underslung, a 1937 Supercharged Cord, a 1956 Jaguar D-Type, and a 1966 Corvette 427 Stingray. However, the BIG treat was seeing the 1916 Oakland Model 38 Speedster.



Some basic facts:

Chassis Number: L72676

Horsepower: 39

Displacement: 4-cylinder, 3.15 liter

Wheel Base: 112"

The Oakland claimed to be "altogether a comfortable, graceful, powerful car with the speed of a racer – a delight to the man who likes to drive FAST!"

Oakland was one of the very few post-World War I companies that marketed a vehicle for sporting purposes even though they were not involved in racing. But, as the ad says, they wanted a car that "makes it seem like a thing ALIVE, and fairly thrills you with its eagerness to GO."

Borrowing from the foundation's outstanding book, "The Spirit of Competition", the following is how the Foundation acquired the Oakland. Per Dr. Simeone, on "September 23, 2006 Bonham's auction of the Frank Cooke collection sported a '1916 Oakland Model 38 Speedster.' They did not really have any significant history, and in fact the only information I could find was gleaned from our collection's original brochure produced just for this car, a part which is reproduced here. Clearly the auction catalog writer was unaware of the provenance of this vehicle because the writer assumed that the body was not original. However, careful inspection and comparisons with the only detailed illustration of the car (in the brochure) showed that this was a remarkably original automobile. The leather, for instance, was intact. Speaking with Andrew Reilly of Bonham's at the time, convinced me that this was actually the original body and one with many undisturbed features, particularly the leather."

Six months later ANOTHER Speedster showed up at another auction with the auctioneer declaring that it "might be the only Oakland speedster in existence." This second car sold for over 4 times what Dr. Simeone paid for his.

Surprises abound. What a find. AND what a treat to tour the museum. Thank you Dr. Simeone for your vision!

Information taken from "The Spirit of Competition" with the permission of The Simeone Foundation Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Article by Dick Stover

