

HISTORICA

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

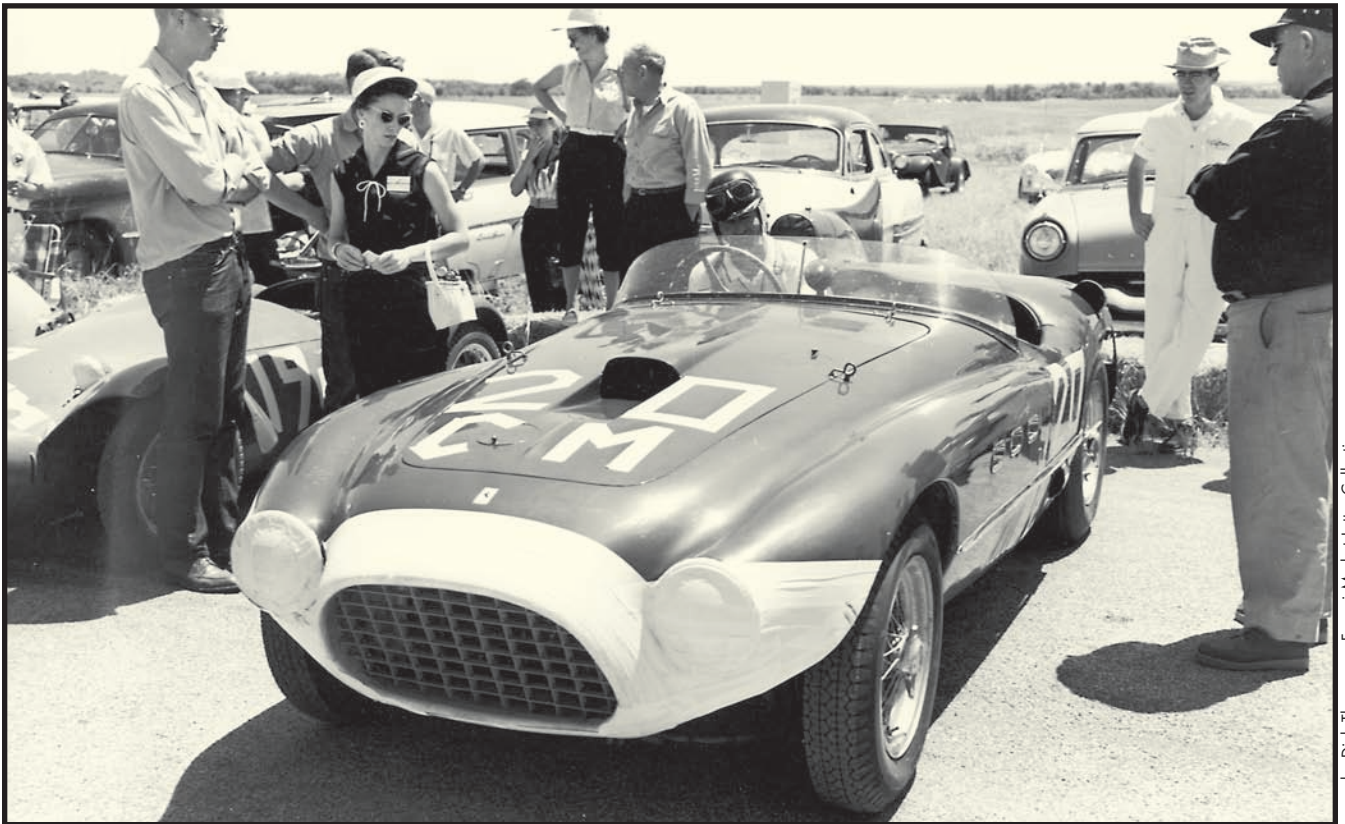


Image by Dick Thompson; Ferrari Market Letter Collection

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS MICHAEL T. LYNCH

In *Cavallinos* 142 and 158, we have shown how pictures can sometimes solve long-standing Ferrari mysteries. This issue's tale tells of text that was found to place pictures in their time and place.

Ferrari 375 MM, s/n 0286 AM, had a glorious racing history spanning Italy, Germany, Mexico, both Coasts of the U.S. and Nassau. Its drivers included Alberto Ascari, Giuseppe Farina, Luigi Villorosi, Luigi Chinetti, Phil Hill, Carroll Shelby and Ken Miles. After the car's owner, Lou Brero, died from burns suffered at a race in Hawaii in 1957, Lou Brero, Jr. kept his father's Ferrari in a container in remote Northern California for almost forty years.

Bill Noon, of Symbolic Motors, was finally able to negotiate a purchase in 1995, and a hoard of documents came with the car. One of them was a 1955 letter from then owner,

Allen Guiberson, to Lou Brero, Sr., offering the car for sale. Guiberson was from Texas, but also kept a home in Los Angeles. During his yearlong ownership, Guiberson had entered the car in six races. He outlined the car's successes in his letter to Brero, mentioning an undated win in Fort Worth.

Historian David Seielstad got a copy of the letter from Noon, shortly after Bill had sorted through the paperwork that came with the car. David sent me a copy and called to see if I had any ideas on when and where the race might have been. We were both aware of races held at Eagle Mountain National Guard Base outside Fort Worth, but could not determine the date of the race that Guiberson mentioned in his letter from any published race reports. Over the years, there was at least one false alarm. I believe Brit Ferrari man Terry O'Neil put David and me onto an Eagle Mountain report of a January 24, 1955 race won by a Ferrari. That

Above: Eagle Rock, Texas, June, 1955. Carroll Shelby warms up his Ferrari, the 375 MM, s/n 0286 AM, in the rudimentary pits next to a Bandini. Shelby would make his first California appearance in this car less than a month later when he won the feature at Torrey Pines, another World War II military base.

Ferrari was also a 375 MM, but not s/n 0286 AM. It was Sherwood Johnston's ex-Cunningham 375 MM, s/n 0372 AM. Second in that race was taken by Dale Duncan in A.V. Dayton's 375 MM, s/n 0370 AM. 0286 AM was not entered, so we were back to square one.

An event that happened in 1983 would later add a piece to the puzzle. That year, Rob Dorris was researching the history of his Ferrari 212 Vignale Coupe, s/n 0179 EL. That led him to the files of photographer Dick Thompson, who had worked for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Dorris found a batch of interesting Ferrari photos and had prints made from the nega-

tives. He sent them on to Gerald Roush, Ferrari historian and publisher of *The Ferrari Market Letter*.

Gerald remembers, "The photos languished around here, and every so often I would come across them and try to identify them so they could be properly filed. Of course, in 1983 and for many years after, we were not connected to anything like the Internet and no chat groups like *Telaio*. It was only when such aids came along that we were able to really make progress." In 2000, Gerald posted four of Thompson's images on a now defunct invitation-only Internet site called *Telaio*, which specialized in Ferrari history.

He was trying to identify the venue in the pictures. The car was obviously s/n 0286 AM, easily identifiable as one of the few Ferraris to race with a fin. One showed a Le Mans start and another showed a grid start. The third was a view of the car in the pits and the last was an action shot on the course. In