

KFQ

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CONTENTS

INFORMATION PAGE

INTRODUCTION TO NEW QUARTERLY

CLUB FEATURES

KAISER FEATURES

FRAZER FEATURES

HENRY J FEATURES

WILLYS FEATURES

SPECIAL INTEREST FEATURES

KAISER - FRAZER OWNER'S CLUB - OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Jack Edward
154 Kathryn Dr.
Pleasant Hill, Cal.

VICE PRESIDENT:
?

SECRETARY: Richard Wenzel
69B Sunset Dr.
Watsonville, Cal.
95076

TREASURER: Richard Leimer
1677 Middleton Ave.
Los Altos, Cal.
94022

KAISER-FRAZER PUBLICATIONS

Kaiser-Frazer Bulletin

Editor: Jack Edward
154 Kathryn Dr.
Pleasant Hill, Cal.

Deadline for copy:
29th of month for following month

Kaiser-Frazer Quarterly

Editor: Thomas J. Wilson
Frazer Farm
7605 Summerfield Rd.
Lambertville, Mich.
48144

Deadlines for copy:
no. 1 - Dec. 1
no. 2 - Mar. 1
no. 3 - Jun. 1
no. 4 - Sep. 1

The Kaiser-Frazer Owner's Club is a nationwide organization. It is an incorporated, nonprofit organization, whose sole purpose is the preservation of and promotion of interest in the automobiles manufactured by the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation. Inquiries concerning the nature of the club and its activities should be directed to the club officers.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW QUARTERLY

Jack Edward, club president has directed that the Kaiser-Frazer Quarterly be reestablished after a long absence from the K-F club members' mailbox. The quarterly is to have two main parts - (1) features, to be edited by your writer, Tom Wilson, and (2) technical section, which was to have been handled by Tom Rankine. The last thing we know, it was understood that Tom Rankine could not take this job, so it may be yet open. For information regarding this, write to the president, Jack Edward, 154 Kathryn Drive, Pleasant Hill, California, or to yours truly, c/o Frazer Farm, 7605 Summerfield Rd., Lambertville, Michigan, 48144.

The "features" section will cover the club, the cars, and items of special interest. The "technical" section presumably will cover maintenance data and procedures, technical knowledge, modifications to the cars, service tips, parts lists, and the like.

But... we may need your help! The features section will be made up of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. editor articles | 3. reprinted or research materials |
| 2. submitted articles | 4. letters from members |

Now unless you want to be bored to death with #1 (like in this first issue) YOU club members have to send in things that you think might be interesting enough to other members to be put in our quarterly. Remember, the Germans let Hitler do all of the talking, and look what they got! So don't let me do all of the talking.. . send letters, articles, opinions, arguments, pictures. I try to answer every letter I get, even if it takes two months like the one from Andy Shroyer hanging on the wall beside my desk. Many letters of course will be answered via the quarterly. Some of the articles in this issue of the quarterly are designed to stimulate interest and responses FROM members.

We feel that one of the major problems with our publications in the past has been the lack of a fixed set of deadlines for articles and for mailing, deadlines which ~~MUST BE MET!~~ In the future, your editor feels that we should try to meet the following dates for deadlines:

number	season	deadline for copy	deadline for mailing
1	Winter	December 1	January 1*
2	Spring	March 1	April 1
3	Summer	June 1	July 1
4	Fall	September 1	October 1

*except this issue

CLUB FEATURES - "EXPLORING THE NEIGHBORHOOD"

"No, he don't want to sell no parts off'n it," said the woman in the waitress uniform standing just inside the door. "He's going to fix it up and use it." This left me having to explain that what I wanted from the car would not affect whether it ran or not. "Its just some lights on the front of the car that I'd like to talk to the owner about" I said. No, she didn't think he'd sell anything off of the car. How do you explain to a person that you want to get a set of practically unobtainable "K-F" fog lights from a "striped to the bone" Henry J in their back yard. The lights are rare and novel enough that they are worth something, but not mint (new) enough to be worth a premium price. The only way known to the modern auto enthusiast on a limited budget is to convince the innocent owner that the object being sought is not likely to be of any worth to him or to anyone else for that matter. Now you say that this is being pretty cheapskate, but if we are not cheapskate, we face two possible alternatives: (1) letting the part or parts sit and rust, and maybe eventually go to the scrap yard, or (2) pay a premium price ... whatever the owner asks, raising the offer as necessary in proportion to the owner's reluctance to sell... and go without our "butter and aig" money for about six weeks. Not much of a choice, huh?

CLUB FEATURES - LETTERS

Write to us! Officers or members who have received interesting letters from other members or individuals might forward them to us.

Send mail to:

K-F Quarterly
 Frazer Farm
 7605 Summerfield Rd.
 Lambertville, Michigan
 48144

KAISER FEATURES - THE KAISER TODAY

The Kaiser is the most popular K-F car made. It outnumbers other models in production by something like 10 to 1, and it enjoyed a longer history than any K-F product except "Cousin Willy" if you want to count him. If you count its introduction year of 1946, Kaiser was manufactured for ten straight years.

What has become of Kaiser? There is plenty of room for discussion as to whether there is a Kaiser today. Kaiser Industries purchased the Toledo firm of Willys Overland, for the purpose of having a future parts outlet for its then declining auto production, according to rumor. This happened in 1953. K-F and Willys were united to form the "Kaiser Motors" or "Kaiser Willys" firm. After Kaiser ceased production, the name Kaiser seemed to disappear. Recently the Toledo firm was officially changed to "The Kaiser Jeep Corporation" and with this move the seemingly eternal name of Willys finally was erased for good. We feel that this move actually wiped out two great automobile names from American history. First, with no more Willys name, IT DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY THAT THERE CAN EVER BE ANOTHER WILLYS AUTO MANUFACTURED. Second, since the firm in Toledo makes Jeeps (what they call the universal jeep, and a utility vehicle which is modelled after the jeep,) and these are not passenger cars, then THESE ARE NOT KAISERS, even though they are sold under the "Kaiser" name.

What is the importance of this? If cars made today were really Kaisers, many club members who buy new automobiles would be buying them, we are sure. If they are not Kaisers, which we have concluded above, they should have no more interest to us than a rusted out 59 Pontiac.

We should also inquire into Kaiser production in Argentina, another facet of the great Kaiser Industries. Upon discontinuance of Kaiser production, models and dies were shipped to Argentina, supposedly to set up production. The Peron government, supporting the K project, itself fell, giving the Kaiser car another flat tire. Finally, in 1958, if our memory is correct, the Kaiser went into production. We have been told that demand was very high for the car, so high in fact that none were available for export. Thus it is difficult to understand why the car was again discontinued in about 1961. We have looked over our K-F publications and IKA (Industrias Kaiser Argentinas) publications and cannot find any firm date on this. One thing is for sure, that is that the car is not now being sold by IKA. We have a current IKA calendar, in full color, showing all IKA products, and the "American Kaiser" is not included.

Your editor welcomes discussion on the above article, and invites criticism of points brought out.

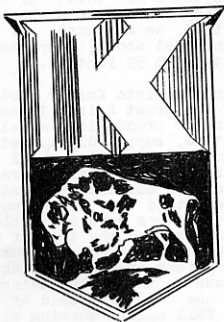
KAISER FEATURES - "THE BUFFALO"

Most of us are familiar with the Kaiser emblem, placed on Kaiser automobiles from 1946 to 1952. The meaning of the "K" is obvious, but we never have heard much discussion as to what the big buffalo standing on the little hill represented.

One theory was put forth by member Arthur Wrightman, of Belleville, Michigan. Art worked for Kaiser-Frazer for many years, and today is employed at the Kaiser-Toledo plant. Art said the buffalo was to symbolize the new Kaiser in 1946. Checking the literature and articles, members will find that the new Kaiser was to be a front wheel drive car. The buffalo is very heavy and muscular at the front end of its body. This was likened to the new Kaiser with its front wheel drive. Having the drive and the motor up front put all of its power up front, like the buffalo. This is the only theory we have ever heard concerning the use of the buffalo.

If this story is true, we might generalize that the symbol of the Corvair should be a kangaroo!

If any members have heard of any other ideas regarding the Kaiser emblem, let us know, and we will publish them.



Say, is that buffalo winking at us? Maybe he just saw a new Toronado!

FRAZER FEATURES - THE LUXURY NOBODY WANTED

The Fride of Willow Run... the handcrafted Frazer ... establishes new styling and a new concept of value in the fine car field... The 1951 Frazer is designed and built to custom standards for America's most exacting motor car buyers... those who have long* been used to the finest in motoring luxury and demand it in the cars they buy today.

from "The handcrafted 1951 Frazer" catalogue, copyright 1950, Kaiser-Frazer Sales Corporation

The above statement from the full-color 1951 sales catalogue was obviously written to promote and sell the new Frazer. And yet the car clearly did not sell well. 1951 Frazer production was 10,214¹. This is an extremely small figure by today's production standards, and even by the production standards of that time. It is an especially small figure when one considers the output potential of the mammoth Willow Run plant in which Kaiser-Frazer produced its automobiles.

This has been thrashed out by club members and others too, in many a midnight session. One idea set forth seems like a good one, and it ties in with the above excerpt from the Frazer catalogue. Notice in line seven we have marked a word with an asterisk... the work "long" as part of the statement "those who have long been used to the finest in motoring luxury..." Frazer then, appealed for buyers from the Cadillac, Lincoln, and Chrysler Imperial class. Actual price-for-price comparisons have made the Frazer equal to the Buick, Olds 98, and Chrysler Saratoga. Whether the Frazer competed with the top three (by actual statement) or the lower ones (by price comparison) it took on a big job. Many of the car owners in these classes were habitual buyers for that make, and all had dogmatic concern for the trade-in value of the cars they bought. (ed. note: The logic of this notion, which persists even today, has always escaped me. I buy a car for the beauty, comfort, and transportation it provides, rather than what I can trade it in or sell it for!)

The other competing makes had the "history" which is what those concerned with trade-in value look for. The only "history" Frazer had was an unsuccessful Graham automobile.

Some people compare our now unproduced Kaiser-Frazer

¹ Kaiser-Frazer Quarterly, Vol 1, no. 4, Summer 1960, p. 5

FF - The luxury nobody wanted - cont.

cars to latecomers (or perhaps we should call them lategoers) such as the Edsel and the DeSoto. To the first of these, the Edsel, there is no comparison.

The Edsel, a well-planned and unusual car, was introduced in the middle of a terrible economic slump, when many thousands of Americans were out of work, when even the Chrysler corporation was operating at a loss, when old names like the Nash and the Hudson were fast being forgotten, and even the great Packard was hiding in a little Studebaker body until it could die an unnoticed death. The Edsel might have been introduced in the middle of a boom too, and been a great success... witness the Mustang!

Another lategoer, the DeSoto, may be compared to our Frazer. We have made the following comparison chart which we hope will bring out certain important points:

car	DeSoto	Frazer
price appeal area	just below highest	same, based on price comparisons
failure year (model year)	1960 (1961)	1950 (1951)
economic conditions	fair	fair
sister car	Chrysler	Kaiser
luxury position of sister car	higher	lower
sharing of body with sister car	yes	no, but did until final model
appearance trend regarding sister car	becoming more and more alike	becoming more and more different

DeSoto had a history of sharing a Chrysler body shell, and was becoming more and more like the Chrysler. For 1960, the Chrysler and DeSoto were so much alike they could be distinguished by reading the nameplates and little more. For the price of your DeSoto, you could get a slightly cheaper model of the Chrysler within the price overlap range, and have the better "Chrysler" name. So DeSoto disappeared.

Similarly, Frazer had a history of sharing the company

KFQ

The necessity of getting this already-late quarterly off to the printers causes us to postpone some of the articles we had planned.

Work will begin immediately on issue no. 2, with its March 1 copy deadline, so that you will receive it on time. In the meantime, here is a preview of some of the articles we plan. Your comments on these and the ones in the present issue will be greatly appreciated. Drop us a line!

Frazer Farm
7605 Summerfield Rd.
Lambertville, Mich. 48144

CLUB FEATURES

Kaiser Frazer tours

FRAZER FEATURES

The man - Mr. Frazer

HENRY J FEATURES

The compact automobile

WILLYS FEATURES

The car that wouldn't die

The most beautiful compact ever built

SPECIAL INTEREST FEATURES

Kaiser-Frazer music

Your Kaiser-Frazer dream car

FF - The luxury nobody wanted - cont.

body shell. Frazer was becoming less and less like like its sister car though, and this was good, because the sister car was a "lower prestige" car. This trend did not come soon enough to overcome the earlier history. Perhaps the first years of 1947 and 1948 provided too great a similarity in the minds of Americans. In this case, the appearance was similar, the prices were different with no overlap, and the Frazer did not have the "better name" in the minds of the public. With no price overlap, obviously a better buy would be the Kaiser, saving the buyer many dollars. Who cared about the name? The Frazer was not well known for being a "better name," like Chrysler was. Even today, many people do not know that the Frazer was a prestige/luxury automobile. The early production figures show the trend - Kaiser outselling Frazer and continually increasing its margin. This was too hard a start to overcome, in spite of Frazer's increasing difference in appearance from the Kaiser.

So today the garage is full of ghosts.

