

.. Only 1800 Superbirds rolled off the assembly lines in 1969 and 1970. After those two years, the cars were never again produced. A sister car, the Daytona, was constructed in likewise small number--500.

By Mike Goens *News sports writer*

TALLADEGA—The bald eagle isn't the only winged species down to a limited few in number.

Remember the Plymouth Superbird?

Sure you do. Only 1800 of these unique automobiles rolled off Detroit assembly lines in 1969 and 1970. After those two years, the cars were never again produced. Along with the Superbird, a sister car, the Dodge

As Streisand would say Memories...

Daytona, was constructed in a likewise small number. Five hundred Daytonas were built during the period.

The cars are indeed scarce, and opportunity is rare to view them. Come tomorrow, however, the public will be staked to another look at the winged fury that revolutionized NASCAR racing in two short years. The cars are to be featured in a pre-race show at Alabama

International Motor Speedway, just prior to the Talladega 500.

Huntsville's Ken Langford is largely responsible for assembling the show. A year ago, Langford spent a day with AIMS General Manager Don Naman at the Nashville 420 race. The conversation went something like this:

Langford: "Don, do you remember when they made...?"

Naman: "Sure. They were something else..."

Well, one thing led to another, and Langford arrived at an idea. Why not put out a call for all the Superbirds and Daytonas in the States and have them come together at the August Talladega race the next year? Naman was enthused about the idea and made an unofficial appointment of Langford to coordinate bringing the cars to Talladega.

Langford has done his job well, and here tomorrow some 45 of the sleek autos will arrive after an early morning trek from Huntsville. Car owners from all over the continental United States meet this morning in Huntsville for a dinner fete later this evening. They'll come from as far away as California and Montana for the monumental gathering. In addition to these two, other states represented are Alabama, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Kansas.

Sunday morning at 6, the owners will form a single-file caravan and depart for Talladega. Langford is to be at the head of the pack for the three-hour junket.

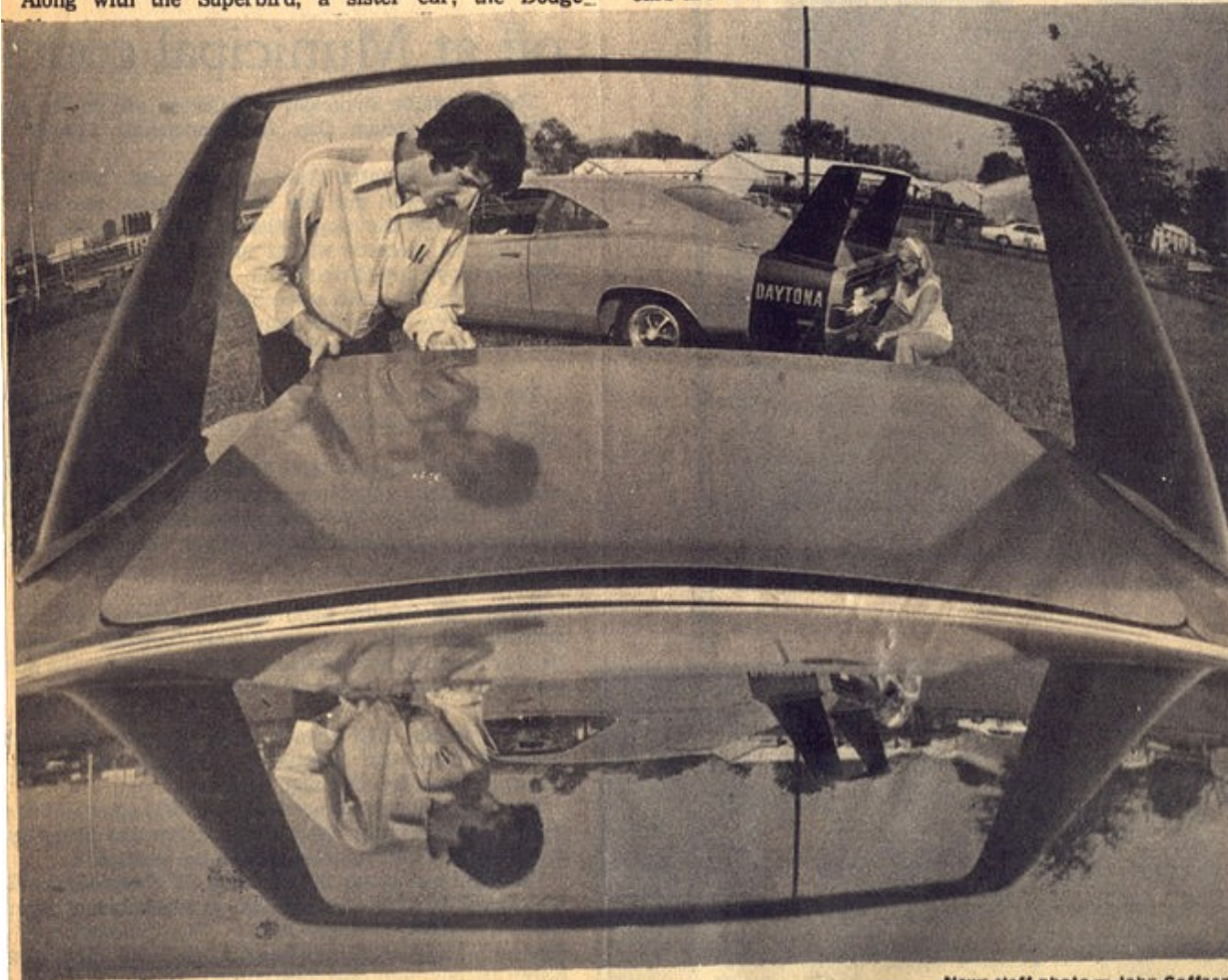
This could just be the beginning.

Langford hit upon another idea. Many of the drivers have expressed desire to see a national Superbird-Daytona Club materialize. That, incidentally, is the purpose of the gathering tonight.

The club's primary mission would be to find the whereabouts of any other cars like their own. Both the Daytonas and Superbirds carry an expensive price tag, valued by experts at \$5000 today.

The Daytona, the true racing thoroughbred of the Chrysler stable, reached speeds of better than 210 mph in 1970. A special streamlined body made such high speed possible. This fuselage caused the Daytona to face 30 per cent less wind resistance than standard bodies.

Five hundred Daytona bodies were originally turned out at Wichita University. The early 1969 prototype achieved one of greatest breakthroughs in big-car aerodynamics when it attained such high speed at small horsepower. That same year, NASCAR forced Chrysler to build 500 additional Daytonas and make them available for public sale. In 1970, Chrysler produced 1800 of them with Plymouth tail lights and an entirely different grille design and called them Superbirds.



News staff photo — John Coffeen

KEN LANGFORD GENTLY LIFTS TRUNK OF HIS 'BIRD FOR INSPECTION

Mrs. Robert Kruse puts polish on her 1969 Daytona