

Documenting your Classic Cadillac

I'm into original Cadillacs, you know? Both of my Caddies are low mileage originals, partly because I can't afford to restore one – and partly because I'm a history nut. Original cars move you right back to the "olden days" because they FEEL and SMELL like you've entered a time machine. I'm the third owner of the '58 we affectionately call the "Turk," which is short for "TURK-oise." "Turk" was purchased from Hillcrest Motors in Beverly Hills by a music business lawyer, Sylvia Goldstein (*pictured at right*). Sylvia was a big name in lyric copyrights in the 'Fifties and 'Sixties. When Miss Goldstein sold "Turk" to a former German foot soldier named Wolf Rudolph in '63, the black California front tag went with it. I still run that tag today! Wolf owned that '58 Caddie for over 42 years... and cried the day it left him.



How could I possibly know this sort of trivia, you ask?

Documentation! The paperwork that spells out the histories of our cars is – for me – as captivating as any other aspect of our hobby. Maybe even more so than wrenching or polishing, once you're too brittle to kneel!

One of the things I'm proudest of is the box full of paperwork I got when Wolf entrusted the "Turk" to me in 2005. (*That's him at right in '63.*) Wolf kept *everything!* Every oil change he would write the mileage on the cardboard his filter came in, and into his box it would go. Along with every insurance statement, every annual registration, and every service receipt. You think I didn't know this car when I brought it home? His box of documents tells Turk's story in ways that will outlast Wolf. *Or me.* It's all encased in plastic now, and stored in a huge ring binder!



I'm also lucky enough to be the *second* owner of the '66 Sedan de Ville we call "Tux," because of its formal, center-post look. "Tux" was bought by a Chicago woman who owned a hospital forms printing company. At right are the contents of the "Tux's" glove box, with the vinyl folder Cadillac gave the proud new owner: The original sales brochure, the owner's manual, and the Options brochure. At the back right is the warranty book and Protect-o-Plate. A better shot of the Plate is in the second photo. You *do* remember the Protect-o-Plate. That little embossed aluminum card? The dealer's service manager would it run through an imprinting machine, and it would store your information via something called "carbon copies." (Kids, this was before computers and *plastic* credit cards.)



Right there in the middle is the original gold lame keyholder – perfect for Madam Entrepreneur, too busy for a trip to Marshall Fields, but desiring something fancy nevertheless. All of these items are stamped with the dealer's name and



address in Blue Island Illinois, with the owner's name embossed on that Protect-o-Plate. Thus ensuring that any future caretakers will have a thorough history on the car... I really believe that the "Tux" won its Past Presidents' Preservation Award in Kansas City when those pieces of history helped it seal the deal.

So, when I bought my daily driver, a "brand new!" 1996 Fleetwood Brougham I'm calling "Ti" conderoga, I was really disappointed to learn this car had almost zero documentation. I set out right away to find what I was missing. Stan Tucker, who owns a very nice original '95 Brougham, still has his owner's materials. He graciously allowed me to borrow it, so I could compile a search list:



1. A leather-looking vinyl folio (three-part binder), which is unique to the Fleetwoods.
2. A maintenance book with service intervals and log – the same one as for other '96 Cadillacs.
3. "Owner's Literature," with tabbed sections in a spiral bound 300+ page booklet. Note: This is not the same Owner's Manual as the one Cadillac produced for the Devilles.
4. A warranty booklet – the same as for other Cadillacs.
5. "Owner's Privileges," which folds into four panels – the same as for other Cadillacs.
6. A plastic card labeled "Roadside Service."

In case you can learn from my experience here's how I went about finding my car's documents:

The first place to go is to call "GM Service Manuals." Their toll free number is 800-828-6868. They no longer had my books listed. But they might have yours! Next I called Helm Inc., the company that manages Cadillac literature for GM. They didn't have the books for the '96 Fleetwood either. But you might try for your car, at 800-551-4123.

Next, I found what I thought was the right package on eBay, and bought it. I opened the box in feverish anticipation, only to find it was the packet for the '96 *Deville!* Well, at least I now had good originals of the maintenance booklet, the warranty booklet, and the owners' privileges brochure. And, I now had a folio that was not correct, but workable. Incidentally, to make the set complete, I found online the '96 Fleetwood Sales Brochure for \$8.49, shipped from a guy listed as syesen1@attbi.com.

Running short on patience, I ordered the pdf version of the Fleetwood owner's manual online, but I did not print it: I had not given up hope of finding the real deal! (I did find original bound copies of the '96 Fleetwood Brougham's Shop Manual in two large volumes. Got that online too.)

Here's where I finally hit pay dirt. I bought an original spiral-bound Owner's Manual for \$48.98 at:

Books4Cars.com
4850 37th Ave. South
Seattle, WA 98118 USA
Toll Free: 888.380.9277
books@books4cars.com

I ordered the Owner's Manual on Dec 8th. On January 18, 2012 I spoke with a guy named Greg, who told me it was on order. As claimed, my order arrived on time. *This time it was the correct book for the '96 Fleetwood.* But it did not include the folio or the plastic "Roadside Service" card. I'll keep looking!

This just in: I just Googled "Owner's Manual 1996 Cadillac Fleetwood." Now Amazon has a factory authorized reproduction listed for \$28.00! Could have saved myself \$20! Another good overall site for the '94-'96 Fleetwood is: <http://myweb.accessus.net/~090/cfb-tech.html> Happy research! Doug