1966 GT350 Rear Shelf

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

– Steve Sloan
sloanx@swbell.net

What would you do if you wanted to know how many 1966 GT350s came from Shelby American with package shelves? The answer to that seems obvious – go to the Registry. That's what I did, but it turned out not to be so simple. The overall count is not in the Registry. And if you try to count the cars yourself you'll find that several have unclear data. And I saw at least one car where I disagreed with the information I found there. And thus the hunt was on.

After going through all my books and resources I still had questions. Fortunately, Howard Pardee must have nothing better in the world to do than mentor me, as he spent almost three weeks digging through his massive archive of documents to help me find the answers. And then he contributed a lot of the "inside baseball" information included in this article.

As usual with any research concerning Shelby American, we still came up with a few mysteries we couldn't solve. What you see here is probably as close to an accurate list as can be made with the information currently available.

Here's just one example of how we pinned down the status of a particular car. I was pretty sure that 6S017 was built at Shelby American with a package shelf, but Howard considered that car to be in the undetermined column. So a deeper dive was in order.

•DSO 71-2509 was for 33 cars without rear seats to be built into package shelf cars.

•DSO 71-2510 was for 67 cars with rear seats to remain that way.

Those two orders total 100 cars.

Those 100 cars have the following Shelby VINs:

•002 thru 022 (21 cars)
•024 thru 099 (76 cars)
•103
•104
•105
Total of 100 cars

You can see that the car in question, 6S017, is one of those 100 cars.

We know that the following cars had rear seats from Shelby American:

•36 thru 99 (64 cars)
•103
•104
•105
That's a total of 67 cars.

That accounts for all of the rear seat cars from DSO 71-2510.

By default, that means the other 33 cars in our list of 100 have to be the package shelf cars from DSO 71-2509. Meaning 6S017 has to be a package shelf car. Exciting stuff, no? Try to remain calm.

For the carryovers (the first 252 1966 cars), Shelby American made a considered decision that two-thirds would be rear seat cars and the remainder would have package shelves. So they ordered 83 cars from Ford without rear seats to build with package shelves, and 167 cars with rear seats to stay that way. For some unexplained reason, they received 82 cars without rear seats and 168 cars with them. When you add in the prototypes 6S001 and 6S023 you get 83 package shelf cars and 169 with rear seats. Which accounts for the 252 carryovers and their seat/shelf status when they left Shelby American. Nice and neat.

You will see the package shelf carryovers listed by VIN in the blue chart that accompanies this article, but a few of those cars require a little extra explanation.

•6S001 - This was the 4-speed 1966 GT350 prototype. It had a rear seat when it arrived at Shelby American, but had a package shelf when it left.

•6S023 – This was the automatic transmission 1966 GT350 prototype. It arrived at Shelby American with a rear seat, and prior to this project there had been no conclusion about the seat/shelf status when it left Shelby American. Extensive research (too lengthy and yawn-inspiring to in-

TO: SHELBY AMERICAN, INC.

Nº 660008

Please enter my firm order for the following vehicle as indicated:

☒ ONE SHELBY GT 350 with the following equipment:

- ☐ Optional Wheels
- ☐ Stripes
- ☐ Rear Seats
- ☐ Automatic Transmission
- ☐ "No Spin" Rear Axle

Color:

Other: GS013

☐ ONE 427 COBRA

Color: Exterior:

Interior:

Optional Equipment:

I understand that Shelby American, Inc., may substitute equipment at their discretion with prior approval and may choose the most expedient and economical means of transportation unless I so indicate in writing my preference.

The unit described above is ordered in accordance with and subject to the provisions of the sales agreement.

Dealer Name & Address:

Tredell Ford, Inc.
20955 Van Dyke Avenue
Warren, Michigan

Ship To:

Same

Dealer Name

Signed/Title

Date 10/28/65

SHELBY AMERICAN VEHICLE ORDER SA SALES DEPT. COPY 1

clude here) has revealed that this car left Shelby American with a rear seat.

Starting with 6S253 (the first full specification 1966 car), the optional rear seats effectively became the default configuration. Not because of a decision at Shelby American, but because that's what the dealers were ordering. The order form in 1966 allowed dealers to specify: Optional Wheels, Stripes, Rear Seats, Automatic Transmission, "No Spin" Rear Axle, Color, and Other (usually a radio in later production cars). See the accompanying order form [*above*] for 6S013 as an example.

It should also be noted that the "No Spin" Rear Axle wasn't available (except for the four factory drag cars) until sometime in the spring of 1966. And the radio wasn't available (except for Hertz units) until April 14, 1966. Other option dates were for the Paxton supercharger which was announced April 18, 1966; Chrome Magnum wheels (for other than Hertz cars) May 24, 1966; and the standard Ford carburetor for automatic transmission cars on February 1, 1966.

Of the 2,126 full specification 1966 GT350s, only 12 are believed to have received a package shelf. And those are scattered throughout the production run with no apparent pattern. Several were company or lease cars and a few appear to have been special ordered for racing duties.

6S1716 had a Detroit Locker to go with its package shelf implying some high performance driving was planned. 6S1226 had a Locker and a roll bar indicating some serious competition was in store. And 6S2163 was raced by the original owner under the International Council of Sports Cars in both B/Production and B/Improved classes. It's easy to understand why the buyers of those cars wouldn't want the dead weight of a rear seat – especially if that was going to cost extra.

After all, Shelby American charged dealers $40 for the optional rear seat, and that cost was passed on to the buyer. Note: Hertz got them at no charge in all their cars.

As a side note, after our research was concluded Howard found a "*1966 GT350 Build*" document dated November 8, 1965 that agrees with our count, at least as far as the carryovers are concerned. It is reproduced in the last page of this article. Let's look at just August, as that's when the carryovers would have been built (certainly too early for any of the 1966 chassis cars to have arrived at Shelby American). This document shows 82 cars built in August as *two seat* cars, and 168 built as *four seat* cars. If you add those together you get 250 cars. Exactly the number of non-prototype carryovers produced. Then add the 82 *two seat*

cars in this document to the one prototype that we know received a package shelf and you get a total of 83 carryovers that left Shelby American with rear shelves. The same number that Howard and I came up with. It's nice to have that confirmation. We both slept better that night.

As noted at the beginning of this article, there were a few mysteries we couldn't solve. Below is a list of cars whose seat/shelf status could not be determined.

•6S479 – Shelby lease car

•6S800 – this car continues to be something of a mystery. Factory records indicate that it was originally sold to Ray Wolfe, Manager of Hi-Performance Motors in El Segundo, California on 9/6/67. This would put it near the time the LAX facility was closing down. The invoice was for $200 (plus $8 tax) and the car was described as "chassis only." No other details were provided on the invoice and the car was reportedly converted to a race car. The history in the registry after that is fairly accurate, regarding the chain of ownership.

•6S951 – Shelby lease car

•6S1062 – Shelby lease car

•6S1195 – Shelby lease car

Please refer to the accompanying blue chart for a detailed list of the 1966 GT350s produced at Shelby American with a package shelf.

Latching mechanism, viewed from the trunk, enabled the access door between the interior and trunk to be swung open in order to accommodate carrying longer items like skis or fishing rods. This door was utilized with both rear shelf and rear seat cars. It was standard on all fastback Mustangs.

1966 GT350s Produced with a Package Shelf at Shelby American

Carryovers

# of cars	VINs
22	6S001 6S002 6S003 6S004 6S005 6S006 6S007 6S008 6S009 6S010 6S011 6S012 6S013 6S014 6S015 6S016 6S017 6S018 6S109 6S020 6S021 6S022
12	6S024 6S025 6S026 6S027 6S028 6S029 6S030 6S031 6S032 6S033 6S034 6S035
1	6S101
43	6S145 6S146 6S147 6S148 6S149 6S150 6S151 6S152 6S153 6S154 6S155 6S156 6S157 6S158 6S159 6S160 6S161 6S162 6S163 6S164 6S165 6S166 6S167 6S168 6S169 6S170 6S171 6S172 6S173 6S174 6S175 6S176 6S177 6S178 6S179 6S180 6S181 6S182 6S183 6S184 6S185 6S186 6S187
2	6S196 6S197
1	6S203
1	6S209
1	6S221

83 Total Carryover Cars

Full Specification Cars

# of cars	VINs
1	6S361
1	6S381
1	6S384
1	6S460
1	6S488
1	6S1101
1	6S1121
1	6S1226
1	6S1324
1	6S1716
1	6S2062
1	6S2163

12 Total Full Specification Cars

83 Carryover Cars

+ 12 Full Specification Cars

95 Total Package Shelf 1966 GT350s Produced

1966 PACKAGE SHELF CARS DEALER MODIFICATION

The following cars are known to have had their seat/shelf status changed at the dealership prior to delivery to the first owner. If there weren't exceptions to the rules it wouldn't be Shelby American.

•6S007 - This car left Shelby American with a package shelf and is included in the prior list. It was shipped to Broadway Motors, Inc. in Kansas City, Missouri. The original owner, Keith Cook of Louisburg, Kansas passed away in 1986 and his son, Sam Cook, advertised the car for sale in *Hemmings* in 2021. He noted that his father had the dealer install a rear seat (along with an air conditioner) before he took delivery of the car. This information is partially noted in the 2019 Registry and is believed to be accurate. So, this car had a package shelf when it left Shelby American but a rear seat was installed at the dealership prior to its initial delivery to first owner Keith Cook.

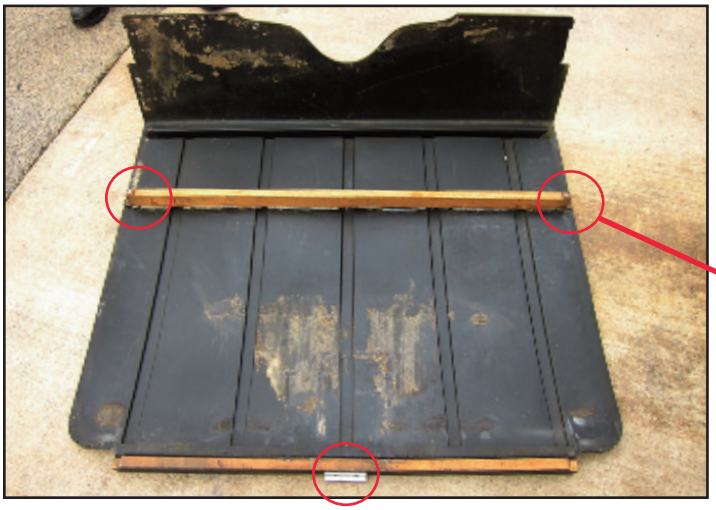
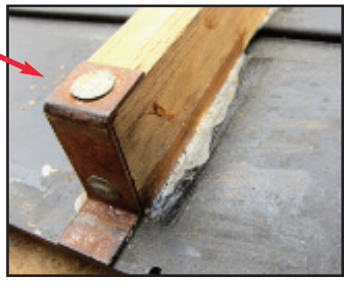
•6S015 and •6S193 – 6S015 received a package shelf and 6S193 received a rear seat at Shelby American. Both cars were shipped to Dick Bohn Ford in Gretna, Louisiana (6S193 on 10/19/65 and 6S015 on 10/20/65). The buyer of 6S015 insisted on a rear seat, so the rear seat from 6S193 was removed from that car and installed in 6S015. The shelf from 6S015 was installed on 6S193. This swap was done at the dealership before either car was delivered to its original owner.

•6S376 – this car received a rear seat at Shelby American (which is why it is not on the factory package shelf production list). However, the seat was swapped out for a package shelf at the dealership, Herb Tousley Ford in White Bear Lake, Minnesota because the original owner intended to drag race the car and did not want the extra weight of a rear seat – approximately 67 lbs. (cushion: 13 lbs., carpeted metal tray: 14 lbs., folding seat back: 40 lbs.) vs. 13 lbs. for the shelf (made of molded plastic Royalite).

November 8, 1965
T. Carlson

1966 GT350 Build

MONTH	*STANDARD TRANSMISSION*		*AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION*		*TOTAL*
	TWO-SEAT	*FOUR-SEAT*	*TWO-SEAT*	*FOUR-SEAT*	
August	82 (White)	168 (White)	0	0	250
September	0	0		100 (White)	100
October		100 (White)		50 (White)	150
November		85 (Black) 30 (Green) 25 (Blue) 25 (Red)		15 (Black)	180
December		15 (Green) 15 (Blue) 15 (Red)		75 (Black)	120
January		75 (color to follow)		75 (color to follow)	150



Construction details could be described as ”crude” for an expensive, limited-production car. However, consideration must be given to the low number of package shelves produced compared to total model year production (95 package shelves vs. 2,374 1966 fastbacks) and the working budget (which did not allow limitless expenses for such unseen details such as the lateral wooden support under the shelf area). Wooden trim items were used instead of incorporating these details into the actual mold for the plastic rear shelf because they were easily fabricated. When painted black to match the shelf, they became practically invisible.