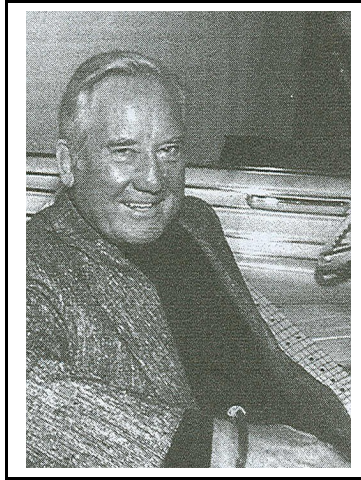


**Across Oceans, Across Time<sup>®</sup> ...**  
**Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...**



It's well-known that many immigrants, through hard work and many sacrifices, make a good life for themselves in their adopted homeland, but the first American-born generation often builds upon their parents' efforts and achieves real success. Such was the case with Funen-born Einar Petersen, a 16-year-old with blacksmith training when he came to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, in 1911. Fascinated with the new technology represented by the automobile, he became a car mechanic, eventually moving to the Los Angeles area in the 1920s. His son, Robert Einar Petersen, carried on his father's love of cars. Robert worked at odd jobs after dropping out of school at 15 and served in the Army Air Force during WWII. Unable to find a job following the war he and some friends started a publicity firm. One client was a group that sponsored car races on the dry lake beds of the Mojave Desert. To promote the event Petersen founded *Hot Rod*, a magazine to promote the sport, in 1948. This led to a career change and Petersen Publishing was founded. *Hot Rod's* success led to *Motor Trend* magazine in 1949, and eventually several dozen other magazine titles were added to the family. Petersen eventually branched out into numerous other widely diverse endeavors. In 1994 *Forbes* magazine named him one of the wealthiest men in America. Along the way, this modest man with a zest for living acquired scores of exotic and collector cars, and envisioned an educational museum that would pay tribute to the automobile and the culture it spawned. In the mid-1990s he persuaded the Los Angeles Natural History Museum to purchase a defunct department store on Wilshire Blvd. and gave several generous donations to endow the project. Robert E. Petersen died in 2007; The Petersen Automotive Museum -- his gift to Los Angeles, the city that grew as a direct result of the automobile -- remains a fascinating monument to a self-made immigrant son. For further information go to [www.petersen.org](http://www.petersen.org).

**The Danish Immigrant Museum**

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