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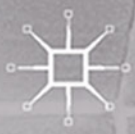
TYCOONS, SCORCHERS, AND OUTLAWS

The Class War that Shaped American Auto Racing

Timothy Messer-Kruse



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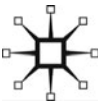

TYCOONS, SCORCHERS, AND OUTLAWS

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In memory of Ramona R. Kruse, 1937–2013

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Introduction

Abstract: *American auto racing began as a competition between inventors and was generally criticized as a sport. The manufacturers who participated in the first races and the first promoters of these races found them of very limited utility. Critics complained that races were actually counterproductive and urged that they end. Over the next decade, however, racing would be established as one of America's most popular sports. This study charts how that happened and how the nature of auto racings' initial growth stamped it with a particularly class character.*

Messer-Kruse, Timothy. *Tycoons, Scorchers, and Outlaws: The Class War That Shaped American Auto Racing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
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American auto racing began in 1895 and nearly ended after but two races. That summer, the *Chicago Times Herald* offered $5,000 to the automobile manufacturer that could run a car at the fastest speed over a 100-mile course. Though ninety entries were received, only two firms were able to ready their cars in time for the November 2 start. Announcing that the full race would be postponed until Thanksgiving Day, race organizers nevertheless decided to go ahead with an exhibition of the two automobiles they had on hand, though lowering the purse to $500, when a crowd estimated at 150,000 showed up to see the horseless carriages.

Both entries were piloted by their designers. Charles E. and J. Frank Duryea drove the Duryea wagon while Oscar Mueller steered the machine built at his father's Decatur, Illinois, factory (though its Benz engine was built at Mannheim, Germany).

Following behind guides on bicycles, the cars followed a route northwest to Waukegan, then back along the lakefront through Winnetka and to finish in Lincoln Park. Duryea got off to a good start and widened his lead substantially when Mueller lost a tire in Humboldt Park and then had to stop repeatedly for ice to keep his engine from overheating. Mueller took back the lead when Duryea broke his drive chain near the corner of Belmont and Milwaukee, but Duryea's faster machine was closing the gap out in the country near Prairie View when this event, already in the history books as the first automobile race in America, established another record by having the first automobile accident.

Duryea began to overtake a farmer driving his laborious wagon along the narrow road (perhaps that is redundant—all rural roads at this time were narrow) and began to pass on the left. The farmer, hearing the noisy contraption coming quickly from behind decided to yield the way but to the left as well. Choosing the ditch over a collision, Duryea wrecked his wheels. Mueller motored on to victory, covering the 92 miles in nine hours, thirty minutes which the scoring judges officially reduced by seven minutes for delays at railroad crossings.[1]

Even though Mueller won the glory of the "consolation race" he remained skeptical of its utility. A few months after his victory, Mueller was invited to participate in another race sponsored by the *Canadian Electrical News*. Mueller declined and wrote the organizers, "We think it advisable to make a maximum speed say twelve miles per hour, those making a faster average speed being considered the same. This would be quite fast enough, as what we want is a practical carriage—one for general use, not for racing; one that will go at a good speed, have a strong

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pull at that speed, and be able to continue the same speed throughout, taking into consideration the kind of roads." Mueller didn't race again.[2]

The following spring another race was organized, this time on an enclosed circular horse track. Like the *Times-Herald* race the preceding year, the race at Narragansett Park in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1896, was one between manufacturers, this time the Riker Electric Motor company, the Electric Motor and Wagon company, and the reigning champion, the Duryea Motor company. The race organizers, the State Fair Association, made up the rules as they went along: "In drawing up the rules and regulations there is but very little material to go by, owing to the fact that never before in this country has a series of horseless carriage track events been given."[3]

As a novelty of technology, the event attracted interest, though it offered little of the excitement of sport. One astute observer described it this way: "While it proved interesting to quite a large number of people who are looking forward to the early introduction of motor vehicles to replace horses, [it] can hardly be said to have created much impression on the vast majority of the people present who were there merely to see feats of endurance and bursts of speed which are more or less unusual."[4] For a journal dedicated to all things automotive (a term not yet in use—"horseless carriage," "autocar," or "motocycle" all commonly in use) in these early days the editor took a surprising stance against racing. "Speed contests are being arranged in several sections of the country. We must protest against the idea that motocycles must be pitted against one another for speed. There is a feeling among those who have the motocycle development at heart that the speed question is being overdone."[5]

The editor of *The Motocycle* was skeptical of the need for racing to advance the technology: "11:27 for a five mile heat, establishes a record which ought to satisfy all who are anxious to put speed ahead of practicability—very few people would care to ride at this pace; it is not possible to run at this rate on the road. A vehicle built for pleasure purposes not with any idea of racing has made this time on a racetrack. It is time to consider the question of speed as settled. Give your time and ingenuity to making vehicles which can be used for commercial purposes, make them light, strong, graceful in appearance and easy to control, and fortune awaits you."[6]

An automobile race took place at the Charles River track in Boston on November 9, 1898, in an exhibition sponsored by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association. The big race was between a De Dion

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tricycle and a Whitney steam wagon in which the winner hurtled around the track at a speed of nearly 20 miles per hour. Such speeding alarmed some of the promoters of the automobile in America including the judges of the race who later issued an official statement condemning high speeds as having no practical use. "A speed greater than about fifteen miles per hour is not needed; for in the case of country roads, the condition of the roads would usually prevent a greater speed without injury to the vehicle and the rider; and in the case of city roads, faster riding would be against the law, on account of the danger to foot passengers. Great speed, therefore, would be needed only by carriages intended for racing."[7]

The Horseless Age, observing the race in Boston and one in France, editorialized against racing: "Races are not essential to the testing of road vehicles. They can be tried privately by the makers, and with less danger than attends a contest . . . the legitimate basis of the race has disappeared . . . it now stands on a par with other racing that leans toward gambling and fosters a dangerous excitement."[8]

The Horseless Age continued its campaign against racing in the next issue, condemning the French automobile club for planning to run a race over open roads. Its argument was not only that the event was dangerous to its participants and observers, but that it unfairly monopolized the public roads: "The roads for some time previous to the appearance of the vehicles are surrendered to the racers and the ordinary traffic of the day is suspended. As the suspense continues until the last straggler has passed the embargo on the usual traffic is considerable." It also pointed out that the example of speeding encourages "the young and thoughtless, who blindly follow the example of the race, forgetting that the roads are common to all and that dangerous speeds cannot be allowed upon them." The editor predicted that "the result of this unbridled license on the part of motor carriage fanatics . . . will be the enforcement of restrictive measures hampering the legitimate use of the motor vehicle. The motor road race has served every useful purpose that it possible can serve. Henceforth it must degenerate into a specie of wild orgie in which the crazy devotees of a remorseless sport face the dust and danger of the road for a glory which those unsmitten by the lunacy can neither understand nor approve . . . it is a nuisance and should be banished from the road."[9]

Count Henri de la Valette, one of the founders of the Automobile Club of France (along with Count Albert De Dion and the Baron Zuylen de Nyevelt) and the head of its "technical" department that organized the

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first road races in France, observed the Boston race while on tour of America. Afterward he was interviewed and expressed his opposition on racing: "After the Paris-Marseilles race was run it seemed to me that the road race had served its purpose. We had proved to the world that it was possible for the motor carriage to maintain for days without interruption an average speed of 20 to 25 miles an hour on common roads, and the safety and economy of the machines had also been demonstrate. Any further trials of this kind seemed to me to be encouraging a dangerous excess of speed and setting a bad example to the public . . . "[10]

Racing did not appear to have any redeeming values beyond testing the cleverness of automobile designers. Those who drove racing cars were termed "chauffeurs" or "operators" and thought of as little more than semi-skilled hired hands somewhat analogous to jockeys if horses were manufactured rather than bred. Beyond the novelty of seeing a horseless carriage churning down a street, races seemed to be more exhibition than true competition.

By the middle 1890s Americans showed little interest in the automobile as an object of sport. Manufacturers thought speed tests impractical and promoters found little public interest in watching ponderous machines sputter around a track. Unlike in Europe where auto manufacturers in France, Germany, England, and Italy developed intense rivalries and auto races became matters of national pride, American manufacturers concentrated on producing practical, sturdy, and reliable machines, not speedy ones. American automakers preferred "tours" to races: cross-country expeditions, most famously the "Glidden Tours," that highlighted both the durability of their machines and the awful condition of the nation's roads. Though automobiles competed to be first in these coast to coast drives, they were a far different sport from racing for speed. Given such disinterest on the part of the auto industry in developing pure racing as a demonstration of their wares, America did not seem a likely place for the development of the sport of automobile racing.

But within a decade, auto races would attract more spectators than any other sport, and race car drivers would become some of America's first true sport celebrities. Journalists, who in racing's first years focused on the machines as if the "operators" hardly mattered soon learned that the driver was the real story. In a very short period of time, most Americans who had never even ridden in a car developed an appreciation of the sorts of skills that racing required. Moreover, within a decade of its birth, American auto racing had settled into a distinctive preference for track

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racing over road racing that distinguished it from its European counterpart where open road "Grand Prix" contests became the norm.

These patterns were the result of the particular way automotive racing began in America, as an elite endeavor involving only the wealthiest fraction of society, and the class resentments this raised. In other words, auto racing was the cultural product of class struggle. Every aspect of the sport of auto racing, how it was organized and governed, where it took place, and how it was thought of, was shaped by class conflicts that were not usually understood as such. Unlike struggles at the workplace, the election campaign, or the neighborhood, the operation of class in culture is harder to spot, partly because the ideas and values that reflect class are not necessarily claimed by those that produce them. To those living and expressing their values and ideas, they seem natural and inevitable.

Such it was with auto racing. The millionaires who first embraced and organized the sport didn't see themselves as placing a particular elitist stamp upon it. The broad working-class public that ultimately thwarted their grand plans generally failed to recognize their opposition as a class movement. The working-class drivers who elbowed their way into the sport didn't grasp that by their presence they were remaking the sport into something it was never intended to be.

This book charts the hidden struggles of class that underlay some of the foundations of the sport of auto racing in America. Chapter 1 shows how the sport was invented by millionaires who aspired to make it in the image of yachting—exclusive, international, and amateur. Chapter 2 describes how the excesses and hubris of these sportsmen and their speeding (or in the vernacular of the time, "scorching") galvanized public opposition to them and their motoring games. In Chapter 3 this opposition becomes effective, limiting the tycoon's power to race on the public road and confining it to the private track. Alongside the public struggle over the power of the tycoons there is an intellectual struggle over its meaning that Chapter 4 explores. Finally, in Chapter 5, appears the first true working-class racing celebrity, Barney Oldfield, who consciously challenges both the leadership and the values of the elite sportsmen and through his singular talent, opens the doors for other humble daredevils to follow.

This book is far from being an exhaustive study of the class aspects of the birth of the sport of auto racing. It is not even much of a chronicle of the emergence of auto racing as no attempt is made to recount all of the most celebrated races and drivers of this era. Along the mountain range

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that is this topic, only a few peaks have been surveyed and even these have only been scaled far enough to estimate their height. Hopefully, rather than retelling the many dramatic moments in what is a terrifically compelling subject, this study will enrich the many wonderful narratives already in print.

Notes

1 *The Autocar* (London), Nov. 23, 1895, pp. 44–45; *The Motocycle* (Chicago), Nov. 1895, pp. 17–23. Cord Scott, "The Car Race of the Century," in *The Chicago Sports Reader: 100 Years of Sports in the Windy City*, Steven A. Riess and Gerald R. Gems, eds (University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago, 2009), pp. 92–103. See also Charles Leerhsen, *Blood and Smoke: A True Tale of Mystery, Mayhem, and the Birth of the Indy 500* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), pp. 128–130.
2 *The Motocycle* (Chicago), 1:6 (Mar. 1896), p. 18.
3 Ibid., 1:7 (Apr. 1896), p. 14.
4 Ibid., 1:11 (Aug. 1896), p. 14.
5 Ibid., 1:7 (Apr. 1896), p. 12.
6 Ibid., 1:11 (Aug. 1896), p. 12.
7 *The Horseless Age*, 3:10 (Jan. 1899), p. 14.
8 Ibid., 3:8 (Nov. 1898), p. 8.
9 Ibid., 3:9 (Dec. 1898), p. 5.
10 Ibid., p. 23.

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1
Millionaires' Toys

Abstract: *Automobiles originally appeared on American roads as the playthings of the wealthiest elite. Millionaires soon competed with each other for the bragging rights of owning the fastest imported racing car. Tycoons organized exclusive auto clubs along the lines of their yachting clubs and these organizations quickly grew beyond their initial social purposes and became both a political force and a governing body for motor sports.*

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The birthplace of American auto racing was not Detroit, Cleveland, or even Chicago where the first much remembered but insignificant race was held. Rather, the mania for speeding automobiles for sport originated in the little island town of Newport, Rhode Island, the "city-by-the-sea" of 22,000 residents. A seemingly unlikely place for the genesis of auto racing as the town was only about three miles from end to end. Though lacking long stretches of road it had something that proved more important in incubating a love for powerful cars—incredible wealth.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Newport had been the favored summer destination for the very richest American families. In the early 1900s great merchants who made fortunes from trade in rum, cotton, slaves, and Chinese spices constructed mansions overlooking the picturesque harbor. They were followed by wealthy southern planters who constructed summer homes to escape the heat of the Carolinas. By the Gilded Age the old monied families such as the Astors and Belmonts built summer "cottages" alongside the nouveau riche industrialists like the Vanderbilts and Morgans. At the turn of the century, Newport was the pinnacle of elite trend setting. "Newport is the very heart of American society; as it beats, so are the smallest veins in the most distant part of America's social anatomy furnished with their life blood."[1]

For the Newport millionaires it was not enough to have wealth but its ostentatious display was one of their distinct pleasures. Each summer the "colony" organized a carriage parade through the town streets, which provided them great opportunity to dress in their finery and drive their carriages, decorated with expensive garlands of flowers, past the hoi polloi. Over time a fashionable "arms race" developed as families vied for the most envy with the finest, the newest, or the most audacious.

For example, in 1895, Mrs. August Belmont imported an unusual French postilion turnout, an open low carriage whose driver was saddled over one of the pair of trotting horses and whose footman rode perched high upon a little seat at the rear.[2] The next year many such elaborate regal carriages were seen trotting up and down Bellevue Avenue. Taking the carriage competition one step further, in 1897 Oliver H. P. Belmont imported a touring car, the first automobile to roll off the ferry onto the island.

Not to be outdone, a number of other tycoons purchased expensive French machines and began calling them "automobiles" and their drivers "chauffeurs" ala Francaise. Soon the sound of sputtering engines became commonplace along Newport's millionaires' row. Alva Belmont (formerly Alva Vanderbilt) added a "motor carriage parade" to the Newport

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society calendar and hosted a party on the lawn of her Newport mansion that featured an obstacle course of dummy policemen and baby carriages with a prize going to the driver who ran over the fewest.[3]

According to one contemporary chronicler of Newport, the automobile craze ratcheted into high gear the year "Willie" Vanderbilt brought the first high-powered French racer to town.

William "Willie" Kissam Vanderbilt was born in New York City in 1878, the great grandson of "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, the railroad tycoon who famously said, "The public be damned" when asked about the discomfort of his railroad's accommodations. "Willie" was the fourth generation of inherited wealth. His father, William Kissam Vanderbilt, was left 120 million by his own father, William H. Vanderbilt, upon his death in 1885, about the same sum William H. was bequeathed by Cornelius.[4]

Known as "Willie" throughout his life, the young Vanderbilt had a chance to ride an automobile before anyone had ever motored along an American street. When he was ten, Willie's family toured Europe and were guests of the Count de Dion who took Willie for a spin in his steam-powered, three wheeled contraption.[5] Willie desired speed and had the means to obtain the latest model at a time when automobiles and yachts sold for similar prices. He purchased his first car in 1899, a year after his stepfather bought his first one, and quickly traded it for a Stanley Steamer on which he earned the first of many citations for speeding—though there being no speed law the officer cited him for operating a steam boiler without an engineer's license. As "Willie" remembered, the steamer was troublesome: "Through the blowing out of water gauges, snapping of driving chains and bursting of tires, caused many a charming old lady to lose her composure while out for an afternoon drive." He quickly discarded it after a few runs, then imported a succession of French Mors, Panhards, and Mercedes all within a couple years.[6]

Vanderbilt dubbed his French Mors racer the "Red Devil" and gleefully raced it up and down along the ocean drive to the "open-mouthed astonishment" of the locals. Soon Willie's young bride, his sister, Consuelo, and his cousin, Daisy Post, all were noted in the press as being pioneer automobilists, but Willie distinguished himself as the most reckless. After attempting to race a friend down a steep hill, driving backward, Willie survived one of the earliest serious accidents, losing control and rolling the open car, though miraculously escaping by landing clear of the tumbling machine on a tuffet of grass. Willie Vanderbilt (Figure 1.1), while not entrusted by his father with the running of the

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FIGURE 1.1 *William "Willie" K. Vanderbilt, Jr.*

family business, the New York Central Railroad, wisely chose to try and make his mark in the racing world. Willie applied himself to organizing races, first through his local auto club, and then by playing an important role in founding a national organization, the American Automobile Association (AAA) in 1903.[7]

While Willie seemed to have a rare streak of luck in never suffering serious injury as a result of his quest for speed, the same could not be said for many others who got in his way. Dogs, chickens, horses, and the occasional human fell before his imported wheels. One of Willie's Newport neighbors lodged a formal complaint and Willie was summoned to the police chief's office where he insisted he never exceeded the posted limit of ten miles per hour (a regulation largely passed to control Willie) and added that "there was not the slightest fear of accident as he could stop his machine very quickly."[8]

Willie's promises to the police chief were quickly forgotten as he took possession of a Daimler Mercedes that he nicknamed the "White Ghost." A few weeks later, having just fired all the striking sailors on his yacht and replaced them with scabs, Willie spotted a trolley of the Newport to Fall River line about to descend Newport's steepest hill, a legendary grade down Broadway Boulevard that had already provoked complaints from trolley riders of fearful speeds. Pulling alongside, Willie made eye

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contact with the motorman who gave a nod and threw the switch for more current and the race was on to the delight of some and terror of others on board the crowded car. The White Ghost easily outran the trolley, startling several teams of horses, one of whom tore a wheel from its wagon.[9]

Vanderbilt's desire to monopolize public rights of way sometimes took surprisingly aggressive forms. In November of 1901, he drove to Boston to attend the annual Harvard-Yale football game. Idling his "Red Demon" in front of the Hotel Touraine, Vanderbilt's racer straddled a set of tracks. A trolley rounded the corner and the motorman "rang his bell furiously" to warn Vanderbilt to move his vehicle but Willie K. simply "waved to the man to come no nearer … it looked as though there would be a collision, but the New Yorker never budged. He sat perfectly quiet and when the car [trolley] was only two feet off the angry motorman, now frightened as well, brought it to a stop."

" 'Why n't cher get outer the way?' he bawled."

" 'You should have waited,' replied the young man quietly, 'Now you will have to go back.' "[10]

Soon having an automobile was not enough to be truly fashionable; one had to have the most powerful automobile. "There is no question but that the sport of racing automobiles, which, luckily, perhaps, only those gifted with plenty of worldly goods can patronize, is one approaching in danger any yet recorded in the annals of recreative amusements. Newport, R.I., the summer home of so many New York millionaires, has been a mecca for the horseless carriage this season and no stable at that popular resort has been considered complete without at least one motor wagon numbered among its equipments." By 1901 the automobile had conquered high society. "To visit Newport and to there see how the automobile absolutely dominates all other forms of outing; to see the fairest, the richest and the most aristocratic members of the city by the sea at all times and everywhere swiftly carried around by motors which they themselves guide and control, is a revelation to any one who has not seen it."[11]

From Newport the rage for high-powered racers extended to Long Island and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut where the "Good Roads" movement of a decade before had left a legacy of relatively well-graded and surfaced roads by which farmers could take their produce to the New York City market. "On Long Island, in Westchester County and in New Jersey for twenty-five miles out, roads that are not macadamized are the exception … this spring they have been practically

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usurped by the automobiles and the drivers of nervous horses are being gradually driven to the back country, dirt roads."[12] Millionaires who shuttled between country estates and Manhattan townhouses found that the racing machine was as fast as the train and much more impressive to arrive by. As the society page of the *New York Times* observed, "Now comes the vogue of the automobile with all the fashionable set interested in the new fad … Even the horse seems overshadowed in the chatter one hears at fashionable dining places, for it is a rich man's amusement."[13]

Sales records and early auto registrations show that most of the early adopters of automobiles described themselves as "capitalists, manufacturers, merchants, or doctors."[14] As John Jacob Astor observed accurately, "A stable of cars is coming to be recognized as the proper thing for a man of wealth."[15] When *Outing* magazine ran a photo of a family with their automobile in 1902, it captioned the picture, "Plaything of the Wealthy." Charles B. Shanks, sales manager for the Winton Motor Car Company, was frank when he gave advice to sales agents, "Automobiles are usually sold to men of money … An agent who can converse intelligently on the events of the day, dress prosperously and be gentlemanly in his conduct, will do the greater volume of business." Charles Duryea, one of the pioneers of automobile technology, was disgusted that high-powered, impractical, and worse, imported automobiles seemed to be the preference of America's "young bloods having papa's money to spend [who] buy racing locomotives."[16]

Millionaires spent huge sums importing the latest French and German racing cars, often the recent winners of European races. "The wealthy men of the United States, who have 'taken up' the sport of automobiling, vie with each other in obtaining powerful machines. Does one man secure a motor carriage of seventy horse power, his rival is unhappy unless he can secure a machine which will develop eighty horse power."[17] Charles Schwab purchased a 40 hp Mercedes one week and then heard that William Rockefeller had purchased a big Panhard. Before the ship carrying the new car had landed, he wired an order for a larger 60 hp model. One reporter observed, "A complete list of the millionaires who use the racing automobiles would practically include every wealthy resident of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco." And once in possession of automobiles with so much power beneath the hood, the temptation to pull the throttle full and see what it could do was irresistible.[18]

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By 1903, it was reported that "five of the leading millionaires of America" owned fifty machines between them. John Jacob Astor owned fifteen, including his $17,000 Mors racer; Charles Schwab had three and three others on order. Jefferson Seligman and George Gould each owned a dozen, while "Willie" Vanderbilt settled with five, but five of the most expensive in the world.[19]

One journal editor who was no stranger to the club rooms of the elite provided this diagnoses of the deep desire tycoons had for high-powered cars: "A surfeit of pleasure leads rich men of weak ideation to a morbid craving for new sensations … the main excuse for the speed mania is the desire to feel new sensations and juggle away the emptiness of a purposeless life."[20] Though such armchair psychiatry has no scientific basis, it is interesting how his observation lines up with an unusually frank interview "Willie" K. Vanderbilt gave about the same time in which he expressed his belief that inheriting great wealth had been a burden and a disadvantage that he could never overcome. "My own life was never destined to be quite happy. It has been laid on lines which I could forsee [*sic*], almost from the earliest childhood. It has left me nothing to hope for, with nothing definite to seek or strive for. The first satisfaction and the greatest, the building of a foundation for a fortune, is denied the man who inherits wealth and nothing else can quite compensate for that loss."[21]

Shortly after the automobile became the center of attention of fashionable society, a number of upper crust motor enthusiasts formalized the automobile's status by organizing a club devoted to motoring. There was only one precedent for such a club, the Automobile Club de France that was founded in June of 1896 and drew its membership exclusively from "tout Paris." Like the aristocratic French club, New York's millionaires believed that only a membership drawn from the social elite would be independent-minded and free of corrupting business entanglements. As one New Yorker urged, the club should be drawn "from a large leisure class who from mechanical taste or sporting proclivities were naturally drawn into the promotion of a new industry of such universal interest as the motor industry … It is this complete alienation from trade interests which has been largely instrumental in giving the principal foreign club the unique position they hold in their respective countries today. Adherence to the same policy is necessary if the New York Club is to attain a similar position in this country." Others simply noted that New York's motoring elite shared a similar outlook: they were those "who

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hold their noses in the air and sniff that automobilists are a 'superior set,' or rather that they are 'different' from all others who use the roads."[22]

Founded in June of 1899 at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, the organizers at first called themselves the New York Automobile Club but it was immediately recognized that this was too humble a name and poorly reflected their ambitions. Hence the name was changed to Automobile Club of America (ACA). Though the name implied a national membership and scope, the ACA was entirely composed of wealthy automobilists from the greater New York City area.[23]

Like its Parisian predecessor, the club was exclusive. Its "clubhouse" was located in rented suites in the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, which were accessed through Astor court, a private street reserved exclusively for club members' use. Membership was capped at four hundred and prospects had to be recommended by two members and then approved by all without a blackball. "Strangers" (guests were referred to as "strangers") could be sponsored into the club rooms for a single day on the word of a member. Women were not allowed in the club rooms. Dues were high, reflecting the elite composition of its membership: the ten dollar initiation fee being equal to a week's wages for the average worker and the two hundred dollar annual dues were an extravagance only a few could afford. The ACA was, as one automobile magazine described it, "an ultra-fashionable coterie of millionaires who have taken up the new and expensive fad of auto-locomotion and banded themselves together for its pursuit and the incidental notoriety attributed to all the functions of upper swelldom." When the granite cornerstone of its new eight-story clubhouse fronting 131 feet of Fifty-Fourth Street was laid with a silver trowel in 1906, the ACA "was said to have more millionaire members than any other social club in the world."[24]

Benefitting from its members' nearly limitless resources, the ACA was understandably a very active organization. It sponsored the first auto shows, organized contests of various kinds, published newsletters, tour guides, and technical manuals, as well as lobbied the state and federal governments for better roads and fewer auto regulations, but its principal and most popular undertaking was to provide formal and informal opportunities for its members to compare the speeds of their autos.

By the end of 1900s automobile clubs had sprung up across America, alike in having formal clubhouses and relatively wealthy memberships, most prohibiting the membership of non-automobile owners so as to "keep the affairs of the organization in the hands of gentlemen." Many

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adopted formal insignias, pins, and pennants reminiscent of yachting clubs. There were exceptions, however. Carl Fisher, the eventual builder of the "Brickyard" at Indianapolis, was the first president of the Indiana Automobile Club and it accordingly bent more to manufacturing interests than to the country club set. But most all clubs were similarly interested in organizing cross-country "runs," auto expositions, and lobbying for better roads and permissive laws.[25]

When they were first formed the auto clubs weren't quite sure what to do about racing and expressed a wide variety of policies on the issue. The Massachusetts Automobile Club took a "well defined stand against motor vehicle racing" while a rival Boston club, the New England Automobile Club, organized explicitly to "encourage touring and racing." The Chicago Automobile Club was founded on August 10, 1900, with an initial membership of 34 who opposed racing. "It is the opinion of its members that speed contests on the road arouse public resentment and do much to injure the cause; and it has been determined to accept no person as a member who makes a habit of entering such contests with his machine." While a majority of the Long Island Automobile Club (LIAC) avidly sponsored a variety of races, a minority faction remained opposed, telling one reporter: "Speaking unofficially … we do not wish to arouse the antagonism of citizens along our roads, which the encouragement of local speed contests would be sure to do. We have to use these roads throughout the greater part of the year, and we do not care to incur the enmity of the community."[26]

A similar ambivalence was evident in France where the Automobile Club of France and the Union Automobile de France (formerly the Motor-Club de France) began warring with each other in early 1901 over the racing question. The Union Automobile issued a manifesto calling on the government to suppress road racing, which had always been "the joy and glory" of its rival and more aristocratic club. In retribution, the Automobile Club banned its members from taking part in any Union Automobile activities.[27]

On both sides of the Atlantic the concerns motivating opponents of racing were similar. While organized races had generally shown themselves to be safe to the point of boredom, they were thought to encourage "scorching" (speeding) off the course.

After the Paris municipal council imposed speed limits on automobiles for the first time, *Horseless Age* wagged a finger of blame at the city's race-mad auto club. "This exhibition of righteous indignation comes with bad grace at this late day, inasmuch as the present restrictions are the direct

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result of the mad escapades of the members of the Automobile Club over the common roads of France, the road races which it has continued to organize and patronize long after there was any reasonable excuse for them, and the general subordination of the commercial to the sporting side of the automobile in consequence of its course. The Automobile Club of France has nothing to do but mend its ways and accept as inevitable the tardy regulation of the municipal authorities."[28]

While many auto clubs were ambivalent about racing, New York's ACA had no such hesitation and early on decided it needed to take leadership of the sport. This ambition began before most rival clubs had been formed, in 1899, when James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the *New York Herald* and the *International Herald Tribune*, sent a letter inviting the ACA to enter his Gordon Bennett International Cup race in France. The ACA established a committee of three to vet those who wished to be considered for sanction to participate. Every subsequent year, the ACA assumed this authority and by the summer of 1901 was conferring its "sanction" on racing events. In this way the ACA became the self-appointed gatekeeper of racing.[29]

Though the ACA staked its claim to controlling racing on the principle that a sport needed one governing body to establish fair and equitable rules for all participants, some charged that the club gave precedence and privileges to its wealthiest members. After the Long Island Endurance Test in which half of those who started broke the rules by finishing in an average time above the posted speed limits, the club racing committee chose to single out some members for punishment. The ACA felt pressured to make some sort of demonstration as the New York legislature was just then considering additional regulations and restrictions on speeders and the club's record of never having punished one of its own for breaking the speed laws or reckless driving was raised as an issue at one legislative hearing. Three members, John Grant Lyman, E.B. Gallaher, and Kenneth A. Skinner, were publicly suspended from the club. Why these men were singled out was never made clear; the only thing they had in common was that two of them, at least, had written public letters complaining of the unfair manner in which the Long Island endurance test had been officiated and judged. Perhaps more importantly, these men weren't millionaires.[30]

Skinner, a sales manager for the French Dion auto company, perhaps thinking he had nothing more to lose after his suspension, denounced the "favoritism" of the auto clubs. He had paid his $100 entrance fee and

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brought his lightweight racer in the Coney Island speed contest earlier that year but never had a chance to make it into the record books, before the timing crew of the signal corps was allowed to call it a day. "The tricycle events were advertised and scheduled to come off first; but no! The big machines and the millionaires and high standing members of the clubs were allowed to have their trials first, and when it came time for the smaller machines they were allowed to go over the course, but no matter about their time! It was too late and it was put off never to be finished—but, of course, this was no outrage; it was all right."[31]

As it quickly became apparent, in order to control racing the ACA had to control the other automobile clubs. As early as October of 1901, the ACA formed a committee to investigate the prospect of joining all the automobile clubs into one federation, though such an organization had to be firmly under the tycoons' own leadership and control. "The A.C.A. is to be the parent organization and is to govern all races in future."[32] Apparently, leaders of the ACA felt they had the right to set policies for other clubs and for the nation generally. "As the senior institution of its kind in the United States and the metropolitan organization, recognized by the leading foreign clubs as the centre of club life and influence in America, [it] must necessarily continue to occupy a commanding position in relation to the sport and the industry as a whole. It has the prestige, wealth, experience and the social standing which in combination cannot be found outside the commercial centre of the country."[33]

Apparently, many clubs, including most of the largest ones, did not wish to be junior partners or to be "dictated" to and so did not respond to the circular "invitation" that president Shattuck sent to them.[34] One automobilist from Brooklyn, most likely a member of the Long Island auto club, called the ACA's plan a "decidedly un-American scheme."[35]

Even the Long Island Automobile Club rejected the ACA's "offer" as the ACA's proposal was to live under "rules formulated solely by them." Amidst their toasting each other at the Union Club, the members of the LIAC expressed their interest in forming some sort of national association of clubs that would be governed by delegates and not by one ruling club. In additions to the Long Island club, clubs in Chicago, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Philadelphia all rejected "affiliation."[36]

Finally in February of 1903, the governors of the ACA formally abandoned the "club affiliation scheme" and instead suggested that all clubs send two delegates to a convention to create a national association of clubs. Placating the clubs from the hinterlands, the New York club

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cleverly proposed this convention should be held in Chicago and then controlled the proceedings.[37] The newly founded American Automobile Association chose Winthrop E. Scarritt, a Wall Street broker and president of the trust that controlled much of the nation's shipyards as well as the Bethlehem Steel Works, as its president. Scarritt was a member and sometime officer of the ACA. The delegates tapped Jefferson Seligman, a wealthy investment banker and New York auto club member, as treasurer. S. M. Butler was elected secretary, a post he also held for the New York club. Among the three vice presidents was W. W. Grant of the Long Island Automobile Club and W. G. Morris of Philadelphia's organization. Of the remaining six officers, two were leaders of the Long Island auto club, one was president of the ACA, and one was the leader of Newport, Rhode Island's automobile society.[38]

Capping their control of the AAA, the ACA delegates pushed through a plank creating an executive committee to meet monthly and take care of the regular business of the organization. This executive committee was to be located in New York City and the members were to hold their meetings in the club rooms of the ACA.[39]

The strings of this organizational puppetry were evident to a few shrewd observers. On the ACA control of the AAA at its founding meeting, one auto journal editorialized:

> When the clubs made plain that they would have an organization of their own, regardless of the interests of the unattached automobilist, we confess that we were of the number who did not believe that the resulting organization would hoist a deceptive flag …
>
> For this state of affairs thanks are due the gentlemen responsible for the American Automobile Association. Having preserved all offices for clubmen only and rendered themselves proof against infection from those who are not club members, they are doubtless content. If they do not voice it they certainly have acted the sentiment, "The automobile public be damned!"[40]

At the ACA's annual ball, standing before the grand ballroom festooned with American flags and bunting in the associations colors, with women in formal gowns looking on from the balcony, professional after-dinner speaker Patrick Francis Murphy told the crowd what they already knew: "The automobilist is or should be a millionaire. It is a luxurious, extravagant, rubber tired existence." William K. Vanderbilt was introduced as the greatest patron of the automobile in America and once the applause died away provided an insight into the elite view of racing. "It has been

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the dream of every motorist to own a perfect motor car and to have a road where he may drive unhampered by speed limits."[41]

It is unlikely auto racing would have taken root but for the speed mania of tycoons. Some combination of the thrill of speed, the urge to conspicuously display their wealth, and the desire to have bragging rights at the clubhouse fed a racing fashion that for a time eclipsed all other elite pursuits. But this fashion came at a high cost, initially for those in the way of the big imported machines, but later in the ability of the tycoons to establish racing in the image of the amateur, international, and gentlemanly sport they dreamed of.

Notes

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2 *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1895, p. 3.
3 Richard Conniff, "Blame the Rich," *Smithsonian*, 38:9 (Dec. 2007), pp. 102–109.
4 Burton J. Hendrick, "The Vanderbilt Fortune," *McClure's Magazine*, 32:1 (Nov. 1908), p. 46.
5 Geoffry L. Rossano, "Long Island Goes to the Auto Races: The Great Vanderbilt Cup Controversy of 1904," *Long Island Historical Journal*, 3:2, pp. 231–245.
6 W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr. to Arthur Lee Newton, Sept. 25, 1940, William K. Vanderbilt, Jr. Collection, Box 39, Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum.
7 *Newport Mercury*, Oct. 14, 1899, p. 7; *New York Times*, July 6, 1899, p. 2.
8 *New York Evening World*, Jun. 11, 1900, p. 2.
9 *New York Sun*, Aug. 25, 1900, p. 4; *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 25, 1900, p. 14.
10 *The Evening World* (New York), Nov. 23, 1901, p. 5.
11 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:12 (July 4, 1903), p. 794; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Aug. 31, 1901, p. 9; *The Motor World*, 2:22 (Aug. 29, 1901), p. 421.
12 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1902, p. 35.
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14 Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 127–128.
15 Ibid., p. 130.
16 Ibid., p. 131; *Motor Age* (Chicago), 5:1 (Jan. 7, 1904), p. 3; *The Horseless Age*, 9:17 (Apr. 23, 1902), p. 503.
17 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Nov. 10, 1901, p. 34.
18 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:21 (Sept. 6, 1902), p. 938; *The Evening World* (New York), Aug. 29, 1902, p. 10.

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19 *Motor World* (New York), 5:22 (Feb. 26, 1903), p. 826.
20 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:7 (May 31, 1902), p. 304.
21 *Minneapolis Journal*, Aug. 29, 1901, p. 2. This is a story from Vanderbilt's interview with *Week's End* the original of which doesn't seem to be extant.
22 *The Horseless Age*, 4:11 (July 5, 1899), p. 6; *The Motor World*, 2:2 (April 11, 1901), p. 27.
23 Robert Dick, *Mercedes and Auto Racing in the Belle Epoch, 1895–1915* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2005), p. 22; *The Horseless Age*, 4:13 (June 28, 1899), p. 6; 5:2 (Oct. 11, 1899), pp. 5, 6.
24 James J. Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895–1910* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1970), p. 145; *New York Times*, Feb. 8, 1905, p. 7; *New York Times*, Mar. 22, 1906, p. 7; *The Horseless Age*, 5:10 (Dec. 6, 1899), p. 56. In 1908 ACA voted to allow women to become non-voting members of the club and thereby to have use of the garage and touring bureaus. However, they remained barred from the restaurant and club rooms. Women were only permitted in the "Ladies Room" under the stairs. *New York Sun*, Oct. 8, 1908, p. 9. ACA dues: *The Motor World*, 2:6 (May 9, 1901), p. 109.
25 *The Horseless Age*, 7:15 (Jan. 9, 1901), pp. 16–18.
26 Ibid., 8:26 (Sept. 25, 1901), p. 536; 6:21 (Aug. 22, 1900), p. 24; 7:15 (Jan. 9, 1901), pp. 16–18.
27 Ibid., 7:16 (Jan. 16, 1900), pp. 12–13, 16.
28 Ibid., 5:11 (Dec. 13, 1899), p. 8.
29 Ibid., 5:12 (Dec. 20, 1899), p. 9; 8:27 (Oct. 2, 1901), p. 568.
30 On general speeding and rule-breaking at the endurance run, **see** *New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1902, p. 4; on suspension, see *New York Times*, May 21, 1902, p. 16; *The Horseless Age*, 9:22 (May 28, 1902), p. 626; the Gallaher letter is in *The Horseless Age*, 9:18 (Apr. 20, 1902), p. 541; Skinner's is in *The Horseless Age*, 9:20 (May 14, 1902), p. 584.
31 *The Horseless Age*, 9:20 (May 14, 1902), p. 584.
32 Ibid., 8:31 (Oct. 30, 1901), p. 645. See also Bellamy Patridge, *Fill'er Up!: The Story of Fifty Years of Motoring* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1952), pp. 78–85.
33 *The Horseless Age*, 9:1 (Jan. 1, 1902), p. 3.
34 Ibid., 8:38 (Dec. 18, 1901), p. 813; 9:3 (Jan. 15, 1902), p. 90.
35 Ibid., 9:5 (Jan. 29, 1902), p. 146.
36 Ibid., 8:38 (Dec. 18, 1901), p. 814.
37 Ibid., 9:8 (Feb. 19, 1902), p. 244.
38 On Scarritt, **see** *New York Times*, June 20, 1903, p. 1. On Seligman, see *New York Times*, Mar. 3, 1886, p. 5. On Butler, see *New York Times*, June 8, 1901, p. 8.
39 *The Horseless Age*, 9:10 (Mar. 3, 1902), pp. 310–311.
40 *Motor World* (New York), 3:23 (Mar. 6, 1902), p. 593.
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2
Scorcher Rule

Abstract: *Millionaires in their automobiles enjoyed a new monopoly of the public roads but at the cost of provoking great animosity from the broader public. The "scorcher" (speeder) menace led to efforts to impose speed limits and other restrictions on automobiles, which the tycoons through their auto clubs successfully fought. Through these struggles automobile racing was firmly connected in the public imagination with the privileges and excesses of the wealthy.*

Messer-Kruse, Timothy. *Tycoons, Scorchers, and Outlaws: The Class War That Shaped American Auto Racing*.
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
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Unlike other "rich man's amusements," like yachting, polo, tennis, golf, or extravagant soirees, motoring was an activity that was undertaken almost entirely within public view. Every outing was an ostentatious display of wealth and power. The imported vehicles preferred by the upper crust cost upward of $20,000, as much as thoroughbreds or yachts, and more than most working people would earn in a decade. Such imported machines were a cut above other domestic automobiles in their power and heaviness of construction. Even compared with the other autos that might be driven by the town doctor or the local banker, the typical imported car had two to four times the horsepower.

Such powerful and heavy machines were a starkly disproportionate presence in the midst of traffic that was still primarily horse-drawn and pedestrian. Faster than a horse at full gallop or a wheelman in full sprint (then the standard of speed of the day) wealthy motorists by their very nature forced every other being on the road to pay them heed. In effect, this new technology allowed the wealthy not only the thrill of speed but also the satisfaction of demanding respect and recognition upon pain of being run over or driven off the road. For the rich, every automobile outing was an adventure and a parade rolled into one experience. For all others on the road it was a whirlwind of danger and disruption.

Many recognized that the severity of the "automobile evil" was compounded by the fact that the generation of horses currently living had never experienced such a thing. "However fully legally the automobile is recognized as a vehicle and entitled to go upon all roads, etc., it is to be considered first that it is to many horses a novelty, seen with awe and fright for the first time." A frightened horse, especially one hitched to a wagon or a carriage, was a life-threatening danger (Figure 2.1).[1]

A typical item in local papers at this time was, "W.K. Vanderbilt passed through the village of Babylon in his white flyer a few days ago and caused a great consternation among the natives by his high rate of speed."[2] Or, for example, this report from the *Poughkeepsie News-Press* was not unusual:

> The automobile which passed through this city several days ago . . . went through Poughkeepsie again about 10:30 o'clock Friday morning, and this time it went like a streak of lightning . . . Several who know about the speed of such things say positively that the machine went up Main Street at a rate of 40 miles an hour. The manner in which the steersman handled the steering wheel was a revelation. Horses and pedestrians dodged in every direction, but before they had time to get out of the way the monster machine had gracefully curved past them and was fast fading in the distance.

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At the corner of Main and Academy streets a woman, whose name could not be learned, was about to cross the street. She was half way across, when the machine loomed up and was so close to her that she had not time to get out of its way. This did not bother the driver, as he whirled the machine around her in a sort of semi-circle, without slacking speed, and passed on without even looking around. The woman was so frightened that she collapsed in the street…She was helped to her feet by passers-by who had seen the occurrence.

All the way up Main street horses and pedestrians were frightened until they could scarcely breathe at the narrow escapes. Had it been possible to get hands on the careless driver he would have been arrested, but he was far out in the country before any one could collect their wits.[3]

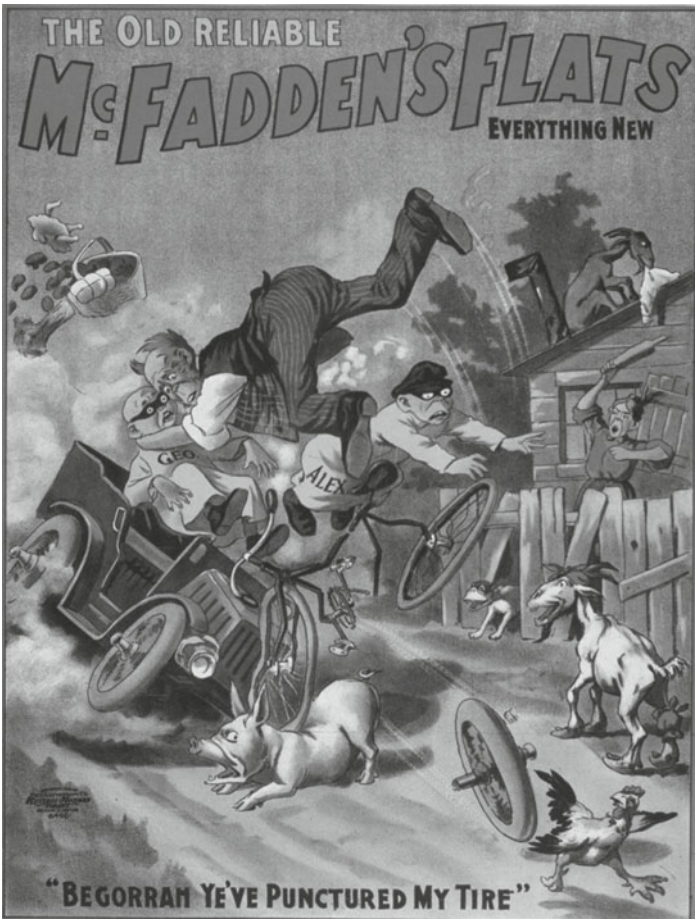

FIGURE 2.1 *The Old Reliable McFadden's Flats, Everything New*

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Then there were a few who reveled in the unlimited potential of the motor vehicle as a tool of the prankster. In Philadelphia there were reports of motorists intentionally scaring common folks. "These crackbrained individuals rush through the streets at top speed, they approach a car or a vehicle as though they intended to run it down, then, when almost upon it and the occupants of the apparently doomed vehicle are all but in a panic, the ex-racing men cut off the power, jam the brake hard down, and grin like monkey gazing at his own likeness in a mirror. Another favorite trick . . . is to sneak up on the hard working street cleaner, and before he is aware of it sound the cyclone in a manner sufficiently strident enough to wake the dead."[4]

Of course, speed is a relative thing and large automobiles travelling at twenty miles per hour, passing horse carts plodding along at five or six, seemed to the cart man to be recklessly speeding, or as was said at the time, "scorching." But there can be little doubt that the temptation to throttle up a powerful machine, especially on the part of a class that felt entitled to their privileges, was great. Speeding, or "scorching," quickly became a major political issue in counties surrounding New York, especially Long Island where the concentration of massive estates was probably greater than anywhere else in America.

> The hard, smooth, level highways of Long Island cannot be equaled elsewhere for fast long distance speeding or any sort of a wheel and with the rapid growth in popularity of the horseless vehicles the most popular suburban highways are being traversed by them almost continuously . . . So many runaways and smashups have occurred from this source that hundreds of owners of road horses will not let their wives and daughters drive out on the highways alone, and the owners themselves are in many instances afraid to drive spirited horses at any hour of the day or night for fear of meeting Vanderbilt's or Mackey's White Ghost or some other of the almost equally notorious machines speeding along at the rate of forty miles an hour.[5]

Long Island's experience with speeders was far worse than most other communities for the simple reason that such a high density of the super rich lived there. When gathered in such numbers activities that might have been frowned upon individually were accepted as lively pastimes. In the winter of 1901–1902, a society journalist reported that a "new and delightful form of amusement" was racing express trains on Long Island. One anonymous enthusiast of this game explained, "We who have been in the country at house parties have found a new and delightful form of amusement . . . the way we do this is quite original. We bet with the men.

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We got to town for the matinee or for a little luncheon in the train, and the men start even with us in their motor cars. The person wins the bet who gets to town first." This informant said that Vanderbilt, Keene, Clarence Mackay, and half dozen other sports indulge in this amusement.[6]

All of these three tycoons were both famed racers and infamous scorchers. Mackay was labeled an "automobile fiend" by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* for roaring by a carriage carrying Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Andrews of Mineola, and frightening their horse who bolted and threw the Andrews to the road. Mr. Andrews took the worst of the fall, much of "the skin was peeled from his face." Three months later Mackay again sped by a rig, this time a peddler's wagon, causing the horse to break harness and injure the peddler.[7]

Millionaire sportsman Foxhall Keene (Figure 2.2) was driving his "big automobile" through the outskirts of Queens, when he frightened a horse causing it to overturn its wagon and dumping a load of boxed produce onto 80-year-old farmer Valentine Hallock. Hallock's collarbone was sticking out of his skin and several ribs were crushed as Keene stopped his car and "expressed much regret." It is not known if Hallock survived his injuries. A couple of days earlier, Keene was arrested by a deputy sheriff riding a bicycle near Norwich, Long Island, while on his way to a fox hunt. Keene avoided paying a fine by arguing that he could not have

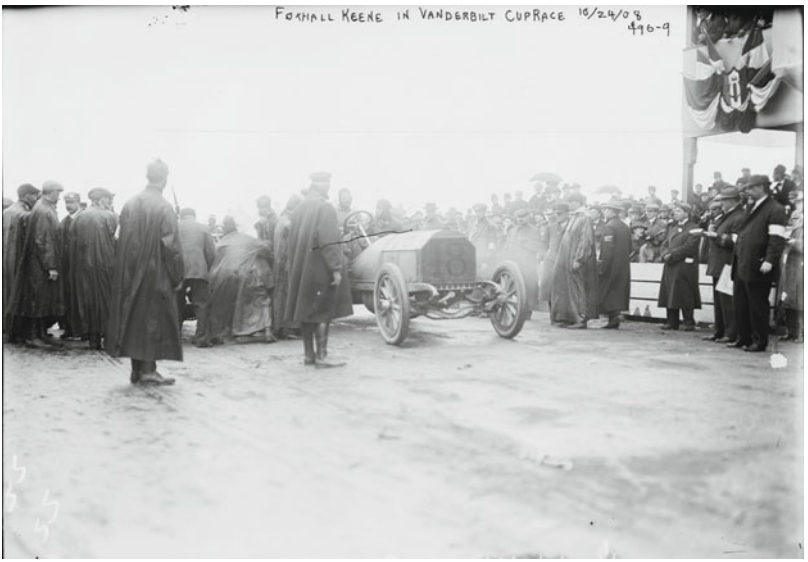

FIGURE 2.2 *Foxhall Keene at the Vanderbilt Cup Race of 1908*

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been going as fast as he had been accused of going or the bike cop would have never caught up with him.[8]

Keene later extolled the wonderful improvement the automobile had made for his life and for that of his peers. "Out here on Long Island automobiles have proved a great blessing to us, as they practically annihilate distance, and in half an hour you can make a call on your friends twenty miles away . . . While there is some opposition on the part of farmers and some others of the country people, neither Mr. Vanderbilt nor myself has had any trouble: and if we kill a chicken or a dog we always pay full value to the owner."[9] Some tycoons did pride themselves on paying "full value" to their victims. John Jacob Astor so frightened a horse with his auto that it suffered an aneurism and dropped dead on the spot. He paid the owner $300.[10]

But often there was no "full value" that could make up the injury caused. In Hackensack, New Jersey, two gardeners were killed when the horse drawing the mower they were operating was "frightened by an automobile driven at a high rate of speed." The scorcher, Frederick Blum, the owner of a dye factory in Lodi, "dashed along" without stopping to see what damage he had caused and was later arrested boarding a ferry for New York City.[11]

In Reading, Massachusetts, undertaker Edward F. Brooks was giving the two young sons of Charles Haag, a worker in a local greenhouse, a ride on his rig through town. Suddenly one or more automobiles raced past, causing Brooks's horse to bolt straight through a crossing bar and into the path of the Falls River express. It was widely reported that four automobiles had raced by and witnessed the accident but carried on without pausing.

Many bystanders watched as the carriage was reduced to matchsticks and the horse's carcass was thrown nearly two hundred feet. Seven-year-old Clarence was picked up off the ground dead, his body so mangled his father who arrived minutes later was restrained and not allowed to lay eyes on him. Once the trainmen had stopped the express they loaded five-year-old Charles onboard and piled on the steam to Boston where he was taken to General Hospital, but in spite of their heroic efforts he lived only a few hours longer. Brooks, a man well known as a civic leader in the town, lingered for a couple of days before succumbing.

The police sent alarms ahead to Andover suspecting that was the "scorchers'" destination not only because they were heading in that direction but because that afternoon was the annual football game

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between Phillips-Exeter and Phillips-Andover academies. Later, the chief first denied he had placed the call to Andover, then admitted he did and added he had personally driven to Andover and found three automobilists at the game who admitted to having seen the crash, but denied being any closer than 150 yards from Brooks's buggy. The police chief refused to give reporters their names and later admitted he had not interviewed any other witnesses to the tragedy. A Boston reporter talked to several people who confirmed that there had been at least one automobile that had frightened Brooks's horse.[12]

Farmers and workers who lived within a short drive of major metropolitan centers were justifiably panicked about the dangers introduced into their communities by the tycoon scorchers. Judging by the frequency of news reports of mishaps involving rich motorists the *New York Evening World* was not too far off when it wrote, "Pictures representing men, women and children fleeing in terror from these death-dealing machines are absolutely true, as a trip almost any day on Long Island will demonstrate."[13]

Alfred G. Vanderbilt, "Willie's" cousin, was motoring with several New York friends when they crested a hill and frightened a horse hitched to a delivery wagon for a biscuit company; the horse was standing at the curb on the main street of Dobbs Ferry. It bolted, throwing the driver from his box and under the wheels, leaving him seriously injured.[14]

Diamond merchant St. John Wood ran over Michael Hurley, a laborer, in the Mt. Vernon section of New York City, smashing most of his ribs and causing internal injuries that most assumed would lead to Hurley's death.[15]

Beyond the sensational accidents that made the newspapers because they involved the wealthy and the famous were innumerable daily incidents that spread deep resentments against the high and mighty motorists.

> While the list of accidents, fatal and otherwise, which are of public record might be indefinitely spread out, there is a class of accidents of which little is heard. In their results they are minor—the breaking of a shaft, the snapping of a strap, being the maximum of damage; nevertheless, life and limb in each instance is endangered, though they are classed as narrow escapes. These are innumerable and of daily occurrence, and any one of them is likely to result damagingly. They are not heard of beyond the family circle of the ones whose lives have been endangered; first because nothing of moment having resulted no action is taken, and, secondly, and principally, because the one who suffers, especially in the country, can do nothing, since

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> the offender puts on power and dashes away out of sight and recognition so rapidly that following becomes an impossibility.[16]

Speeding may have been a more pronounced problem in the outlying districts of New York City for farmers and teamsters, but it was also a growing problem in city neighborhoods itself. "From a close observation and a record kept by the *Motor World* of mechanical vehicles passing through the streets and parks of this city it has been proven that the [automobile]…law is disobeyed by not less than ninety-five per cent of the automobilists in the metropolitan district." In November of 1901, witnesses reported seeing two automobiles racing down New York's Broadway at midnight, at a speed that was estimated to reach 50 miles per hour. At such speeds policemen were at a distinct disadvantage whether mounted on horse or, as was increasingly common, on bicycle.[17]

Leaders of the Automobile Club of America (ACA) attended the New York Board of Alderman hearing considering a proposal to establish a speed limit of 8 mph on city streets. ACA leader H. S. Chapin opposed the measure that had been advocated by a citizens' group and two bicycle policemen. Chapin said, "Nobody went too fast because every man had perfect control of his machine and was as much interested as any one [*sic*] else in avoiding accidents, because collisions were not only dangerous to the people but resulted in great damage to costly machines."[18]

The Horseless Age complained repeatedly of reckless speeders and scolded the ACA for making empty promises to do something about them. "'To dash through towns and villages at breakneck speed may seem very daring and sportsmanlike to the chauffeur when his power is on and a friendly challenge stirs his blood, but enthusiasm is not a sufficient excuse for failure to remember that others have rights as well as one's self."[19]

Class resentments against the tycoon speeders were aggravated by the often reported upon ability of the millionaires to escape the consequences of their recklessness and law-breaking. Harold Vanderbilt was issued a fine of $10 by a judge for speeding his racer through the village of Oyster Bay and "walked out of the court laughing." A constable in Great Neck, Long Island, obtained a warrant to arrest George Arents, the vice-president of the American Sugar company, but couldn't serve it because he couldn't catch up with his speeding car whenever it tore through the village.[20]

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When Thomas D. DeWitt, "a wealthy merchant," was apprehended by bicycle policeman Doyle on 125th Street and Eighth Avenue and hauled into a Harlem court for speeding, the judge released him because New York's speeding ordinance did not define the meaning of the word "automobile." This was particularly gratifying to Mr. DeWitt who had drafted that legislation some years earlier.[21]

Central Park mounted policeman Fitzgerald succeeded in arresting two racers who "whizzed by him . . . going at a terrific rate of speed" down the East Drive. Fitzgerald was surprised to find that one of the "scorchers" was but 14 years old. The boy, John Rutherford, reportedly "took his arrest nonchalantly" remarking, "Oh, I'll be bailed out pretty soon." He was right as his daddy, principal of the 20 Broad street brokerage firm of John A. Rutherford & Co., arrived before he could be transferred from the station house to the Children's Society. As he posted $300 and took his son, Rutherford reportedly complained to a reporter about his son's arrest, "The boy is fourteen years old. He owns the automobile, and I consider him as competent to run it as any chauffeur in the city. The boy can do more with the machine than most of them. My son was going no faster than the other fellow and I can't see that I blame him much." Rutherford and son left the station house in Rutherford Jr.'s car, the young man at the wheel.[22]

Frederick C. Havemeyer, heir to the fortune of the "sugar king," the late Theodore Havemeyer, was arrested in March of 1902 by a bicycle policeman who spotted him racing down Fifth Avenue. When the winded cop finally got Havemeyer's car to the curb, Havemeyer leaned out and reportedly said, "Do you know who I am?" Havemeyer posted a $50 bail but the next day at the hour when his appearance in Yorkville police court was scheduled, Havemeyer failed to appear. Instead when his name was called a man stepped forward and asked, "What is the fine? I am ready to pay it." The judge asked the man if he was Havemeyer and the man answered that he was his coachman and added, "He thought it would be all right to pay the fine and not come here at all. He's got a sick headache this morning, you know, and he really can't be here." The judge fumed and "thundered," "Well, to make it convenient for him, we'll adjourn this hearing till to-morrow morning. Then I expect Mr. Havemeyer to be present . . . Have Mr. Havemeyer in court to-morrow without fail." The next day the judge regretted that the law only allowed him to impose a $10 fine.[23]

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In a similar incident, Edward R. Thomas, "millionaire chauffeur and son of Gen. Samuel Thomas, president of the Illinois Central railroad," was arrested for speeding down Amsterdam Avenue and when taken to the Harlem station gave a false name. He too posted bail and failed to show up for his arraignment the following day but the magistrate, figuring out who he actually was, put out a warrant for his appearance and had an officer drag him to court. Apparently the judge only wished to lecture the young man, telling him, "The higher a man is in the financial world the more respect he should show for the law. I knew your father well and I know that he would tell you the same thing." Then the judge dismissed all charges and let him leave through his private entrance to avoid the reporters massed outside.

So frequent did such incidents become that *Automobile Topics*, a journal dedicated to unrestricted speed limits, wrote, "How to be a sportsman though rich! Messrs. Vanderbilt and Rothschild are trying to demonstrate how it may be done, and are doing very much better than those who are satisfied to demonstrate the combination by paying police court fines with nonchalant indifference." The editor of the *Automobile Topics* may have spoken a bit too soon, because the most famous of the many speeding Vanderbilts, "Willie" K. Vanderbilt, soon became notorious for his speeding and his ability to avoid pay fines from his pocket change and continue on his way.[24]

By the summer of 1901, about the same time Willie Vanderbilt took delivery of his German racer, dubbed "The Red Devil," so many complaints for "scorching" had arrived at the Newport police department that extra mounted officers were posted at the principal streets with strict orders to arrest all automobile speeders. Nevertheless a defiant Vanderbilt ran the Red Devil on practice runs down Ocean boulevard in front of the Casino.[25] Willie was widely quoted saying, "Arrest me every day if you want to…it is nothing to pay fines for such sport," but then moved to Long Island where the roads were straighter, flatter, and, he thought, less patrolled.[26]

The laws' inability to restrain the millionaire scorchers was probably most evident to those charged with enforcing the law. Cycle cop Edward Dobson had tried to catch the driver of a high-powered French racer who roared down Fifth Avenue through Harlem each evening for weeks, but his wheel was no match for the machine that ignored his shouts to stop. Finally, one night he overtook the car on a downslope and

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apprehended the driver who turned out to be the silk magnate William H. Barnard. Dobson told the judge that Barnard had threatened him, saying he would "break" him or have him "transferred," but the judge, saying he didn't doubt Officer Dobson, let Barnard off with a warning to Dobson's "chagrin."[27]

Officer Dobson's disappointment at the judge's lenient treatment of the millionaire was apparently commonly experienced among New York's finest. A deep cynicism soon infected the traffic force to the point that the traffic police commissioner conducted an experiment in 1903 of racing through Manhattan and the Bronx to see how many times he would be apprehended. Over five hours of wild racing, the commissioner was arrested only twice, which the commissioner called a "disgraceful" neglect of duty. *The Evening World* was not surprised because it could not "remember a single case in Manhattan where a chauffeur charged with causing a pedestrian's death has suffered any but the mildest penalty…If a judge occasionally dealt severely with automobile speed violations…[there might be] a greater alertness on the part of the bicycle squad in seeking to repress speed violations."[28]

While the ACA continued to issue pronouncements condemning speeding, they refused to take the one step that would be the most effective within the powers of a private organization. They refused to sanction or expel powerful members like Vanderbilt provoking the editor of a friendly automotive journal to opine: "The gravest offenders are those whose wealth and position make them leaders of the fad worshipping set, which unquestioningly follows their bad example and holds them up in justification. These have their fun and go scot free, the imitators argue, then why should we hesitate to break the law? Let the leaders of the automaniacs be brought to book and a wholesome lesson will be learned by all."[29]

Members of auto clubs in rival cities engaged in an ongoing friendly and informal competition to set the fastest times between various points. New York to Boston, or to Philadelphia by way of Trenton and Princeton were popular routes. Often these escapades made the news, either in a positive light of a gentleman boasting of a record pace, or negatively of a rich man acting boorishly. When Barclay Warburton, owner of a Philadelphia newspaper, and Joseph Bunting, manager of automobile sales for Wanamaker's department store, set out to break the record to New York, they left behind them a trail of mayhem. Their speeding auto frightened several horses, for which they admittedly did not stop, and

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they ended up smashing into a delivery wagon and injuring its African American driver. Warburton paused only long enough to flip a gold piece to the man who had just landed on the street before speeding on. Warburton later explained to reporters, "We bumped into a poor-looking furniture van, the front seat of which was occupied by three negroes, one of whom was thrown to the ground. I think if the asphalt had not been slippery the horse would not have lost his footing. I did not feel compelled to settle with him, but did so out of charity, as I did not think the poor fellow could afford to lose so slight a thing as his harness."[30]

Judges too soon expressed their frustration at the laughably low penalties the law allowed them to impose in speeding and reckless driving cases. When Jackson Gouraud, heir to a California railroad fortune, stood before Magistrate Crane of Harlem court, the judge couldn't contain himself. "I am not speaking personally, Mr. Gouraud, but I think a stop should be put to automobilists running wild in their own sweet way. I am going to try to have the present laws amended so that the penalty for recklessness shall be $1,500. Maybe that will put a stop to this speeding…It was only last night that I came near being run down in Seventh avenue. The wheels of the machine grazed my coat and splattered me with mud, and the people who were in the auto turned and laughed at me as they dashed out of sight. As long a man has a million dollars and an automobile he thinks he can do as he pleases. He rides down people who have to walk and if he kills them he straightens it out by settling in dollars and cents and takes up his work again where it was left off."[31]

Vanderbilt's carelessness with his speed landed him in trouble on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1902, Vanderbilt was convicted of reckless speeding along the Champs Elysee and was sentenced to two days in jail. His lawyers appealed the verdict and in the meantime Vanderbilt returned to America. When Vanderbilt was again in Paris the following year, his case was heard but this time his defense was ironclad. A man by the name of Coubac appeared in court, claimed to be Vanderbilt's chauffeur at the time of the incident, and testified that he had operated the car that day and that monsieur Vanderbilt was not even among his passengers! The judge, clearly skeptical of this tactic, then asked Coubac if he would prefer that he transfer the jail sentence from his employer to himself. Coubac "protested energetically" as did Vanderbilts' lawyers, though to no avail. Coubac was ordered to return and face the same charges.[32]

Shortly after setting the world's record for the flying start mile on the open road, Vanderbilt raced a friend from Chartres to Paris. His friend

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driving a racing Mors passed him on a dusty road and Vanderbilt lost sight in the dust cloud just long enough to smash into a woman driving a cart. According to some reports the woman was not seriously injured and Vanderbilt left the scene after "the millionaire handed a roll of bank notes to the country woman."[33]

Two years later while motoring with his wife through an Italian village, Vanderbilt's chauffeur ran over a small boy. An angry mob gathered and roughed up Vanderbilt and he drew his pistol. Just then the local constables arrived and saved the motoring party from peasant justice. Reports following upon the incident are contradictory, one special cable saying that because the injured boy was expected to recover in ten days, no charges were filed against Vanderbilt or his chauffeur. Others hinted that Vanderbilt had bought his way out of trouble, saying he had "amply compensated" the family so that they would drop charges. All agreed that on his way out of town for the benefit of the press he donated $40 to the town ambulance fund.[34]

When Vanderbilt arrived back in New York aboard the Kronprinze Wilhelm, his massive steel yacht the *Tarantula* mooring alongside the ocean liner to whisk Willie and his wife back to his estate on Long Island, he denied all the reports that had preceded him home: "There was no mob. We were running at a slow speed into Pontedura. It was just dusk, and the boy came out of his house and ran directly in front of our machine. We stopped in time, and the boy was not hurt. A number of peasants threatened us, but the police arrived in time to protect us. I did not draw a revolver to protect myself. There was no occasion for such an act."[35]

The populist *Cole County Democrat* of Jefferson City, Missouri, editorialized wryly: "[Vanderbilt] was bowling along in his motor car when he accidently ran over a little Dago baby about five years of age. Of course, the child got in Mr. Vanderbilt's way; no doubt about that. But the brutal populace, impelled no doubt, by the ignorance of that benighted country, and wholly failing to appreciate the honor of having one of their children run down by an American millionaire, let lose their foreign rage and came near to mobbing Mr. Vanderbilt. It seems a pity that American millionaires can't go abroad and enjoy all the privileges and comforts of home—and when they have the money, too!"[36]

Vanderbilt's Italian mishap was just one of numerous incidents involving high class Americans running afoul of the law or of the pedestrians of Europe. Philadelphia tycoon Robert Goelet smashed

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into a peasant cart and was mobbed while on honeymoon with his wife. One of Vanderbilt's cousins, Elliott F. Shepard, was sentenced in France to three months' imprisonment for recklessly running down a child, Madeline Marduel, who died on that St. Ouen road.[37] Vanderbilt's brother-in-law, Charles Fair, was killed along with his wife in a motoring accident in France in 1902.

Millionaires generally escaped having to pay compensatory damages to their motoring victims (Figure 2.3). In an era before lawyers took civil cases on the likelihood of commission, those injured were thankful to have their medical expenses paid. Messenger boy Charles Margolin, who was run over by "millionaire shoe man" John H. Hanan while making a delivery, told a reporter he was the envy of his pals because Hanan had promised to buy him a new wheel and a new suit of clothes, even though he hadn't been able to go down to Hanan's office and claim them as his leg was still bandaged and painful. *The Evening World*, a newspaper that promoted itself as championing the common man, noted that railroads were required by statute to compensate widows and orphans, up to $60,000 but the drivers of "devil wagons" rarely paid substantial sums. "At $60,000 per victim the celebrated 'White Ghost' of Mr. Vanderbilt's early automobiling days would by this time have cost its successive owners more than a yacht."[38]

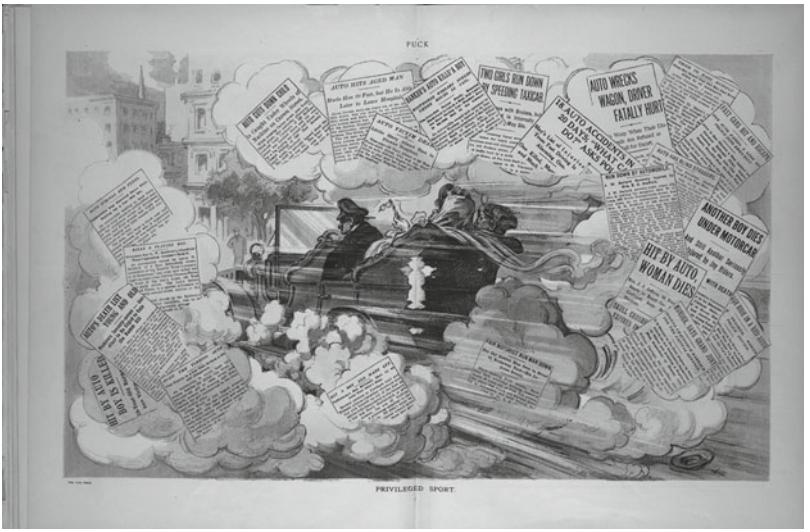

FIGURE 2.3 *"Privileged Sport,"* Puck*, June 9, 1909*

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A large number of accident victims were never compensated because it was common for speeding automobiles to skip the scene and roar off, especially as there was no particular clause in the legal code of New York or of adjoining states making this a crime. Peter Hansen was unable to get out of the way quickly enough in West Hoboken when a speeding auto hurled him into the air. Before he could get up, a second car, racing to catch the first, drove over him. A few miles further down the Hudson County Boulevard, one of the racers smashed into James Cox who was riding his bicycle and left him unconscious in the street with a fractured skull. The two racers were never identified.[39]

The great French actress Sarah Bernhardt who performed often in New York City in these years was famously asked why she purchased an automobile, and she explained it was so that she wouldn't be run over by one.[40]

Many prominent "automobilists" found their misfortunes reported in detail in the local papers. C. H. Tangeman, a Fifth Avenue Manhattanite, smashed the French racer, dubbed "Royal Flush," into a Brooklyn trolley on Flatbush Avenue. Tangeman had competed with "Royal Flush" in a recent race on Ocean Parkway. None of the trolley riders were seriously hurt, but Tangeman in his haste to get away from the scene left his wreck where it had come to rest.[41]

Automobiles ran over children in the streets of New York at alarming rates. One thousand children were killed this way prior to World War I.[42]

Edward Copeland Wallace, an old money Brooklynite who lived in Tuxedo, approached an E. T. Lovatt at a high speed on a road in Rockland County. Lovatt's horse was skittish and he signaled to Wallace to stop but Wallace roared past, causing Lovatt's horse to bolt seriously injuring Mrs. Lovatt. Wallace's car didn't stop.

Unlike other "reckless riders [who] have been fortunate enough only to kill or injure children, so that they escaped with merely showers of stones[,] Mr. Wallace was unlucky enough to injure a Republican leader . . . who knew what his rights were." Lovatt telephoned his son who lived far down the road; this son built a barricade across the road, then beat Wallace when he stopped, and dragged him to the local justice of the peace, who ordered Wallace held for trial. "If this were the first case of the kind it would not be occasion for alarm or feeling. But this sort of 'accident' happens so frequently as to convey the impression that automobilists think they own the highways outside of the large cities, and

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sometimes in them. They will find out presently that they do not own the right to run their machines at any rate of speed which endangers the safety of other people. They will face not only bridges, but missiles, and ultimately shotguns, if neither their own sense nor the punishments inflicted by the courts bring them to a serious consideration of the rights of other people."[43]

Popular sentiment was clear as Wallace's trial attracted crowds who "hooted and jeered and insulting epithets were hurled at him from all sides" and "crowded the room used for the trial, to suffocation . . . [and] in the courtroom there was evidence of marked hostility, which broke forth in exclamations of anger at all points where Mr. Wallace's part in the accident was brought out." After the accident residents of Rockland's four principal towns held a mass meeting and planned to arrange a system of barricades connected by telephone so "scorchers" could be intercepted and held.[44]

Within two years of the first automobiles appearing on the roads of Long Island, the area's farmers and workers were so outraged at the millionaires' callous disregard for their safety that they successfully lobbied Albany to take up a bill establishing a statewide speed limit of 15 miles per hour and allowing for the imprisonment of offenders. The millionaires responded by cleverly introducing a rival bill, disguised as merely another version of a similar reform, setting a limit of 20 miles per hour. Buried in the fine print was the bill's real purpose: making it more difficult to imprison offenders and lowering the maximum fine from $500 to $50, effectively making millionaires pay a speed tax rather than deterring their antics. But millionaire lawyers, being more shrewd and experienced in legislative affairs than Long Island farmers, deftly scheduled hearings on both bills at the same time thus misdirecting the hayseeds to one irrelevant conference while they crafted the real law without opposition. The gentlemen of New York's Automobile Club of America drove up to Albany and took key legislators for rides in their automobiles, for most lawmakers their first ever jaunt in a motorized vehicle.[45]

> It is hard to realize the intense feeling which has been aroused all over the north shore of the [Long Island] island by the introduction of the automobiles. There are hundreds of these machines now being used by the well to do summer residents; and there is scarcely an issue of a village newspaper which does not contain a spirited protest against the action of drivers and owners. At Northport, Port Jefferson, Oyster Bay, Roslyn, and, in fact, almost every town which boasts or deplores of one or more of these

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> machines, the feeling is intense. It will be many years before the country horse of farmer, liveryman and tradespeople will become accustomed to the strange antics of the auto, and until that time accidents on the roads will be a matter of daily occurrence.

The reporter went on to list the various ordinances pertaining to autos—speed limits, requirements of having name painted on side, requirement to stop if horse driver raises hand. "But all these rules seem to be utterly disregarded by the select owners of autos, and, what is worse for the people, there seems to be no effort to enforce them."[46]

Making political hay out of what was clearly a hot issue, Nassau County district attorney James P. Niemann began a crusade to arrest scorchers. Niemann declared, "I could not stand the spectacle any longer, of seeing these people ride along our roads without regard for the safety of the public who built and pay for them and I propose to eliminate the evil from Nassau County if in my power." Niemann had several quarter mile stretches surveyed and deputy marshals stationed along those routes with stopwatches. Offenders were first waved to a stop and if they ignored this a signal was sent to officers further down the road who pulled a "big furniture van" across the road.[47]

At a meeting of Nassau County supervisors to debate proposed new laws restraining speeders State Senator Cocks proposed that citizens should arm themselves with planks full of sharp spikes and throw them in front of speeders. Samuel M. Butler, secretary of the ACA who attended in an official capacity to appeal for calm and to reassure angered citizens that the ACA took the issue very seriously and "stood on record as opposed to the high rate of speed and that if the names of any of the club members were sent to him, as breaking the law, the club would take action upon it." Another automobilist, Sidney D. Ripley of Hempstead, then spoke and said he had never run his car faster than 15 miles an hour and "had never caused an accident, not even killed a chicken." Just then a roar was heard outside, and "a large red automobile, supposed to belong to W.K. Vanderbilt, Jr., passed by the Court House at the moment at a high rate of speed and was soon lost in a cloud of dust in the direction of Garden City." The chairman of the meeting then asked Ripley how fast he thought the car was going and Ripley replied "about fifteen miles an hour" causing a roar of laughter in the courtroom (Figure 2.4).[48]

Elite automobilists fought every regulation. ACA member Xenophon P. Huddy wrote the first legal treatise on auto regulations, *The Law of*

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FIGURE 2.4 *"As the Law Stands,"* Puck*, April 16, 1902*

Automobiles, in 1906. Huddy opposed all regulations, including speed limits, hit and skip laws, and especially licensing requirements, arguing instead that private tort actions were sufficient to deter all bad behavior. Likewise, reflecting the commonly held attitude in the ACA clubhouse, manufacturer Albert Pope wrote in 1903 that auto regulations were "invidious class legislation."[49]

In January of 1902 when the new Cock's bill, raising the penalty for speeding to $500 or one year in jail or both, was considered at hearing, the leaders of the ACA rushed to Albany to protest. President Albert Shattuck, son-in-law of former New York mayor William L. Strong, sent key legislators toy cars. George Chamberlain of the ACA law committee condemned the proposal as "class legislation" complaining that "we do not believe it right that automobilists . . . should be condemned to jail for a year because a few men have outraged the Long Island community."

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Interestingly, when asked why the ACA had not moved to sanction or expel these "few men" from their club, Chamberlin explained that had they done so these men would have been banned from racing in Europe and it was difficult "enforcing the law against a neighbor."[50]

In the end, the lobbying might of the ACA prevailed again and the bill was watered down to a $50 fine for first offenses. Hidden in the fine print was a small but significant loosening of speed regulations that the lawyers somehow managed to quietly slip in. Instead of a uniform and firm state speed limit, now localities were permitted to raise the speed limit if they so desired. The ACA looked forward to exerting its influence to do so. Senator Cocks who had initially sought sterner rules bitterly remarked to his colleagues, "We are like the people of old; we have asked for bread and you have given us a stone."[51] Later that week at the ACA annual banquet, held at the Waldorf-Astoria, President Shattuck congratulated his colleagues for all their achievements—good roads, fighting the Cocks bill, and the formation of the American Automobile Association (AAA) under their patronage. Shattuck joked, "We hope the Senator, having rocks in his possession, does not intend to throw them at us when we pass by in his county." The assembly then listened to Col. W. H. Moore of the Good Roads Association advocate employing convict labor to improve roads in the North as had been done so successfully in the South.[52]

The following year, 1903, as was becoming an annual rite of spring, the New York legislature again took up a hopper full of bills restricting and regulating the automobile. As he had before, ACA president Shattuck and AAA president Winthrop Scarritt and their lawyers lobbied hard and eventually worked out a sneaky compromise in the new "Bailey Bill" that included seemingly tough wording and more restrictions. However these clauses were designed in a way that they could be successfully challenged and evaded in practice. "The ambiguous wording of certain sections was intentionally suggested by the automobile representatives in order to satisfy the anti-automobile sentiment and at the same time leave loopholes of escape for the motorists."

In following this strategy, the leaders of the ACA may have been too clever for their own good, for though they thought they were just fooling the yokels who had been screaming for a crackdown on cars, they also fooled many of their own constituents and allies. When the Bailey bill's wording was publicized, auto manufacturers and the middle-class auto clubs denounced the ACA leadership for selling them out. The

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New York State Association of Automobile Clubs declared that the ACA "had no right to speak for all the automobilists of the state." Even a faction within the ACA denounced their president for negotiating on behalf of the organization without consulting the membership on such a vital issue.[53]

The ACA leaders had painted themselves into a corner because they could not publicly admit having wordsmithed a bill designed for the rich to evade. For example, new statewide speed limits were a primary feature of the bill, but all of them were rendered moot by a tangled section that effectively allowed local governments to set higher limits if they desired. A measure seemingly lowering the speed limit actually raised it by changing the language in the existing Cock's law that said no speeds above 20 mph were permitted in rural areas to one that said local authorities could set no speed limits lower than 20 mph. However, a strict reading of this passage indicated that in the event that local authorities established no regulations, then there was no speed limit.[54]

Restrictions on speeding past teams of horses, probably the single greatest source of serious accidents in this era, was cleverly compromised by wording that forbids the overtaking of a horse team "at a greater rate of speed" than eight mph rather than the plainer language of barring "a speed not exceeding eight miles an hour." The difference being that in the former wording, the speed of the passer must be calculated as the difference with that of the passee, not an absolute speed, thus allowing for higher speeds and doubling the chances of disputing the facts in the case.

As local governments were slow to act, the Bailey bill did effectively negate all speed limits in rural areas. ACA officials were aware of this, for though they didn't advertise this loophole they apparently used it. Several newspapers reported that a "prominent official" of the ACA openly sped at near a mile a minute to set a new speed record between Morris Park and Albany. One auto manufacturer who disliked the new law and blamed its passage on the chummy lobbying of Shattuck may have been onto something when he charged that Shattuck's "chief interest was in a speedway on Long Island."[55]

Likewise a clause that reduced the speed limit to eight mph near post offices was actually a Trojan horse for undermining local speed ordinances. By requiring such speed zones to be carefully marked by signage specified in detail, the ACA lawyers expected that many villages, bergs, and hamlets would not be as careful in their posting as

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the law required, or go to the expense of marking all the roads leading into and out of these restricted areas; then no speed limit would be in effect within one-half mile of an ill-marked post office. A month after passage of the law it was reported that "owing to the failure of the authorities in most part of Nassau County to provide the signs called for by the Bailey law, automobilists are reputed to be speeding their machines faster than ever and officer are powerless to interfere in the absence of signs."[56]

Finally, Shattuck and the ACA lawyers acquiesced in a new system of licensing and registration because they were "confident it would be declared unconstitutional and thus end the continuous attempts to pass such a measure."

Besides misunderstanding that some of the provisions of the Bailey Bill were intentionally unenforceable, the motorists and motor interests that were whipped into a lather against it the eleventh hour were also stirred by their suspicion that the bill was designed to primarily benefit the tycoons, and not just the professional classes like themselves. One key compromise was a licensing system that levied a new fee on motorists. But a central concern of the scorcher tycoon set, the ability to periodically monopolize the roads in order to hold their road races, was preserved.

While much of the lobbying and politicking surrounding automobile regulations happened behind closed doors, many details about the efforts of the auto club tycoons to preserve their speeding privileges seeped out to become common knowledge. The backroom power of the ACA was sufficiently well known to be the subject of a short story in *Munsey's Magazine*, at the time one of the largest circulation monthlies in America.

In the story, "Senate Bill 22: The Secret History of a Mysterious Legislative Failure," members of the "Speeders Automobile Club" sit around in their club rooms complaining about Senate Bill 22, a bill pushed by "agricultural counties." The vice-president of the club speaks for them all when he says "You know how the sight of a red devil ruffles up a countryman's nerves":

> Never saw such a fool bill! So many miles an hour around this corner, so many around that curve, this speed for a city, this for a borough… If you see some jay country horse in the distance, get out and give him a nerve tonic before you pass him!… And you must plaster your machine from end to end with numbers, tags, initials, licenses, bells, whistles, horns, burglar

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> and fire alarms, seventy-nine different varieties of lights, and Lord knows what else! Who wants to look like a confounded Christmas tree?

Fielding, a young member of the "Speeders Automobile Club," makes a bet with a senior member, Hammersmith ("who held controlling interests in so many arrogant corporations that no man knew the limit or extent thereof"), that he could flip the vote of the chair of the legislative committee about to report favorably on a bill lowering speed limits. Fielding wins his bet and thwarts the hayseeds who irrationally hate the automobile by having a confederate recklessly driving a team of horses sideswipe the chairman's horse-buggy, disabling it, and then fleeing. Fielding then "happened" by in his shiny automobile and gave the chairman a lift home, during which a second conspirator pulled alongside in his large auto and challenged Fielding to a race. Along the fine macadamized country roads the pair sped and as the chase grew heated and the pace exhilarating, the chairman found himself urging Fielding to go faster and shouting taunts at the other driver. Later, while dining at the Waldorf-Astoria, Fielding collects on his bet, a new car, from Hammersmith who asked what he was going to do with his old one. With a wry smile that ends the story, Fielding tells him he sold it to the committee chairman.[57]

Provost's short story, while written from the elite's perspective carried with it a subversive subtext. The stories protagonists, all depicted as wealthy and powerful, entered into a conspiracy to intentionally cause an elected member of the legislature to crash his wagon—an act that could have easily injured him or his horse—in order to thwart a popular reform. While the antediluvian attitude of the rural politician toward automobiles was lampooned and the leaders of the Speeders Club triumphed in the end, the privileged social world Provost depicted was certainly not one most readers of *Munsey's* would have politically sympathized with.

When it soon became clear that both the Cocks law and the Bailey revision of it had failed to curtail the scorchers, many advocated taking the law into their own hands. James Canfield, editor of the *Patchogue Advance*, a Long Island weekly, wrote: "It will not be long before Long Island people will be obliged to go armed to defend themselves against the crazy and vicious automobilists, who have absolutely no regard for life or limb… The automobile is developing a new species of fiend and unless some stringent laws can be passed and enforced one need not

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be surprised to hear of the shooting or lynching of some of these auto fiends. Seated in their swift, powerful machines, with plenty of money to pay the expenses of any mishap, they plunge over the highways with scant regard for human life."[58] Citizens formed an anti-auto militia, the Brookhaven Committee of Safety, which was seen as a model for other Long Island villages. When an auto frightened a team pulling a wagon injuring its riders in Hammonton, New Jersey, and kept speeding along, a telephone message was sent down the road and an armed mob of citizens gathered with violent intent but the culprit took a different route and escaped.[59]

A Committee of Fifty organized to oppose a proposed increase in the speed limit sent out 30,000 post cards requesting opinions on what rate should be allowed, received 6,000 back, a large number recounting their own brushes with autos. Charles J. Gould wrote, "I have been thrown from my horse by the reckless driving of an automobile . . . those owning autos are all wealthy men and would pay a fine of $50 three times a day. I would like to see a list of persons killed and maimed. Has there been a single owner imprisoned?" Zane Gray, a dentist, replied, "I was nearly killed by an auto yesterday and hereafter I shall carry a gun. Nothing but a bullet could have caught this one."[60]

Dr. William B. Gibson, coroner of Huntington, Long Island, applied for a justice's permit to carry a revolver with him in order to shoot any automobilist who refused to slow down and get to one side of the road while he is driving his buggy. He boasted of having used it once to force a motorist off the road.[61] *The New York Times* sympathized with those taking the law into their hands to defend against speeders, "There is one thing that travels faster than the swiftest automobile yet invented and that is a bullet. It would not be well for the drivers of automobiles to induce the belief that firearms offer the only really efficient protection against them."[62]

Even New York's clergy felt compelled to take a hard line against the tycoon scorchers. The Reverend Olmsted "told his congregation that rich people were becoming an intolerable nuisance through their indulgence in reckless speed on land and on water."

Reverend George C. Lorimer, not to be outdone, expressed his belief that automobilists who run over and kill others should be given the electric chair.[63]

New York's poor neighborhoods simply dealt with the scorcher threat directly. Edward Thomas was notorious for running over and killing

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a seven-year-old boy in Harlem with the Mercedes racer he had purchased from Willie Vanderbilt. The coroner refused to press charges. But a couple of days later Thomas was caught again driving through the immigrant neighborhood. Thomas's auto was brought to a stop when someone threw an old boiler under its wheels. In moments Thomas was hit with a fusillade of rocks and tin cans. Police rushed to the scene and saved Thomas and his wife while arresting thirteen-year-old James Pollock, and accused him of organizing the attack. The police court judge ordered Pollack sent to Catholic Protectory for three months in lieu of payment of a hundred dollar bond, which, apparently, his family and friends couldn't scrape together. During his sentencing the magistrate seemed a bit biased, railing, "You little loafer. What have you to say to this?" However, Pollock was not without friends as his local alderman arrived the following morning and paid his bond securing his release, an act that may have been calculated as politically popular, or at least worth the investment.[64]

A similar incident in another immigrant neighborhood involved the wealthy Mrs. H. Gottschall being struck by a stone while being chauffeured in her open electric touring car and knocked unconscious for three days. Police conducted a massive manhunt in the Italian neighborhood and eventually arrested three-year-old Joey Russo as the ringleader. Even the upper class *New York Times* couldn't help but make fun of the cops' overreaction describing Russo as the leader of the fearsome "rubber nipple" gang.[65]

A Long Island judge threw out the charges against a boy accused of throwing mud into a drivers' face because automobiles had become a "public nuisance."[66] A New Jersey motorist wrote, "One can scarcely ride with safety on our boulevards as boys and half grown men seem to be imbued with the idea that it is perfectly lawful to throw stones, cans, or anything else at anyone who goes along in an automobile. The small children have evidently been told that they can do it with impunity and they do it."[67]

Another motorist magazine noted that "When traveling through Bronx borough . . . automobilists are greeted with an almost constant hooting from boys of the district, and the slogan 'get a horse' seems to be vociferated from all sides all the time. Sometimes the mischief takes the more serious form of pelting with stones or rubbish. The police have received frequent complaints, but except in a few cases they have accomplished little."[68]

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The sight of a line of automobiles filled with "silk hats" moving through an East river neighborhood just as school let out after a fresh snow was combination irresistible to young immigrant children who pelted the tycoons with snowballs as they passed. Every boy for blocks around came running and the chauffeurs sped up to run the gauntlet as quickly as they could. One bold youth, frustrated that he couldn't get a clear throw at John D. Rockefeller, Jr., opened his door and hurled big dirty snowballs inside, knocking Rockefeller's hat and glasses off. Interestingly, no policemen intervened.[69]

Edward Hayes became a hero to the society motoring set after his passing car was hit by a clump of mud on Eighth Avenue, splattering on his sister's cheek and his face. Hayes jumped out and rained blows on a young man named Joseph Greenbaum. The fight was broken up by a policeman who arrested Greenbaum. Greenbaum was fined five dollars.[70]

At some point the public's resentment of tycoon "scorchers" became so general that even a random crowd of strangers could spontaneously share in it. When a motorist broke down on Broadway and a crowd gathered the mood turned ugly quickly. As the motorist recalled, "It wasn't simply interest or curiosity. It was a sort of malicious enjoyment at the thought that an automobilist had come to grief… They laughed and jeered at our strenuous efforts, and when I finally got the machine started up again, actually a little sigh of disappointment arose."[71]

Still, in spite of all the warning signs of their growing unpopularity, the tycoons' deep feelings of entitlement made them tone deaf to the public mood. Contributing to their aloofness was a certain callousness toward the circumstances of the poor common to those in their privileged circumstances. For example, writing in the Automobile Club of America's house journal, John Ellis Roosevelt, a New York investment banker and cousin to Theodore, who commuted to Wall Street from his estate Meadow Croft on Long Island, asked, "Cannot something be done to lessen the deplorable accidents to children by vehicles in our streets?" Roosevelt's answer was simple. Keep the grimy urchins on the sidewalks. "The proper place for pedestrians, and particularly for little children, is the sidewalk… The drivers are not always to blame—they are using the roadway, where they belong… it is not fair to them that they should be forced to go through a roadway strewn with little children." "The use of the streets as playgrounds is contrary to law… In the interest of safety and harmony, sidewalks have been made for pedestrians and separate

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roadways for vehicles. Vehicles are prohibited from using the sidewalks, and pedestrians have been repeatedly advised by the courts that their proper place is on the sidewalk."[72]

George Chamberlain, first president of the ACA, expressed the outlook of many wealthy motorists who shifted the blame for trouble caused by their noisy machines to the commoners whose lives were disrupted by them. Describing a trip through New England, Chamberlain complained of the horse driver whose "mind is so much absorbed in observing the motor carriage he pays little attention to his beast, and many accidents otherwise avoidable may be attributed to this fact." Then there were the delivery wagons left unattended, "and through this negligence occurred the only accident which happened the entire run." The horse apparently didn't appreciate all the precautions Chamberlain took: "I stopped at a reasonable distance, not intending to pass him until his driver should make his appearance, but the horse, after surveying my carriage, preferred not to wait for his driver, and suddenly wheeling around, proceeded to make free deliveries of ice through the village at a very remarkable rate." Chamberlain, not a working man himself, didn't seem to realize that a delivery man must leave his wagon unattended in order to make his deliveries. Other dangers Chamberlain warned against were female equestrians and "Hebrew" peddlers, one of whom Chamberlain invited to take his cart around his auto but the Jew supposedly looking to take advantage of him was said to have asked, "Vell, if I come on, who pays the damage?" Such stories of gold-diggers looking to fake or exaggerate accidents, even shooing their old broken-down livestock into the path of oncoming motorists and demanding damages rose to the level of folktales over the next decade.[73]

At the Automobile Club of America's annual dinner, held at the Waldorf-Astoria, three hundred tuxedoed guests celebrated their success and listened to an array of speakers, including Senator W. W. Armstrong who had been so helpful to them in Albany. Seated alongside the society men was Thomas Edison. After the surprising entrance of an electric car that whizzed around the ballroom and parked at the rostrum, a fantastically costumed Will Carleton jumped out and led the three hundred guests in a rousing chorus of "Mr. Dooley." Tone deaf to the complaints of the public to the recklessness of rich automobilists, the toastmaster for the evening got a big laugh when he joked that those men with the smallest cars usually had the loudest horns, but that "when I run over

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a man I don't add insult to injury by scaring him to death before I kill him."[74]

A book clearly intended for the rich motorist included a similar joke. One motorist asks another if he had made a record with his automobile yet. The other replies, "Oh, yes; two dogs, a chicken, three small boys, and a street-cleaner, all run over in less than an hour!"[75]

New York City magistrate Leroy B. Crane accepted the invitation of the ACA to speak at one of their dinners but used the occasion to scold them. Crane described how he had himself nearly been run over by speeding autos on three different occasions. "Fortunately I dodged in the nick of time, but generally got a laugh; not that I was not run over, but at my close escape. Yes, I go home every night wondering whether one of my children has been run over by an automobile or not." Crane was clear in viewing the issue as one of class: "The automobile laws are too ambiguous. Show the public that you mean to obey the law and that you mean to have every one who uses a motor car live within the provisions of the law and this feeling of the public, of the poorer classes, I might say, against you, will vanish." The problem, Crane thought, was that "there are some automobilists who don't think they need to obey the law. They place themselves superior to it, carrying the idea that they are above the law and the consideration of the public." Such men were currently not deterred because the "penalties are not heavy enough." Neither did Crane mince his words about the power of the men seated before him to correct the situation if they really wanted to, "You have men of wealth, influence, and ability in your club, and you can get anything you want from the Legislature." Ex-president Scarritt apparently didn't agree with Crane's message, retorting that he "did not like to be discriminated against" as police arrest and punish automobilists while looking the other way at the infractions of horse-drawn vehicles. Scarritt and the other ACA officers continued for years to fight against any legislation that increased penalties for automobilists.[76]

Winthrop E. Scarritt, shipyard tycoon and president of the AAA and a power in the ACA, once denounced the *New York Times* for printing "a venomous communication calculated to inflame the minds of the poor against the rich, thus encouraging the spirit of anarchy and hoodlumism." Scarritt objected to the letter of a citizen who advocated for tougher laws against automobiles, which Scarritt viewed as stirring up "a bitter feeling of class hatred, i.e., the poor against the rich." "Your correspondent, speaking of the law, says: 'It would seem that it is permitted

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to be violated when wealth is an adjunct.' This statement is not only a false assumption and a gratuitous insult to our, on the whole, excellent and conscientious police officials, but it is far worse—it is anarchistic, and would be just such a statement as we might expect from Herr Most and those of his ilk."[77]

Once retired from the presidency of the AAA, Scarritt freely admitted that "the rich, reckless driver" caused most of the trouble for the majority of automobilists and that for them "the imposition of a fine is no hardship." Scarritt's diagnosis was seconded by none other than President Woodrow Wilson who told a North Carolina auto club, "Nothing has spread Socialistic feeling in this country more than the use of automobiles. To the countryman they are a picture of arrogance of wealth with all its independence and carelessness." While Wilson's comments were ridiculed in the automotive press, there was more substance beneath them than most tycoons were willing to admit. Indeed, the ground was shifting beneath their feet and the public mood is something, as they would quickly learn, that cannot be easily ignored.[78]

Notes

1 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Apr. 18, 1902, p. 6.
2 Ibid., Jan. 22, 1901, p. 11.
3 *The Horseless Age*, 7:2 (Oct. 10, 1900), p. 11.
4 *The Motor World*, 1:4 (Oct. 25, 1900), p. 55.
5 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Oct. 19, 1901, p. 17.
6 *Motor World* (New York), 3:15 (Jan. 9, 1902), p. 371.
7 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 13, 1901, p. 9; Aug. 4, 1901, p. 29.
8 Ibid., Nov. 14, 1902, p. 13; *The Evening World* (New York), Nov. 12, 1902, p. 6.
9 *The Motor World*, 3:7 (Nov. 14, 1901), p. 202.
10 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1902, p. 35.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., June 8, 1902, p. 1; *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro, Vt.), June 13, 1902, p. 6; *Boston Daily Globe*, June 7, 1902, p. 1; June 8, pp. 1, 9; June 10, p. 3; Aug. 8, 1902, p. 1.
13 *The Evening World* (New York), Aug. 29, 1902, p. 10.
14 *New York Tribune*, Apr. 1, 1906, p. 1.
15 Ibid., Apr. 23, 1903, p. 6.
16 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1902, p. 35.
17 *The Motor World*, 2:10 (June 6, 1901), p. 187; *New York Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1901, p. 10.

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18 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 9, 1901, p. 37.
19 *The Horseless Age*, 8:7 (May 15, 1901), p. 141.
20 *The Evening World* (New York), Sept. 9, 1902, p. 8; May 29, 1903, p. 3.
21 *New York Evening World*, Apr. 29, 1901, p. 3.
22 *The Evening World* (New York), Mar. 28, 1903, p. 1.
23 *New York Tribune*, Mar. 17, 1902, p. 2; *The World* (New York), Mar. 17, 1902, p. 14; *The Horseless Age*, 9:13 (Mar. 26, 1902), p. 403.
24 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:2 (Apr. 26, 1902), p. 80.
25 *The New York Times*, July 24, 1901, p. 8.
26 *Boston Daily Globe*, June 8, 1900, p. 2; *New York Sun*, Nov. 10, 1900, p. 2; *New York Tribune*, Dec. 10, 1900, p. 4; Gettleman, p. 39.
27 *The Evening World* (New York), Aug. 30, 1901, p. 5.
28 **Ibid.** (New York), Apr. 15, 1903, p. 10.
29 *The Horseless Age*, 10:13 (Sept. 25, 1902), pp. 349–350.
30 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:6 (May 1902), p. 246.
31 *The Evening World* (New York), Nov. 16, 1903, p. 5.
32 Ibid., Feb. 18, 1903, p. 1.
33 *The Horseless Age*, 10:8 (Aug. 20, 1902), p. 205.
34 *New York Sun*, Feb. 26, 1906, p. 1.
35 *New York Tribune*, Apr. 4, 1906, p. 7.
36 *Cole County Democrat*, Mar. 2, 1906, p. 4.
37 *Syracuse Herald*, Mar. 3, 1906, p. 10; *New York Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1906, p. 1.
38 On Hanan, see *The Evening World* (New York), Oct. 5, 1903, p. 5; Nov. 10, 1902, p. 10. Hanan's son, Alfred, made the papers a year later when at age 14 he and his chauffeur were arrested in the Williamsburg neighborhood after taking police on a chase. Young Alfred was drunkenly ordering his driver to speed and when the first police officer ordered them to stop, he commanded to "Hit her up!" A second officer later succeeded in making the arrest. Ibid., Nov. 1, 1904, p. 7.
39 Ibid., Oct. 20, 1902, p. 6.
40 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:2 (Apr. 26, 1902), p. 80.
41 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Dec. 7, 1901, p. 32.
42 Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 176.
43 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 30, 1902, p. 4.
44 Ibid., June 8, 1902, p. 52.
45 *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1902, p. 1; *The Horseless Age*, 7:23 (Mar. 6, 1901), p. 14. Historians of the early period of motor cars took note of the rural antagonism toward automobiles but chalked it up to rural backwardness or general suspicion of "city folk." (Michael L. Berger, *The Devil Wagon in God's Country: The Automobile and Social Change in Rural America, 1893–1929* [Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979], c.f., 13–28.)

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46 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Aug. 4, 1901, p. 29.
47 Ibid., July 20, 1902, p. 44.
48 Ibid., Oct. 19, 1901, p. 3.
49 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, p. 180; Xenophon P. Huddy, *The Law of Automobiles* (Albany: Matthew Bender & Co., 1906).
50 *The Horseless Age*, 9:6 (Feb. 3, 1902), p. 187; 9:9 (Feb. 26, 1902), p. 279. On Shattuck, see *The Motor World*, 1:4 (Oct. 25, 1900), p. 60.
51 *The Horseless Age*, 9:11 (Mar. 12, 1902), p. 335.
52 Ibid., p. 336.
53 Ibid., 11:18 (May 6, 1903), pp. 562–563.
54 *New York Times*, May 3, 1903, p. 14; *The Horseless Age*, 11:23 (June 10, 1903), p. 691; a few weeks after the passage of the Doughty-Bailey Bill, motorist Gustave Lippman escaped his ticket because the arresting officer could not provide proof to the court that all the buildings that Lippman passed while exceeding the eight-mph limit were less than 100 feet apart, the definition of a town under the statute. *The Horseless Age*, 11:24 (June 17, 1903), p. 713.
55 *The Horseless Age*, 11:23 (June 10, 1903); 11:19 (May 13, 1903), p. 670, p. 585.
56 Ibid., 11:22 (June 3, 1903), p. 666.
57 Agnes Louis Provost, "Senate Bill 22: The Secret History of a Mysterious Legislative Failure," *Munsey's Magazine*, 29:2 (May 1903), pp. 188–194.
58 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 21, 1902, p. 14.
59 *The Horseless Age*, 10:5 (July 30, 1902), p. 125.
60 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1902, p. 35.
61 *The Horseless Age*, 10:1 (July 2, 1902), p. 17.
62 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, p. 179.
63 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:7 (May 31, 1902), p. 294.
64 *Motor World* (New York), 4:9 (May 29, 1902), p. 269. Thomas then sold the easily spotted "White Ghost" to the Chicago millionaire John A. Drake and purchased a high-powered Panhard for a record amount to replace it. Later, the "White Ghost" ended up in the possession of William H. Beach, "a New York clubman" who while attempting to set a speed record between Stamford and New York was apprehended in Greenwich by a deputy who "was obliged to draw his revolver in order to check" him. On Thomas's arrest, see *The Evening World* (New York), Nov. 15, 1904, p. 7; on Thomas killing the boy, see *The Evening World* (New York), May 19, 1902, p. 4; on Thomas as millionaire chauffeur, see *The Evening World* (New York), Aug. 29, 1902, p. 10; on rock throwing, see *The Evening World* (New York), July 22, 1903, p. 3; on Beach, see *The Evening World* (New York), Sept. 9, 1902, p. 8 and *The Horseless Age*, 10:11 (Sept. 10, 1902), p. 287. Thomas was also sued by the owner of a valuable St. Bernard dog he ran over and killed on New York's Jerome Avenue. See *The Horseless Age*, 10:5 (July 30, 1902), p. 125.
65 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, p. 177.

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66 *The Evening World* (New York), May 29, 1902, p. 7.
67 *The Horseless Age*, 9:26 (June 25, 1902), p. 752.
68 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:6 (May 24, 1902), p. 247.
69 *The Evening World* (New York), Jan. 9, 1902, p. 1.
70 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:24 (Aug. 27, 1902), p. 1081.
71 *Motor World* (New York), 4:14 (July 3, 1902), p. 413.
72 *The Club Journal* (New York), Apr. 30, 1910, p. 22.
73 *The Horseless Age*, 5:1 (Oct. 4, 1899), p. 18.
74 *New York Times*, Jan. 25, 1903, p. 17.
75 *Chauffeur Chaff or Automobilia*, Charles Welsh, ed. (H.M. Caldwell Co.: Boston, 1905), p. 14.
76 *New York Times*, Dec. 14, 1904, p. 6; Feb. 27, 1905, p. 9; Mar. 1, 1905, p. 9.
77 Ibid., June 1, 1902, p. 2. On Scarritt, see ibid., June 20, 1903, p. 1.
78 Ibid., Feb. 8, 1905, p. 7. See the Wilson quote in ibid., Mar. 4, 1906, p. 12.

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3
Seizing the Open Road

Abstract: *Wealthy racers attempted to organize the sport around the road race. They were increasingly pushed onto enclosed tracks by the public backlash against their attempts to monopolize public roads for their amusements.*

Messer-Kruse, Timothy. *Tycoons, Scorchers, and Outlaws: The Class War That Shaped American Auto Racing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
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Before racing was organized, owners of fast cars simply raced on the streets. Commonwealth Avenue in Newton, Massachusetts, was one of the widest and best-paved streets in the region, a stretch of road that proved irresistible to automobile owners eager to test out their machines. "Newton's well kept streets offer a great temptation not only to 'scorchers' but to owners and operators of automobiles of every variety, and few who speed along the boulevard can refrain from 'letting go at full force.'" Scorchers had angered enough of Newton's residents and citizens' complaints prompted the local board of aldermen to establish a speed limit for automobiles of 10 mph and for Chief of Police Tarbox to swear to enforce it, serving a warrant on one speeder at his home.

In early June 1900, 50 automobilists gathered at the break of dawn on Commonwealth Avenue to witness "a spirited automobile race." Five racers competed along the entire length of the boulevard from Chestnut Hill to Norumbega Park and back, a total of 13 miles, which they covered in 22 minutes. "Nearly all those who took part were from Cambridge and Boston. Among the number were many Harvard men." The bandit race was over before the police were even aware it was happening.

Late in the evening of June 15, Chief Tarbox received a tip that the race was to be repeated early the next morning. Positioning a squad of ten officers a mile from the start line, Chief Tarbox switched his uniform for fine summer clothes in order to mingle with the racers' friends. When the cars roared off the hidden officers jumped out and flagged down the leaders, arresting Charles Boyden, a 20-year-old student, and Albert Champion, the French "motor expert" who gave his address as 19 Cottage St., Cambridge. Later that morning the judge fined them each five dollars with the warning that he would not be as lenient if they were brought in again. It was Boyden's second offence for breaking the local speed ordinance.[1]

While auto clubs didn't officially sponsor such outlaw street races, they came as close as they could without admitting they were racing. One of the most frequent club activities was to sponsor "runs" between various cities. Part parade and part race, these excursions could include a handful or dozens of club members. They were adventurous, not only because the roads were iffy and the weather fickle, but because run-ins with locals were common.

Such was the case when some of the top officers of the Automobile Club of America (ACA) embarked on a "run" to Morristown, New Jersey. After arriving at their destination, the men gathered at a local

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hotel for lunch; there they were confronted by the town constable. Three members, Cornelius J. Field, head of the club's "Technical Committee," C. G. Wridgeway, and W. S. Sterritt (*sic*—most likely president Scarritt), were arrested and taken before a magistrate for speeding, which they denied and the magistrate fined the trio ten dollars. As soon as the court proceedings were over, the club members roared away: "The automobilists let their machines out to their utmost limit on the long stretch of fine road from Morristown to Elizabeth, about seventeen miles. Field and Bostwick hugged each other tightly for first place, but Field won by 2 minutes, reaching Elizabeth in 27 minutes." Back at the clubhouse on Fifth Avenue the day's events "created no end of amusement among members of the club."[2]

Though the *New York Times* reported the arrest of the ACA leaders as a humorous lark, the events of that day were thought of much more seriously by the residents of Morristown. One Morristown automobilist who said he had carefully cultivated good relations with the townspeople by being overly careful with his machine complained to the *Horseless Age* that "in one day this Automobile Club of America (so called) has undone my work of over two years by causing six serious accidents in our vicinity and arousing public indignation to a high pitch. How many accidents were caused in this whole day's run we have yet to learn."[3]

Another run of the Automobile Club of America, from New York City north to Ardsley in Westchester county, "degenerated into a lively road race," as soon as the line of cars passed the New York city limits. "The temptation was too great to be resisted, and one having yielded, the majority followed example without restraint, and the rather discouraging spectacle was presented of nearly a score of members of the leading automobile club of America indulging in a prolonged speed contest, on the common road, under the very eyes of the authorities."[4] When some members of the ACA were too vocal in boasting to reporters that they were going to set a new record to Trenton, New Jersey, during a club run, the ACA was forced to formally announce that the run was not an official club activity but stopped short of threatening any of its own members with penalties if they participated.[5]

Not all ACA members thought racing should be the centerpiece of club activities. A more middle-class element thought the club should primarily concern itself with advocating for good roads, friendly legislation, and high standards for auto-related businesses. But such practical-minded

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interests were a distinct minority among the millionaire sports. Albert C. Bostwick, "the young millionaire racing man," led a victorious slate of society sportsmen. As one automobile journalist noted, "The election's result showed the sentiment of the club toward racing and automobile competitions, as Mr. Bostwick has been a pronounced supporter of these tests since the organization of the club."[6]

On April 14, 1900, the ACA sponsored its first race over a 25-mile stretch of macadam between Springfield and Babylon, Long Island. As the "scorcher evil" had not yet begun to be an issue, Albert C. Bostwick, chair of the "Tours and Runs Committee," was able to convince several town councils to give their permission for the race. Even still, the organizers feared that the locals would attempt to interfere with the race and took the precaution of having both police and volunteers patrol the route.[7]

Using rules drafted by the Automobile Club of France and a silver cup donated by M. Léon Blanchet, the Parisian club's founder, the race was intended to imitate the great road rallies of Europe. But this ambition was sacrificed to the club's desire for exclusivity as the organizers limited entries to the ACA.[8]

Only a small crowd of several hundred people gathered at the start across from the Palace Hotel to watch as a variety of steam, gas, and electric vehicles left in staggered starts, 30 seconds apart. Each driver had a square of leather fastened to his belt, on which was painted the number of the machine in the race. There was only one mishap: Langdon Barber, son of an asphalt baron, lost control and smashed into a tree, wrecking his car and leaving him "badly cut." The winner drove an electric vehicle that completed the 50-mile circuit in slightly more than two hours, beating the second place car, a steamer, by eighteen minutes and averaging about five miles an hour over the rural speed limit of 20 (Figure 3.1). It was not a very impressive performance, with one knowledgeable critic observing, "The time made was not at all remarkable as racing speeds go, since gasoline machines in France have been driven over half as fast again for double or treble the distance."[9]

Nevertheless, even though the race was mostly free of accidents and the racers showed little daring with their leisurely speeds, the race left an uproar of complaints in its wake. *The Horseless Age*, a booster of all things automotive, condemned road racing for running roughshod over the public's rights and feelings:

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FIGURE 3.1 *Finish line of the Long Island Road Race of 1900, near Springfield, Long Island*

> No person possessed of elementary knowledge, and a saving sense of propriety, will care to uphold racing upon the common roads, which from time immemorial have been the highways of the people, whereon all, without regard to rank, wealth, condition or color, are assumed to have equal rights. Excessive speeds upon the highways have been proved by long experience to be dangerous to the lives and property of all, and are consequently forbidden by law… the organized race (is not allowed)… for the reason that they would virtually exclude all other users from the privileges of the road, while they were in progress. All such contests must be confined to special tracks built for the purpose and maintained by private enterprise, where the public rights are not invaded.[10]

Other automotive trade magazines were alarmed by the appearance of road racing in America, fearing that it would only serve to fuel the opposition to the industry in general. *Motor World* editorialized against road racing and urged track racing as the best compromise:

> While the importation of high powered French racing cars is purely a question of price, the possibility of their use in America as in France is another and a much more serious question. Racing here there certainly will be, but

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> record breaking flights over public highways, wherein the lives and limbs not only of the flyers, but of citizens as well, are likely to be endangered, will not be allowed and should not be attempted. The best interests of all concerned demand right now a firm stand be taken against all racing which is not confined to its legitimate sphere—the track. Not to do this means the piling up of a vast amount of prejudice against the motor vehicle, soundly based upon no small amount of right.[11]

Critics also blasted the encouragement of speeding that such events fostered. "Since the road race to test the speed qualities of the several different types of automobile the Merrick road, which is one of the most frequented driveways along the south side, has been visited by auto drivers who have been recklessly indifferent to consequences when meeting a horse on the highway. An average speed of more than thirty miles an hour has been maintained with no slow down when meeting horses, no matter whether the latter were spirited or not or driven by men or women."[12]

Later that summer "Willie" K. Vanderbilt, tried to organize a road race in the millionaires' colony of Newport, Rhode Island. Initially Vanderbilt attempted to convince the town council to allow him and his tycoon friends to turn Ocean boulevard into a raceway for an afternoon. Skeptical of this poster boy for scorching, and perhaps aware of the rash of complaints after the earlier Long Island race, the council refused to go along and Vanderbilt moved his race to nearby Aquidneck Park, a horse track.

Compared with the few hundred spectators who gathered for the Long Island races the few thousand who crowded the Aquidneck grandstand and hung on the track rails proved to be an impressive showing that would attract many imitators later that year. But the crowd was unique in being primarily composed of the island's elite. Like most society events, the races themselves were just an occasion for the high and mighty to dress up, gather, and be seen. Greater interest was shown in the "fine gowns of the fashionable" that "got a trifle seedy" as the dust was kicked up by the passing machines, than in the races themselves that were described as "really a failure." Vanderbilt in his high-powered Mercedes faced little real competition as he carried away most of the handsome silver cups he had donated as prizes before retiring to a nearby estate for a running of the hounds.[13]

The Aquidneck races were copied up and down the east coast that summer as auto clubs struck deals with state fairs to conduct races on their

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fairground horse tracks. The ACA sponsored two races in New Jersey, one at the Tri-State Fair in Guttenberg and another at the Interstate Fair at Trenton. Like all the previous races that summer, the competition was secondary to the social occasion. One auto magazine reported that "one of the millionaire racing men appeared clad in silk—mind you silk overalls."[14]

The racing itself was lackluster because the cautious clubmen cut power on the curves and only laid on the gas for a portion of the straights. Track racing was fine as an exhibition of their novel machines, but for speed these sports yearned for the straight, uncrowded road. "After the races at Guttenburg I asked one of the competitors how he found track racing compared with his speed work on the far famed roads of France," wrote a reporter for an auto magazine, "The gentleman wasn't long in letting me know that so far as he was concerned there simply wasn't any comparison between driving an enormously high powered car around a track and doing the same thing on the road. The latter was exhilarating; the former simply a sure producer of heart disease."[15]

Charles Jarrott, one of the few racers from that era who documented his experiences in a memoir, recounted how all his colleagues preferred the road race to the track. The open road had an almost mystical allure to them. "And then beyond all—the road: the space of a continent to be traversed, hundreds and hundreds of miles of road, varying in grade, in character, in scenery, and in every other kaleidoscopic feature which makes the road the Mecca of every true automobilist." Jarrott believed that only the road race truly tested the mettle of the driver:

> Here is your opportunity to prove your worth, to prove your superiority over your competitors; this is no circular course on which you can practice and study every little curve and corner months before the race. The long winding road stretches out before you, reaching from the capital of one great country to the centre of another… Hundreds of miles of straight road, narrow road… The unknown presents itself at every yard, and your neck and the safety of your car depends on the soundness of your judgement. Are you better in dealing with these ever-recurring problems of driving than the man immediately in front of you, or the man just behind you?[16]

Jarrott was certainly expressing the common opinion of tycoon racers like Vanderbilt, Keene, Bostwick, and Harkness when he dismissed the track race as nothing more than the "dreary monotony of grinding out a certain distance over the same road again and again" that "destroys the charm" of the sport. Tycoons yearned for the road, and did not enjoy

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chasing their tails in circles around little dirt tracks. A contemporary magazine feature writer who covered early racing found the same attitude, "The racers are one in saying that road-racing is the highest expression of the automobile."[17]

There are a number of possible reasons beyond Jarrott's fundamentally aesthetic concerns why the moneyed and privileged preferred to race on the open road. For one, in these early years the roadway was perceived to be safer than the enclosed track. On the highway all the risk seemed to be borne by those in the way of the speedster. Whether chickens or children, experience had proven that though running over things might be costly in lawsuits and settlements, such sums could always be paid in cash, whereas a flipped car on the track could take a driver's life. Track races were also uncomfortable, primarily due to the clouds of dust and incessant noise, whereas the best vantage points for road races were only periodically punctuated by the roar of a car and a spurt of dust, leaving plenty of time in between for proper socializing.

Track races were hidden away, almost guiltily, a spectacle limited to only the select few. Not that tycoons had any qualms about exclusivity, indeed their whole social world was built upon that principle, and part of the thrill of the road race was the momentary possession of the very thing the tycoons could not own—the public property of the common road. Indeed, this particular satisfaction was multiplied by the numbers of people who could line the roads and witness the glory and the power of the men who temporarily monopolized them.[18]

Early observers of the sport of racing didn't have to look very deeply to spy a certain exhibitionist streak among automobile racers. All could remember that the predecessor to the first road races were the society automobile parades, some like those in Newport that included the lavish float-like decoration of the cars. One of the auto clubs' favorite activities was the group "run," practically a moving parade of automobiles that was guaranteed to interrupt business and cause people to stand and gawk wherever the line rolled. The editor of *The Horseless Age* plumbed the motives of these men who craved speed and concluded, "The automobile scorcher, the chauffard, as they call him in France . . . is essentially a player to the gallery; he is found wherever the crowds are."[19]

But perhaps another reason tycoons preferred road racing was so obvious it went unremarked upon—millionaires competed to possess the fastest car, not to be the fastest driver. To own the fastest, most powerful racer was as clear a mark of social distinction in their world as owning

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a champion thoroughbred horse. The thrill was in the act of acquisition and the honor was in having the knowledge, the technical savvy, and the wherewithal to purchase the best machine. While the fine lines, the craftsmanship, even the impressive size of the engine could be appreciated in the garage, only speeding on the straight open road, they thought, allowed a racing car's essence, its true character, to be fully realized.[20]

But the lesson of that summer was that even a tame road race provoked shrill opposition. After the Long Island race it was observed that "the communities through which the puffing, noisy little vehicles pass rise up in hot indignation against what is termed the danger to human life and live stock." Though critics laid the blame for subsequent speeding on race organizers, the root of the public's intense hostility to road racing lay deeper, in the elitist character of the sport. Certainly farmers and others still employing horse and buggy technology had legitimate fears of the effect of the appearance of the smoking, loud, and perhaps relatively fast auto on an already unpredictable and powerful animal. But these fears were multiplied and compounded by the resentment of the playboys and tycoons who drove them. While ordinary citizens understood they could not bar these horseless carriages from the public roadway, by the same principle they refused to be barred themselves, even for a single day, so the millionaires could have their fun. To many regular folks, a road race represented the worst excesses of wealth and power because it ceded to the rich the exclusive use of the public roadway.[21]

Unlike most other things that stood in the way of their desires the millionaires could not simply purchase the roads for themselves. Rather, they had to appeal to government authorities for permission to borrow them, which meant excluding all others from them for a period of time. And these governmental bodies were accountable to the people who used and in some cases built those roads. This brewing clash had all the makings of an intractable class conflict—barons wanting to monopolize and engross the people's commons.

Even the tycoons' erstwhile allies, the main automobile journals, editorialized against road racing: "The road race is objectionable from different viewpoints, but chiefly because it stirs up opposition among other road users, not specifically against such races, but against the automobile generally. The races should therefore be relegated to suitable tracks." Track races, one editor conceded, were far less effective than road races for stimulating the improvement of automotive technology, but they did have one redeeming quality—they did provide for some auto sales by

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stimulating "interest in automobiles among the moneyed classes attending such races."[22]

Class opposition to road racing seriously derailed the ACA's racing plans for the next season. In May of 1901, the ACA announced it was organizing a grand annual road race it called the "Automobile Club of America Sweepstakes." (The ACA was politic in waiting until after passage of favorable auto legislation in order not to stir up the anti-racing opposition.) Intended to be an international competition, the purse was set at the astonishing amount of $5,000, with 80 percent going to the winner. The first race was to be the Buffalo to Erie run in September followed by a one-mile competition, location to be determined.[23] However, in late August the ACA announced it was cancelling the race because it could not secure permits from all the communities it was scheduled to run through. This in spite of the cooperation and endorsement of the then ongoing Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. *The Horseless Age*, never a supporter of the idea in the first place, concluded drily, "One conclusion it is safe to draw from the failure to secure the necessary permits… That the authorities and the public in the United States are not particularly friendly toward automobile road racing."[24]

Vanderbilt too redoubled his efforts to stage a road race and announced plans for a larger race event. An impressive $10,000 in silver prize cups were pledged by Vanderbilt, Colonel Astor, H. O. Havemeyer, and Mrs. John R. Drexel. Vanderbilt and his friends formed an organization, the "National Automobile Racing Association," to lend an official cover for what was essentially him and his club buddies drag racing on a public street; they again applied for permission to race on Ocean avenue. Appearing personally with his lawyers before the town council, Vanderbilt described the race course that would start in front of Stuyvesant Fish's villa, "Crossways," and run straight for a three-mile stretch. Vanderbilt reassured the town fathers that there should be no concern for safety as he pledged to use his own funds to hire 30–40 special police to patrol the route. After much debate the council narrowly approved setting aside the road for the race by a vote of 3 to 2.[25]

Newport's high society split along pro and anti-racing factions, both eventually sending teams of lawyers to circuit court to argue for an injunction to block the proposed contest. The anti-racing group, led by famed scientist Louis Agassiz, argued that there was no statutory basis for allowing the council to cede a public road to a private party and succeeded in getting Rhode Island attorney general Tanner to issue an

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opinion that the council resolution setting aside Ocean avenue for racing was illegal and unconstitutional. With the attorney general's opinion in hand the opposition forces asked a local judge to issue an injunction against the race.[26]

Vanderbilt, now feeling the sand slipping between his feet, backtracked and tried to stand on arcane legal technicalities. He claimed that the town council had not voted to actually close Ocean avenue, just expand its use, which would mean that state courts did not have jurisdiction to second guess the matter. The local judge apparently bought this argument and refused to take the matter up.

Unable to enlist a local judge to issue an injunction to stop the race, opponents pressured the town's police commissioners to undermine the town council by voting to instruct the police to apprehend any vehicles exceeding the lawful speed limit. In effect the town of Newport had given Vanderbilt a permit to race on Ocean avenue but only if the competitors respected the local limit of ten miles per hour. Even this was not enough to deter Vanderbilt and his millionaire friends who were prepared to run their races and pay their tickets afterward. After the police commissioners threatened speeders with arrest, Vanderbilt went ahead with planning for the race and even issued a press release with details of the pairings and heats.[27]

With less than a week to go before race day, the Supreme Court of Rhode Island ruled that it was illegal for the Newport town council to cede a public road to a private party for such a purpose. In the end, even Vanderbilt's millions couldn't overcome the opposition and the race was moved to nearby Aquidneck Park for a second year.[28]

In the days leading up to the race Vanderbilt and other prominent racers who had just argued that holding a race in the area would not, as their opponents claimed, encourage a rash of speeding, were arrested and fined for speeding. Both Willie K. Vanderbilt and his brother Reginald paid $10 fines as did Vanderbilt's millionaire friend Foxhall Keene.[29]

Race day was an exclusive event, intended for "society" only. The pre-race luncheon was hosted by Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt who had her staff set up ten large tables in the pavilion at Southwick's Grove that was "decorated with hundreds of palms and with golden rod in panels and garlands."[30] *The Evening World* described the race in its headline as "The Millionaires' Auto Race at Newport: Season's Biggest Society Event." The *World* reporter observed, "All the millionaires at Newport, and they are numerous, are driving to Aquidneck Park in all kinds of traps. Every

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four-in-hand was out." Among the dignitaries present was the governor of Maryland, Chauncey Depew, and the Chinese and British ambassadors who had summered at Newport.[31]

As for the races themselves, those most knowledgeable about the sport were critical. *Motor World*, one of the most astute journals when it came to racing, wrote, "Newport's motor races degenerate into a ploughing match around a half-mile circle of dirt bearing the dignified title of Aquidneck Park." Nonetheless, the competition was keener than the previous year. David Wolfe Bishop showed off the new racer he had imported from France, which had finished third in the famed Paris to Berlin race. Vanderbilt brought out his new Mercedes, dubbed "The White Ghost," and though he won every heat, doing his best mile in 1:28, Vanderbilt was unsatisfied as the small track prevented him from throttling up to his car's full speed.[32]

Frustrated at their inability to truly test the limits of their autos, Vanderbilt and Keene simply organized their own outlaw race on the roads near Westbury, Long Island. Vanderbilt and his servants timed Keene's attempt to break the 60-second barrier for a mile with a flying start and then Keene and his men did the same for Vanderbilt. Both tycoons later boasted to the New York papers, always eager for stories about these two, that they had broken the minute mile, though their illegal race would not be recorded in the official ACA record books.

Vanderbilt and his ilk knew that there was one option for road racing that remained open to them but which they hadn't yet embraced. While public officials stood in the way of their seizing the public roads for their races, they didn't control private ones. If the tycoons wanted to race on the road, they could just build their own road. After the Newport races, newspapers began reporting that a syndicate of "the young millionaires at Newport" led by Vanderbilt were quietly scouting for an estate of suitable size to accommodate a private racing road. Some reports claimed this private racing road was to be built in Rhode Island, and others located its future site in Connecticut or New York. Various newspapers thought the road would be banked at the turns, others that it was going to have a practical aspect, connecting various branches of the society "colonies" on Long Island. Reports of its length varied from two to seven and even twenty-three miles. Ultimately the "young millionaires" did nothing more than incorporate a paper company to hold the property, undoubtedly daunted once their consultants tallied up the price tag.[33]

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The truth was that Vanderbilt had not quite yet given up the idea of holding races on the public roads. He still dreamed of bringing to America the sort of long road races he had seen in France. He wouldn't again turn to the drastic option of building his own road until he had succeeded in organizing his famed Vanderbilt Cup race in 1904 and a growing record of deaths and injuries forced its demise after just three seasons. Vanderbilt's Long Island Parkway, so often credited as a visionary project, was really a reluctant and late capitulation to a wave of public criticism that could no longer be ignored.[34]

In quest of such open road speed Vanderbilt had to return to Europe where such point-to-point races were popular. In 1902 Vanderbilt competed in a time trial at Achères, France, and set the world's record for a gasoline car at 65 and 7/10ths of a mile per hour.[35]

Yet track racing was clearly unsatisfying even to its champions. Albert C. Bostwick's comments after lowering his mile record at the Elkwood Park track indicated a certain yearning for the open road: "Well, it was a pretty lively pace for an automobile, I can tell you, and unless a fellow has a good deal of the daredevil in him it is anything but a comfortable feeling sitting in a car and flying around a racecourse at that gait. It nearly took my breath away, and at every curve in the track I felt that my car would run straight away and not make the turn . . . It would be different if the track were straightaway." Speaking to a reporter, Foxhall Keene echoed Bostwick's sentiments: "Well, automobiling is a great sport . . . but when all is said and done there is nothing like racing and cross-country riding to send the blood surging through your veins."[36]

There would be only one other opportunity that year for tycoons to show off the true speed of their prize possessions. The Long Island Auto Club, seeing the immense difficulty other clubs had had in attempting to get permission from numerous villages and jurisdictions near the racing routes surveyed along the invitingly open countryside, quietly solicited Brooklyn's officials for permission to use a three-mile stretch of Coney Island boulevard. The boulevard was neither long enough nor wide enough for head-to-head racing, but it was a serviceable straightaway for time trials.

Being a major event, the racing was delayed by the need of the clubmen to hold a mass automobile parade from Park Plaza, though Prospect Park, down Coney Island boulevard, and back. One hundred autos proudly paraded in line until one burst into flame when a gas line broke and dripped under the engine pan. The occupants scurried to safety and

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the flames were quickly extinguished and all was fine until a horse was frightened and bolted, knocking down Mrs. H. S. Steinburger of Flatbush and breaking her leg.

With teams of specialists from the signal corps linked by telephone and a plethora of officials from the ACA in attendance, any records that were to fall were guaranteed to land in the official books. Though Vanderbilt failed to make an appearance, the usual stable of millionaire racers, Keene, Bostwick, Percy Owen, and others, attended as did the French champion Henri Fournier. Though the signalmen never quite got their equipment to work reliably, they did record three racers breaking the 60-second barrier, Fournier, Bostwick, and Keene becoming the first racers on American soil to go so fast, save for Charlie Murphy who did it on his bicycle drafting behind a locomotive in 1898.[37]

In spite of the apparent success of the Brooklyn time trials, news of the event provoked public anger. Within days of the races, the city commissioners announced they would not grant permission to turn over a city street for such purposes again. The Long Island auto club appointed a committee to scout for another site, though they failed to locate a community willing to host them.[38]

The best they could do was win the blessing of a dozen villages and towns for a spring 1902 "endurance contest" over a 100-mile course over many of the same roads that would later serve for the Vanderbilt Cup. Billed as an exhibition of both mechanical advancement and civic responsibility, the rules required all contestants to respect the speed limit of 15 miles an hour. Few knowledgeable observers thought this was likely. "A dozen French machines have been entered, mostly by amateur owners, and it is considered probable that these will likely allow their sporting propensities to get the better of their deference to the conditions imposed by the club, and will seek the personal gratification of covering the distance in the shortest time possible rather than the distinction of a blue ribbon which to them can be of no financial significance."[39] The first car finished officially in well under three hours, and of the 31 cars that completed the circuit, 14 were disqualified for speeding.[40]

Meanwhile the greater clout of the ACA prevailed and over the winter off-season, the club obtained permission from Staten Island to use a freshly macadamized stretch of South Shore Boulevard on Staten Island for more open road speed trials. As happened earlier that fall at the Coney Island boulevard races, throngs of spectators crowded both sides of the wide street. Police stretched ropes to keep the crowds from

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elbowing into the street but they were trespassed and forgotten as soon as the first heat of cars flew past.

The day was already history-making when tragedy struck. Percy Owen set a new gas-powered American speed record for the mile. Excitement built as the most anticipated machine readied for its run. Specially made by the Baker Motor Vehicle Company of Cleveland for this event, at 3,000 pounds it dwarfed the other cars. Unlike the others that had the appearance of buggies, the Baker Electric was torpedo shaped and fully enclosed with only a six-by-two inch mica peephole allowing its driver a view ahead. Reporters gawked at the "freak" machine, which one thought "looked like an inverted canoe" and nicknamed it "the Demon."

" 'Here she comes!' yelled someone in the crowd," one reporter wrote. "There was a cloud of dust in the distance, and a long black cigar-shaped object in a whirl of dust shot down the road. It was like a torpedo striking the water on leaving the tube of a battleship." The Baker Electric crushed the record for its first kilometer, covering the distance in 35 seconds or more than 63 mph. At full speed it then hit the trolley tracks that intersected the boulevard.

Race organizers had buried the tracks under a mound of dirt but after a few heats the dirt had worn down and the rails could be seen glistening menacingly. Right at this spot the crowd was the thickest as it was entertaining to watch cars "taking the hurdles" as "the giant vehicles would take little jumps in the air, jolting the low-bent racing men with their funny, vizors-covered faces and great goggles." The Demon struck those trolley tracks, leaped in the air, and spun through a wide circle into the thickest part of the crowd, throwing people into the air and tearing out several small trees. Andrew Fetherston, the assessor of taxes of the town of New Brighton, lay dead near the wreckage, his legs mangled and his ribs crushed. Pinned near him was a cop, Captain Thomas H. Taylor, and a mortally wounded 68-year-old, John G. Bogart. Police officers lifted the "demon" off Taylor and Bogart so they could be taken off in litters to the Smith Infirmary. The Demon's driver, W. C. Baker, and his "electrician," C. E. Denzer, unstrapped themselves from the wreck and hurried off to their hotel to dress the burns they suffered when sulfuric acid sprayed out from ruptured batteries.[41]

While the rescue was in progress a large stagecoach with a jolly ragtime band drove up, oblivious to the accident. Policemen rushed up and yelled for quiet and waved their clubs when the musicians were slow to

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end their tune. The "demon" was towed to a local firehouse where crowds gathered to gawk and strip it of souvenirs.

Andrew Fetherston was the first person to die in an American auto race. Unfortunately for Baker and Denzer, a local district attorney was among the crowd that scattered when the car skidded into them. He later told reporters, "I have never seen anything like it in my life. To see some of the other autos coming along was a sight, but that freak of a thing—well, it only lacked a devil sitting upon it with his forked tail sticking up." The D.A. charged Baker and Denzer with homicide, though the charge didn't stick and a coroner's jury released them after ruling the tragedy an act of God.

Though not criminally liable, the pioneer racers provoked a visceral reaction against such contests of speed. *The New York Times* editorialized, "A 3,000-pound automobile capable of running one mile in 50 seconds . . . is as much out of place in a road race or anywhere on the public highway as a Gatling gun introduced into a hotel for the purpose of killing cockroaches . . . The Automobile Club of America should hold a solemn meeting, tear up its constitution, burn its by-laws, and disband."[42]

The Board of Aldermen of New York City took up a new speed ordinance while Borough of Manhattan president Cantor introduced a measure to ban all specialized racing machines from the city.[43]

Bowing to such pressure, the ACA board of governors held a special meeting and issued a resolution they would later quickly forget:

> Whereas, the Automobile Club of America deeply regrets and deplores the terrible accident which occurred during the holding of the record trials by this club on Staten Island, on May 31 last, . . . Resolved, That, although similar trials have been held throughout the world without serious accident, yet the accident upon Saturday, notwithstanding every safeguard that precaution could suggest was adopted, has convinced the governors of the club that it is unwise to hold speed trials with automobiles on the public highways, and that the governors of this club will not hold or consent to the holding of such contests by the club.[44]

Some members of the ACA board pressed to have track racing specifically included in this resolution, thus divorcing the ACA completely from all speed contests. But the majority wished to preserve this option and the resolution was watered down.

The American Automobile Association (AAA), which had assumed the right to sanction races itself, and was largely controlled by the leaders of the ACA, debated the issue and agreed to remain silent. Instead

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it merely passed a resolution empowering race officials to exclude any vehicle that they felt was unsafe.[45]

The Horseless Age praised the ACA's ban on racing but thought it didn't go far enough. "If they will now suspend, or expel if necessary, their wealthy members who habitually commit the most flagrant offenses against the anti-speed law and devote their efforts to the promotion of the practical automobile, they may repair the damage they have done and regain the public confidence they have lost."[46] Apparently the ACA board of governors took this advice to heart because two weeks later it was reported that steel tycoon Charles M. Schwab had resigned from the club after he was privately admonished for "his well advertised speed excesses."[47]

Public condemnation of the Staten Island races was so loud and impassioned that many observers thought the tragedy might spell the end of motor racing once and for all. *The Horseless Age*, long a critic of racing, warned that racing was putting the entire automobile industry "in dire peril" because "the temper of the American people will not stand much more of this senseless aggression on the part of automobiles." It urged all those interested in the industry to begin "crushing at once the high speed craze." Even *Automobile Topics*, as boosteristic a speed magazine as existed at the time, thundered, "Short-distance automobile racing is a vain and empty sport which can easily be spared."[48]

As a practical measure, *Automobile Topics* urged the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers to bar its members from participation in speed contests. Racing was just a pastime of the "excitement craving gentry" and had "absolutely nothing to do with progress in the construction of practically useful automobiles." At the time this was written, the summer of 1902, the editor could justify his proposal to the NAAM by observing that "so far as we know there is not a member of the N.A.A.M. whose reputation as a manufacturer rests upon racing exploits."[49] The NAAM apparently had no interest in taking this drastic step, perhaps because at least one of its auto manufacturers, Alexander Winton, was just then laying plans to establish his business through racing.

In the wake of the Staten Island tragedy, the fledgling American Automobile Association denied an application for sanction to hold a race at the Brighton Beach track on June 21 and for the first time warned that anyone who participated in the race would be banned from all AAA races.[50] But within a couple weeks they had relented and the Long Island

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auto club was allowed to go forward with its plans. Immediately, not to be outdone, the Rhode Island club announced plans to hold more races in the fall at Narragansett Park.[51] Apparently the first spilling of blood did not dampen the enthusiasm of elite motorists for racing. Indeed, their problem was that in the wake of such incidents it was increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to gain the needed permits from local authorities to hold open road races. "In the present temper of the American public toward the high speed automobile it is extremely doubtful whether any officials could be found here who would be willing to incur the displeasure of their constituents by sanctioning a race of this kind."[52]

It was at this juncture, when the hostility of the public to road racing seemed insurmountable, that clubmen were forced to search far afield to find a stretch of road to speed along. Boston clubman J. F. Hathaway, who routinely wintered in Florida, thought he had the solution. Hathaway had observed that the stretch of beach between Daytona and Ormond was as hard packed as clay and flatter than most roads. Backed by some eager local boosters, the destination quickly captured the imaginations of tycoon scorchers. A letter writer to the *Horseless Age* reported breathlessly, "The sand is nearly as hard as asphalt and very smooth. There are no stones whatever. The beach is so wide and smooth that it does not require much nerve to run your machine to the limit. Imagine a boulevard 500 feet wide, dead level for 30 miles, smooth as a floor."[53]

The location was ideal, not only because the wide beach was perfect for the sorts of full throttle straight-ahead contests the clubmen craved, but also because the area was already developing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate elite tastes and comforts. Florida real estate developer Henry M. Flagler had already built up his Ormond Hotel into a resort destination and railroads offered direct connections to New York City. The "hotels and cottages of beautiful tree-embowered Daytona" were not far away. The wealthiest tycoons could even sail their yachts from their berths at Newport, Boston, and Long Island directly to the area.[54]

The first race held in late March 1903, did not attract as many of the millionaire sports as organizers had hoped, though enough descended on the little town of Ormond to establish it as a fashionable destination for years to come. The races were not terribly competitive but "bluff and beach were thronged with the summer-garbed crowds of fashionable men and women, who make up most of the winter population." More importantly, the boasts about the smoothness and speed of the beach

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were confirmed. Alexander Winton lowered the world's records for the kilometer and the mile.[55]

This pioneering effort was all the more important as the subsequent racing season of 1903 did nothing to soothe the public's anger against rich scorchers or their racing hobby. Several events that spring confirmed the claims of racing critics—that road racing was inherently dangerous and undemocratic.

First came news of the tragic death of New York automobilist William Morris Elliott Zborowski, who lost his life while competing in a hill climb race on a mountain between Nice and La Turbie, France. Knowing the riskiness of his preferred sport, the day before his ill-fated hill-climb, Zborowski wrote up his will leaving his entire $2.6 million estate to his wife and son. (Zborowski was descended on his mother's side from New York founding father Gouverneur Morris and on his father's side from Polish royalty. For his part, Zborowski had the good sense to marry an Astor.) He was a well-known society sport, having been a famed polo player and steeplechaser. Zborowski's death provided another occasion for the *Horseless Age* to denounce the sport of racing. "The growing danger of personal accident in these races makes them more of a menace to the industry than a benefit. Are such events as the Staten Island races and the recent La Turbie races calculated to stimulate the interest of prospective purchasers and to create a friendly feeling on the part of the public and of legislators? Certainly not. They can only strengthen the public conception of the automobile as a dangerous vehicle—a toy of the rich—and result in nothing but harm to the industry."[56]

Then in May of 1903, the transatlantic cables brought news of the carnage that accompanied the Paris to Madrid race. The *New York Tribune*'s headline was typical, "Automobiles Spread Death."[57]

The race was ill-fated from the very start. As was common in the early years of road racing, the cars were started in turn a minute apart, with the first car, driven by Charles Jarrott, sent off at 3:45 a.m. Before the last contestant had cranked up his engine, the telegraph wires had brought the news of multiple accidents along the first stretch. At least six dead, including a soldier, several riding mechanics, a bicyclist, a peasant woman, and Marcel Renault, champion of the previous year's Paris to Vienna race, along with dozens of men, women, and children grievously wounded and maimed. A regiment of soldiers and the full force of gendarmes had proven a feeble barrier to the tens of thousands of spectators who pressed against the roads, the fools on bicycles and

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private cars that occasionally wheeled out onto the course, and the heavy racers whose average speeds over the previous two years of open road racing had nearly doubled to the around 65 miles per hour.

"Willie" Vanderbilt lined up for the great Paris to Madrid race but broke down within sight of the start, a stroke of luck that may have saved him in what proved to be the bloodiest automobile race in history up to that point. A reporter for an English paper happened to spy Willie K. Vanderbilt Jr., who, along with Foxhall Keene and other clubmen, had gone to Europe where road racing was celebrated and encouraged, emerge from a ditch. "Walking away therefrom was a being with part of a cap over one ear and part of a pair of goggles over the other, plastered with mud and oil, in the rags and tatters of what had once been a suit of clothes. It opened its mouth and said in a voice choked with tears, and in the American language: 'I don't mind breaking down again: but it makes me so very angry.' "[58]

For many the carnage on the French roads had proven that road racing was untenable. "The annual saturnalia on wheels has gone, never I hope, to return. It has died hard, and claimed its victims wholesale in dying. It was a species of mid-summer madness which should never have been allowed to reach the stage it did . . . Anyone . . . must have perceived long ago the drift of these insane speed trials . . . " This editor simply concluded, "To call road racing sport is to libel sport. It is sheer madness, and there's the end of it."[59]

While newspapers and even automobile magazines joined in a chorus of condemnation of road racing, the leaders of the Automobile Club of America was quietly at work in Albany revising the legal code to take away the ability of local governments to stand in the way of their racing plans. Earlier that spring public demands for stricter penalties for scorchers prompted yet another batch of reform bills and the renewed attention of both the ACA lobbyists and Long Island community activists. Buried deep within the "Bailey bill" that was signed by the governor in late May 1903 was a provision that seemed to empower county governments to restrict or permit speed contests as they deemed fit. But legally, this provision took away the ability of local governments to regulate racing. Even the editor of the *Automobile Topics* who had been covering news of the speed reform movement misunderstood what the Bailey bill did. Even as this journalist denounced the bill, he did so on grounds that were exactly opposite the bill's effect. "The Bailey bill, with all its faults, contains nothing so pernicious as the clause which makes road racing

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a matter of local option." Road racing had been a matter of local option prior to the Bailey bill, and that is why no road races had been held since the ill-fated Staten Island time trials. The Bailey bill actually took away the power of local governments to permit or prohibit racing and vested it in the hands of county officials.[60]

With the passage of the Bailey bill, Vanderbilt and other tycoon racers redoubled their efforts to inaugurate a major road race in America that would rival the great rallies of Europe. In the summer of 1903, a group of tycoons laid plans to organize a race over 50 miles of roads near the wealthy summer resort of Saratoga, New York. Vanderbilt, Foxhall Keene, E. R. Thomas, Charles Gates, Harry Payne Whitney, Jesse Lewisohn, W. H. Barker, William Fleischmann, and Albert C. Bostwick were reported to be cooperating with the automobile club of Syracuse to lay out a course of 40–50 miles and to plan a race with a $10,000 trophy. "The cost of the feature [trophy] will be defrayed in part by those interested in racing here, and in part by the participants, most of whom . . . will be men of great wealth."[61] Whether due to local opposition or a lack of time remaining in the season, the plan never got off the ground.

Unable that racing season to dragoon a long stretch of road to prove the top speed of their possessions, the tycoons settled for seizing smaller runs that had punishing grades. As these "hill climbs" passed the way of the dinosaur after racing's first decade they were looked back upon as something of a quant novelty and not recognized for the keen sport they were considered at the time. For just as the purpose of the road race was to test who owned the fastest car, the hill climb tested who owned the most powerful one. Such was the importance of this question to the millionaires at the time that a hill climb was one of the few events that "Willlie" Vanderbilt took part in during 1903.[62]

Having gone an entire racing season without a single road race, this time many of the best-known tycoon scorchers announced their intention to race in Florida. In January of 1904, the hopes of Daytona's boosters were realized as the beaches of Ormond filled with "well-to-do automobilists and fashionable folk." In preparation for the influx of millionaire automobilists, the city of Daytona passed its first ordinance limiting the speed of automobiles, setting the limit at ten mph and the fine at $50.[63]

Most notable was the appearance of "Willie" Vanderbilt who seemed very comfortable in Daytona. "He has seemed to realize that down here he is among those who know the game and are enthusiasts in it like

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himself and not among silly sensation seekers, nor open to the annoyance of impertinent askers of foolish questions." Vanderbilt carried away most of the victories, including the championship 50-mile race.[64]

Flush from his triumph, Vanderbilt returned to New York determined to take control and refashion racing in America. On the same afternoon Vanderbilt was elected to the AAA racing board and he announced his intention to hold the first true international automobile road race in America, a competition that would elevate the sport and put it on par with the grand prixes of Europe. In fact, some observers intimated that the one was a quid pro quo for the other: "This offer by Mr. Vanderbilt was made after a formal proposition had been made to him to become a member of the racing board and he had accepted." Vanderbilt's suggestion to frame separate rules for road racing from track racing were accepted.[65]

Pledging a $5,000 purse, a 25-pound solid-silver trophy humbly adorned with a frieze of himself driving his Ormond Flier to a world's record, and all the political clout he could muster to allow such a spectacle on public roads, Vanderbilt set about to break the political log-jam that had stymied the growth of road racing in America. His determination to establish road racing as the pinnacle of American motor sports was evident in the deed of gift he drafted for his expensive and hefty Vanderbilt Cup, one clause of which read, "Under no circumstances may the race be held on a horse or bicycle track."[66]

Vanderbilt, anticipating the challenges he would face in organizing his dream road race, had the year before stood for election to the AAA Contest Board, the controlling power behind American racing. He quickly assumed its reigns, one observer noting that "when Mr. Vanderbilt takes snuff, the racing board sneezes." In short order Vanderbilt obtained permission from Nassau County for his international race.[67]

Willie's plans for the Vanderbilt Cup race in 1904 were audacious given the vocal and organized opposition that had grown up throughout the area against open road racing. It was to be a ten-lap 284-mile race over public roads. And most importantly it was to be the first truly international race in America, one that would set American automakers against their European counterparts at the very edge of the possible. Vanderbilt recognized the technological superiority of European automobiles and later claimed that he inaugurated his grand race because he "felt the United States was far behind other nations in the automotive industry,

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and I wanted the country to catch up. I wanted to bring foreign drivers and their cars over here in the hope that America would wake up."[68]

Opposition to the race, already fed by smoldering resentments against the haughty millionaire drivers, flared when signs were posted along the race route warning locals to stay off the roads and pen up their livestock on race day. Race day Saturday was also a big market day for truck farmers who now realized they would not be able to move their goods to Brooklyn. Even the usually staid *New York Times* sympathized with the common man, editorializing that the race had "clearly infringe[d] the public right for a few rich men and their servants" and characterized it as "a terror and a juggernaut, like that which led the nobility and privileged classes into the excesses which precipitated the French revolution."[69]

Vanderbilt, having fought battles on Long Island before and lost to popular opinion, did his best to divide the opposition by hiring many locals as "race marshals" and "deputies" at the extravagant rate of three dollars per day. When asked if he thought the race might be stopped by its vocal opponents, Vanderbilt replied, "We have the signatures of over 500 property owners and citizens of Nassau county approving if the act of the supervisors in giving us the use of the road, and I think that will prevent the opposition from carrying its point."

The AAA attempted to portray itself as an advocate of law-abiding behavior by announcing that it would disqualify any contestant caught speeding before the race. But such threats proved empty when practice runs were routinely made at full speed. A reporter for *Motor Age* surveying the cup route even happened to spy "Willie K." flying across the course at a speed the reporter estimated could not have been less than a mile a minute. Vanderbilt was driving his latest 104 horsepower Mercedes, retrieved from the customs house just the day before.[70]

The day before the race AAA president Scarritt took a phone call from a Long Islander reporting an infraction of this rule and was overheard to exclaim, "Now look here. The race is in the morning and if you had a fast car you would want to go fast, too. Just be charitable for this once, and remember that these men are anxious to do well." Likewise, Vanderbilt's promise as leader of the AAA racing board to cancel the race if practice speeding caused any casualties proved empty when a week before the race Joseph Tracy's little Pope-Toledo swerved off the road at a high rate of speed, ejecting its mechanic Harold Rigby "like a cannonball" and killing him instantly.[71]

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At the official weigh-in on Friday, all cars and drivers passed under the limit of 2,204 pounds for the car and over 132 pounds for the driver except for Frank Croker, son of Tammany Boss Richard Croker, who ordered his mechanics to bore holes through the machine's frame to reach the limit. Several other drivers predicted that Croker's car would simply split apart from the first good jolt at speed. Once approved cars were rolled into garages whose doors were sealed until race day.[72]

Willie Vanderbilt missed seeing the drivers take their last practice laps because he spent the day in a Brooklyn courtroom, listening as his lawyers argued before Judge Wilmot Smith why the People's Protective Association (PPA) should not be granted an injunction against the race. It is undocumented what Willie's reaction was when the PPA's lawyers declared that it was unconstitutional to deny the use of the public roads to citizens just to gratify the whims of "purely pleasure seekers, who sought to do a thing merely to gratify an aristocratic taste."[73]

Well before dawn carloads of men "in long fur overcoats, swallowtails and smart riding boots" and women in "well tailored morning gowns" began to arrive at the start line near the old Quaker church at Woodbury. Many women, inappropriately dressed against the chill October air, complained and their companions tore planks from the grandstand to start improvised fires. Chauffeurs and butlers were sent scurrying in search of hot coffee, which they brought from back in large dented pots whose prior use no one questioned. Local farmers not accustomed to being ordered around didn't understand how they were supposed to cater to these fine people's every whim. When Pierre Lorillard and his two female companions thought it would be smart of them to take a shortcut across a farmer's field and hailed him to open his gate, the farmer improperly replied, "Not on your life! Go out in the road if you want to get past!" Whereupon Lorillard revved up his touring car and simply smashed the farmers gate to bits and roared on through.[74]

Eighteen drivers representing four nations lined up at the start, an odd mix of manufacturers' employees, wealthy amateurs, and professional drivers. Only a handful had ever competed in a road race of this scale: three drivers, George Heath, George Teste, and Albert Clément, had finished in that order at the Circuit Des Ardennes just a couple of months earlier. Fernand Gabriel had finished second in the great Gordon Bennett race of 1903 and was leading the doomed Paris-Madrid when it was called off. William Werner had four first place finishes in European road races to his credit. Several of the Americans had never raced before.

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None of the Americans piloting American cars were thought to cause any of their competitors to "suffer from insomnia."[75]

In these days of narrow roads, the cars were started at two-minute intervals to spread them out. All went off well until the car owned by Willie's cousin Alfred, piloted by Paul Sartori who had been imported from Italy along with Alfred's Fiat, had engine trouble and started two hours late. Apparently thinking his delay granted him some allowance from the rules, Sartori took a flying start, which disqualified him.[76]

Gabriel, the odds-on favorite, took a commanding lead by the third lap but was overtaken by Heath and Clément before his warped crankshaft forced him out in the seventh. Frank Croker in his first race kept up in his little Pope-Toledo until a blown tire near Mineola stubbornly took 28 minutes to replace. While flats were the plague of all early auto races as rubber technology lagged far behind the steady upward climb of horsepower, race speeds easily heating materials well beyond their failure points, in this race nature seems to have been assisted by protesters who scattered nails near sharp turns. One reporter surveying the "ugly curve" at Jericho, picked up seven nails.

George Heath, an American "man of means" racing for the French team on a Panhard Levassor that morning complained publicly of the condition of the roads over which he was about to recklessly fly. "The road is so soft and narrow in places that it is exceedingly dangerous. If there are not lives lost at some of those sharp turns I shall be agreeably surprised." Tragically, Heath was not surprised.[77] Missourian and former cycle champion Albert C. Webb miraculously escaped death in his Pope-Toledo in the fifth lap when his steering buckle snapped and he slid into a tree.

Sugar tycoon George Arents, Jr. was not as lucky when he lost a tire on Hempstead Turnpike near Queens and flipped, throwing him clear but crushing his mechanician Carl Mensel. Both Mensel and Arents were picked up unconscious, Mensel dying 30 minutes later. Two days later Arents came to, though he had no recollection of the race. Doctors performed a delicate operation to remove splinters of glass from his shattered goggles that had lodged deep in his right eye, but decided not to operate to remove the blood clot on his brain as he had regained consciousness.[78]

Some of the precautions taken to ensure safety misfired badly. Race watchers with flags were posted around the course and instructed to raise their banners and shout when a car approached to warn people away

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from the road. Instead the sentinel's cries sent the crowd surging forward narrowing the road to a tight passageway of cheering crowds. The inexperienced racers described speeding through such human corridors as "unnerving" while the more experienced Europeans didn't remark on it all. Trains on the Long Island Central line had been ordered to time their passage through the several crossings the course traversed to avoid racers but this system was ill considered as Gabriel shot through the crossing at Mineola Junction a scant 50 yards ahead of one locomotive.[79]

George Heath roared to a stop in front of the grandstand having been first to complete the ten laps, followed within a minute by Albert Clément who stormed up to Willie Vanderbilt letting loose a stream of French complaints. Having removed his goggles from his dirt-caked face, Clément comically looked a bit like a raccoon as he argued his complaint that the officials had improperly delayed him at the checkpoints. While Clément's protest officially clouded the results until the AAA racing board met later that day, the grandstand crowds had no doubt that Heath was the victor and swarmed the finish line forcing organizers to order the other racers to stop immediately. American Joseph Tracy in his little Pope-Toledo, the most underpowered car at the start, surprised everyone by being in third place when the race was called.

While the *New York Tribune*'s headline read "Heath First in Death Race," most newspapers reported that the event had elevated racing in America to European standards. The *Evening World* crowed:

> The contest is international, ranking with the races for the James Gordon Bennett trophy which have been held abroad. The winner of to-day's race will be acclaimed the greatest chauffeur in the world; his car will be proclaimed the best car for speed in the world . . . No road race of such importance has ever been held on this side of the Atlantic. Nothing like the speed that will be maintained over the 300 miles of the course has ever been made in the United States over such a stretch of ground . . . never before in this country has there been a contest in which the danger was so widespread.[80]

While most news reports hailed the race as a great success despite Carl Mensel's death, the most astute observers noted this had been a very unlikely result. *Motor Age* noted that upon this race rested the future of road racing in America. "Before it was run it was common opinion that the race for the William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., cup would be either the beginning or the beginning and the end of automobile road racing in this

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country." Had there been the bloodshed of innocents that had recently accompanied races in France, it was almost assured that racing's opponents, already nearly victorious, would have been strengthened immeasurably. Mensel's death, though tragic, was understood and accepted by the public as a consequence of a risk he himself assumed. "Automobile road racing can be nothing less than a sport dangerous to those who take part in it, and the advisability of its perpetuation on this score is a question outside that relative to its danger to the community. The effect of automobile road racing upon public sentiment mainly depends upon whether the public is endangered or not." On this score, the race had triumphed, but the *Motor Age* gave no credit to Vanderbilt and the auto clubs for this achievement. "The Vanderbilt race was run without injury to the public, despite the fact that provision for guarding the spectators from harm was so scant as to be almost nothing. Accidentally or providentially or in some other way the American populace lined a 30-mile open race track for hours and met no injury."[81]

Willie Vanderbilt had realized his dream of bringing European road racing to America (Figure 3.2), overcoming intense public opposition that swirled around an axis of class resentments and stereotypes. For a pyrrhic moment it seemed as though the tycoons had won, had succeeded in fashioning auto racing into the genteel, international, and elite sport they had always hoped it was. Indeed, the Vanderbilt Cup would be run five more times over the roads of Long Island, though each running drifted a bit further and further from Vanderbilt and his fellow clubmen's ideals. Over time the entrants shifted from the gentlemen "amateurs" like George Arents, William Wallace, and Frank Croker, to "professional" drivers, usually employed by auto companies seeking advertising glory. Eventually the fiction of the race being one of national teams was dropped to allow individual entrants.

Year by year the race attracted more and more controversy as the tally of drivers, mechanics, and spectators killed grew. In 1907 public opposition succeeded in forcing the cancellation of the race and though it was revived in later years, it never again shone with the luster of its first years. The tycoons had succeeded in seizing the public road but in democratic America, they couldn't hold their prize. Had they listened to the sage advice of the editor of the *Motor World* they might have understood the deeper reasons why the road race, so successful in Europe, would never take hold in America.

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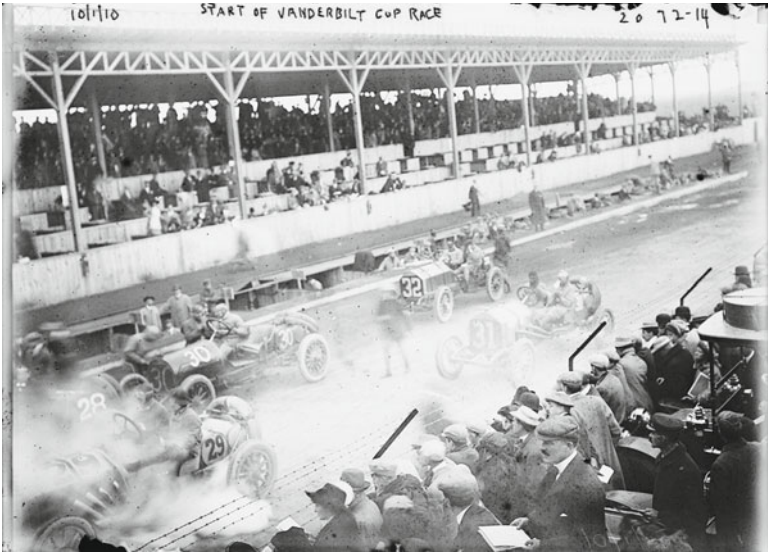

FIGURE 3.2 *Start of the 1910 Vanderbilt Cup Race*

> There are some foreign customs and ideas which do not survive any attempts to transplant them upon American soil… Your French agriculturalist through long years of serfdom does not object to hustling himself and his horse off the road to allow his superior to go racing by at a sixty-mile-an-hour gait. American farmers, with money in the bank and votes in their possession, are not so fond of anything of the kind.[82]

Notes

1 *Boston Daily Globe*, June 16, 1900, p. 18.
2 *New York Times*, May 12, 1901, p. 2.
3 *The Horseless Age*, 8:7 (May 15, 1901), p. 146.
4 Ibid., 7:8 (Nov. 21, 1900), p. 13.
5 *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1900, p. 10.
6 *The Motor World*, 1:4 (Oct. 25, 1900), p. 60. On Bostwick, see ibid., 1:1 (Oct. 4, 1900), p. 4.
7 *New York Tribune*, Apr. 15, 1900, p. 2; Apr. 14, 1900, p. 5.
8 *New York Sun*, Apr. 15, 1900, p. 6.
9 *The Evening World* (New York), Apr. 14, 1900, p. 6. On the Barber family, see *New York Times*, May 23, 1912, p. 8; *The Horseless Age*, 6:4 (Apr. 25, 1900), p. 10.

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10 *The Horseless Age*, 7:8 (Nov. 21, 1900), p. 13.
11 *The Motor World*, 1:4 (Oct. 25, 1900), p. 53.
12 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 6, 1900, p. 40.
13 *New York Times*, Sept. 7, 1900, p. 7; *Boston Daily Globe*, Sept. 7, 1900, p. 2; *The Horseless Age*, 6:21 (Aug. 22, 1900), p. 24; *Autobain* (Chicago), Oct. 1900; *Newport Herald*, Sept. 7, 1900 (online reproductions from http://www.vanderbiltcupraces.com/blog/article/discovered_the_1900_vanderbilt_cup_trophy (accessed July 7, 2013); *The Horseless Age*, 6:21 (Aug. 22, 1900), p. 24.
14 *The Motor World*, 1:1 (Oct. 4, 1900), p. 7.
15 Ibid., 1:4 (Oct. 25, 1900), p. 55. *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1900, p. 22.
16 Charles Jarrott, *Ten Years of Motors and Motor Racing* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1906), pp. 98–99.
17 Ibid., p. 99; A. H. Gleason feature in *Country Life*, reprinted in *Motor Talk*, 1:7 (July 1905), p. 21.
18 Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880–1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), pp. 103–109.
19 *The Horseless Age*, 8:27 (Oct. 2, 1901), p. 553.
20 Steven A. Riess, *The Sport of Kings and the Kings of Crime: Horse Racing, Politics, and Organized Crime in New York, 1865–1913* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011), xi–xii.
21 *New York Times*, Sept. 23, 1900, p. 22.
22 *The Horseless Age*, 8:29 (Oct. 16, 1901), p. 595.
23 Ibid., 8:9 (May 29, 1901), p. 189.
24 Ibid., 8:22 (Aug. 28, 1901), p. 449; *The Motor World*, 2:8 (May 23, 1901), p. 43.
25 *The Motor World*, 2:19 (Aug. 8, 1901), p. 351; *The Horseless Age*, 8:21 (Sept. 4, 1901), p. 478; *New York Tribune*, Aug. 30, 1901, p. 6; *New York Times*, Aug. 24, 1901, p. 7.
26 *The Motor World*, 2:21 (Aug. 22, 1901), p. 383.
27 *The Horseless Age*, 8:20 (Aug. 14, 1901), p. 426; 8:21 (Aug. 21, 1901), p. 445; 8:22 (Aug. 28, 1901), p. 464; *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1901, p. 1; Aug. 31, 1901, p. 3; *The Motor World*, 2:21 (Aug. 22, 1901), p. 384; 2:20 (Aug. 15, 1901), p. 370.
28 *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1901, p. 1; Aug. 31, 1901, p. 3.
29 *New York Tribune*, Aug. 31, 1901, p. 7.
30 Ibid., p. 6.
31 *New York Evening World*, Aug. 30, 1901, p. 3.
32 *The Motor World*, 2:22 (Aug. 29, 1901), p. 409; *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 30, 1901, p. 5.
33 *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 31, 1901, p. 12; *The Horseless Age*, 8:23 (Sept. 4, 1901), p. 485; 8:29 (Oct. 16, 1901), p. 595; 8:30 (Oct. 23, 1901), p. 627; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Oct. 19, 1901, p. 17.
34 The standard celebratory account of the building of the Long Island Parkway is Howard Kroplick and Al Velocci, *The Long Island Motor Parkway* (Mount

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Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Press, 2008). See also Bellamy Patridge, *Fill'er Up!: The Story of Fifty Years of Motoring* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1952), pp. 119–124.

35 Steven H. Gittelman, *Willie K. Vanderbilt: A Biography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2010), p. 74.

36 *The Motor World*, 3:7 (Nov. 14, 1901), p. 202; 2:15 (July 11, 1901), p. 283.

37 *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1901, p. 1.

38 *The Horseless Age*, 8:35 (Nov. 27, 1901), p. 748.

39 *Automobile Topics*, 4:2 (Apr. 26, 1902), p. 55.

40 *New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1902, p. 4.

41 *New York Tribune*, June 1, p. 1; June 2, 1902, p. 4. The Baker machine was so specialized that later that year when it was shown at the Cleveland races, all it could do was slowly and silently parade twice around the track because, being built to run on a straight course, it was unable to make turns on the track. *The Horseless Age*, 10:13 (Sept. 24, 1902), p. 336.

42 *New York Times*, June 2, 1902, p. 3; June 3, 1902, pp. 5, 8.

43 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 4, 1902, p. 4.

44 Ibid., June 7, 1902, p. 3.

45 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:8 (June 7, 1902), p. 335.

46 *The Horseless Age*, 9:24 (June 11, 1902), p. 693.

47 Ibid., 10:1 (July 2, 1902), p. 26.

48 Ibid., 9:24, June 11, 1902, p. 691; *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:8 (June 7, 1902), p. 330.

49 *The Horseless Age*, 9:24 (June 11, 1902), p. 695.

50 Ibid., p. 715; *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:10 (June 21, 1902), p. 431.

51 *The Horseless Age*, 10:3 (July 16, 1902), p. 72; 10:4 (July 23, 1902), p. 94.

52 Ibid., 10:5 (July 30, 1902), p. 109.

53 Ibid., 11:5 (Feb. 4, 1903), p. 198. Randall Hall, "Before NASCAR: The Corporate and Civic Promotion of Automobile Racing in the American South, 1903–1927," *Journal of Southern History*, 68:3 (Aug. 2002), p. 637. See also Dick Punnett, *Beach Racers: Daytona before NASCAR* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2008).

54 *Motor Age* (Chicago), 5:5 (Feb. 4, 1904), p. 4.

55 Hall, "Before NASCAR," p. 638; *The Daytona Gazette-News*, Mar. 28, 1903, p. 1.

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4
Man or Machine?

Abstract: *Initially, observers of racing conceived that it was primarily a contest between machines. The pilot of the racing car was usually referred to as a "chauffeur" or an "operator" reflecting their limited role in the outcome of the race. The tycoons running the sport were fine with this formulation as they were primarily interested in owning winning cars much as owners get the glory of winning in horse racing. Over time the rise of a handful of racing celebrities such as Henry Fournier began to spread the more working-class idea that racing involved aspects of skill and physical talent much as other sports do.*

Messer-Kruse, Timothy. *Tycoons, Scorchers, and Outlaws: The Class War That Shaped American Auto Racing*.
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It was probably inevitable that rich motorists would conceive of the idea of racing. After all, given the immense variety of makers and types of horseless carriages competing one against another was a natural impulse. But once these competitions became common, what did people think it was that was being tested? Was racing just a simple matter of having the most powerful machine, or was it something more? What role did the driver play in the outcome? When racing began, no one exactly knew what this sport was or what it meant.

The confusion surrounding the meaning of auto racing was mirrored by the inability of racing's observers to agree on its terminology. On the one hand no one could at first agree on what to call the vehicle—a horseless carriage? An autocar? An automobile? A locomobile? A motocycle? More telling was the variety of terms used to describe the fellow behind the wheel (or the tiller, as the case may have been). Common terms in the first decade of racing were "operator," "chauffeur," "automobilist," and "motorist." The term "driver" was deployed far less often than these.[1]

The terminology of the automobile was a source of controversy in its early years. Linguistic nationalists who worried that so much of the vocabulary surrounding motoring was of French origins wished to find good American coinage for such words as "chauffeur," "chassis," "garage," and even "automobile" itself. More interestingly, others complained that some common terms had a poor relationship to the concepts they were meant to describe. Professor Frederick Remsen Hutton was particularly troubled by the words used to describe the controller of the automobile, saying that English was "in sad need of verb." Professor Hutton didn't believe "driver" was appropriate because unlike in horsemanship, where ride and drive denoted very different things, in the auto "it is the motor which drives and impels or propels the vehicle." In motoring "the automan mounts both motor and vehicle and therefore he 'ride-drives.'" When a motorist asks a companion if they would care to "go for a drive," they aren't asking them to take the wheel. Nor did Hutton like "operator" for it was "a makeshift and no one will ask his friend to come and 'operate' with him." Rather, Hutton thought a new word was required that captured the new meaning that automobiles created, of a machine that is operated but is also largely automatic.

The professor mined Latin roots and came up with "pello" meaning to drive out or repel and proposed that the verb for operating or running an auto should be "to pell." Then "the man who does it and is at the wheel and levers shall be called 'the peller'… The automobile itself

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would be . . . simply 'a motor-pult.' " From there Hutton found all sorts of interesting derivations: "The passive form of the verb, applicable to the passenger might be made 'to pelt.' "[2]

Comic and absurd as the professor's suggestions may have been, they do reveal that at bottom his concern was to express the limited role of the driver in the motion of the car. It wasn't fair to call a driver a driver when actually he just set the machine to its task of getting from one point to another. Here was the nub of the issue. It was, after all, an *auto*mobile—a vehicle that moved itself. If that was so, then racing wasn't a competition among men, it was really a competition between machines. There was a human element because humans built the machines. Initially most observers of racing believed the sport served to distinguish who was the better designer and builder of machines, not who was the better operator of them.

As *Motor World* in its inaugural issue of 1900 observed, "A very large number of people . . . without any investigating, will tell you that there never can be any real racing between motor vehicles, since the supremacy of one of them over another of the same pattern is purely a question of which has the most power to push it around the track."[3]

In fact, in the early years of automobiling it was not clear why anyone would engage in such sport voluntarily. Not only was it obviously dangerous, it was thought to be possibly debilitating. Dr. Carlton Simon identified a new medical malady, the "automobile frown," that he thought was frequently contracted by "scorchers." "There is a distinct contraction of the muscles of the forehead and eyes, producing a frown which by continued habit remains in evidence upon the face." This was caused by the tremendous mental strain the fear of an accident produces at high speeds. "The body is bent forward, being rigid, due to fear of impending danger, alert and ever ready for any mishap. This is a constant strain upon the automobilist, and the tension after considerable riding is extreme. There is a tremendous loss of phosphate, which to the medical man shows depletion and injury to the nervous system. In other words, excessive automobiling means a loss of vitality." A middle-class magazine devoted to outdoors sports agreed: "The racing chauffeur . . . is nerve-twitched, emotionally overplayed. As a tribe the great chauffeurs have the same facial expression of nervous strain and emotional wrack that belongs to 'problem' actors and Negro evangelists." The *Medical Sentinel* agreed, "The automobile is declared to be responsible for much irritability and nerve wrecking wherever the auto-scorcher is found."

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The great racer Henri Fourier in an article introducing the motor car to Americans, most of whom had only seen these machines from afar or read about them, wrote, "It is delightful to travel in an automobile going 20 mile per hour," but then felt compelled to add, "and there are no ill effects."[4]

Then there were those who thought speeding in an automobile was actually a form of madness. Indeed, so unnatural and perverse did the sight of men driving machines over the country roads at such speeds seem that prominent physicians immediately claimed it as a species of psychosis. English "brain disorder specialist" Dr. Forbes Winslow described the sport as a new mental disease, calling it "motor intoxication" or "speed madness." Other learned scientists followed. A paper read at a meeting of the Société d'Hypnologie et de Psychologie described the peculiar form of intoxication produced by high motor-vehicle speeds: "The mental and moral states of the chauffeur become abnormal, the change being not unlike that by which Dr. Jekyll was transformed into Mr. Hyde. When the madness has possession of him the chauffeur becomes reckless, vindictive, furiously aggressive, and is swayed and controlled by whatever angry or insane impulse seizes him."[5]

Whether a species of disease or of madness, the act of driving a car at a high rate of speed was not generally looked upon as a natural activity, one that could bear the generally wholesome and vigorous label of "sport." Commenting on the Paris to Berlin race of 1901, a trade newspaper dismissed it as sport: "The whole is to the great advantage of the automobile manufacturers, because nobody seriously believes that the matter served any sportive objects. That one may travel fast in an automobile is known."[6]

One of the earliest track races in America took place at the Narragansett Park in Providence as part of the Rhode Island State Fair of 1896. More an exhibition of automobiles than a true race meet, most of the heats were little more than fast parades, none approaching a head-to-head competition, leaving one observer to mull what auto racing's future might be. "But even when machines are built especially for racing (as those at Providence were not), and tracks of the most approved pitch are available, it is probable that the limit of speed will soon be reached. Any uncertainty in regard to the performance of a racing machine would then be chargeable to the wilful neglect of the operator." In other words, while the "operator" could lose a race, he could not win one—that is what the car does.[7]

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That same year similar views of racing were expressed in France where racing had a much longer and more gloried record. (French road racing began with a race from Paris to Rouen in July of 1894, a full year before Duryea and Mueller sputtered around the suburbs of Chicago.) In 1896, the Paris Auto Club held a public debate on the merits of racing and concluded that it was necessary to the advancement of technology. Even those who had competed in that year's Paris to Marseilles race seemed to believe that the race was primarily a test of vehicles and not of men. Where the human element entered into the equation was merely as a factor of chance. "If, as is contended, the incompetent manufacturer is sure to be eliminated by the race, the competent stand little better show because of accidents or incidents trivial in ordinary practice, but fatal in a race."[8]

Most early observers of racing thought so little of the importance of the driver in determining the outcome of a race that they often omitted mention of drivers at all. A typical news report of the period read, "Many leading racing men have expressed their conviction that the contest in the Gordon Bennett race would probably be between the Mercedes, the Panhard and the Mors vehicles: in other words that the Mercedes was the machine with which the French contestants would have to count most." In reporting on the first race meet of the New England Automobile Club held at the Brookline Country Club, just as much attention was paid to who owned or built the cars that raced as who drove them. In some cases the identity of the driver was almost inconsequential: "In the race the Winton carriage, which was operated by one of the men from the factory, ran away from the other carriage from the start."[9]

Likewise, after the Paris to Bordeaux race concluded, the *Horseless Age* wrapped up the outcome as if the machines ran themselves: "The Panhard-Levassor vehicles, which at one time were looked upon as invincible, have not been very successful of late. They made no particular showing in the Nice week, and did not make any great speed in this double event. On the other hand, the Mohrs vehicle won the Paris-Bordeaux race for the second time."[10]

In the early years of the sport, even those directly involved in organizing auto races discounted the role men played behind the wheel. As the editor of the *Horseless Age* crassly put it, "Success in a race is simply a question of motor power."[11] Another correspondent wrote, "There is nothing specially creditable in the speed of an automobile as a racing machine. It is simply a question of power and gear." Yet another who

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gauged the public mood offered, "Many people think that motor racing consists of sitting behind an engine of high power, opening the throttle, steering straight, and 'letting her sizzle.' "[12]

In the horse culture of the nineteenth century the skill of the jockey was much appreciated and while no one believed that a good jockey could turn a mediocre horse into a winner, handicappers routinely appreciated that in a field crowded with thoroughbreds a skilled jockey could get the most effort out of his horse and turn the margin in a close race. Such common sense would have provided a good analogy for the role of the driver in auto racing but interestingly it wasn't seen as parallel at the time. Tod Sloan, one of the world's most famous jockey's, was banned from English tracks for a minor infraction of the rules and so he announced his intention to become a racing "chauffeur." Instead of seeing this as a comparable role, Sloan's skill and daring on horseback was unfavorably compared to what he might accomplish behind the wheel: "It is a pity that so smart a jockey, undoubtedly the champion rider of the world, is under a ban for the present. Such skill in the saddle should not be wasted in idleness for long. As the pilot of great horses Sloan will be remembered for many a year. As a chauffeur on an automobile his light will be hidden under a bushel."[13]

While most observers thought of automobile racing primarily as a test of design, technology, and workmanship, the experience of actually running races provided numerous occasions to see the driver not merely as an "operator" but as having some particular skills. During a race on Long Island in 1900 an auto driven by A. Fischer crested a hill just as a two-horse farm truck approached, frightening the horses:

> The animals whirled directly across the road. A cry of horror went up from the spectators, for it looked impossible for Mr. Fischer to pass between the frightened horses and the other automobile. It was a moment when nerve and brain were required. Being unable to slacken speed, Mr. Fischer depended upon the suppleness of his wrist to avoid a disaster. The automobile seemed to lurch just at the critical moment, and then it swept almost across the road, clearing the wagon. It was a remarkable piece of steering, and the spectators yelled in their delight and appreciation.[14]

Some reporters describing this first road race on the east coast accepted that there was an element of skill, though its degree remained uncertain: "The result of the race, as regards the first machines to breast the home tape, will depend, to some extent, upon the skill with which the roadsters are handled."[15]

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As knowledgeable observers gained the opportunity to watch more races they began to appreciate some qualities that were the hallmark of driving expertise. One member of the Automobile Club of America (ACA) who wrote of his experiences watching the Paris to Berlin race of 1901, remarked, "A short distance further along the road was an up grade of some steepness, and Mr. Wright observed that all of the four leading racers changed from the fourth to the third speed at exactly the same spot, which he thought showed great adeptness in handling the vehicles."[16]

Some automobile enthusiasts, especially those who organized early automobile clubs, recognized that competitions between motor cars involved some elements of skill and daring. While these fans believed auto racing involved some sort of specialized skills or talents, what these may have been or what role they played in the outcome of a race were not clearly understood. Speculating about the prospects for an American car to win the upcoming Gordon Bennett trophy, *Autocar* magazine conceded "Half the race, if not even a greater proportion, is undoubtedly owing to the nerve and skill of the man at the wheel."[17]

A limited role for drivers in the sport of racing was fine for many of the millionaires who invented and first organized the sport because they wanted the glory of winning to shine on the owner of the car. It was noticed at the time that "when two men own anything which 'goes' there is sure to exist a difference of opinion regarding the respective merits of their possessions, and it is this difference of opinion which is responsible for the automobile race." Official reports of race finishes listed the owner first and the "operator" or "chauffeur" second if at all.[18]

In the summer of 1901, all the New York papers gave extensive coverage to the fashionable races at Newport, printing the names of the winners and narrating in detail the exciting final heats between Vanderbilt and Foxhall Keene. From these reports one would imagine all these winners were the drivers of their own cars, but in reality not all owners were behind the wheel. The Associated Press described the final race between Vanderbilt and Keene with this curious passage: "Mr. Vanderbilt quickly shot ahead at the start and at the end of the first lap was an eighth of a mile ahead. Aided by a very clever chauffeur, who at the sharp turns took every chance and leaned far in with only a small strap to support him… Half way over the course he had Mr. Keene surely beaten." While it is certain that Vanderbilt did indeed drive his own car that day, the AP's use of the ambiguous term "chauffeur" for Vanderbilt's riding mechanic

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was not a mistake, but a consequence of the lack of importance of the difference.[19]

Other newspaper accounts reported that Oliver H. P. Belmont won the five-horsepower class competition though it appears that Belmont simply owned the De Dion voiturette that finished ahead of Vanderbilt and watched his nameless chauffeur's winning run from the sidelines. Col. John Jacob Astor appeared in the paddock dressed in a full duster and goggles but allowed his chauffeur to win his heats for him, followed a close second by Frederick H. Benedict's man. Neither driver was actually credited in the final tally of the day's victories, which listed the winners as Astor and Benedict.[20]

Reporting on the Pittsburg races of 1903, the special correspondent for the *Automobile*, likely a member of the Pittsburg auto club, doted on the owners of the winning cars at the expense of their drivers. "The best performance, everything considered, was that of the Mercedes car owned by George H. Flinn, president of the club. It was driven by Reilly, his chauffeur." Reilly's full name was never supplied. The reporter tells us that "A.L. Banker's Peerless racer covered the distance in 1:15 and three-fifths, the fastest time of the day," and "the best race of the day was between T. H. Guffey's Decauville and Dr. George Urling's Autocar." Both Banker's and Urling's cars were driven by employees of the firms who built them. No mention was made of who drove Guffey's Decauville.[21]

Such class distinctions were upheld even in death. When Frank Croker, the son of a New York City Tammany boss, overturned on the beach at Ormond, Florida, killing both himself and his mechanic, A. Raoul, *Collier's* referred to Raoul as Croker's "chauffeur" and did not afford him the privilege of being referred to with the honorific "Mister": "The machine turned end over end several times. The chauffeur was killed instantly and Mr. Croker received injuries from which he died the next day."[22]

Millionaire sportsmen, such as Vanderbilt, Keene, and Bostwick, did personally want to claim the glory of their racing victories, but they did so by embracing the idea that their feats were a matter of "daring." Unlike driving skill, which was, after all, to them a mundane characteristic acquired through work, such as servants and workingmen took pride in, daring or "nerve" was chivalrous and dashing. It was one of the qualities celebrated in the world of business, it was the soul of the entrepreneur. Indeed, the upper-class magazine *Outing* described auto racing with a vocabulary that blended nobility and business:

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> The supreme test in speeding consists in management of the machine. The success of the operator depends upon his getting the utmost power and swiftness out of his motor; in knowing how to best supply it with fuel, and in the thousand-and-precautions against being taken unawares or caught by accident. He must be perfectly cool at all times, have plenty of nerve force, and be an utter stranger to fear.[23]

In describing the Gordon Bennett Cup race to its readers, *Outing* emphasized that the race was primarily a competition among automobile builders, but where the drivers made a difference was in their daring: "The machine itself is of first importance. The individual takes secondary rank, although to the latter's nerve and daring much of the ultimate success is surely due."[24]

Foxhall Keene himself explained racing to a reporter in a way that stressed daring and level-headedness in the face of danger: "Well, automobiling is a great sport, and it requires some nerve and skill to drive a machine at high speed, but when all is said and done there is nothing like racing and cross-country riding to send the blood surging through your veins. There is no trouble about driving an automobile fast if a man will only keep his wits about him."[25]

Skill in driving was generally seen as something involving "tricks." In 1903 one newspaper predicted that the American chauffeur would soon replicate the bareback rider and the wheelman in learning to do tricks with the auto. Sending a reporter to find the most skilled professional chauffeurs in New York City, the stringer found a driver who could close the lid of his watch with his back tire without breaking it, another who could drive his vehicle in tight circles backward, and many who could describe an "S" by meandering around obstacles. But the reporter clearly didn't think that just going fast was a matter of skill by itself, rather only gimmicky tricks impressed him as skillful. He thought that perhaps in the future auto races might actually demonstrate skill by incorporating such feats into the show. "An expert chauffeur can run over a series of obstacles a foot or more in height . . . It requires good judgment in taking the jumps and the chauffeur must be very active in balancing his machine. Automobile hurdle races will in all probability be a feature of the automobile meets of the future."[26]

The Long Island Auto Club, which by 1902 had gone further into the race game than any other auto club, decided to feature an obstacle course race at its upcoming Brighton Beach track competition in order to test the skill of drivers, which, it was assumed, was not otherwise at issue in

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the general speed heats to be held. As the club announced, "Dexterity, rapidity of thought, judgement and calculation are the qualities most called for in a competition event of this class. The operator who is accustomed to threading his way through the crowded thoroughfares, and who has more or less often crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, is the one who, if he drives a light car, should be able to win the prize." The editor of the *Horseless Age* thought the "effort of the club to discover some useful feature in the event is commendable" but also that the effort was wasted because the winner would not be the most skillful driver, but the one with the most maneuverable car. "It is questionable, however, whether the prize will go to the driver who actually is most skilled, as the result must in each case depend upon the manageability of the machine."[27]

If there was any widespread appreciation for the difference between an experienced and skillful chauffeur and the novice operator, much of it was born of the general fear of automobiles, not a respect for racing:

> There have been, so far, very few accidents to the public which are attributable to lack of expertness on the part of drivers of high speed cars. Still the peril undoubtedly exists, and while maintaining that the motor car is at least as safe as any vehicle on the road, one may admit that any man desiring to drive a fast vehicle should pass an examination to show his competence . . . one can hardly imagine the folly of those who indulge in express speeds before they are entirely masters of their vehicles. But since there are such persons, they should be prevented from either committing suicide or killing their fellow creatures.[28]

The danger of novice automobilists was readily apparent, though the precise nature of their failure was never identified but rather a vague picture of their fumbling at the controls was drawn for the readers of daily papers. The very day Senator "Billy" La Roche purchased a handsome new electric surrey, he could not resist shouldering over the professional chauffeur who came with the vehicle to take the wheel himself. The reporter who dug up the story over the senator's denials recounted that the chauffeur had at first put the car through a series of "graceful and skillful maneuvers" through Prospect Park. "Their chauffeur was an expert. He made the machine go like lightning for a half minute and then stopped it in a space of a few feet so quickly that the rubber tired wheels would slide along the roadway. Then he would make the machine go zigzag, describe circles and write the ten numerals." The senator's guests were "white-eyed with admiration of the chauffeur who could do such wonders." This made the senator eager to prove his own mettle, so after

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drinks at Bader's road house, the senator and his guests reseated themselves in the car, but with the senator at the helm. "Great Scott! Billy's got the levers!" exclaimed one of the guests and the senator flew off across the park "with a dexterous if unschooled hand." The senator failed to handle a sharp curve and he and all his friends were badly bruised and the surrey was scrap.[29]

Even the most knowledgeable observers of automotive technology seemed at times to think that the difference between novice and expert drivers was simply a matter of learning the proper use of all the levers and pedals. *The Horseless Age* recommended that beginners keep off crowded city streets "until they have become thoroughly adept in handling their machines," which intimated perhaps more skill than was intended as the passage continued, "some vehicles . . . are so simple to operate that the possibility of a false move seems almost precluded; nevertheless a mistake is quite possible during an emergency in the first stages of the driver's experience, when some reasoning between cause and effect still has to precede every operation. Later on these two factors become welded into one in the operator's mind, and the likelihood of a false move is thereby vastly reduced."[30]

Nevertheless, though a concept of driving skill had developed in some quarters, there was no particular appreciation that not all skills were the same. Many seemed to believe that the skill required to be an expert driver was rather ordinary and could be acquired by "the average driver":

> Nearly every owner of an automobile has the ambition to become an expert operator, and as skill is always acquired by practice, all users of considerable experience must be at least fairly skilled operators. [In the upcoming 100 mile endurance contest] The running of the vehicles by skilled operator should therefore not abnormally affect the results . . . we are inclined to believe that in a trial of considerable duration . . . the influence of variations in skill of operators will vanish more and more, and the actual endurance of the vehicle will have the greatest influence on the results.[31]

Skill was only really considered a factor when all other variables were kept even, an unusual occurrence given the great variety of auto makes and the lack of standardization. Planning for the upcoming Narragansett races of 1902, the club promoters predicted "a special class of Winton touring cars has been placed on the program, and the event should be the best racing of the day, for the cars must be regulated with no changes

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of sprockets, and as they are the same horse power, it will be a question of the skill with which they are driven." The American Automobile Association (AAA) racing committee was reported discussing with manufacturers guidelines for building standard racing cars. "The cars, in this way, would be much as the yachts built under yacht racing rules, of very near the same capacity, and one would [only] differ from the other in the strength of its construction, and the reliability of its propelling power. The driver of the car would then hold the same position as the captain of a yacht, as skill, good judgment in using his power, and steering his car, would decide the race, and there would be close finishes which would be exciting and interesting to all spectators."[32]

Racing enthusiasts thought the problem with track contests in these early years was the lack of parity in machines and they searched for some formula that would negate all the advantages of the more powerful machine. "The greatest drawback to track racing, as sport pure and simple, is the difficulty of arranging a fair handicap. Suggestions innumerable have been put forward from time to time with a view to establishing a standard of measurement which should serve as a formula of an equation applicable to all racing machines." Some advocated for classes by horsepower, though horsepower was variously judged by each manufacturer by their own methods. Others thought weight was a more reliable standard and a few creative minds proposed grading them by price, those underestimating their car's cost to gain advantage to be subject to immediate sale at the stated price.[33]

When Alexander Winton (Figure 4.1) driving his new production, the "Bullet", beat Harry S. Harkness's newest powerful Mercedes, the glory that Winton reaped was not as a driver but as a designer and engineer. "The magnificent showing made by American-built automobiles at Cleveland this week cannot fail to have a stirring effect wherever the automobile is known."[34]

Automobile manufacturers, like Winton, who wished to use racing as a means of establishing the superiority of their products found that glorifying the drivers of their winning cars could overshadow their selling points. After all, if the race was won by the skill and pluck of the driver then perhaps the machine he drove might be no better or worse than its competitors in the race.

Alexander Winton first faced this problem when he hired racing celebrity Barney Oldfield to drive his racers. It was less an issue when he drove them himself as, being the owner of the firm, no one suspected

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FIGURE 4.1 *Alexander Winton racing in 1900*

that he had earned his place behind the wheel because of any special driving skills he possessed. But Oldfield's succession of stunning victories quickly overshadowed the vehicle he was hired to promote. Winton quietly negotiated an end to Oldfield's contract just at the start of the 1904 season.

Having pushed Oldfield aside, Winton hired a series of drivers who were not only unknown but had no racing experience. When he handed over his latest Bullet to Earl Kiser at the Glenville track in Cleveland in August of 1904, Kiser had never before driven that car in a race. Kiser failed to win the championship cup that day, but he did run a record-setting mile in the midst of losing that Winton seized upon in his advertising. The Winton company's account of the race emphasized Kiser's inexperience and thereby enhanced the glory of their machine. "Previous to August 22 Kiser had never driven a Winton car in a race. In fact, he had never driven the Bullet at all except to try it out for the races of that day. His inexperience was plainly evident in the erratic rating of the Bullet's speed." Another of Winton's drivers, Charles Gorndt, driving the lighter and smaller "Bullet No. 3" succeeded in lowering the mile record for cars of that class, a feat more remarkable, as Winton's magazine pointed out, because "Gorndt had never ridden in a race previous." The punch line was obvious, "Surely this was marvelous work for green drivers; how great is the credit it reflects upon the cars they drove."

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The following week when Kiser beat Oldfield head-to-head in Detroit, Winton's press people were ecstatic at this "triumph" as it demonstrated that "the superior speed of the Bullet was abundantly in evidence."[35]

Once automobile manufacturers expanded their market beyond the wealthiest buyers who did not worry about the complexity of operation because they hired professional chauffeurs to drive their autos, they began emphasizing the ease of operation of their products. Advertisements and pitches made this point by featuring women drivers who, it was assumed, being the less mechanically competent sex, best illustrated this point. In fact, many women found automobiles to be easier to manage than horse carriages. Eva Mudge provided a widely published testimonial: "I have driven horses, handled yachts and managed auto, and the easiest of them all is the auto."[36]

Ironically, as the power of machines steadily increased, the respect shown for the drivers who piloted them declined. The feeling seemed to be that when all cars could easily go at blinding speeds, what remains for the chauffeur to do but hang on?

> Well, eighteen months ago no one dreamt of such speeds. Today they are within the attainments of all; therefore commonplace…it must be concluded that 100 per hour is easily made. What, then, is there remarkable about it? Does it require the rare gifts bestowed by nature upon a few individuals to drive in a race or on the banked track…a specially fast machine? Then we would have to idealize the accomplishments of our great jockeys!…Consequently, it is in reality a vulgar prowess and an ordinary accomplishment to drive an extra fast vehicle in a race. As many good drivers are born every year as racing vehicles are constructed. Hence, what is there admirable in it?[37]

In August of 1901 a pair of professional racers disembarked from the steamship Deutschland in Hoboken, New Jersey, and immediately set about upsetting the tycoons' conception of motor racing. Arriving in America were Henri Fournier, the auto racing champion of France, and Tod Sloan, one of the winningest jockeys of his generation and Fournier's "manager." Unlike all the other auto racing champions in America, they had come not to win glory and a hearty toast in the clubmen's rooms, but to make money.[38]

Sloan worked out of their room at the Hotel Martin and immediately began making bookings. The same night as their ship moored, Sloan had Founier drove a motor-bike in an exhibition at a cycling meet at Madison Square Garden. Fournier puzzled spectators with his unorthodox riding

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style, crouching as low as possible and not using the pedals once he was under way. Motorcycling clearly wasn't Fournier's métier as his time was unimpressive.[39]

Next, Fournier agreed to appear at the Empire City track in Yonkers for a day of gentlemanly sport. ACA official Albert C. Bostwick, who was scheduled to try and lower the world's record for the mile (held by Fournier of course), arrived late as he had just come from a meeting of the club, but his racer and mechanic had been sent ahead and the other clubmen waited for him. Professional timers were engaged, the track was rolled hard, and the time trials commenced.

Bostwick opened his 40-horsepower Winton and took the first mile with the flying start common in those days, clocking 1:13 and two-fifths, a disappointing three-twentieth of a second behind Fournier's record. Bostwick pressed on and the fashionable crowd gave a hearty cheer as it was announced that while missing the one-mile record, Bostwick had set the world's record for three and for four miles. In his fifth mile something broke and the last record stood unbroken.

Then Fournier motored onto the field with his "pupil" William K. Vanderbilt seated in the mechanic's seat. Vanderbilt did not contribute much to Fournier's run as it was observed that instead of grasping the hand strap and leaning hard to the inside of the curves to counterbalance the tipping car as good mechanicians did, Vanderbilt simply sat still and upright on his perch. Yet even without his help, Fournier managed to reel off new world's records at all distances up to five miles. "He started off quickly and maintained a steady pace until the brow of the little hill so often referred to was reached. Then he shot down this with a grand rush, was caught at the start of the mile proper and disappeared in a cloud of dust. Keeping well to the right, he never deviated from his course, and crossed the finish mark in an even 52 seconds, smothering Bostwick's new made record." Bostwick's reign as the world's fastest man had lasted less than hour.[40]

Journalists, especially those from the automobile trade press, were agog with the apparent ease with which Fournier had toppled Bostwick's ephemeral world record. One motor journalist enthused, "The vehicle was handled with rare skill. On the straight the inside wheel was rarely the regulation three feet from the pole; on the turn it almost always got down to less than a foot. On the first turn the Motor World man measured the mark left by the flying wheels. From the rail it measured a shade under 10 inches. The remarkable part of it was that near approach

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to a portion of a true circle made at this point. It might almost have been made by a gigantic compass."[41]

Having never seen such driving mastery on a racetrack before, observers struggled to explain what was different from all the motor racing they had seen before (Figure 4.2). "Fournier is nothing if not original. He has tricks and mannerisms, but they are all his own. Instead of crouching forward he leans back—way back. In place of an alert, even a strained manner and an anxious expression, he drops into nonchalence [*sic*] as he drops into his seat. Careless, apparently heedless, he appears to pay little attention to the operation of his vehicle. This inattention is on the surface only. There is nothing done wrong, nothing left undone that should be done."[42]

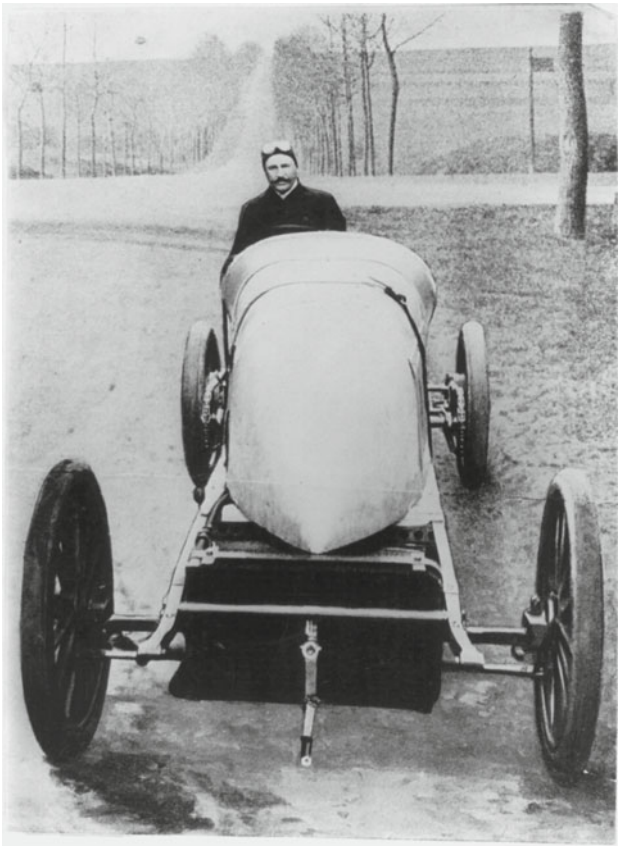

FIGURE 4.2 *Henry Fournier, circa 1906*

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Fournier repeated his feats a few weeks later at the Ocean boulevard races, between Brooklyn and Coney Island. The races that day were individual time trials down a straightaway with a one-mile flying start. As it happened Foxhall Keene and Henri Fournier drove identical machines, both having been manufactured to the same specifications at the same Mors factory at the same time. In spite of their vehicles being twins, and the course being a flat straightaway, Fournier bested Keene by a couple of seconds over a mile, setting a new world's record at 51 and four-fifths seconds. Reporters noted the only seeming difference between the two drivers was that Fournier was seen to assume an unusual posture, laid back in his seat until he was nearly fully reclined, which they thought he did to "steady the vehicle."[43]

The most savvy technical journals immediately recognized that the Coney Island boulevard races had been a unique test of the relative contributions of man and machine to victory. "Two Mors racing automobiles, apparently exactly alike, are driven at top speed over a measured course in record breaking time. Both are operated by men whose names are synonyms for skill and reckless courage and daring. In this respect, as with the vehicles, there is absolutely nothing to choose between the two. Result: One makes from three to eight seconds faster time than the other in a mile. What causes the difference?" The experiment seemed to be as pure a one as any theorist of the sport could have hoped for. "It cannot be experience, or rather the lack of it, on the part of the less speedy man. On a broad, level road such as is the Ocean Parkway, kept clear of all traffic, it is a question of speed, pure and simple. Why, then, did Fournier beat Keene, for it is these two redoubtable chauffeurs who are under discussion?" The answer if there was one was thought to lie in motivation:

> "Professional versus amateur," says the cynic. "The 'long green' chaser always wins in such a contest. Fournier's living depends on his beating all comers. With Keene automobile racing is but a passing whim. There are some of the fine points he has not mastered." But is this diagnosis the correct one? . . . Doubt has already been expressed, however, as to the two vehicles having been, as it were, cast in the same mould . . . But the Frenchman only smiled. He is too knowing to satisfy curiosity so easily.[44]

Fournier's world-record setting achievement launched him into sporting celebrity, part of which was the appreciation that he did not share the pedigree or the privileges of the tycoons he had bested (which one

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journalist referred to as "the Vanderbilts, the Keenes, the Bostwicks and other so-called 'pampered pets of fortune'"). Newspaper accounts noted that he had worked as a mechanic in a French automobile factory, that he had become an automobile racer after years of competing as an amateur cyclist. In short, he was a man eager to rise up from the working class, like so many of the readers of the cheap Sunday newspapers that publicized him.[45]

Journalists loved Fournier as he had none of the elitist airs of the auto clubmen he raced against. One reporter went to interview Fournier in Chicago, while he was there for the auto show, and upon presenting himself at his hotel was ushered up to his room. "I knocked on the door, the valet showed me into the bathroom, where I talked to Fournier as he splashed about. He afterward took me out in his automobile. I rode by his side while he ran his machine sixty miles an hour."[46]

After setting a new world's record for the mile at the Brooklyn Ocean boulevard races, Henri Fournier was featured in the *Evening World* in a series of "seven lessons on just how a horseless machine should be managed." Fournier was described as the champion automobilist of the world and "the most expert manipulator of the horseless machine that has yet been seen."

Fournier began by listing what he regarded as the most important qualities of the chauffeur. First and foremost was "previous years of experience in steering," either in horsemanship or bicycling. "The importance of being a good steersman cannot be overestimated. I place it first in any rules for automobiling…for it should be remembered that a train has a track and horses have intelligence, but an automobile is in the world to shift for itself…[it] has no track, no intelligence, nothing but the constantly active hand of the driver on its wheel and his alert eye on the road ahead."[47]

Fournier stressed the physical nature of driving, what he termed an "an army discipline of the whole body." The driver must eventually learn to master his controls almost without thinking. "His hands and his feet must go about their business without the assistance of his eyes." The controls needed to be worked with an artist's touch. "The feet must be just as perfectly under control, just as responsive to the least command, as must be the feet of an organist. And to this I may add that the hands of a chauffeur must be as sensitive as the hands that manage a keyboard, and they must be as automatic."

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In other lessons, though, Fournier stressed the simplicity of becoming "expert" at the operating of an auto but also warned that it was easy to be overconfident in operating a horseless carriage because "the machine is so perfectly easy to manage that they think they can relax their vigilance."[48]

Lesson six specifically addressed racing and for this Fournier had only two points of advice:

> I have only two points to emphasize in discussing automobile racing, which I believe is the coming sport in this country and in Europe. The first point is the position of the racer in the car. I see men going in for records and sitting perfectly erect. Now, to my mind this is not only dangerous to the health of the chauffeur…from the rush of air to his lungs…but it impedes his progress. I always advise the position I assume when racing—that is, lying back in the seat of the car until the back of the neck rests on the back of the seat. This brings the eyes at an angle which permits level, unobstructed sight over wheel and motor straight down the road, and the wind sweeps over the face without coming in its full force against the mouth. The position reduces the resistance offered to the wind by a good many square inches.

Fournier's second point was simply to invest in a quality mask and goggles.[49]

Fournier's "lessons" provoked a furious rejoinder from Charles Duryea, an automotive pioneer himself, who complained that "no enemy of the motor vehicle could have done much better" than Founier who showed the automobile as a "ponderous machine having terrific speed and needing an engineer, on a constant physical and nervous strain, to properly watch for possible trouble and take the lightening-like exact precautions needed to avert it" instead of showing the car as it is, "more safe than a team of horses." The editor of the *Horseless Age* agreed, though he speculated that Fournier's points had been "touched up" to "adapt the article to the taste of the average newspaper reader, who is, of course, more impressed by extravagant statements of the physical strains to which automobile racers are supposed to be subjected than by anything that might be said regarding the perfection of automobiles."[50]

While the popular appreciation of the skills involved driving grew, there were persistent counter-currents working to undermine them. Foremost among these were the automobile manufacturers whose commercial interests required that they downplay the complexity of operating their machines. Such commercial pressures even bent driving's

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pioneer advocate Henri Fournier to deny his own role in his victories. Once established as a businessman whose income depended on selling imported Mors cars, Fournier suddenly discovered that the car was the most important element in the outcome of a race. When a reporter asked Fournier why he sold Mors cars and not Panhards or Daimlers, Fournier replied, "Isn't that plain? Haven't we beaten them all for two years? We could not do that if we were not ahead of them."

"But perhaps the chauffeur had much to do with that," it was suggested.

"Oh, something, but, not very much. It is the vehicle itself that deserves most the praise."[51]

In contrast to the extensive lessons and suggestions Fournier advocated when a racer, as a dealer in automobiles he suddenly discovered their ease of operation. "I can teach any one to manage an automobile in half an hour, and tho it is going at high speed, one can stop the machine on its own length. Anybody can manage it, and it turns, twists and dodges about so easily that accidents are avoided which would be disastrous if you were sitting behind a horse…there is comparatively little hazard about running an auto."[52]

In early 1902 Fournier disappointed many by returning to Paris and missing the subsequent racing season in America. While in France he lowered the world's record for the mile to 47 and two-fifths, eclipsing Vanderbilt's record set three months earlier of 48 and two-fifths. Then a week later a "wealthy Parisian merchant" who went by the pseudonym "A. Angieres" lowered it to 46.[53]

When Fournier returned to America in January 1903, the press went wild. "The New York morning papers…burst forth with skyrocket articles on the arrival of the 'Great Chauffeur.' He could not have been better heralded if he had been a wild beast show with a staff of press agents." But Fournier soon disappointed all the publicists' grand expectations by settling into the full-time business of starting a motor company. Lending his name to Searchmont Automobile Company, renamed the Fournier-Searchmont Automobile Company, he spent the next two years designing and promoting his company's cars until it went bankrupt in late 1904.[54]

Henri Fournier was the first of a succession of celebrity drivers, famous not for their family names or fortunes, but for demonstrating a degree of skill and ability behind the wheel that set them apart from all other racers. In 1903 when Fournier retired from American racing, a young upstart from Ohio, Barney Oldfield, burst onto the scene and

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dominated the sport, lowering the world's record for the mile five times in one season. Oldfield's talent was evident to any observer just in the way he steered his vehicle, leaving little doubt about the answer to the question, who wins the race, man or machine? Indeed, some popular writers began blurring the distinction between the two, depicting the machine as little more than an extension of the driver's mind and body:

> The chauffeur is the type, the symbol of the modern. The driver in action leans over the motor bonnet like an aimed arrow. His left hand is on the steel driving gear, his right hand opens and closes as he feels for the emergency brake that will save a life at the next blind corner, his feet clad in buckskin shoes, are pliable and acutely sensitive, and play the clutch as if it were a soft pedal. His goggles throw off a steady fusillade of sand… The machine is throbbing as if it were a great heart, and the pulsations go through him as part of the system. The wheel tires get egg-shaped from the momentum. Chewing dust and blinking wind he feels the speed gathering from all parts, from the hub bolt to the inmost nut of the body, like a rising tide.[55]

Oldfield would emerge as auto racing's first working-class hero, both in the sense of bringing into racing the popular ethos of such underclass sports as boxing and cycling, and as the working person's champion in a sport founded and dominated by millionaires. Oldfield cemented the idea that drivers won races, not machines, an idea that neither the tycoons nor the manufacturers who controlled motoring thought very highly of.

Notes

1 Cf. *The Horseless Age*, 8:14 (July 3, 1901), p. 313.
2 *The Auto Era* (Cleveland: Winton Motor Carriage Co.), 3:7 (Mar. 1904), p. 16.
3 *The Motor World*, 1:1 (Oct. 4, 1900), p. 11.
4 *Motor World* (New York), 3:14 (Jan. 2, 1902), p. 353; *Motor Talk*, 1:7 (July 1905), p. 21; Henri Fournier, "The Automobile," *Annual Report… of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1901, p. 594; *The Medical Sentinel*, 14:10 (Oct. 1906), p. 456.
5 *New York Times*, June 21, 1903, p. 6.
6 *The Horseless Age*, 8:18 (July 31, 1901), p. 388.
7 Ibid., 1:11 (Sept. 1896), p. 2.
8 Ibid., 2:1 (Nov. 1896), p. 25. H. L. Barber, *The Story of the Automobile: Its History and Development from 1760 to 1917* (Chicago: A.J. Munson Co., 1917), p. 73.
9 *The Horseless Age*, 8:12 (June 19, 1901), p. 255; 8:8 (May 22, 1901), p. 165.
10 Ibid., 8:10 (June 5, 1901), pp. 209–210.

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11 Ibid., 7:17 (Jan. 23, 1901), p. 12.
12 *Town and Country*, Dec. 3, 1904, p. 28; *The Horseless Age*, 9:12 (Mar. 19, 1902), p. 356.
13 *New York Tribune*, Aug. 29, 1901, p. 8.
14 Ibid., Apr. 15, 1900, p. 2.
15 *New York Sun*, Apr. 15, 1900, p. 6.
16 *The Horseless Age*, 9:4 (Jan. 22, 1902), p. 116.
17 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:21 (Sept. 6, 1902), p. 944.
18 G. F. Baright, "The Automobile in Newport," *Town and Country*, Sept. 27, 1902, pp. 14–17.
19 *The Saint Paul Globe* (Minnesota), Aug. 31, 1901, p. 1.
20 *New York Sun*, Aug. 31, 1901, p. 1.
21 *The Automobile* (New York), 9:3 (July 18, 1903), p. 55.
22 *Collier's*, Feb. 4, 1905, p. 12.
23 Robert Bruce, "The Promise of the Automobile in Recreative Life," *Outing*, Apr. 1900, pp. 81–85.
24 *Outing* (New York), Apr. 1903, p. 132.
25 *The Motor World*, 3:7 (Nov. 14, 1901), p. 202.
26 *Galvaston Daily News*, Sept. 21, 1902, p. 12.
27 *The Horseless Age*, 10:6 (Aug. 6, 1902), p. 133.
28 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Sept. 6, 1902, p. 3.
29 Ibid., Nov. 30, 1901, p. 1.
30 *The Horseless Age*, 8:31 (Oct. 30, 1901), p. 631.
31 Ibid., 8:6 (May 8, 1901), p. 118.
32 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:23 (Aug. 20, 1902), pp. 1037–1038.
33 Ibid., 4:26 (Oct. 11, 1902), p. 1186.
34 Ibid., 4:23 (Aug. 20, 1902), p. 1040.
35 *The Auto Era*, 4:2 (Oct. 1904), pp. 3–4, 18.
36 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Nov. 10, 1900, p. 12.
37 *La Locomotion* (Paris), quoted in *The Horseless Age*, 10:12 (Sept. 17, 1902), p. 295.
38 *New York Times*, Aug. 30, 1901, p. 3.
39 Ibid.
40 *Motor World* (New York), 3:8 (Nov. 21, 1901), p. 226; *New York Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1901, p. 7.
41 *Motor World* (New York), 3:2 (Oct. 10, 1901), p. 35. See also *The Evening World* (New York), Oct. 11, 1901, p. 1.
42 *Motor World* (New York), 3:8 (Nov. 21, 1901), p. 226.
43 *New York Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1901, p. 1.
44 *Motor World* (New York), 3:8 (Nov. 21, 1901), p. 225.
45 Ritchie G. Betts, "Faster than the Locomotive," *Outing*, Jan. 1902, pp. 392–400.

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46 William Salisbury, *The Career of a Journalist* (B.W. Dodge & Co.: New York, 1908), p. 285.
47 *The Evening World* (New York), Nov. 21, 1901, p. 9.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., Nov. 28, 1901, p. 5. Note an article by Fournier on racing appeared in the *Sunday World* for Nov. 3, 1901.
50 *The Horseless Age*, 8:36 (Dec. 4, 1901), p. 779.
51 *Motor World* (New York), 3:2 (Oct. 10, 1901), pp. 39–40.
52 Henri Fournier, "The Automobile," *The Independent*, pp. 2936–2938.
53 *Motor World* (New York), 5:7 (Nov. 13, 1902), p. 191.
54 Ibid., 5:16 (Jan. 15, 1903), p. 486; 3:12 (Dec. 19, 1901), p. 307. "[Fournier]...has now retired on his laurels, and the serious part of business life, as director of one of the large Paris garages, has claimed him for itself. His massive frame at the present time would require a severe thinning-down process were he to again think of handling the steering wheel of a racing-car. Business has left its mark upon him, but the happy-go-lucky Henri of five years ago is still the same Henri of to-day." Charles Jarrott, *Ten Years of Motors and Motor Racing* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1906), p. 214.
55 *Motor Talk*, 1:7 (July 1905), p. 21.

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5
Outlaws

Abstract: *Once auto racing was pushed to the track and manufacturers began becoming more involved in the sport, the door was open to the participation of working-class drivers. One of these in particular, Barney Oldfield, revolutionized the sport by introducing a new technique that allowed him to dominate track racing for the next decade. Oldfield exemplified the working-class values of his fans that conflicted with the elite ideals of the amateur gentlemen who governed racing. The racing authorities tried repeatedly to exclude Oldfield pushing him to be a racing "outlaw" but ultimately they could not keep him off the track due to his immense popularity.*

Messer-Kruse, Timothy. *Tycoons, Scorchers, and Outlaws: The Class War That Shaped American Auto Racing*.
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In the summer of 1902 serious auto racing was in its third season and except for events in which the great French champion Henri Fournier appeared, relatively few people were drawn to the track. The first track races in Philadelphia, at the Point Breeze bicycle track, in June of 1902, attracted only a few hundred spectators. Races in Baltimore held on Decoration Day only attracted a small crowd of "barely a hundred people." Unlike the year before when crowds could be counted on to come to any automobile event, partly just to see an automobile driving at speed, public interest had ebbed. Many noted that the "novelty pure and simple had worn off of automobiling."[1]

The Brighton Beach races held at the end of August were considered to be the best planned and most important of any track races held to that point and expectations for them ran high. "The success of the meet will mean the establishment of track racing as a popular feature of automobiling." Disappointingly, on race day the crowd was thin. When the gate was finally tallied and all the contractors paid, the club realized a significant loss.

More troubling than the poor ticket sales were reports that the spectators seemed "apathetic." Even the race organizers admitted that the races had lacked drama. As was typical for elite drivers who had little to gain by winning other than bragging rights at the clubhouse, the races were tame. "At no time during the races, however, did the drivers take grave chances. There were no hairbreadth escapes, and only wide 'berths' were given when overtaking another chauffeur." Club brass, discussing what to do to attract a larger crowd, came up with the idea of having more handicapped races to add excitement to the contests.[2]

Undoubtedly, the club officials were partly correct—closer, more thrilling races would improve the sports appeal. But one element they didn't consider was who the winner of those races was. Twenty-five-year-old Harry S. Harkness was hardly the sort of hero the broad public could identify with. Harkness was the son of an executive of the Standard Oil company who lived in the family mansion on Fifth Avenue. He had personally travelled to Paris to purchase a big Mercedes that he nicknamed the "Crimson Cyclone." Harkness and most of the other competitors fit perfectly in the mold of a tycoon scorcher that would provoke jeers were he to hazard his way through any of New York's poorer neighborhoods.[3]

Racing had become thoroughly identified in print and popular culture with an elite and exclusive culture whose values weren't widely shared outside of the country club. Immigrant and working-class communities

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had come to view these contests as part of a world that was not their own and not surprisingly chose not to pay to attend an event that was as likely to be covered in the society pages of the newspaper as in the sports pages.

While poor attendance worried race organizers in the east, the picture was quite different in the west where several events demonstrated the possibility of auto racing becoming a popular sport. In September, Cleveland packed its grandstand with an estimated 10,000 people on a Tuesday, "hardly a holiday," but still a day on which people turned out.[4]

The most likely reason why the auto races in Cleveland pulled huge crowds while the ones held in the east did not was that the auto clubs of the midwest, while filled with their share of each city's wealthiest citizens, also had auto manufacturers among their leadership. The Cleveland Auto Club's competition committee was headed by Charles B. Shanks who was the marketing manager for the Winton Automobile Company and editor of Winton's in-house magazine, *The Auto Age*.[5] Detroit's Automobile Association consisted mostly of aspiring manufacturers who either raced their own inventions or enlisted their mechanics to do so. The Detroit club's first race in 1901 had a program that read like a manufacturer's directory. Among the competitors were Alexander Winton of the Winton Automobile Company of Cleveland; Jonathon Maxwell of Maxwell Motors of Tarrytown, New York; Edgar Apperson of Apperson Automobiles of Kokomo, Indiana; W.T. White of White Motors and W.C. Baker of Baker Electric, both of Cleveland; and Henry Ford.[6]

It was also in the midwest where the possibilities of racing as a business opportunity were first explored. While the elite auto clubs of the east rented horse tracks and sold tickets to defray the costs, they weren't dependent on these revenues to hold such events. The Automobile Club of America (ACA), with its high dues and many special assessments levied on its members, was awash in money and while turning a profit is always preferred, it was never the goal of its racing committee. However, in the midwest, enterprising promoters, having seen large crowds turn out to races, pioneered organizing these events commercially. In November of 1901, Max Fleischmann, promoter and leader of the Cincinnati auto club, announced he was organizing a race in that city and had hired the manager of the Cincinnati Reds baseball club (which he also owned) Frank C. Bancroft to manage it. The races took place with Henri Fournier appearing as the main card, and Carl Fischer taking second in a few competitions. After the 1902 fall racing season drew to

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a close, race promoters in Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago formed a syndicate to coordinate event dates and create a racing circuit for professional drivers.[7]

Because of the active promotion and participation of local companies and manufacturing concerns, races in midwestern cities were tinged with a feeling of local pride, a residue of the town boosterism of the early nineteenth century that lingered well into the twentieth. Many of these manufacturers had risen from rags to riches, just as many of their workers aspired to do. Winton was a Scottish immigrant who labored in foundries before starting his own bicycle business. Apperson and Maxwell both grew up on farms in Indiana and both were apprenticed to machine shops as boys. Henry Ford was still then known as a "clever mechanic" rather than the captain of industry he was to become. While many of these men were then ascending the social ladder as their companies prospered, they were not considered in the same class of leisured, inherited fortunes that dominated the east coast auto clubs. They weren't "public-be-damned" scorchers.

Moreover, these inventors came to the track with very practical motives—establishing the reputation of their vehicles, the fruits of their labors, more than their own glory as speedsters. While most of the vehicles competing in the east were French and German imports, in the midwest the homemade products were most prominent. There was more than a slight tinge of nativism to the Cleveland crowds roaring for their hometown champion, Winton, as he beat Harry Harkness who was driving the racer he had purchased in France. All these factors combined to bring to the midwestern racetracks a crowd far more representative of the working-class cities in which they were held than the races held in the east. Such working-class crowds were eager to find a hero they could really get behind, someone who even more than Winton or Ford seemed to be one of them, who expressed them. In the fall of 1902, such a hero blazed onto the scene and almost single-handedly remade the sport of auto racing.

In October 1902, a 24-year-old former bicycle champion, former amateur boxer, and former factory worker climbed up and grabbed the handlebars (chosen over a wheel as it allowed for more leverage which was needed to turn the heavy, stiff, machine). Berna "Barney" Oldfield (Figure 5.1) prepared to race the "freak" racing machine he had built with his partners, fellow bicycle professional Tom Cooper and the car's designer, Henry Ford. It was a machine designed for one thing—speeding

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on a dirt track. It had four cylinders each about the size of a large coffee can that at top revolutions could produce 80 horsepower, about the same as the most advanced French racing machines. It had only one gear. Its steering mechanism could only make left turns. Its engine could only run 20 miles or so before needing to be refilled with oil. Oldfield had only driven it once, two days earlier.

Oldfield was paired up with the Cleveland Auto Club's Charles Shanks, who Alexander Winton had tapped to pilot his racing machine that held all track world records from one to fifteen miles. The "Winton Bullet" was just as specialized a freak racing machine as Oldfield's, though its equally massive four cylinders were arrayed horizontally to keep the car's profile low to the ground. Shanks took the lead with the pistol shot as his auto had a gear box. But as Oldfield's ponderous car picked up momentum he passed the Bullet and won handily and set a new Grosse Pointe track record of 1:04 and one-fifth for the mile. Reporter's described Oldfield's driving as "hair-raising" though they didn't quite know how to describe it.[8]

Cooper and Oldfield had taken up auto racing as a purely commercial enterprise. Using all their savings they had purchased the two prototype racers from Ford and improved them. They formed a partnership with a manager and publicist who began making bookings for racing exhibitions in which Cooper and Oldfield would race each other in the twin automobiles, which were distinguished only by their paint jobs. But with winter coming on they were able to make exhibitions only in Toledo and Dayton before being forced to mothball their machines until the following spring.

During this long interregnum, not much was reported about Oldfield. When he was scheduled to appear at the first track meet of the season, at the Empire City track, just outside of New York City, little was known about him other than that he was a "westerner" and had a reputation as a "daredevil." Attendance on race day was better than it had been in the previous season, but the 5,000 people who sat in the grandstand only filled it halfway.

Oldfield and his managers did what they could to promote him by playing on his reputation as a "daredevil." Their plan was not just to win races but to develop racing as a show that would have a reliable box office draw and then barnstorm it around the country much as circuses did. Some aspects of Oldfield's performance they had clearly tried to make more theatrical. When he stepped out onto the Empire City track, he

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wore a flaming scarlet coat of red leather. As it turned out, after this race, Oldfield was able to shed such gimmicks and just be himself.[9]

Oldfield knew that his vaudevillian scarlet leathers and his daredevil reputation had to be fulfilled that day for his commercial plans to succeed. The weather was good, the track was rolled hard, and he seized his chance. His chance came in the championship match against Charles G. Wridgway, ACA member and manager of the Banker Brothers automobile dealership, and soon to be vice-president of the Peerless Automobile company. From the start it was evident that Wridgway was irrelevant and Oldfield's only opponent was the clock.

> The race was probably the most exciting ever witnessed in America. As Oldfield dashed around the track everybody could see that he was risking his life to break the world's record. His big machine, flashing with gasolene flames, almost lifted itself from the ground, and at each turn, when it swerved to the outer rail, it seemed as though it and the rider would be dashed to pieces.

When Oldfield roared past the grandstand in his last turn, the band struck up "Hiawatha" and the audience mobbed him. Oldfield ignored the imploring crowd, shouting to be heard above the cheers to ask if his time was official. When told that it was he broke down crying. "I am so happy!" he exclaimed. "I have risked my life, but I have won."[10]

Oldfield had triumphed doubly that day (Figure 5.1). He had obviously won a title, "world record holder," that he knew to be highly marketable. But he had also just stuck his thumb in the eye of the tycoons who had clumsily tried to block his ascent to fame.

Back in November when Oldfield first appeared in Detroit, he had broken the world's record for a mile on a circular track. After Oldfield outdistanced the Winton company's driver, Charles Shanks, by the unprecedented distance of nearly a mile, Alexander Winton charged that his ignition assembly had been sabotaged before the race.

Oldfield's records of from one to five miles were not allowed by the American Automobile Association (AAA) because he had not sought the association's permission before attempting them. W. E. Metzger, organizer of the Detroit races, presented four affidavits from judges and timers attesting to the feat to a meeting of the AAA in the club rooms of the ACA, but was denied. "The stumbling block in the way of the acceptance of the records was a section of the much-criticized racing rules of the AAA that has been generally overlooked." Rule 67(a) reads, "No

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FIGURE 5.1 *Barney Oldfield at the Indianapolis track in 1914*

time shall be considered official unless the time is taken by an official of a 'recognized meeting,' or by one appointed subject to the approval of the Racing Committee." Soon after Oldfield's achievement was reported in the press, a telegram "from Cleveland" enquired of the board if such sanction had been granted. A reporter from the *Motor World* discovered that none of the existing recognized records were for competitions that were sanctioned according to Rule 67(a) either under the AAA or the ACA preceding it. Chairman Stewart said, "We have no doubt whatever that the Oldfield records were made, but owing to the informality it is out of the question to stamp them officially." Clearly Oldfield had been singled out because he was not the sort of amateur gentleman the leaders of the eastern auto clubs thought belonged in the sport.[11]

At least one auto journalist was aware of these backroom controversies and understood that Oldfield's victory that day also represented his revenge against the tycoons.

"Oldfield makes his living by automobile racing, and he felt the action of his rival keenly. He cried for joy to-day, it was said, because his victory placed him on an equal footing with his rivals."[12]

A month later Oldfield broke his own record at the Indianapolis fairgrounds, lowering the mile mark to 59 and three-fifths.[13] Then on July 4

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at Columbus, Ohio, Oldfield set new records at all distances to ten miles and set a new mile record at 56 and two-fifths.[14] Two weeks after that he clipped two-fifths of a second off his mile record on a half-mile track in Jackson, Michigan.[15]

At first many in the specialized automotive press interpreted Oldfield's achievements as an indication of the advancement of American auto manufacturers over their French and German counterparts whose racers had long outmatched American cars. "Isn't it time that this everlasting crowing about the superiority of French-made machines should cease? Take Saturday's races at Empire City track as an illustration. With two such crackerjacks as a Mors and a Panhard, both stripped to the bone, and both in the hands of expert drivers, one would naturally expect records of American machines to have been smashed to atoms. But what was the result? Neither of these widely-advertised machines came within hailing distance of Barney Oldfield's time on a machine made in America."[16]

According to this view, Oldfield's track record was looked upon as suspect because he broke them using a freak car: "Oldfield's machine is simply a unique piece of mechanism, impracticable as an automobile, inasmuch as it can never be used on the public highway."[17] Oldfield's significance as a uniquely innovative and skilled driver was not appreciated because he was seen as "a mere manipulator of a racing engine." He was simply, as the editor of one auto magazine concisely put it, "a human adjunct to a piece of mechanism which has made phenomenal time around a race track."[18]

However, even such critics were won over after Oldfield appeared a second time at the Empire City track outside of New York City in late July 1903. Oldfield's name had been widely advertised and his match race with F. A. La Roche, driving a French racer, was the marquee of the midsummer race. La Roche was a charter member of the ACA, a tycoon who had interests "in several electrical and motor companies," and who owned the largest importing company for foreign automobiles in the United States. The box office power of such a match was demonstrated by crowds, upward of ten thousand, that were said to have "outnumbered any gathering of the kind America has seen."[19]

Oldfield, now with some leverage due to his popularity, demanded that the order of events be arranged so that he could take a solo run against time and the mile world's record just before the championship match with La Roche. This contract stipulation was clearly pointed at

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the leadership of the eastern auto clubs who had shown reluctance to make his records official. "Oldfield's attack on the mile record was made the second event of the afternoon, he having requested that this special feature of the meet be presented at this stage of the game because he wanted to settle his record standing here in the East while the chairman of the AAA Race Committee was referee." With the AAA officials looking on, Oldfield electrified the crowd with a race against his own previous record, lowering it by nearly 6 seconds to 55 four-fifths.[20]

Judging by the detail of the descriptions made of this record-breaking run, it was here at the Empire City track in July of 1903 that the nature of Oldfield's achievement became widely recognized. Suddenly, keen observers understood that Oldfield was not smashing track records because he had some sort of monster machine or a unique disregard for his own life, rather, he had innovated and mastered a hitherto unknown driving technique. His track dominance was not a fluke of character or of technology, but a clearly observable skill that he had acquired.

> There was no time to think of much, to marvel at the daring of the man or to wonder why he kept to the outside of the track away from the pole, before there came an exhibition of hair-raising daring and nerve and skill that explained. Keeping near the outer fence, Oldfield suddenly seemed to be seized with terrible convulsions, and then the car veered violently and shot into the turn, skimming like a huge projectile close to the rail. As the front wheels turned, in response to the driver's sudden and tremendous work at the steering wheel which caused his strange contortions, the rear wheels slid sideways for a distance of forty or fifty feet, throwing up the dirt in a cloud that drove the spectators near the fence, hurrying away, pell-mell. It was this that caused the whole great crowd to gulp and gasp with a sound that blended into one long moan. Faces of men used to all sorts of dare-devil sports blanched, and experienced hands holding watches shook as if with ague. The exhibition was Oldfield's method of making a turn, that was all. He ran wide and turned in suddenly, instead of trying to hug the pole as closely as possible.[21]

Oldfield's technique of skidding into the corner and using the skid to whip the tail of his car around to point the nose into the straight-away cut deeply against the conventional wisdom and practice of racing. At first it was believed due to the need to cut power on the turns, hugging the inside of the track was a sure-fire winning strategy for it both blocked opponents and shortened the distance around each lap. Regular track

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events, many experts thought, weren't much of a test of skill because of the "decided advantage" the driver at the pole had over all others. Alexander Winton, at the time the most successful track racer in the world, expressed his skepticism that track racing was much of a sport because of this problem. "One car will get the pole from the start, he argues, and keep it, making it impossible for the other machine to pass." To compensate for this advantage, many thought the best test of the "operator's skill" was the pursuit race, in which four racers were equally spaced around the track and all started at once. When a car was passed, it was out of the race.[22]

The need to cut power on the curves gave lighter cars an advantage as they could get back to speed more quickly than heavier ones after a turn. So pronounced was this bias in favor of lighter cars that in some races the bigger and more powerful cars simply didn't bother to compete: one report of a race in 1900 explained, "The track is only half a mile in length, and the turns were so sharp that the heavy racers were not brought out in competition, the lighter vehicles having it all their own way." This was one of the reasons that Willie Vanderbilt shunned track racing, "as he cannot run his machine for what it is worth at the park, as he has to slow down at the curves and cannot get going well before he has to cut the speed again."[23]

Charles Jarrott, one of the great pioneer English racers, spoke of his driving technique in the 1901 Paris to Berlin race: "As to the speed, on the wide open roads a terrific pace had to be maintained, but in rounding corners it was absolutely necessary to slow down." Even the great Fournier cautioned against taking curves too quickly: "The good driver will never let his machine go too fast round a turn . . . The reckless man will never win. He is the pitcher who goes too many times to the well. The secret of success is to keep out of trouble, and that means to go slowly and carefully where there is danger." Just weeks before Oldfield's first public demonstration of this skill, W. C. Baker, a racer whose electric "Torpedo" was one of the fastest cars of its day, described the limitations of the track: "It is morally impossible for any high speed racer to negotiate the turns of any regular circular horse track at full speed; hence it is obvious that the power must be shut off at the turns, and the highest possible speed be made on the stretches or longer sides of the track. Therefore, as soon as the machine is around the turns, the speed must accelerate with a jump, so to speak, as the time and distance on the stretches is short."[24]

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Oldfield's obvious skillful driving won breathless accolades from both experts and the general public. L. Lemaitre, a well-known European racer, watched Oldfield's exhibition at the Empire City track, and exclaimed, "Oldfield is worth a dozen Fourniers…I never saw such work, on a track or elsewhere. He is a marvel, and better still, he is a thorough mechanic."[25]

Oldfield's dramatic style of driving caused some observers to attribute his success to nerve alone. Many described his approach to racing as a "devil-may-care style of driving." But others recognized his singular talent and defended his driving skill. "Now as to the 'devil-may-care' style of driving, it is certainly a gross libel on Oldfield to talk of such a thing. As well talk of the devil-may-care seamanship of Charlie Barr in piloting the Reliance. Neither Oldfield nor Barr had conniption fits during the operation; on the contrary, they kept their wits about them and just sat tight to win…the man who thinks Barney himself is not keenly on the alert all the time simply doesn't know what he is talking about."[26]

When Oldfield returned to the Empire City track on October 4, he did so in a different racing machine, the Winton Bullet rather than the Ford 999, and again set records proving that his records were not just a result of the "freak autos" he rode. Again lowering records from seven to fifteen miles, and, perhaps most importantly, drawing an even larger crowd than the largest-ever that showed up to his previous meet, Oldfield swayed even his most stubborn critics. "It was a study to watch the faces of these quondam critics as they gazed open-mouthed at the terrific speeding machine, as it swept past the judges' stand, and to hear them later yelling like Comanche Indians as Barney negotiated mile after mile within a fraction of a second of the world's record. Yet even before the echoes of the cheers of the crowd had died away these same men were busy trying to explain that, after all, it wasn't the machine, but the driver, and in the same breath inventing excuses for the poor showing made by the Gray Goose, or whatever its name may be."[27] Again the big Sunday papers splashed photos across their front pages and hailed the champion.[28]

Everyone seemed to love the cigar-chomping man of the people except for the racing authorities. After the meet was over, the AAA stripped Oldfield of his records and finishes for the day because his entry form had been submitted late.[29]

The popular press wasted no time hailing Oldfield as a common man's hero. Oldfield's achievement at Yonkers was soon spread across the nation

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in a story illustrated with a halftone photograph of Oldfield, bare-headed and begoggled, whipping around a curve. In the wake of his thrilling runs that summer, newspapers began not only reporting his wins and times, but profiling him. News of his races, complete with numerous photographs, were splashed across the front page of the Sunday newspapers, the media most likely to make its way into the apartments and cottages of working-class readers. The *New York Tribune* described him as coming from rural Ohio, former amateur boxer and professional bicycle racer. "Oldfield drives a car which he helped build himself, and keeps in training just like an athlete." Wire services distributed a lengthy story first published in the *New York Herald* recounting not only Oldfield's background and aspiration to "go a mile in 35 seconds," but also describing his innovative driving techniques. "It was easy to reconcile the maker of world's track records with the square-shouldered young Hercules of the laughing brown eyes who talked with me of miles traveled faster than the wind."[30]

A day after the race, Oldfield appeared uninvited and unannounced at the Broadway offices of *Automobile Topics*, the journal that had been one of his harshest critics to date. Those in the office didn't recognize him with his hair combed and his neat, clean tweed jacket sporting a small championship medal on the lapel that had been given to him by the Columbus auto club a few weeks earlier and which the reporter he spoke with perceptively observed was "plainly an object still of admiration by its possessor rather than an invitation of envious glances as such decorations usually seem to be." He introduced himself as "Barney Oldfield," not in the manner of society folk who would have said "Mr. Barney Oldfield."

Oldfield was there to explain himself. "It's just a plain business proposition with me, or, in other words, I am a professional racer, and nothing more. If people care to see me get all the speed I can out of an automobile, and they pay their gate money for such an exhibition, why it's only fair I should get my share of that gate money for doing the trick. That's all there is to it. I'm a professional racing man; nothing more."

His interviewer was surprised when Oldfield explained in elaborate mechanical detail all the changes and improvements he had made in his racer based on his track experience. "To listen to him explaining why he had regulated his ignition to such and such, and his compression to so and so, the relative value of differential and ordinary axles, how he had changed a carburetor here and an inlet valve there, the whys and wherefores of a hundred changes he had effected . . . was to listen to a technical

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dissertation on automobile construction which any college professor of mechanics might envy."

He recounted a bit of his own biography, how he had indeed been a professional bicycle rider but only in the summer months—in the winter he had to go to work to make his living, eventually selling bicycles and "rubber goods." From his days on the bicycle he had experienced speed and the pain of accidents: he broke his collarbone twice, a number of ribs, smashed his face and knocked himself unconscious. But these things didn't bother him much. "I'm only a workingman and used to hard knocks. Things that would kill a man used to comfortable living would hardly hurt me."[31]

So taken with Oldfield was the owner of the *Automobile Topics* that he announced in recognition that Oldfield was "the greatest exponent of speed the automobile turf in America has seen," and because there was no appropriate trophy for mastery of the track, he was himself having struck a championship medal, listing all of Oldfield's track records, to be presented to him at the upcoming races in Cleveland.[32]

Oldfield was not the only professional driver to rise to fame in the sport's first decade, but he was by far the most vocal and frank about being one. In many ways, Oldfield represented the antithesis of the elite amateur ideal of sport—that the glory of the pursuit was all a true sportsman should ever seek. Oldfield on the other hand relished telling reporters that his only aim was to make a living. "I am in this dangerous business for the money alone and not for the notoriety that can be obtained. You know for the first year or so, a fellow takes great pride in clipping out newspaper stuff that is printed about him . . . but it all grows old and after those hospital sieges a fellow naturally begins to turn to the bank book instead of the scrap book."[33]

To Oldfield, the "millionaires" who claimed to be in the racing game for pleasure or sport were fools. "Millionaires who say that they race for pleasure are either ignorant or lying . . . If I had [their] money I'd hire some one else to take the risk, and that's the truth. Pleasure? Not for mine."[34]

Most galling to the defenders of the amateur ideal was Oldfield's denigration of the tokens and trappings that they cherished as the pure and true goals of the sportsman. Oldfield had no use for the trophies, medals, and cups he earned, other than as publicity to push ticket sales to his next race. "When I defeated Vanderbilt for the world's championship at Ormond Beach three years ago, I had one dollar and eighty cents in my pocket . . . For my victory I got a million dollars worth of newspaper space

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and silver stein that was worth about thirty dollars…One American driver who made a remarkable showing in the Vanderbilt Cup race two years ago, was rewarded with a gold watch worth probably sixty dollars, from the manufacturer who made the car." Implied in his observation of the emptiness of such baubles was a class criticism of elites for whom the opposite was true—to the tycoon a winning purse meant little but the things that could not be easily bought were most coveted.

Besides dominating on the track, Oldfield earned the tycoon's ire by publicly denigrating road racing as a sport that didn't interest him as it wasn't truly a test of driving skill. Rather it was just a test of mechanical management. "As far as skill being the most component part of a road drivers ability, it does not figure so much at the steering wheel as at the throttle and spark advance. A man needs more skill in keeping his engine going than is necessary to guide the car over the course. You would be surprised how few good drivers there are in road races."[35] Later other working-class drivers, such as Ralph DePalma, echoed his analysis: "The straightaway opportunities [on the track] are slight, and this means that a driver must be more skillful at the wheel to drive well on an oval than on the road."[36]

Besides his on-track persona—the cigar clenched in his teeth, the flask hung by string around his neck, his hatless visage, all markers of his origins—Oldfield's candor about money also expressed working-class values. Where elites were tight-lipped about their incomes, workers were generally open about their incomes, partly because an ethic of class solidarity encouraged workers to share information about their wages to thwart employer favoritism and discrimination. Oldfield freely boasted of his earnings, both when they were high and low. In 1905 he told reporters he was on track to earn fifty thousand dollars that season, or more than the president of the United States. In doing so, Oldfield was quick to tie his riches to his humble beginnings. "There were times when I was nearly starved, and there were times when a dime looked as big as a barn to me."[37]

Unlike the millionaire racers who prided themselves on their daring, working-class drivers like Oldfield didn't relish the dangers of their profession but considered it an unavoidable evil that they hoped to escape. Throughout his career Oldfield continuously announced his desire to retire. "This racing is risky business and if I pull through next season I hope to do so with enough money to insure my being well fixed for the rest of my life, though, with capital invested in a legitimate business which will not necessitate risking my neck on the track. I am not prepared to say whether I will go to the Florida meet for the mile record.

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Racing is a business with me and I must figure as what my expenses would be." In the end, none of Oldfield's off-track ventures panned out and he ended up racing to the end of his life, in his last years somewhat pathetically driving a tractor as a gimmick.[38]

For the rest of his first season Oldfield's dominance was so great that it made intrinsically exciting events boring. At the Cleveland Auto Club's second annual races held at the Glenville track in 1903, Oldfield won every standard event he entered by a wide margin. "On the whole the first day of the races was somewhat tame, as there was nothing to match Barney Oldfield, and even his hair raising drives seemed to grow monotonous to the crowd." In his first event, a five-mile event, he outdistanced his closest of five rivals by a quarter mile. In the next 10-mile race, he finished a half mile ahead. No one came close to Oldfield in the day's marquee event. Oldfield's celebrity was such that his last minute announcement that he would not attend a race in Chicago slowed the turnstiles and caused the Chicago Auto Club to lodge a protest with the AAA who threatened to ban Oldfield from racing should he cancel an agreed upon contest again.[39]

Oldfield's racing fame soon transcended the track and he became a national celebrity and hero even for people who had never watched an auto race. When the racing season drew to a close in November, he packed his cars onto rail cars and raced in the West. "Barney Oldfield is demonstrating anew down on the coast that it is not necessarily the fastest machine which wins, and that races are won by the iron nerve and deftness of the man who manipulates the flyer. Tremendous crowds have witnessed the meet on the coast, where Oldfield has had little difficulty in defeating all his competitors."[40]

In the winter of 1904 Oldfield ventured south to participate in the Ormond beach races and reporters noted that "native Floridians," poor folk who came to the beach by "horse and mule driven rigs," were there for their hero. One reporter watched as a huckster hawked photographs of Vanderbilt and Oldfield:

> "Who wants Vanderbilt? Willie K. for 35 cents."
>
> "How much for Barney?" asked a sombrero-topped cracker.
>
> "Fifty for Oldfield. Everybody wants him and there's only a few of him left."
>
> The patriotic cracker paid his half-dollar without a murmur, and proudly carried away a reproduced half-tone of Charles Schmidt driving the Gray Wolf.[41]

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On a stretch of wide hard sand between Daytona and Ormond Florida the two most opposite drivers in the history of the sport met for the first and last time. In a 90-horsepower Mercedes he had imported just for this purpose and dubbed the "Ormond Flier" idled William K. Vanderbilt, heir to one of the largest fortunes in America.[42] Across from him in a Cleveland-built Winton racer was Barney Oldfield, the former newsie from Toledo, Ohio, who had worked his way up to being hired to pilot Winton's rolling advertisement through boxing, cycle racing, and sheer bootstrapping tenacity. Vanderbilt wore a fur coat and gripped the wheel in tailored gloves; Oldfield chomped on the end of cheap cigar—a trick he discovered saved his teeth from the bone-jarring bucking of a race.

When the pair roared off, five thousand members of high society and curious locals, or as one reporter described them, "summer-garbed crowds of fashionable men and women" and a "sprinkling of open-eyed and open-mouthed 'crackers,'" strained to see through the early morning mist blowing in from the sea, following the one-mile race as much by sound as by sight.[43] At the quarter mark, Vanderbilt and Oldfield were surprisingly even. Then Oldfield found a bit more speed and began to pull away, inch by inch. Vanderbilt tried to match by adjusting gears, but the maneuver cost him precious momentum he never regained. But Oldfield's glory was short-lived. Later that morning while running hard in a heat for the right to race for the coveted 50-mile championship race, the Winton Bullet shuddered as metal screeched and Oldfield's drive shaft snapped.[44]

With Oldfield out, the rest of the week's races belonged to Vanderbilt as his big Benz roared past all competitors winning all remaining nine contests including the coveted fifty-mile championship cup and breaking the one mile speed record to boot. As *Motor Age* observed, "Every time Mr. Vanderbilt went over the course he returned with victory and records dangling from his motor."[45]

When the beach races were over Vanderbilt returned to Long Island and his other leisure pursuits. Oldfield, needing to make a living at his craft, continued his circuit through the South, giving hair-raising exhibitions in Savannah, Macon, and New Orleans.[46]

As the first independent professional racer in America, Oldfield was immediately resented and rejected by the elite sporting world. Oldfield posed a dire threat to the monopoly of the auto tycoons over the sport. The editor of *Automobile Topics* was most blunt. "It is true I have time

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and again said that there was no place in automobilism for the 'professional,' and without being inconsistent I repeat it and at the same time don't hesitate to dub Barney Oldfield a professional. This means in plain English that as he stands at present he is absolutely outside the ranks of automobilists who represent either the sport or the industry. He simply stands for Barney Oldfield—a drawing card at a race meet."[47]

Oldfield's success as racing's first self-proclaimed professional race car driver forced racing's governors to decide the question of whether auto racing was to be an amateur or professional sport. This was a question that auto clubs had long had the luxury of skirting as the only professionals that had previously entered the sport were the servants of auto club members. Thus it was that for the first several years of racing no cash prizes were awarded.[48]

Prior to the summer of 1902, races offered only prizes in cups and "plate." The Long Island Automobile Club introduced "a new feature in automobile racing" by allowing winners the option of taking their prizes in cash. The club "deliberated at considerable length before deciding to allow cash awards. It was finally decided that the cash award would go far toward recompensing owners for outlays involved in getting their cars into racing trim, and compensate them for the expense involved in transportation, etc." When the Long Island Automobile Club offered cash prizes for its races at Brighton Beach, *Automobile Topics* cheered, saying, "The absurd rule making it obligatory to take a prize in other shape than cash under penalty of being considered a professional, may well be relegated to the waste-basket."[49]

Such liberalism was apparently not widely shared among club men. *Automobile Topics* noted that "the fear that someone might mistake a professional for an amateur driver is causing them to lose sleep." The editor thought such fears entirely unfounded: "One might just as well talk of a comparison between King Edward, Baron Rothschild, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Whitney or Mr. Lorillard and the jockeys they engage to ride their race horses. Nobody would dream of accusing any of these gentlemen of being professional because he accepts a cash prize when his horse wins . . . Neither is there any chance of mistaking an automobile owner for his hired chauffeur whom he pays to run his machine. This amateur-professional question is an insult to automobilism. It ought to be dropped."[50] Later that summer, the Rhode Island Automobile Club held its second race at Narragansett Park and simply listed all its prizes as cash amounts, no cups being advertised.[51]

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The elite outlook of the auto clubs that assumed control of racing led to a subtle but pervasive discrimination against "hired men." After the ACA's 1901 "Endurance Run" from Erie to Buffalo, employees of the Winton company, interviewed at the Winton garage on East 58th St., complained to the press that the ACA had discriminated against hired men. "Much dissatisfaction was expressed as to the conduct of the contest. Discrimination against the entries of manufacturers is alleged, in favor of private owners of the carriages entered. Vehicles belonging to club members and officials were given undue advantages over other contestants, it is said, notably in the positions in starting from, and in the necessary attentions at the various controls."[52]

Just prior to the opening of the 1902 racing season, a faction of the ACA demanded that racing rules clearly separate amateurs and professionals. The ACA held a number of closed door meetings on the issue and either couldn't agree or agreed to keep the status quo of having no policy on the issue, leaving local race organizers free to define categories as they wished. ACA president Shattuck was in favor of separation: "The matter of making an amateur definition, of separating the amateurs and professionals, had been neglected or overlooked, not deliberately ignored…Personally, I incline to the belief that there should be a distinction made. Take the case of two drivers, one an expert professional, the other an amateur, and the former would undoubtedly have a decided advantage. Take Fournier as an example. No amateur driver would have a ghost of a show against him. Given equal machines, the Frenchman would win out, with a big margin to spare…It is not right to pit the two classes of men against each other."[53]

After president Shattuck declared himself in favor of separating amateurs and pros, both Alexander Winton who was a member of the ACA but drove cars on behalf of his own firm, and Henri Fournier declared themselves amateurs and promised to accept no prizes in victory other than trophies and cups.[54]

Races organized by the auto clubs often designated separate divisions for "members" and "professionals."[55] When the Automobile Club of New England held their summer 1901 track races at the Brookline Country Club, the club specified that "only amateurs will be allowed to compete."[56] Later when it announced plans to build a speedway in Brookline, it announced that "in the races to be organized the professional element will be largely excluded, and well-known amateurs will be invited to compete."[57] The professionals at issue were hired men, not barnstormers like Oldfield.

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Other clubs allowed professionals and amateurs to compete against each other but in handicap races where club members would be given head starts of between thirty seconds and three minutes.[58] The tycoon scorcher crowd simply began planning for races that would exclude Oldfield and other up-and-coming professional drivers entirely. Plans were laid to hold a race meet at Aquidneck Park, near Newport, for the benefit of the elite who owned racing cars, "especially Harry Payne Whitney, Payne Whitney, Edward M. Robinson, J. De Forest Danielson, H.O. Havemeyer, Jr., and Lawrence Waterbury." Rather than label themselves amateurs, the tycoons planned to limit the races to "cottagers and residents."[59]

During the Brighton Beach races of 1903, a plucky Frenchman, M. Bernin, made his first appearance on an American track and "his handling of the speedy little car revealed a high order of skill and judgment which won general commendation and inspired the comment that the material for a worthy rival to Oldfield had been found." Bernin won four of his five heats but was later disqualified because he was a chauffeur employed by ACA member W. Gould Brokaw but driving in a competition for "gentleman drivers" only.[60]

The spread of track racing had broken the conventional wisdom of manufacturers most of whom would have agreed with the *Horseless Age* that only slow and long endurance runs truly advanced the practical technologies needed for the average car. Manufacturers were noticeably more active in the fall 1903 racing season. "From the list of entries in the various races it will be seen that quite a number of manufacturers have built special racers for the season. Odd and freak shapes predominate and fanciful names are quite generally applied to the monsters."[61] By that time some manufacturers, like Winton and his cross-town rival, Louis P. Mooers, had embraced track racing as the centerpiece of both their marketing and development of automobiles. Mooers explained at length why he thought endurance runs were "but a waste of time." He recalled an anecdote of a factory manager who had entered a new model in an endurance contest and it had operated perfectly and won first place over a thousand miles of steady driving. Then he handed it over to a "racing expert" who managed to disable the car in half an hour. The manager was furious but the owner of the firm was delighted as he knew that the defects discovered in this way are precisely the defects the buyer would find and which were profitably prevented. "Actual hard usage given in a half hour's racing was the practical test." Winners of endurance contests

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"fool their makers, who find themselves at the end of a season with a stock of unsold cars on hand and wonder how it happened."[62]

Manufacturers realized relatively early the advertising value of winning races and soon demanded that their managers win track trophies as well as keep up production schedules. For example, Henry Pardee, a manager of the Packard Automobile Company, hired Harry Cunningham, the mechanician of Ford's record-holding car the 999, away from Ford and charged him with training former bicycle racing star Albert Champion to race on four wheels. After Champion proved a disappointing student, Pardee pressed Cunningham into driving Packard's new Gray Wolf, a machine boasting all the horsepower of larger racers but extremely light in comparison, at the Brighton Beach track in New York.

Cunningham muscled the Gray Wolf into a succession of third place finishes in the early rounds of the meet but Pardee demanded more. In a pitched argument in the pits, Cunningham refused to throttle the Gray Wolf any more, for "if I do try it, as sure as you will see I will crash." Pardee dismissed Cunningham on the spot and called for Champion, extracting a promise that Champion would take the Wolf as fast as it would run.

While Champion was starting out on his first laps, Cunningham walked with several newsmen down the track and pointed to two posts along the fence, and told the reporters that if Champion was going to crash, he would plunge through the fence there. The Gray Wolf roared out of the near turn and just as the uncannily astute Cunningham had predicted, lost control and tore through the fence between those two posts.

When they reached Champion's crumpled body that had been tossed well clear of the wreckage, his right femur was sticking sideways out of his trousers. Champion survived all his injuries but for the rest of his life his nickname would be "up and down" because of the lopsided way he walked.[63]

The deepening involvement of manufacturers in racing inevitably drew them into taking an interest in the administration of the sport. Manufacturers, like most businessmen, had a fundamentally conservative outlook that craved steady, consistent, and predictable conditions in which to operate. The AAA's racing board was anything but.

The first and foremost duty of the AAA racing board was to formulate, promulgate, and adjudicate clear, consistent rules for the sport. Though AAA wrote a stringent set of racing rules in early 1903 it failed to enforce them consistently. Largely this failure was a legacy of the fact that the

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AAA was a marionette of the ACA and tycoons believed rules were essential for everyone but themselves.[64]

Between 1903 and 1905, there were many instances of races being announced without the requirements for entrants being clear, of racing divisions being one day organized by weight and another by horsepower, of entrants being disqualified for infractions of rules they claimed were not published before races. But most galling to many manufacturers was the fiasco the AAA and the ACA made of the selection of the national team for the Gordon Bennett International Cup race of 1903.

When asked what qualifications the drivers for the upcoming Gordon Bennett Cup race should have, newly elected president Scarritt implied the only criterion would be that they qualify for membership in the ACA. "In passing upon the application of any of these would-be drivers on the American team, the only question to be asked and answered is, 'Is he a gentleman in the highest and best sense of the word?' If he be such, is recognized as a man of integrity and honor, and passes as such among his fellows, the question is answered satisfactorily . . . If, however, his only qualification for membership be his ability to drive a car a quarter of a second faster than any of us, and he does not possess the qualifications I have named, he would never get my vote for membership."[65]

Winton Motor Carriage Co. sent an official letter to ACA enquiring as to the qualifications for the teams that were to represent America in the Gordon Bennett Cup race. Auto journalists grew excited at the prospect that Winton would enter one of its innovative racing cars and have Barney Oldfield drive it. "The inference is that the Winton people want to enter a car and have 'Barney' Oldfield drive." Winton was informed that the question of the "proposition to permit chauffeurs not members of the challenging clubs to figure in the race" was as yet unsettled and was to be referred to the contest committee for their determination.[66]

The ACA race committee then dawdled and ultimately deferred making a decision on admitting professional chauffeurs into the club until it had received word from the international committee if they would allow such men to drive in the race. Their indecision stemmed from intractable differences of opinion regarding what was termed "the injection of professionalism into the contest":

> The officers of the Automobile Club of America seem almost equally divided into two groups on this question of the employment of professional chauffeurs. On the one side are those who believe that the race should afford a combination of the acme of mechanical perfection with the acme

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> of driving skill and who assert that this combination is possible only by the use of paid experts at the wheel. Opposed to them are those who believe that the contest should remain strictly a gentleman's race, with members of the challenging clubs operating the competing machines.[67]

The ACA Board of Governors after a heated meeting agreed to vote for a revision of the rules so that "club members entering cars might select some one not a club member to drive for them, but that no one except a member . . . could enter in his own name. Thus, if Mr. Winton wanted Oldfield to drive a car for him, the entry could not be made in Oldfield's name and would have to be made in the name of Mr. Winton."[68] A week later, the racing committee accepted three entries, but not Winton's, choosing an unknown instead. "Automobile fiends are sorry that the entries for the Gordon Bennett cup closed without Winton nominating. This means that Barney Oldfield, by all odds the best man on this side, will not be seen in the great road race next season."[69]

The deadline for applications was announced for early January, then extended (according to one rumor, for the convenience of a manufacturer who was a member of the New York club). Then when too many teams had applied, the ACA announced that time trials to winnow the field were to be held sometime in April, somewhere near New York City, the exact location and time not to be revealed until a day or two before the race. Manufacturer complaints that such uncertainty hopelessly complicated their ability to plan were brushed aside. In the end, several teams attended the secret races on Long Island (secret as the ACA officials knew that public opposition to them was hot). All had breakdowns, leading to a confused and arbitrary outcome.

Those hoping that Oldfield or other experienced drivers might have a chance to challenge the famous racers of Europe for American pride were sorely disappointed. "There are many patriots, though, who are hoping against seeming fate that the Americans with their greater experience at the comparatively rough going may win . . . [but] the American cars are overmatched in power, and good as they are, the American drivers must be confessed to be but novices in the game . . . The absence of Barney Oldfield, Earl Kiser and Carl Fisher, the peers of any of the visitors as drivers, will be bewailed many times."[70] Likewise, manufacturers and their spokesmen had had enough:

> The most unfortunate phase of automobiling as a sport is that it attracts so many individuals of wealth, with no other claim to prominence. Such

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> men—as in the case of the Automobile Club of America—appear to labor under the delusion that wealth alone is akin to administrative genius. Hence they resent any advice as impertinence, and, as a consequence, we have these wretched blunders, like Staten Island and Paris-Madrid. On the heels of the dilletante administrators come a horde of daredevil scorchers who make a living by speeding machines on the public highways.
>
> It is high time that the business men engaged in the furtherance of the industry took matters in their own hands. Dismiss at once the pompous autocrats and hired chauffards. Otherwise they will kill automobiling outright between them.[71]

Wealthy racing enthusiasts viewed the arrival of professional racers such as Oldfield as a disaster to sportsmanship. They viewed these "hired men" as serving to corrupt the sport by their money-grubbing. Charles Jarrott, a pioneer racing clubman, complained bitterly in his memoir that the sport he loved had been ruined by money. "The sporting element [has been] obliterated altogether by the all-devouring monster of commercialism—the curse of the twentieth century." It wasn't like the "good old days" when most racers "were independent, racing their own cars."

> A race of the present to-day would offer none of the charm which a race of five years ago afforded. It would have none of the sporting feeling or good comradeship between the fellow-competitors. It would instead be a play, a tragedy—a tragedy of commercialism—a fight to death in the arena, with each hired man striving for the death of his rival, showing no mercy and expecting no quarter.[72]

The elite motor sportsmen viewed themselves as being assailed on two fronts by class forces they ultimately could not overcome. On the one hand they couldn't sustain their beloved open road race against the popular opposition to its engrossment of the common road and the widespread view that it fostered the "scorching evil"—a view even the most aloof clubman would have conceded was partly the result of their own private excesses. From the other side the rich clubmen felt the soul of their sport was becoming steadily corrupted by "commercialism."

"Commercialism" to the motoring elite was any pecuniary motive that intruded upon the purity of the amateur ideal. At the turn of the century some of the clubmen had even objected to the ACA sponsoring auto shows at the Madison Square Garden and then tut-tutted at the riot of crass commerce that transpired under its vast roof. Ironically, only the richest of

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Americans enjoyed the luxury of rising above the compromises that come with making a living and they looked down upon those not so well suited.

These men resented and, when practical, resisted as best they could the meteoric rise of professional drivers like Henri Fournier and Barney Oldfield because they saw them as money-grubbers who exuded nothing of the esprit de corps and generous camaraderie they believed they themselves exemplified. They failed to see that it was precisely because such drivers lacked the means to casually choose silver cups over purses of silver that they were beloved by millions of people who had to work for a living and didn't believe that by so doing they were "corrupted" or "crass." Quite the contrary, Oldfield's insistence that racing was a dangerous and mad thing he wished to do only so long as he needed to make his family financially secure seemed more sane and humane to them than the gentleman scorchers who strapped on their goggles for fun, excitement, and bragging rights.

To the genteel sportsmen, auto racing was about daring, nerve, and the ability to make sound judgments. For working-class drivers like Oldfield, auto racing was a matter of careful planning, laborious and steady practice, and hard work at developing needed technical skills. Whereas clubmen liked to think auto racing was cerebral, working-class drivers saw it as being more physical—a keen eye, a quick reflex, strong muscles all trained to a high degree of reliability. The elite view of racing had little appeal to working-class men and women who often worked or lived in dangerous circumstances. To them, seeking out more danger was not something to be celebrated. However, a scruffy journeyman, chomping on a stub of a cigar, skillfully skidding through turns and beating the tycoons who haughtily roared through their own crowded streets, now there was a sight to see!

By the end of racing's first decade, the tycoons who once controlled the sport seemed to have lost all interest in it, to the point that even some officials of the racing associations considered abandoning it. In 1912 the American Automobile Association, which once garnered enough registration fees for its races to pay its contest board chairman the princely salary of $6,000 per year, was reportedly losing thousands of dollars each year. News reports circulated that the AAA contemplated abandoning the racing game altogether in favor of exhibition tours and endurance contests and that those manufacturers still sponsoring teams were seeking an excuse to dismiss them. A man "prominent in racing affairs" was quoted as saying, "As a matter of fact, automobile racing

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has been killed as a sport, and has degenerated into a racing proposition… The Automobile Association of America would not worry in the least if racing were abandoned. The development of highways is more important than anything else now… it is felt that auto contests are nearing their finish."[73]

It is highly revealing that this "man prominent in racing affairs" made the distinction between racing as a "sport" and racing as a "racing proposition." Working-class racers like Oldfield simply couldn't afford the luxury of such semantics. For them, racing was a business and they had largely reached an accommodation with the tycoons and the AAA to simply exist in separate worlds. Oldfield and other professional racers were partitioned off by rules that separated "stock" cars from the sort of "freak" racers that he and the other barnstormers employed. But in 1909, in response to the fierce public backlash against the dangers of racing, Oldfield threatened this arrangement by announcing plans to race a stock car, an American-made product of the Stearns company. "The days of the freak racing car are over," Oldfield told reporters. "Hereafter, racing events will be confined to cars to that will be of some practical use after the race is over."[74]

The day before Oldfield's first race with the Stearns in Philadelphia, he received word from the AAA that his entry was denied and he would not be allowed to race because the racing authorities decided that the Stearns did not qualify as a stock car. Oldfield claimed the race officials never even examined his car and alleged that they were simply attempting to force him to pay more of his gate to the "AAA racing trust." Oldfield called the AAA "grafters" and threatened quitting the association entirely and racing exclusively as an outlaw:[75]

> I practically started automobile track racing in this country and have made my living out of it for seven years. In fact, after my fence smashing experiences and my many battles with promoters, AAA officials and others, it might be truthfully said that I have fought and bled in the cause. The only thing I have overlooked is dying for the game but at that I have given fate more than enough chances… I have paid thousands of dollars into the treasury of the A.A.A., have jumped through, walked lame and played dead at the command of the racing board so long that I am getting tired of hearing the crack of the ring masters' whip.[76]

This dispute seemed to liberate Oldfield from the relatively amicable but chilly detente he had kept with the AAA the previous years. In October of 1910, he served as a spokesman for many drivers who were furious at

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the callous management of the Vanderbilt Cup Race that year. Oldfield sent a public letter to Vanderbilt and his race director demanding that better security and protections for drivers be instituted or he would pull out of the upcoming "Grand Prize Cup" race he had contracted to compete that used the same course.

In the Vanderbilt Cup race of 1910, little effort was made to patrol the roads in order to keep crowds back from the roadway. Ray Harroun had complained to the race managers that a bridge lacking a guardrail was unsafe two weeks before the race and nothing was done to correct the issue. Harold Stone sailed off the road at the exact spot, killing his mechanician Matthew F. Bacon whose body was then left by the side of the road for two hours while fans picked souvenirs from the wreckage. Driver Joe Dawson was well in the lead of the race when he ran down a man, and stopped to help. Told falsely that the man was uninjured he continued on until he struck a second man and lost the race by a couple minutes. Oldfield's manager pointed out to reporters that the special police that were employed by Vanderbilt were primarily positioned so as to ensure that no one escaped paying for their tickets rather than protecting the race course.[77]

Vanderbilt churlishly responded to such criticism by banning the Benz company and its drivers, including Oldfield, from competing in his race. Clearly unaccustomed to being criticized by those he considered beneath him, Vanderbilt wrote, "In view of the tone of the letter which was sent…and simultaneously published in the papers, and the criticism you make on the management of the race, which we consider to be absolutely uncalled for and unwarranted, we do not think it wise that the cars under your management should compete."[78]

Rather than compete in the Grand Prize Cup, Oldfield competed with it. Having learned much about promoting events from days as a boxer and cyclist, and from his close friend, the heavyweight boxer Jim Jeffries, Oldfield and his manager laid plans for track spectacles that large crowds would pay a premium for. The same day Vanderbilt barred Oldfield from his race, Oldfield's manager announced his most audacious racing exhibition yet, a head-to-head race with the boxing champion of the world, Jack Johnson, probably the most notorious black man in America. Johnson, a lover of big fast cars, was game to put his Thomas "Flyer" and $5,000 against Oldfield's Knox. The spectacle was filmed for even more opportunities to sell tickets.

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Oldfield finessed his violation of American racial boundaries by simultaneously claiming to stand for the high ideal that sport should have no color bar and proclaiming that he was compelled to defeat "the negro" so as to discourage him from attempting to make a living in the racing game. (Oldfield did not mention that he had previously refused to respect the color bar in sport when as a professional bicycle racer he accepted the challenge of Major Taylor.) One day Oldfield was quoted saying, "Color line? There isn't any color line in automobile racing. You go so fast on a the track that you are lucky to be able to see where the man is against whom you are racing, without trying to find out whether he is black or white or pink." The next as remarking, "I raced Jack Johnson for neither money nor glory, but to eliminate from my profession an invader who would have to be reckoned with sooner or later…I am glad if my victory over Johnson today will have any effect on the 'white man's hope' situation."[79]

When Oldfield's manager sent a white man to the AAA office and successfully registered as a driver under the name "Jack Johnson," the AAA simply stood on the principle of racial exclusion and cancelled Johnson's membership.[80]

The AAA Contest Board thought the action of Oldfield in racing Johnson so urgent that they took the unprecedented step of calling a meeting by telephone to vote unanimously to suspend Oldfield and his manager from the organization. Chairman S. M. Butler wrote with urgency because "Oldfield filled New York papers and placarded Broadway announcements his contest with Jack Johnson…Answer quick."[81]

Oldfield embraced his status as an outlaw. He took his 200-horsepower Benz for a couple laps against time on the Readville, Massachusetts, race meet three days after his suspension was official. A month later he traveled to the west coast and organized races in Los Angeles under the imprimatur of the Pacific Coast Motor Racing Association, an organization he set up for that purpose. AAA board then banned everyone associated with this event, promoters, a dozen drivers, racetracks, and even Oldfield's stable of automobiles. Independent drivers around the country viewed Oldfield's outlawry as a protest for better working conditions for drivers. Louis Strang, a former factory employee who rose to be a racing champion by way of employment as a personal chauffeur, wired Oldfield his support:

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> Accept my congratulations on the determined stand you have taken to race at independent meets. You not only have made, but have kept alive, the circular track racing in America and deserve all the credit for the popularity it enjoys. You will win out I know and if I can help you, command me.[82]

Sports writer Eddie Smith of the Oakland *Tribune* supported Oldfield's stand and revealed that it was connected to the control of manufacturers over the AAA:

> Barney Oldfield claims he is fought by a racing trust…Oldfield claims the manufacturers who are opposing him are in the habit of hiring racing drivers to work in the factories during the week and drive a racing car on Saturdays. Most of the men who take their life in their hands get less than fifty dollars a week. Over one hundred racing car drivers have been killed in the United States during the past few years. The three A's get $100 a day for sanctions, giving nothing in return, and apparently do not care how many racing drivers are hurt or killed.[83]

By the spring of 1911, it was clear that neither the AAA nor Oldfield would profit by their standoff. Oldfield was not as successful as he had hoped in organizing races outside the AAA's authority and the AAA wasn't able to prevent Oldfield from taking the field in some prominent races. When the Florida Beach Committee decided to lease its beach to Oldfield rather than the AAA's local club, the chieftains in New York City decided to call a truce. Dispatching Eddie Moross, one of the Oldfield's old racing teammates, as an emissary, a deal was struck. Oldfield would sell all his cars to Moross for $50,000 and retire for at least a year. Rumor was that Moross was really a front and the money really came from the AAA bigwigs. In return the indefinite suspensions of Oldfield and all his associates would be revoked after a year. Both parties settled back into their earlier functionally mutual animosity.[84]

As he left the track in 1911, complying with his forced retirement, Oldfield took the opportunity to slam the door behind him. In a lengthy article for *Popular Mechanics* Oldfield blasted the commercial nature of the sport, a commercial nature that he himself was largely responsible for promoting:

> The dignity of motor racing is gone. It has been permitted to degenerate to the rank of prize fighting, without any of pugilism's redeeming virtues. It has ceased to be racing, and has become merely a morbid and unelevating spectacle. It is run for money alone. Its profits are blood money.[85]

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He was, of course correct. Commercialism had indeed overtaken racing just as the tycoons feared. Manufacturers and marketers increasingly promoted the sport, traded on its celebrities, and governed the AAA. By the end of racing's first decade fewer and fewer of the competitors were wealthy amateurs and more and more of the racers themselves were looking to win so as to build a lucrative career. But commerce, while it clouded and compromised the intrinsic values of the sport—the thrill of speed, the test of will, the pride of skill—could not kill them because they formed its base, its nature.

In spite of all the rational arguments against the dangers of motor racing, the sport continued to grow unhindered. Across America every legislative effort to restrict automobile racing failed even as new forms of racing emerged. Manufacturers who for a time had dropped their sponsorships of racing teams reentered the field, even Henry Ford who had noisily left in 1909 but backpedaled in 1914. Within a year of his angry retirement even Barney Oldfield returned to the track.

Part of the reason for racing's resiliency was due to its innovativeness—not in its machines but in its venues. Road races became more and more rare and a number of promoters invested in newer tracks specially designed for automobiles. While somewhat safer for drivers (though each improvement in track construction allowed for higher speeds thus checking the increases in safety) new stadiums like the one Carl Fisher built of bricks in Indianapolis were much safer for fans. Fisher not only built the first speedway designed exclusively for automobiles, but planned to franchise his speedway designs through a company he chartered in 1915, the Speedway Association of America, whose mission was to elevate auto racing to the "same high standard maintained in the promotion of baseball." While Fisher's brickyard was a success, his plan to replicate it, like many of his investments, went bust. But while Fisher's operation wasn't scaleable, during the 1920s new styles of tracks spread. Mile board tracks with their impressive banked curves were built in many places.[86]

In 1911, so many of the drivers competing on the racing circuit were professionals that they founded their own organization to represent their collective interests. The Motor Racing Drivers' Association of America was envisioned as a body that would ensure that drivers received their pay and took care of their hospital bills or burial costs in case of accident. But the Motor Racing Drivers' Association's first priority was to create a system of accreditation that would weed out of the sport the

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amateurs who they felt posed a danger on the track. The worm had turned—the amateur clubmen were no longer welcome in the sport they had founded.[87]

The automotive world the tycoons had once dominated had been utterly revolutionized. In 1908, Henry Ford, the man who couldn't get his "999" racer to work right and in frustration sold it to his mechanics, Barney Oldfield and Tom Cooper, began selling Model T's, a sturdy, practical, and surprisingly powerful car at a price farmers and even working people could afford. As automobiles became common the tycoons lost interest in their automobile clubs whose exclusivity was slipping away. As the common man and woman began to motor about, states began regulating without the former lobbyists like the ACA standing in their way.

The governing bodies of auto racing, the ACA and the AAA, abandoned their attempts to bar money-grubbing professionals from the track and instead became bureaucracies whose primary activity was extracting sanctioning fees from racing promoters and track owners. Barney Oldfield still served as the racing authorities' nemesis, though unlike the early years when the clubmen attempted to keep him out of the record books or exclude him from the most prominent races, they now just tried to make him pay a share of his income to them as tribute. Racing had settled onto its road and was well established to continue and to grow far into the future. It had lost its association as a tycoon's pastime but grown more sophisticated in its understanding of just what the skill of driving was.

Automobile racing was born amidst a pervasive class consciousness and class tensions. It had from the start been marked by both the class that had developed it and the broader working-class interests that viewed it as a symbol of their own oppression. By limiting the privileges of the tycoon racers working people actually planted the seeds for the transformation of the sport and eventually their ability to claim it as their own.

Notes

1 *Motor Age* (Chicago), 5:1 (Jan. 7, 1904), p. 1.
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3 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:21 (Sept. 6, 1902), p. 929.

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4 *The Horseless Age*, 10:13 (Sept. 24, 1902), pp. 335–337.
5 Ibid., 10:2 (July 9, 1902), p. 48; on Shanks, see ibid., 10:4 (July 23, 1902), p. 95.
6 *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 1901, p. 6; *The Horseless Age*, 8:31 (Oct. 30, 1901), p. 645.
7 *The Horseless Age*, 8:33 (Nov. 13, 1901), p. 715; 8:36 (Dec. 4, 1901), p. 782; *Motor World* (New York), 5:10 (Dec. 4, 1902), p. 296.
8 *Motor World* (New York), 5:5 (Oct. 30, 1902), p. 131; see also William F. Nolan, *Barney Oldfield: The Life and Times of America's Legendary Speed King* (New York: G.F. Putnam's Sons, 1961), esp. chapter 4. See also Leo Levine, *Ford: The Dust and the Glory, A Racing History*, *Vol. 1, 1901–1967* (Warrendale, PA: Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc., 2000), pp. 3–11.
9 *Motor World* (New York), 6:13 (June 25, 1903), p. 481.
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12 *New York Tribune*, May 31, 1903, p. 6.
13 *Washington Times*, June 21, 1903, p. 2; *Motor World* (New York), 6:15 (July 9, 1903), p. 553.
14 *New York Tribune*, July 5, 1903, p. 6.
15 *The Salt Lake Herald* (Utah), July 17, 1903, p. 7.
16 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:8 (June 6, 1903), p. 477.
17 Ibid., p. 496.
18 Ibid.; 6:9 (June 13, 1903), p. 543.
19 *New York Times*, Mar. 5, 1905, p. 9.
20 *New York Tribune*, July 26, 1903, p. 1.
21 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:16 (Aug. 1, 1903), p. 1057; see also *Motor World* (New York), 6:18 (July 30, 1903), pp. 665–666.
22 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:10 (June 21, 1902), p. 444; *The Horseless Age*, 8:32 (Nov. 6, 1901), p. 662.
23 *New York Times*, Sept. 19, 1900, p. 9; *Boston Daily Globe*, Sept. 11, 1900, p. 1.
24 *The Automobile Review* (Chicago), 5:3 (Sept. 19012), p. 52; Walter Wellman, "Faster than an Express Train," *McClure's Magazine*, Nov. 1902, pp. 21–32; *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:23 (Sept. 20, 1902), p. 1020.
25 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:16 (Aug. 1, 1903), p. 1042.
26 Ibid., 6:24 (Sept. 26, 1903), pp. 1584–1585.
27 Ibid., 6:26 (Oct. 10, 1903), p. 1727.
28 *New York Tribune*, Oct. 4, 1903, p. 1.
29 *Motor World* (New York), 7:2 (Oct. 8, 1903), p. 57.
30 Cf. *St. Paul Globe*, June 16, 1903, p. 5; *New York Tribune*, Aug. 3, 1903, p. 9; for Sunday coverage, see, for example, the *New York Tribune*, July 26, 1903, p. 1; *Salt Lake Herald*, Aug. 16, 1903, p. 3.

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40 *Goodwin's Weekly* (Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 14, 1903, p. 12.
41 *Motor Age* (Chicago), 5:5 (Feb. 4, 1904), p. 4.
42 *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1904, p. 7; *Motor Age*, Feb. 23, 1904, p. 68. One of the attractions of Daytona besides the hard-packed sand was the moisture in it, which cooled and preserved tires (*New York Times*, Feb. 1, 1904, p. 1).
43 Randal L. Hall, "Before NASCAR: The Corporate and Civic Promotion of Automobile Racing in the American South, 1903–1927," *The Journal of Southern History*, 68:3 (Aug. 2002), pp. 629–668. Quotes, 638, 639.
44 *New York Evening World*, Jan. 29, 1904, p. 1.
45 *Motor Age*, Feb. 23, 1904, p. 68.
46 *Motor World* (New York), 7:22 (Feb. 25, 1904), p. 955.
47 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:9 (June 13, 1903), pp. 543–544.
48 Cf. *The Horseless Age*, 8:30 (Oct. 23, 1901), p. 618.
49 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:15 (July 26, 1902), p. 683; 4:11 (June 28, 1902), p. 470; cf. *The Horseless Age*, 8:30 (Oct. 23, 1901), p. 618.
50 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:17 (Aug. 9, 1902), p. 764.
51 Ibid., 4:22 (Sept. 13, 1902), p. 993.
52 *The Horseless Age*, 8:25 (Sept. 18, 1901), p. 526.
53 *Motor World* (New York), 4:18 (July 31, 1902), p. 510.
54 Ibid., 5:17 (Jan. 22, 1903), p. 536.
55 See, for instance, the reports of races in *The Horseless Age*, 12:9 (Aug. 26, 1903), pp. 228 and 230.
56 Ibid., 8:10 (June 5, 1901), p. 212.
57 Ibid., 7:15 (Jan. 9, 1901), pp. 16–18.
58 There was a precedent for handicap races, one having been held in July 1902 by the Denver club, handicaps being set by the relative power and size of the entrants. *Automobile Topics* (New York), 4:13 (July 12, 1902), p. 580. Oldfield's

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Winton "Pup" was not particularly high-powered or heavy, nor was it even the most powerful car on the track that day in Cleveland.

59 Ibid., 6:17 (Aug. 8, 1903), p. 1131.

60 *Motor World* (New York), 7:6 (Nov. 5, 1903), p. 201.

61 *The Horseless Age*, 12:11 (Sept. 9, 1903), p. 274.

62 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:26 (Oct. 10. 1903), p. 1770.

63 Untitled manuscript, Shorty Pritzbur Records, Gordon White Archives, Box 129, Hardyville, VA 23070. (gewhite@crosslink.net). Note: Gordon White is a private collector of auto memorabilia.

64 *Motor Age* (Chicago), 5:2 (Jan. 14, 1904), p. 4.

65 *Motor World* (New York), 7:9 (Nov. 26, 1903), p. 319.

66 Ibid., 7:10 (Dec. 3, 1903), p. 353.

67 Ibid., 7:11 (Dec. 10, 1903), p. 381.

68 Ibid., 7:12 (Dec. 17, 1903), p. 412.

69 Ibid., 7:13 (Dec. 24, 1903), p. 448; *Tacoma Times* (Takoma, Washington), Dec. 28, 1903, p. 3.

70 *Motor Age* (Chicago), 6:14 (Oct. 6, 1904), p. 5.

71 *Automobile Topics* (New York), 6:7 (May 30, 1903), p. 445.

72 Charles Jarrott, *Ten Years of Motors and Motor Racing* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1906), p. 96.

73 *New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1912, p. 9; in late 1918, F. D. Folwell of the AAA Contest Board wrote to R. Kennerdell, chairman of the Contest Board, and said, "It is my opinion that the Contest Board should resume business at once, if we are to control racing in future. I have heard some opinion expressed that as racing is now on a permanent commercial basis and no longer sport, that the American Automobile Association should drop its control of it. However, I personally feel that the Contest Board is the only fit organization to control automobile contests" (Contest Board Minute Book, Folwell to Kennerdell, Nov. 22, 1918, frame 35).

74 "Freak Racing Cars Thinks of the Past, Declares Oldfield," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, p. 136.

75 "Oldfield Getting Raw Deal from the Auto Race Men?" Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, p. 136.

76 Press release from J. Alex Sloan, "Barney Oldfield Charges Discrimination by A.A.A.," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 2, p. 116.

77 *New York Times*, Oct. 3, 1910, p. 3.

78 Ibid., Oct. 5, 1910, p. 9.

79 "Barney Oldfield, Who Draws No Line in His Game" and "Eliminate Negro Cause for Race," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 1, p. 224 and p. 219, respectively. See Andrew Ritchie, *Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion*

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Bicycle Racer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988), esp. pp. 54–59, 71–80.

80 "Butler Issues a License to Johnson," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 1, p. 218.

81 AAA Contest Board Minutes, Oct. 11, 1910, frame 184; telegram Butler to Beecroft, Oct. 11, 1910, frame 182; Gordon White Archives, Box 129, Hardyville, Virginia, 23070.

82 "Olive Branch May be Waved," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 2, p. 57. *The Encyclopedia of Auto Racing Greats*, Robert Cutter and Bob Fendell, eds (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 578.

83 "Barney Oldfield-A.A.A.," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 2, p. 45.

84 "Oldfield Sells Out to AAA for $50,000" and "Oldfield, Peeved over Suspensions, to Race Again," Barney Oldfield Scrapbooks, LA84 Foundation Sports Library, Los Angeles, CA, vol. 2, p. 69 and vol. 1, p. 247, respectively.

85 *Popular Mechanics*, Aug. 1911, p. 348; New *York Times*, Mar. 13, 1912, p. 9.

86 *New York Times*, June 26, 1915, p. 10; Michael Gianturco, "The Infinite Straightaway," *American Heritage of Invention and Technology* (New York, NY, 1992), 8:2, pp. 34–41. Mark S. Foster, *Castles in the Sand: The Life and Times of Carl Graham Fisher* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

87 *New York Times*, Mar. 19, 1911, p. 6; Apr. 7, 1911, p. 15; Oct. 1, 1911, p. 8; June 12, 1911, p. 7.

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