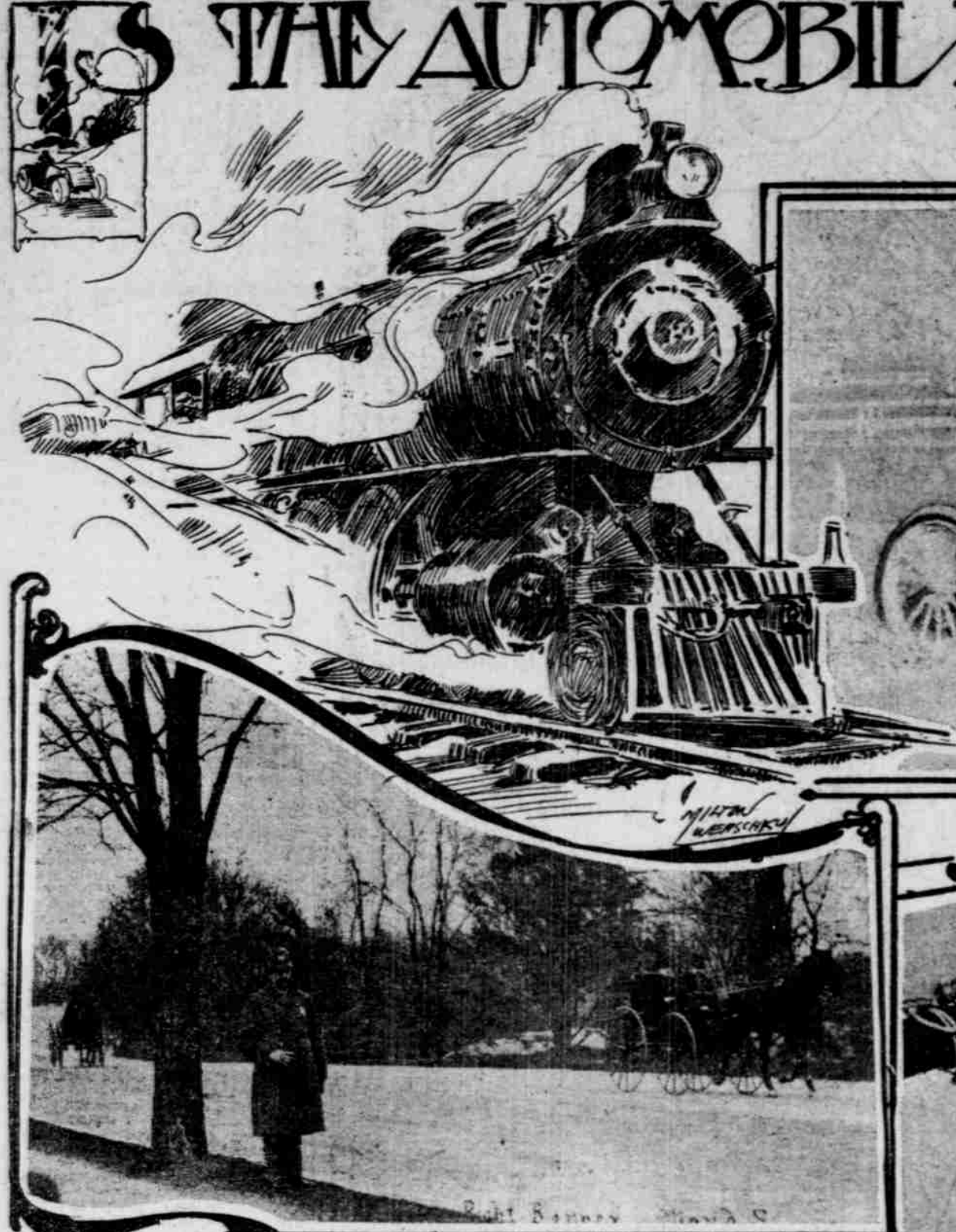


THE AUTOMOBILE THE SWIFTEST THING IN THE WORLD

DEXTER MARSHALL



ROBERT BONNER DRIVING MAUD S. FIRST A PHOTO TAKEN FOR HIM IN HIS LIFE TIME

THEY will try to prove the automobile the swiftest thing in the world at the Ormond races to be held late in the present month and there's more than a possibility that they will succeed. At all events neither pains nor expense has been spared in getting ready. Reginald Vanderbilt's new 250-horse-power car so built as to be within the weight limit and in which he hopes, no doubt, to better his cousin, W. K., Jr., will be the novelty of the races, but the most strenuous efforts to outdo all earlier records are being made by half a dozen persons and interests.

It may be the impression of some people that the single record mile made by the automobile in January last, when Bowden at Ormond, did the distance in 32 4-5 seconds or at the rate of a little more than 109 miles an hour with an overweight machine, is the fastest time ever made by anything that goes on wheels, but this is a mistake.

Of all wheeled machines the steam locomotive still holds the speed record, both as to short stretches and long distances. It has to its credit many separate brief performances at rates better than 103 miles an hour. Its long-distance performance still markedly best the automobile's best long-distance work.

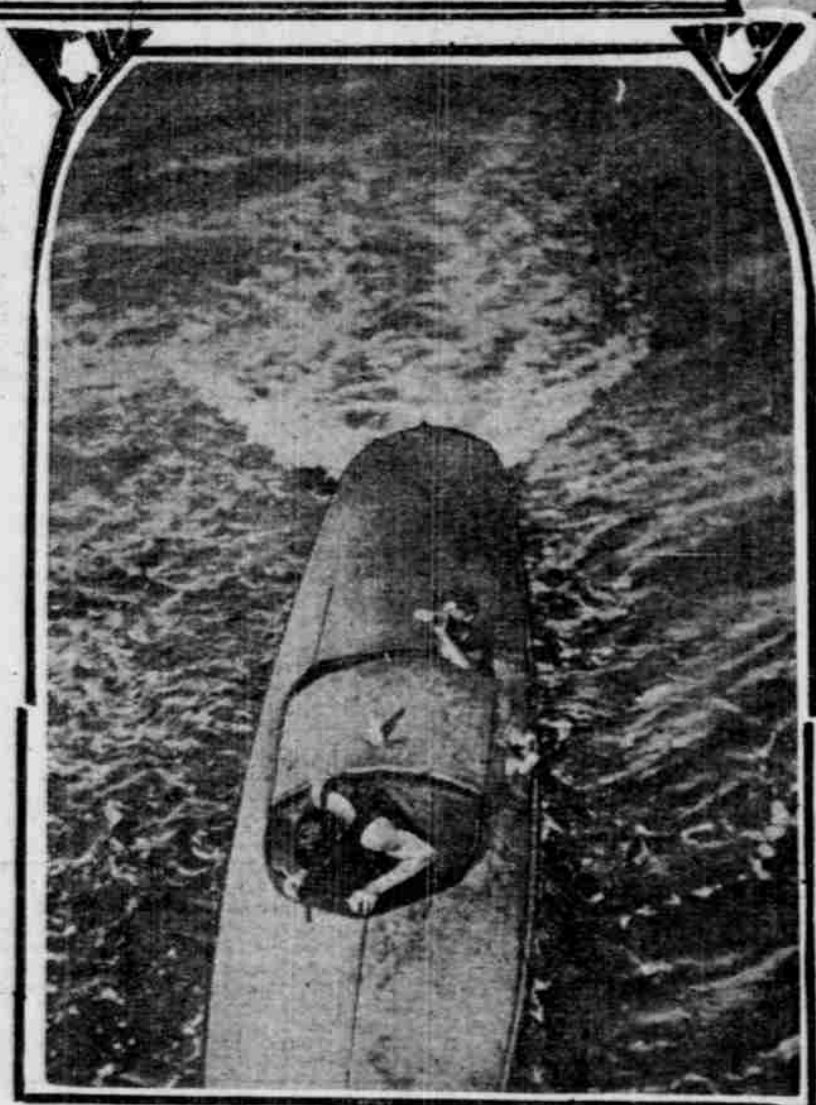
The fastest of the short-stretch records was made nearly four years ago in March, 1901, on the rails of the Plant system in Florida, when, on the run from Fleming to Jacksonville, Fla., five miles were reeled off in exactly 150 seconds, (two minutes and a half) being at the rate of 120 miles an hour. Better than two miles a minute must be done at Ormond this month if the automobile is to prove itself the swiftest machine in the world.

The earliest record better than 100 miles an hour to the credit of steam was made 12 years before in 1883 by the Empire State Express on the New York Central, when the then newly established fast train between New York and Buffalo left a single mile of right of way behind her whirling wheels in 25 seconds or at the rate of 112 1/2 miles an hour. Automobiles were so new then that most of us called them horseless carriages and so rare that whenever one of us saw one it was a simple conversational topic for days afterward.

The longest stretch of more than 100 miles an hour steam railroad speed ever made in this country was two years ago when 723 miles between Palmyra and Macedon, N. Y., were covered in exactly four minutes, or at the rate of 109 1/2 miles an hour. Other fast records show speeds of 115, 111, 108 and 102 miles an hour on various lines over various shorter distances. Nothing better than the new 15-hour train between New York and Chicago was much larger than in any previous year.

Not to go more into detail of the speed records just here, and for the present ignoring the experimental electric records made under the direction of the Emperor William some two or three years ago, it must be admitted that until the first quarter of the last century had passed there were practically no railroads in operation anywhere, and that the entire progress of mechanical speed evolution has taken place in eighty years.

Yet so it is. The limited train, running close to a mile a minute daily, week in and week out, the whole year round; the



INDIAN BOATING IS THE NEWEST SPEED GAME

express steamship crossing the Atlantic Ocean in less than six days, and sometimes in less than five days and a half; the motor boat, with its 25 to 30-mile an hour clip; the automobile, with a record of over 100 miles an hour—all these things are accepted as commonplace features of everyday life today even by those of mature years.

Yet there are thousands of men and women alive in the United States in January, 1906, whose memory runs well back of the first practical steam railroad in the world and still further back of the first in the United States, for it was not till 1831, a short 75 years ago, that the first steam engine was run regularly on American rails.

Whatever may be thought about certain manifestations of the present speed craze throughout the civilized world, it must be agreed that the contrast between conditions in those lands which have and which have not done most to develop railroad speed fully justifies a lot of speed talk. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that the speed maintained by its railroads is an accurate indication of any country and its people, as a whole; nor is it at all misleading to say that the four countries foremost in their devotion to the automobile—Germany, France, the United States and England—are also foremost in every other line of progress.

Nevertheless, running an automobile 60, or even 90, miles an hour on a rough and crooked country road, or betting your last cent on the ponies because of a tip, are foolish experiments; whoever tries them should not grumble if he lands in a ditch, or breaks his neck or finds his pocket as bare as cash as Mother Hubbard's cupboard was of bones when she went to that receptacle for the relief of her poor hungry dog. Yet no one need be ashamed because his heart beats quicker at the sight of a spirited horse race, a flying train, a scudding, white-winged yacht; nor blush because he is susceptible to the intoxication produced by being whizzed over city streets and through country lanes at a speed which is really little less than insane.

Automobile, Newest and Swiftest Racing Machine.

AUTOMOBILE racing, newest speed game, but one in the world and quite different from horse racing, either running, trotting or racing, is a mighty expensive sport. Figures to show just

how costly are not available, but the fact that conservative estimates place the expense of the Vanderbilt road race, run on Long Island, in 1905, at \$100,000 will furnish an inkling.

The other new speed game is played with power boats, and it is as like automobile racing as any water game could be like one played on the land. Both games owe their existence to the invention of the gasoline engine, but the Rochester man who claims a license fee for every automobile operated, except those run by steam or electricity, asks no compensation from those who use auto boats.

There are several radical differences between auto races and horse races. In the first place, though admittance fees are charged at auto track races the expenses of auto road racing are not paid by the dear public, whose members turn out to see the fun, but by the manufacturers, the men who enter the races for prizes and the Automobile Association of America. There is no "gate money." The race is free to spectators; indeed, it would be impossible to fence off the 20 or 30-mile stretches over which the autos whirl when speedily for Vanderbilt or Bennett or other cups and prizes on Long Island, in Europe or the smooth, glistering beach at Ormond. You have to pay for the race.

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That organized gambling of the French pool or the bookmaking variety will ever be carried on in connection with auto racing is highly improbable. Even the most peckish, most superstitious gambler, ready to risk his all upon tips and dreams and "hunches," would balk at betting upon the speed of a machine, since sometimes do on horse racetracks.

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No driver or jockey can do this without great risk of discovery by the spectators. But the chauffeur would have no trouble whatever in modifying his sup-

ply of gas with a movement of the hand so slight as to be quite imperceptible to the onlookers so that his machine might come in second, third or even last, or he might purposely "lose control" at a critical moment and nobody would ever be the wiser.

In auto road racing, especially, even the judge would be unable to detect crooked work by a crooked chauffeur and if organized gambling on auto races were once established, the bettors would be far more at the mercy of the auto drivers than they are at the mercy of the jockeys and the men who sit in the sulkeys.

It is no disparagement to either sort of racegoers to say that the difference between those who go to see horse-races and autocraces is radical. All sorts of conditions of men and women, except the very serious minded; the rich, the poor, the well-to-do, and those who earn enough each week to keep the pot boiling comfortably, but with little or no surplus cash at the end of the week, are to be seen at the horse-races. They get to the track by all sorts of public conveyances, trolleys, steam and third-rail electric roads and stages. Some go in carriages and autos to be sure, but so large is the gross attendance that their number is relatively small.

Arrived at the track, a large percentage of the racegoers busy themselves at once with the odds and lay their bets. These things are so absorbing and call for so much thought that they are over very serious by the time the racing is well started. There is always a percentage of happy, light-hearted spectators on the field and in the stands, of course. But the proportion to whom the betting and not the fun of watching the game is foremost is always large and naturally made up of glib individuals who can't afford to lose what they have bet.

It is rare that the majority at a horse-race join in the cheering, even at the conclusion of a race, for the majority are almost always losers as a matter of course, and losers, even when they are not, are not inclined to enthusiasm when luck goes against them.

The atmosphere of the auto road-race crowd is of another brand altogether. First of all, the individuals making up the crowd are different. They have more money, a good deal more money, individually, though perhaps not always collectively, because the horse-race crowd is generally much larger than the autocrace crowd.

As they are not buying pools or making bets with the bookies, the folks who go to see the auto make records form a much lighter-hearted throng, and, of course, they spend a lot more individually on cold bottles, hot birds and the like, to help along the gaiety of the occasion.

The autocrace crowd cheers every winner, whoever it may be; every loser, too, for that matter. If it appears that he has "done his best," and the result is decidedly inspiring to the mere onlooker, who neither makes autos nor owns nor races them, but has simply "dropped around," so to speak, that he may see the auto-enthusiast's life as they live it.

Certainly the impression that the

autocrace crowd makes is that of opulence. It isn't probable, of course, that the majority of the 100,000 people who went 60 to Long Island to see the Vanderbilt cup race last Fall were more than fairly well-to-do, while there were surely many who weren't well off at all. But the percentage of those who went in their own autos, coaches and carriages, was large enough to give the crowd a truly autocrace semblance; those who had money to spend without feeling the expense did so with such freedom that most everybody else "blew himself" also, and it would be a waste of time to describe the result with fidelity.

At the same time everything conspired to prevent the peculiar nervous tension so noticeable among the bettors with slender purses at a horse-race.

Don't imagine that there's no tension at an auto roadrace, though. There is, there is, indeed; but "it's different."

All auto roadraces to date have had to be run early in the morning, the first starters at last Fall's Vanderbilt race, for instance, getting away at 6 a. m. after it was light enough to see.

Consequently a big part of the crowd is always on hand the night before. Indeed the gathering thereof begins days ahead, becomes strenuous 48 hours in advance and continues with ever-increasing strenuousness all through the preceding day and night. The night before the last Vanderbilt cup race at Krug's little hotel, Minnola, was a night no one who endured it is likely ever to forget.

Those who had secured sleeping accommodations in advance had a hard enough time for the rooms were not like those at the Waldorf, and it wasn't easy to sleep because of the relentless hubbub made by the constantly arriving newcomers.

Their automobiles were continually tooting their devilish horns and sounding their even more devilish, evilly misnamed Gabriel's trumps, and their chauffeurs and passengers were chattering and gabbling with a volubility and a volume that most effectively drove slumber from all except those who would be able to last themselves in the midst of a boiler shop's clangor.

All night long the hubbub went on. All night there was the popping of corks, the rattling of the rattle of dishes, knives and forks, as the newcomers, half famished after their nocturnal auto trips, satisfied their hunger in the hotel dining-room. All night the rank smell of badly smoked cigars and the heavy odor of gasoline, ever growing thicker and more pungent, impartially assailed the nostrils alike of those who could and those who could not sleep.

The gray light of the dawn showed a strange-looking crowd to the members thereof. There were heavy eyes from lack of sleep and other causes, hasty dressing, unshaven male faces and frowsy female coiffures. But everybody displayed interesting signs of the excitement which is an integral part of the modern speed madness.

Nor was all the excitement due to the suspense as to who should be the winner. Judging by the many auto road race precedents, some one was due to be badly hurt before the day was over, some one might even be killed, and the apprehension of accidents was a decidedly

interesting factor of the general excitement, and not the least relished, by any means. Last year this apprehension was not justified. In 1904 there was a serious accident and everybody remembers how Frank Croker was killed last year at Ormond.

The excitement of the start lasted a long time, for the automobiles in a road race don't start together, as the horses do on a track, each striving to pass the others. A concerted start of autos in a race would be impossible, so the machines, 20 in number, started at intervals of two minutes, each being timed not only at the start and finish, but at various points along the road.

It was only begun with the starting, however, being distributed over about 31 miles of road, and it reached its climax between four and five hours after the first start, when the autos began to make their finishes.

Those who keep track of such things remember that the race was won by the Frenchman, Henry, who, driving a French machine, made the 231 miles in 4 hours, 38 minutes and 8 seconds, a new world's record, averaging a mile in every 36 seconds, or 61 1/2 miles an hour for the entire race.

This was then the record in auto racing made in America, though not by an American machine. The cup is held in this country, however, because for reasons there is no room here to explain. France, which has won the Vanderbilt cup twice, refuses to receive it, and make a race for it.

Within the past two or three months this record has been bettered in Italy on the Brescia Course, Raggio, who won the Florio race, making 211 1/2 miles in four hours 44 minutes and 47 seconds, or at a rate of 64 1/2 miles an hour.

The best auto mile on a circular track ever made was reeled off on July 4 last at Morris Park, New York, the time being 44 1/2 seconds by Webb Jay, with an American steam machine. The best track mile made was a gasoline car was made by Chevrolet, the Frenchman, driving a French gasoline auto in 33 1/2 seconds. The best track records for longer than mile distances were made in 1904 by Barney Oldfield in California in slightly less than a mile a minute time.

The coming Ormond races will not aim to better either track or road records, but to improve the straight-away speed. In 1904, at Ormond, W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., made the best records, but one, as follows: One mile, 23 seconds; 5 miles, 2:13.4; 10 miles, 4:29; 20 miles, 8:32; 30 miles, 12:42.5. The fifteen-mile record that year was made by H. I. Bowden, who made the distance in 19 minutes and 13 seconds. Bowden's record of a mile in 22 1/2 seconds, made at Ormond last year, was not allowed officially because of his machine's overweight, but McDonald's of 21 1/2 seconds wiped out Vanderbilt's. Should the record be lowered to a mile in 20 seconds, or two miles a minute, at Ormond this year, the figures will be more than four times as fast as were the figures composing the best records of Maud S., the

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Notwithstanding the early introduction of horse-racing it was practically self-implemented, of course, in this country, and in spite of the fostering care it received at the hands of a few, it was not an institution of great moment till more than a score and a half years after the American development of the "iron horse" began. The country was just getting rich enough to support the turf fairly well in 1800; the next year the Civil War broke out and the sport was again set back.

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Notwithstanding the early introduction of horse-racing it was practically self-implemented, of course, in this country, and in spite of the fostering care it received at the hands of a few, it was not an institution of great moment till more than a score and a half years after the American development of the "iron horse" began. The country was just getting rich enough to support the turf fairly well in 1800; the next year the Civil War broke out and the sport was again set back.

Thus it was that horse racing did not come into its own in the United States till about 1850, since then, however, it has had no setbacks except those imposed by the many anti-betting laws enacted in various states.

In spite of these laws, however, the racing of running horses has become a great institution in the United States, particularly in New York, Kentucky, Louisiana and California, and probably as much money—the real measure of enthusiasm for a sport as well as anything else—is now spent upon the sport this side of the water as in England itself.

That the best American racing horses are the equals of the best British horses will be admitted even by Englishmen, if fair-minded, probably for the reason that