

**AUTO ROAD RACING
AT ITS ZENITH**
INTEREST IN SPORTING
SIDE OF MOTORING.

Tests of Speed Attracted Huge
Crowds for Vanderbilt and Grand
Prize Contests.

Automobile racing is not the undisputed monarch of the world of gasoline and motors that it used to be, but with the coming of rivals, paradoxical as the statement may seem, the importance of the sport has become greater than ever. Road races that furnish at once tests of speed and of endurance dominate the sporting side of the industry, and this is as it should be. Short races on circular tracks are losing their hold on the public, and with the legislation of the American Automobile Association against such contests their day may be considered as drawing to a close.

But the day of the road race is at its zenith, judging from the tremendous interest that has been taken in such contests in this country within the last twelve months. Nine such contests took place in the last year, the distance travelled by the racers varying from 250 miles to more than 400, and huge crowds turned out at inaccessible points to see the most daring drivers in the world match their skill and nerve against one another. In not one of these races was a contestant seriously hurt. In 1909 four races are already scheduled, and as many more are practically certain to be held, with more than a fair prospect of renewal of races held this year at Philadelphia and Lowell to bring the number to ten.

A year ago America was without a great road race for the first time since William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., offered, in 1904, the cup that bears his name. The Vanderbilt Cup Commission had decided wisely, in 1906, after the fatal accident that marred the race over the Long Island roads, not to hold another contest near New York until safety for the spectators could be assured, and, despite offers of a course from Savannah, St. Louis and other cities, this decision was adhered to.

Savannah had become mightily enthusiastic about automobilism, however, and last March a splendid stock car race was held, preceded by a shorter race for smaller cars. That started the boom for road races for the year, and the next contest soon followed. This was the race for the Briarcliff trophy. In April, over the Westchester roads, promoted by the automobile manufacturers, and aided and encouraged by the Automobile Club of America, this race was held against the wishes, implied, though not openly expressed, of the American Automobile Association, which wanted no such races near New York until the Motor Parkway was completed.

A race at Lowell followed the Briarcliff contest on Labor Day, and then in quick succession came the Motor Parkway Sweepstakes and the Fairmount Park race at Philadelphia, the Vanderbilt Cup race and the Automobile Club of America's light car and Grand Prize races at Savannah in November, with the last named of which the road racing of the year ended. It will be readily understood that consideration of the road races of the year finds them sharply divided into two classes, those for stock cars and those for specially built racers. Two races of this latter class were held, and, although owing to the dispute over rules between the American Automobile Association and the recognized automobile clubs of Europe no modern foreign racers were entered in the Vanderbilt Cup race, that contest had a good deal of interest, even though eclipsed by the great struggle at Savannah on Thanksgiving Day.

The stock car races have a peculiar interest all their own, and the lessons of the seven races of this character that were held, with the growing tendency to confine automobile racing to contests for such models, justify later consideration of this phase of the sport in a separate article. It is the present purpose to deal with the international races designed primarily for racing machines. These were the Vanderbilt Cup and Grand Prize contests, held respectively on Long Island on October 24 and at Savannah on Thanksgiving Day.

In former years the Vanderbilt Cup race ranked with the Grand Prix of France and the Florio Cup of Italy, or with the defunct Bennett Cup races, but the fixture held a somewhat anomalous position this year, yielding much of its prestige to the Grand Prize race at Savannah, which attracted the leading manufacturers of Europe, whose racing models, built for the earlier races abroad, would have been either ineligible or seriously handicapped in the Vanderbilt Cup affair.

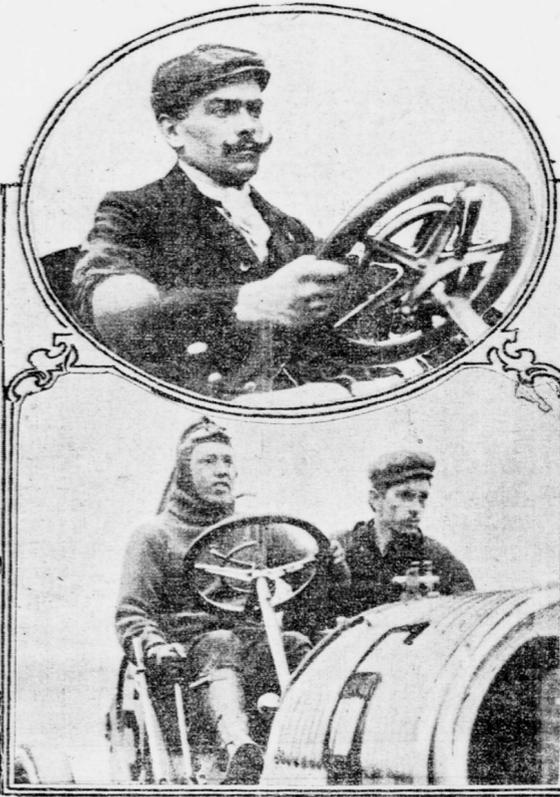
The best of the foreign drivers, too, were reserved for the Grand Prize. They had unpleasant memories of the 1906 Long Island race, and were by no means convinced that the crowds would be handled in such a way as to assure safety for spectators and drivers. The race showed their fears in this respect to be well founded, for only a miracle prevented a disaster after Robertson won the long contest.

Seventeen cars started in the Vanderbilt Cup race and two finished; but several more would have finished had they been allowed to do so. The crowding of the course made this impossible, however, and after George Robertson, in an American Locomobile, had beaten Herbert Lytle, in an Italian Isotta-Fraschini, by less than two minutes in a remarkably fast race, Mr. Vanderbilt stopped the contest. No particular lessons were learned in the race, except that some manufacturers had produced some exceedingly fast stock cars. Robertson's car, which took part in the 1906 Vanderbilt race, and, driven by "Joe" Tracy, made the fastest single lap, was not a new model, and the two Mercedes racers that it defeated were also old models, neither of them having taken part in the European races.

By the peace agreement between the American Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of America the contest for the Vanderbilt Cup has become a national one instead of an international one. It lies within the province of the Vanderbilt Cup commission to determine whether the race shall remain one for specially built racers or for stock cars, but, in all probability, the latter will be the decision, as few racers are likely to be attracted.

The conditions in the Vanderbilt Cup race, despite its traditions and its quasi-international character, left the Savannah race as the one to which the eyes of the sporting automobile world had to turn for demonstration of the advances of racing construction since the last Vanderbilt contest, in 1906. There many lessons were to be learned, and chief among them was the demonstration of the increasing reliability of the speed machines.

TWO DRIVERS WHO EARNED AUTO FAME.
LOUIS WAGNER, WHO WON GRAND PRIZE RACE AT SAVANNAH.



GEORGE ROBERTSON, WHO WON VANDERBILT CUP RACE ON LONG ISLAND.

The Growth of Automobile Shows

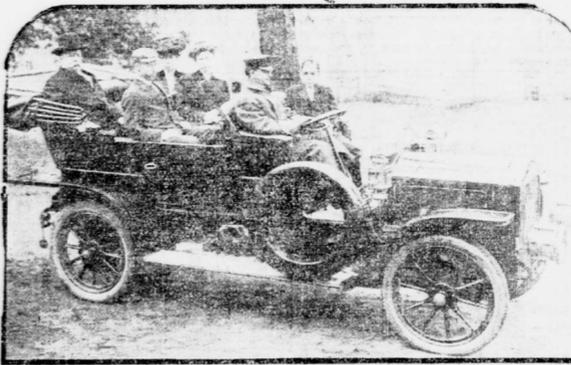
Number of Exhibitors Has
Increased From 69 to
301 in Ten Years.

The growth of automobile shows and the marked influence they have had on the industry are dealt upon in interesting fashion by Harold O. Smith, chairman of the show committee of the American Motor Car Manufacturers' Association. To the Automobile Club of America he properly gives the credit for inaugurating the long and still growing series of exhibitions that have been held, beginning with that of 1890. That infant exhibition of only sixty-nine exhibitors created in the automobile buying public the first desire to become a motorist, he says. The public knew little then of automobiles, and had a varying faith in the "horseless carriage."

The rapid development of the Automobile Club of America's shows is now history, and only a glimpse at the number of exhibitors of past and the present one in the Grand Central Palace, under the management of the American Motor Car Manufacturers' Association, with their exhibit list totaling thirty, is needed to demonstrate the growing popularity of the automobile.

On December 2, 1901, the Automobile Club of America opened its second show, with ninety-two exhibitors. There was no show in 1902, the date being advanced to January, but each year since has seen successful exhibitions, with the following schedule:

- 1901-January 17-24, Madison Square Garden, 193 exhibitors.
- 1902-January 15-23, Madison Square Garden, 265 exhibitors.



**PRESIDENT-ELECT TAFT AND FAMILY IN HIS
WHITE STEAMER.**

1903-January 14-21, Madison Square Garden, 217 exhibitors.
1904-January 13-20, 6th Regiment Armory, 238 exhibitors.
1905-December 1-8, Grand Central Palace, 218 exhibitors.
1906-October 24-31, Grand Central Palace, 237 exhibitors.
1907-December 31-January 7, Grand Central Palace, 291 exhibitors.
Not only has the number of exhibitors increased

was stopped. One was a De Dietrich, one an American National and another an American Lozier. Two Talas, a Renault, a Benz, an Acme, a Buick and a Châswick, the last three being American cars, were not running when the race was stopped, having been put out by one accident or another.

Remarkably little structural weakness was developed in the Savannah race, and remarkably severe tests were applied to the cars. More than three hundred turns had to be made in the course of the race, and the racking, tearing test of the curves was such that great surprise was expressed by the technical experts at the way in which the cars stood up to their work. Most of the structural accidents were of the kind that can hardly be avoided in such a race, and, altogether, the progress of the manufacturers toward perfection was markedly shown.

It was a matter of regret to many that more American cars were not entered, and that American manufacturers had not been more ready to enter racers instead of stock cars. A number of American cars could have been counted on to make a better showing in the race than one or two of those that started, and, while there can be no criticism of the tendency of American makers to prefer stock car contests, such regret is easy to understand.

The winner of the Vanderbilt Cup was not eligible at Savannah, and its makers did not care to build a new car. The Thomas racers were also conspicuous by their absence, and America was really represented by cars that were unable, owing to their small piston stroke, to compete with the foreign racers. As a matter of fact, the American cars did better than was expected.

WORKING FOR THE AUTO

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO
HELP ALONG.

Alfred Reeves Tells of Aims of the
American Motor Car Manu-
facturers' Association.

The American Motor Car Manufacturers' Association, which is conducting the show which opened last night in the Grand Central Palace, is now the largest organization of its kind in the world, according to a statement by Alfred Reeves, its general manager. In telling of the growth of the association and what it is working for, Mr. Reeves said:

Organized on a basis of fairness in trade and believing that competitors in business had certain mutual interests that could best be cared for by a central organization, a few pioneers of the motor car trade formed the American Motor Car Manufacturers' Association. While they had great expectations, the most conservative or radical did not dream into what a giant oak their acorn would develop, for it is now the largest association of its kind in the motor car world.

Not only has the American association grown to power, but the individual concerns that make up the membership of the association have from year to year added materially to their output, until today the total acreage of floor space is surpassed by the guidance of some of the most able men in the industry of very few other industries. Under the wise direction of the association has been brought to a pass that matters affecting the dealer and the buyer.

The automobile industry, being extraordinary in many respects, it was natural that its trade association should have a growth of a phenomenal sort in its four years of organization, during which time it has accomplished so much for those involved in the trade and the public. It has worked consistently for its members, to the ultimate benefit of the buyer.

The association was formed in the belief that competitors in business had certain mutual interests that could best be cared for by organization work. Independence is the keynote, for its members believe competition brings advancement. Within its ranks are the makers of the highest, as well as of the lowest priced cars, including all styles and types.

It aims to further the use of motor cars in general and to assist the common interest of its members as well as its members. Buyers of cars are assured of proper construction and materials at fair prices. The companies conduct their business independently under their own business methods, each endeavoring to secure the greatest favor and trade from the public. The interests are identical only so far as they are concerned in the work of the association, which relates to the ultimate object of securing for the public the highest quality of automobile construction. The various standard manufacturers retain their present leadership in motor car building.

Information and benefits are sought that will permit the members to produce the best cars at the lowest possible cost, so as to offer their cars to the general public at prices within reason and yet permit a fair margin to the manufacturer. The maximum of quality at a minimum of price, the trading is certain to be satisfactory to buyer and seller.

While much of the work of the association furnishes benefits of an abstract nature, which are covered by the trade in general, there are other benefits of a concrete nature that involve the members alone. Compilation of statistics both here and abroad furnishes a valuable guide for the makers. The lists of agents and dealers are another good work. Uniform guarantees that are liberal to the dealer and fair to the motorist are advocated, while plans for advertising and information regarding the value of mediums of profit are supplied for a market in every state. The perennial question of good roads and legislative matters are handled by competent committees. Every year hostile legislation is opposed, and many unreasonable legislative provisions are removed from the work of the legislature. Its work in the matter of good roads has been of great importance, and has secured some thousands of dollars have been expended.

There are scores of other things which the association does quietly, but these mentioned will give a fair idea of its work. On its committee of management and in its membership are the pioneers and most of the leading men of the automobile industry, including Benjamin Briscoe, chairman; R. E. Olds, H. O. Smith, G. Vernon Rogers, W. H. Van Dervoort, Charles Lewis, W. C. Marmon, C. G. Stoddard, S. H. Mora and Alfred Reeves.

MOUNTING OF OUTSIDE SPLASHERS.
Thought Turns to Methods of Protecting Pedestrians from Flying Mud.

Consideration for appearances has led many drivers to mount splash guards on the inner side of the wheels of their cars, these taking the form of short curtains of canvas or leather to prevent the mud and water flying up on the under body and mechanism of the machine. Because of the axle, it has not been difficult to locate such devices on the inner side of the wheels, but until recently no simple method of mounting similar guards to the outer edge of the wheels for the benefit of pedestrians and other traffic has been found.

The protection of others from splashing which outside guards afford is possible of realization, however, as several devices of this character have been developed. In one type, the guard, which consists of a swinging screen of chain cloth, hangs on a plate with a bearing encircling the wheel hub. The bearing supports the floating plate, from the lower part of which the screen is suspended, while the upper part is connected to the frame of the car with a long, yielding spiral spring, which holds it in position.

WHY SUB-FRAMES REQUIRE INSPECTION.
In cars which have the power plant mounted on a sub-frame, it is essential that the position and alignment of the latter should be investigated carefully at each periodical inspection. If the frame is too tight for its work, or is inaccurately fastened, there is danger that it may warp out of line when unduly strained. Although it is customary to provide flexible or universal joints at all points which might be affected by such a displacement, the result throws an abnormal amount of labor on the parts of the joints, and causes an extra amount of friction on the transmission producing loss of power. Besides this, the condition may indicate a dangerous weakness in some quarters.

CLEANING THE SPARK PLUGS.
Most motoring novices learn how to clean and adjust spark plugs properly without much difficulty, but frequently are surprised to discover that their efforts are of small avail. One reason for this is that not infrequently when endeavoring to insert a plug in a hot motor the nervous driver knocks the sparking end against the cylinder opening in trying to locate the thread. The usual result is that the points which have been so carefully adjusted are forced together once more, and consequently the expected forceful spark fails to materialize. A further source of difficulty in the same connection arises from the inbred conviction that, once attended to, the plugs require no further inspection, so that when this happens the trouble hunter wanders off vaguely and needlessly into the intricacies of coil adjustment.—Motor World.

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2 cylinders, vertical, shaft drive

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