

ON, ATLANTA, GA.,

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1906

DARE-DEVIL BARNEY OLDFIELD TALKS ABOUT THE "SPEEDY LIFE"

BARNEY OLDFIELD, the king of motor car pilots, is a good talker and an entertaining one, yet it would be hard to find a professional athlete or champion in any line who possesses more inherent modesty than this plain young fellow who has received the plaudits of hundreds of thousands of spectators who have witnessed his wonderful driving over circular tracks. Oldfield says he is not an egotist, and that he realizes that the crowds come to see him drive, not for their love of the sport, but because they scent the danger and are filled with morbid curiosity to witness an accident.

"We are living in a fast age," said Barney last night, while regaling a number of listeners at the Capital City Club, "and the man who is willing to sacrifice his bones and gore on the altar of a highly seasoned sport is going to be the drawing card and the one the newspapers are going to print the most stuff about."

"It is not enough that Americans bring forth beautiful specimens of inventive and mechanical skill. They must be raced around a circular track where there is a chance of killing a driver or two."

"It is not enough to have wonderfully complete and comfortable express trains. We must have an 18-hour limited with a schedule that permits of no time to be wasted in safeguarding the passengers from collision and disaster."

"Rational diversions and exhibitions no longer satisfy. It must be a 'sport' savoring of a casualty list. Our perilous sports and pastimes have their origin in the craving of the get-rich-quickers for something new. The new-fashioned delights and diversions must be full of ginger—and oftentimes gore."

"I am not to be blamed for plying the vocation, in which many are kind enough to say I excel. It is the only thing I can make more than an ordinary living out of, and if I took up another line of work in the sporting game, it would of necessity be a deadly one in order to be profitable. If a prize fighter was not killed now and then, that sport would be relegated back to the 'bean-bag' class. If a bicycle rider was not occasionally, and I might say often, smashed against the posts of a saucer track and run over by a big motor-pacing machine, the game would be just about as exciting as a session of 'drop-the-handkerchief' at a church sociable."

"Take a man who owns and drives a touring car, and he alone can tell of the fascination of skimming over the smooth road where even but little skill is required to guide the car. The average owner of a high-powered machine knows nothing about speed or pace. But he knows that his blood tingles and he feels an exhilaration that cannot be equaled by any other sensation, when he is flying past trees, fences and scenery. He never stops to reckon the result of a broken steering knuckle or any of a hundred other accidents resulting from mechanical weaknesses. He is not satisfied to drive

30 miles an hour, which is fast. He must go 60. His acquaintance will tell you he has contracted the automobile fever. It's not that ailment at all. Just a plain case of that latter-day desire for the dangerous things our forefathers feared.

"But because he has the few thousand dollars necessary to buy the automobile, he is put in the motor-mad ward and treated accordingly."

"The man who has but 50 cents will gladly spend it hoping inwardly to get a chance to see something happen to the man with the automobile. It's human nature, I tell you, gentlemen. Maybe a little different brand than was common in David Harum's days, but still it can only be described as human nature."

"There is no person who knows of the dangers of automobile track racing more than sporting writers in the big cities, yet I am asked almost every day to take one of them a mile at record speed in the Green Dragon. And they mean it, too. They crave the sensation they know must result from the dangerous sport."

"The man who has heard of my accidents while racing, who knows that three times spectators who would not keep away from the fences on the turns have been swept before the mad machine and were picked up in pieces, is the very one who disregards the policeman's request to get back of the danger line. He knows that if a tire blows up; if a piece of steel, half an inch in diameter, gives way in the steering column, I will crash through the very spot he is standing on. But he stays there, scarcely 5 feet from where I drive, and waves his hand, as I go by at the rate of 70 miles an hour. I tell you it's in the air, this love for danger in sports."

"I frequently sit in a street car or at a table in a cafe and hear one man tell another that he 'is going out to the automobile races to see that fool Oldfield kill himself.' Then I know what it is that draws them."

"I attended a football game at the Polo Grounds in New York last fall. Things were going fine for the players, and no one had been hurt. Along toward the latter part of the second half, two young fellows next to me arose to leave. One remarked with a look of disgust on his countenance:

"Let's go. This is too tame, those fellows are playing a Sunday school game, and nobody's going to get hurt." If the ambulance calls had been frequent, this pair would have been satisfied and would have left in high glee, because they had seen some one broken up."

"If I could guarantee to go through the fence Monday afternoon, the merchants would have to close up their stores, because they would have neither customers nor clerks. The street cars could not haul the crowd, nor would the inclosure hold them."

"Why, when it was made known in Poughkeepsie last fall that I was going to have some moving pictures taken for my vaudeville stunt, showing me crash-

ing through the fence with the Green Dragon, the state fair grounds there, noted for having one of the largest grandstands in the country, could not accommodate the crowd. The fence was to be a pasteboard one, and the speed that was to be attained in the reproduction of the films was to be the result of 'doctoring' by the picture man, yet they wanted to see how it was done, and a lot went away disappointed because it was not a real accident, with real blood, instead of red dye, splashing on my head.

"They are unwilling to admit it tactfully, but that's what they go to see me drive for. There's that chance of an accident, and they don't want to miss it. If it does not occur they are disappointed, and call the races tame."

AUTOS STIR UP PEACHTREE.

King Gasolene Reigned Supreme on Streets of Atlanta Last Night, When Autos Paraded.

Those who failed to take part in the auto swim on Peachtree street last night missed one of the sights of their lives, for the big parade was enjoyed both by the participants and the spectators.

As car after car, brilliantly lighted, some with electric effects and others with the usual Japanese lanterns, swept down the principal streets of the city, giving the onlooker an impression of endlessness, gasolene reigned as king.

The list of events and entries in the big auto race Monday afternoon follows:

First Event—Two miles for motorcycles: Tracy Ewing, W. M. Beck, Calvin Treavis, M. T. Edgar, John McCashin, E. R. Davis, Zenas Fields.

Second Event—Two miles for cars: J. B. Connolly's Cadillac, John Toole's Cadillac, Milton Elliott's Cadillac, R. C. Craven's Cadillac.

Third Event—Three miles, novelty race for touring cars: start and stop; Barney Oldfield's Peerless, John Toole's White Steamer, J. B. Connolly's White Steamer, Edward Inman's Peerless, Zenas Fields' Franklin.

Fourth Event—Three miles, free for all: J. B. Dickerson's Pope-Toledo, driven by Toole; Asa Candler's Franklin, driven by Joe Lander; J. B. Connolly's White Winship, Nunnally's Franklin, Edward Inman's Peerless.

Fifth Event—Three-mile handicap: Milton Elliott's Cadillac, J. B. Connolly's White, Barney Oldfield's Peerless, Edward Inman's Peerless, J. B. Dickerson's Pope-Toledo, driven by Toole, Asa Candler's Franklin, Winship, Nunnally's Franklin, driven by Joe Lander.

Sixth Event—Three-heat race, between Barney Oldfield, driving his Peerless Green Dragon, against Paul Albert, on his White Streak. Two, three and five mile heats.

Seventh Event—Three miles: Trial against world's record for half mile track—Barney Oldfield, on his Peerless Green Dragon.

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BARNEY OLDFIELD TELLS HOW HE STARTED RACING

LAFOIE, BERNARD
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BARNEY OLDFIELD, whose death-daring drives of the modern juggernauts have made him the sensation of the automobile world, is in Atlanta to demonstrate his prowess in guiding the giant racing cars around the circular horse tracks at a faster speed than an express train makes.

Oldfield received his first schooling in judging pace and distance while riding a bicycle ten years ago, and later took a post-graduate course by piloting the motor-pacing machines over the indoor board tracks. He was as proficient in the latter line of work as he has since driven in the automobile racing game, for his indoor records made at Madison Square garden six years ago still stand as the fastest ever driven over that notoriously treacherous saucer course.

If one should notice a group of listeners that almost constantly surround the great driver, it's a 10 to 1 shot that a question is being propounded that relates to the reason Oldfield entered the automobile racing business.

"Four years ago, Henry Ford, of Detroit, then a poor mechanical inventor, built the old '999' racing car, a freak machine with just a giant engine, four wheels and a frame," said Barney, last night, explaining how he came to enter his dangerous vocation. "Tom Cooper, the champion bicyclist of the old days, and myself, were partners then in the motor-cycle racing business, and we bought the car from Ford about the time he had given up trying to get it to run successfully. We worked day and night on it, and finally six hours before a big race at Detroit, the erratic old monster concluded it would run. Alexander Winton, who then held the American racing championship, was the star of the meet, with his Bullet No. 1, and it was Winton I was to drive against. The purse was \$500, and we needed it, for our bank-roll had been through an awful siege trying to complete old '999'."

"Before the race, Ford came around and said to me, 'That car isn't going to be able to keep within hailing distance of Winton, and I don't want you to connect my name with the car in any way.' That made me awfully sore, and I went on with preparations, determined to do something that had never been done before—I intended to drive the turns without shutting off the power. It is a matter of automobile history how that race came out. I beat Winton by nearly a mile in five and broke all world's records to boot. The next morning I awoke to find that Barney Oldfield was quite a man in his line."

"That winter I went to work in an automobile shop, for racing was not a popular sport then, and it was the wrong season of the year to make a star in. There are some champions that can live in their friends in the winter time, but this one went to work—hard work, too—for \$2.50 a day. I had a wife and old folks to support, and I could not afford to loaf."

"The following spring it was in Indianapolis that I did something that every one said was impossible. I drove the '999' a mile in :59.2—beating the minute. Then the following July, I went to work for Winton, for he never raced again after I defeated him, and drove a big eight-cylinder machine he built for me—Bullet No. 2."



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Who Will Exhibit His Racing Machine at Piedmont Park Next Thursday.



NAPOLÉON LAJOIE.

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Detroit, Grosse Pointe track, December, 1902—Turned completely around with "999" while going at 1:02 clip, uninjured.

Detroit, Grosse Pointe track, October, 1903—Went through fence in "Winton Bullet," killing a spectator, breaking two of his own ribs and sustaining severe bruises.

St. Louis, August, 1904—Crashed through fence, badly injuring himself and killing two spectators.

San Francisco, Cal., December, 1904—Tire bursted, causing machine to go through the outside fence, injuring both arms and legs.

Ormond Beach, Fla., February, 1905—Broke springs in machine, while going at a 39-second clip, turning the auto completely around and hurling it into the ocean. He sustained a sprained ankle.

Chicago, Harlem race track, May, 1905—Tire blew up and threw machine through outer fence. Wasn't even scratched.

Hartford, Conn., June, 1905—Rear wheel collapsed. Oldfield thrown out and sustained sprains of shoulder and arm.

Pittsburg, Pa., June, 1905—Tire blew up and machine ran into fence. Chevrolet's bump from the rear causing the damage. Oldfield was uninjured.

Detroit, Mich., Grosse Pointe track, August 8, 1905—Crashed through fence, wrecking machine, receiving two scalp wounds and sustaining wound on right arm.

Monsieur Lajoie is a Frenchman who is so Frenchy that he is part to French peas and French puddings: one for feed and one for fuddle.

He was busy at Piedmont Park this morning with a swat stick and getting into trim for home runs this afternoon and was unable to "welcome our city" the Divine Sarah, but so her the following wireless at the Terminal Station: "Bon soire, Madam, consomme en tasse, table d'hôte?"

To which the Madame cordially replied in elegant English: "Twelve three for you! Have you seen the Candler building?"

This little exchange of pleasant tree. My head grazed the limb, just enough to shave off all the hair on the top of the head, while I struck at other limb with my chest and shoulder. My chest was caved in and some of the same ribs were broken over, again for three weeks it was a toss up whether I lived or died, but I came around a right and was driving again before my ankle, which was also mashed, had healed enough to let me walk without crutches.

"My next real bad accident was in Detroit last August, and it occurred hundred feet from where I had my first one. My machine had broken a spur plug and was limping along on three cylinders when Danny Wurgis came along from the rear and struck me with his front wheels. Before I could get away from the inner fence, it was a

built the old '99' racing car, a freak machine with just a giant engine, four wheels and a frame," said Barney, last night, explaining how he came to enter his dangerous vocation. "Tom Cooper, the champion bicyclist of the old days, and myself, were partners then in the motor-cycle racing business, and we bought the car from Ford about the time he had given up trying to get it to run successfully. We worked day and night on it, and finally six hours before a big race at Detroit, the erratic old monster concluded it would run. Alexander Winton, who then held the American racing championship, was the star of the meet, with his Bullet No. 1, and it was Winton I was to drive against. The purse was \$500, and we needed it, for our bank-roll had been through an awful siege trying to complete old '99'.

"Before the race, Ford came around and said to me, 'That car isn't going to be able to keep within hailing distance of Winton, and I don't want you to connect my name with the car in any way.' That made me awfully sore, and I went on with preparations, determined to do something that had never been done before—I intended to drive the turns without shutting off the power. It is a matter of automobile history how that race came out. I beat Winton by nearly a mile in five and broke all world's records to boot. The next morning I awoke to find that Barney Oldfield was quite a man in his line.

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"The following spring it was in Indianapolis that I did something that every one said was impossible. I drove the '99' a mile in :59 2-5—beating the minute. Then the following July, I went to work for Winton, for he never raced again after I defeated him, and drove a big eight-cylinder machine he built for me—Bullet No. 2.

"It was with this machine I had my first real accident in Detroit that fall. I was rounding the upper turn in the last mile of a 5-mile record trial—and I was inside the former mark, too—when my left hand front tire blew up. The wheel would not answer the steering gear, and I knew I had no chance to escape going through the fence—something that I had always figured meant sure death. There was a crowd lined up along the rail, and when you are going ninety-odd feet a second, there is not much time to think or plan. I had always figured out that I must not hit the fence slanting off from the side, so I yanked the wheel all the way around and took the fence at right angles. I broke a fence rail over my breast and upper arms, and why I was not brained I don't know. It missed my head clean, and I braced myself for the shock that I knew was coming when I hit.

"I had a flash of a couple of men in front of me—both running. The machine caught one of them and carried him along in front of it through the air. Three seconds later I got up on my hands and knees. It was exactly 110 feet from where the machine lay, a mass of wreckage. As I lay over I saw the other man beside me. I remember trying to get up and run—for he was a horrible-looking object. They afterwards told me every bone in his body was broken. I had a broken shoulder and four ribs.

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"My next accident that amounted to anything serious was in St. Louis during the world's fair. It was a false start and Albert Webb was in front of me. It was a big race with a prize of \$1,000 and I could not take a chance of pulling up and learning afterwards that the officials had declared it a start, so I tacked on Webb and hung on to his rear wheel. That track was covered with small clods of hard dirt about the size of a marble. We were going along well inside a mile a minute gait and when Webb took the turn his machine began to throw those clods in a stream right into my face. Suppose you hang an English walnut on a string and strike it while going a mile a minute. You're in luck if it does not knock you senseless. A lot of those clods struck my goggles and broke the glass; this blinded me and then before I could shut off I was knocked almost senseless by being struck on the forehead with another lot. The next thing I knew I was through the fence and shooting through the air.

"My machine—it was the first Green Dragon—struck squarely between two men who were sitting on the rail, and their blood covered me as I shot into the air. The machine landed against a giant oak 50 feet from the fence, and I continued my skyward journey until stopped by one of the big limbs of the

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"My next real bad accident was in Detroit last August, and it occurred a hundred feet from where I had my first one. My machine had broken a spark plug and was limping along on three cylinders when Danny Wurgis came along from the rear and struck me with his front wheels. Before I could get away from the inner fence, it was all over and my head was about as artistically cut up as could be done outside a real dissecting room; my same old shoulder had snapped again, in addition to a broken wrist on the other arm. My machine was not even scratched, except that I pulled the steer wheel with me as I began my ariel journey.

"These are my most disastrous accidents, though I have had a dozen or so that I don't care to mention.

"The stage has opened a new field for me, and my automobile race scheme, showing two real racing cars going at the rate of 100 miles an hour, is thrilling the patrons of a Broadway theater in New York. I had twenty racing contracts to fill this summer and I am driving now to get in shape for my season's hard work. On September my racing contracts will all have been filled and I will then forswear racing for good, and head the road company producing my play, not as an actor, remember, but just to drive the Green Dragon in the race and to help draw the crowds."

Birmingham is getting to be a promising gold brick market. Two seers who left last week found the pickings good.

What with Barney Oldfield and Lajoie in town at the same time, Birmingham has good reason to be cheery.