

But Carl rebuilt the track. And, grimly, he held another Day. During the first few years of Speedway, Carl's critics were justified in all they had said about this new project. Someone said Speedway's opening financial losses were like those of "a circus in the rainy season." But Carl had an expression, "Things either grow or stand still," and Speedway must not be allowed to stand still. Its purpose was speed. "The greatest automobile race track in the world" was Carl's idea, and it would be run his way. That was the agreement between the four partners who built this race-track that would be used just one day out of the entire year. These four were Carl Graham Fisher, James A. Allison, Frank Wheeler and Arthur Newby.

Accidents and tragedies haunted Speedway at first. The asphalt flooring of the track buckled in the summer heat. The heavy cars grooved in its softened surface. What road material would insure safety for men willing to risk their lives? Carl pondered, tested, worried. He brought safety engineers to Speedway, and they suggested that the new track be made of brick. So Carl rushed orders for the entire output of a brick factory. The old track was torn up; again Speedway was in upheaval.

Over its ruins Carl kept interest in it alive with the first aviation meet ever held in America. Now the hard-headed businessmen were more than ever convinced that Carl was mad. Automobiles were queer enough, but airplanes were lunatic toys. Carl knew that the plane demonstration would not attract much more publicity than a kite-flying contest. Just the same, he went ahead with his plans.

He brought an odd brace of inventors to Indianapolis who were, I thought, the strangest men I had ever met, but Carl said they had genius. They were the Wright brothers.

Carl argued that the Wright brothers were not only right in their belief that men would eventually fly, but that they had proved their conviction. Hadn't Orville Wright succeeded in staying up in the air for a whole hour? "The airplane just has to grow up," Carl told me stubbornly, and I believed him.

The Wright brothers proved to be small attraction to the public, but Carl was determined to go on with the show. He built