

"We'll get up a team," they said, as they had of bicycles a few years before.

As the "Big Racing Four," Carl, Barney Oldfield, Webb Jay and Al Webb—"the world's most daring automobile racers"—hurtled their pioneer cars over the dangerous dirt tracks of Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. It was at this time that Carl designed the racing cap with the goggles in the visor to protect his weak eyes, which would become the badge of racers.

His eyes prevented him from becoming as great a racer as Barney. Yet in 1904 he held the world's record for two miles, covering the distance in 2:02 on the treacherous Harlem dirt track in Chicago, and a year later he accompanied the American team to Europe and competed in the James Gordon Bennett Cup Races in France.

The Speedway racetrack was to develop out of this trip to Europe. But over there Carl and the other Americans were completely outclassed by the European racers with their superior cars. Carl was forced to admit that the English, French and German cars could "go uphill faster than the American cars can come down."

He did not enjoy his tour of Europe. He hated European food, and the foreign languages maddened him. When, in Italy, he found a cook in a restaurant who had worked in America and could fry potatoes and make apple pie, he took the man along with him for the rest of the tour. Steak, fried potatoes and apple pie were Carl's favorite dishes. He was known to eat the three, three times a day.

While in Europe he consulted the greatest oculists and was deeply concerned when they could do nothing for his fading vision. Not until his return to Indianapolis did he find an oculist who gave him his first glasses. By that time he was thirty-one. He had been driving in semi-blindness for years as one of the outstanding racers of his day!

Eyeglasses made the world over for Carl. After acquiring them, he learned to play tennis, baseball and polo. He became conscious of poor vision in others and peered closely at the eyes of everyone he met, particularly if they were very young. Many a