

How He Did It.

BARNEY CARVES WAY TO FAME.

*Smashes World Marks With
Many Makes of Cars.*

*Peerless Green Dragon, Win-
ton and Others Used.*

*Benz Rolls Up Large List of
Important Victories.*

Several million persons have seen Barney Oldfield drive famous racing cars. For nine years the wonderful master of the steering wheel has raced in all parts of the country. He always makes good with the crowd. Many thousands of columns have been used to tell about Oldfield's nerve, daring and ability. But what of the cars that made it possible for him to keep at the top of the ladder year after year. Surely Barney never claimed to be a pedestrian of championship caliber. Seven great racing monsters have been used by Oldfield since he began his career. Of course, he has driven a few makes of stock chassis—including the Knox which he now drives, in connection with his appearance on the racing cars, but this story has to do with only the monsters.

Ten years ago Oldfield was a motorcycle rider on the bicycle track pacing motor machines, having graduated or evolved from the ranks of the champion bicycle riders. Together with Tom Cooper, the old-time bicycle champion, who was his chum, Oldfield conceived the idea of constructing two racing automobiles and of giving exhibitions around the country and com-

A few months later Barney drove the "Bullet" against William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., at the wheel of a foreign car, which cost him \$20,000, for the world's straightaway championship over the Florida beach course. Oldfield defeated Vanderbilt with ease and the young millionaire was never a competitor in a race after that. Barney also had a smaller Winton racer known as the "Bullet No. 3" which he used in smaller class races.

PEERLESS ONE.

In the summer of 1904 Oldfield's services were in great demand by manufacturers, for he was the holder of all good records and the machines he abandoned never showed the same speed he got out of them. The Peerless Motor Car Company employed Barney and built for him the famous Peerless Green Dragon. This car proved a most wonderful racing machine. With comparatively small horse power and extremely lightweight, the Green Dragon developed great speed and Oldfield soon broke all his old records with the famous car. It was at Fresno in the winter of 1904 that Barney got all world's records from fifteen to fifty miles and two weeks later at Agricultural Park he broke every record from one to fourteen miles. Barney says Charley Burman's great mechanical knowledge resulted in keeping the Green Dragon keyed up to record-breaking pitch.

BOOSTS BURMAN.

Charles Burman raced with Oldfield several years and was with Barney when most of the world records were smashed. He paced Oldfield when the fifty-mile mark was beaten and tramped around the track at Fresno filling the holes and helping the Peerless car to ride the many bumps. The world record was smashed, thanks to what Charles was willing to perform.

His allegiance to the Peerless factory kept Burman at it unceasingly and he traveled with Barney, helping out in the record-breaking stunts which proved such a hit. Oldfield was ready to smash world records and always hit the mark squarely. He was there with bells every time Burman had anything to do with the meet.

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Henry Ford, head of the great motor building concern which bears his name, was at that time unknown in the gasoline engine field, but confided to Cooper that he could build a racing car of great power, and one that would beat anything on the track at that time. Cooper financed the building of two cars, and together with Oldfield and Ford worked on the cars day and night, the "999" and "Arrow" were completed in the spring of 1902.

Cooper drove the Arrow and Oldfield the "999." Oldfield's first race with the now famous car was at Detroit against Alexander Winton, who then held the championship of America with his Bullet No. 1. Oldfield startled the automobile world by defeating Winton and breaking the previous record for the mile on a circular track.

The "999" was a crude affair, as cars go now, but inside those ugly cylinders such great power was developed that no American or foreign car could beat it with Oldfield at the wheel. Then Barney predicted that a mile-a-minute on a circular track was possible. Experts laughed at him, and prophesied disaster for the man foolish enough to go into a turn with the engine almost wide open. But at Indianapolis in 1903 Oldfield covered a mile in 59 4-5 seconds, and made good his prediction. Bill Piekens later brought the "999" to the coast and it now lies in a garage in this city.

In the summer of 1903 Oldfield abandoned the "999" for the Bullet No. 2, which Winton built for him. This was the car which Oldfield brought to Los Angeles when he came here the first time in the fall of 1903 and on the Agricultural Park track smashed the mile record putting it down to 54 4-5s.

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Then Barney felt the need of a six-cylinder car of great power, so in 1907 he took on the Stearns "Big Ben," later selling it to Ed Maier, who now has the car in use in Los Angeles and it is his favorite for a hurry-up trip out to his ranch.

Oldfield made a ten strike from a publicity viewpoint when he purchased a six-cylinder National engine, built a low chassis and painted the bonnet on either side as an American flag, naming the speed car "Old Glory." A month later he was notified that he was violating the United States laws by using the flag and name, and with the importation of the 120 Benz he turned the National over to Johnny Aiken and the factory then took up racing and followed it successfully. The 20 Benz was the big road racing car Oldfield used at Ascot Park the latter part of 1909 and surprised the automobile experts by breaking the world's track records with it. The construction and balance of the car was thought by the experts to preclude the possibility of using it on a circular track. Probably it was Oldfield's skill that made the feat possible. The 120 Benz was turned over to Bruce-Brown by Oldfield and it captured the Grand Prize road race at Savannah last November.

When Barney imported the "Blitzen" Benz from Germany and broke the world's speed record by traveling 142 miles an hour on the Florida beach, no one believed he would dare use such a high-powered car on a circular track, but Barney not only has used the car in all sorts of mile tracks, but holds the record for a mile in 1:04 on a half-mile track. Oldfield seems to be able to do things on mile dirt tracks with any sort of cars. That is why he draws the crowds and is practically in a class by himself as a track driver.