

THE SAGA OF THE ROARING ROAD

records that were made in competition with the best foreign cars and the best our country could produce, all exceeding its horse power.

Probably the most significant fact about this car was its two unit construction—the motor and clutch in one unit forward, and transmission on the rear axle, a single shaft, and two universal joints connecting the two units. The construction was adopted as the simplest, most efficient and dependable method of delivering every ounce of power developed to the rear wheels.

On January 3, 1904, the "Gray Wolf" broke all existing world records and established new American records for cars of any weight or horse power over the Daytona course.

The following month, William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., sent the name of Daytona around the globe by establishing the course record for the mile, 39 seconds, which was two-fifths of a second faster than Henry Ford had driven his "999" over the iced surface of Lake Claire at New Baltimore, Michigan, fifteen days before.

Vanderbilt set seven world's records in 1904, and won five out of six important races in his big Mercedes. His only defeat was at the hands of Barney Oldfield, then piloting Winton's "Bullet," in a mile event.

Ford was there with his "999" that year, too, but I didn't know of his presence until several weeks later, when I called on him in his little Detroit plant, and asked why he didn't show his car's speed at Daytona. "Lacked the money!" was his reply.

Then the story came out—came from Ford's own lips. He had borrowed enough to get old "999" down to Daytona, and carried a tent with him, which he erected in the shade of the palms far in the rear of the

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course. Ford not only lived beneath the canvas shelter, but garaged his prize model there as well.

He lacked sufficient cash to have an axle, broken on the way down from Detroit, repaired, and for that reason could not compete. He told me that he lived, on crackers and cheese during his stay, while he awaited funds from associates back in Detroit with which to ship "999" and himself home.

"But why didn't you let me know?" I asked Ford. "I've been your friend in the past, haven't I?"

"Yes," answered the now financially-powerful Ford, "but I've made a resolution since I last saw you. I'm through borrowing money. I'm going to put my car over without asking for \$5 and \$10 handouts!"

Ford returned to the beach the following year, but his troubles were other than financial on his second visit. A sprung axle that could not be replaced before the finish of the tourney kept him from making the showing that probably would have been his with an undamaged car.

Records of the Vanderbilt year went flying in 1905. Arthur C. MacDonald, the first English racer here with a Napier, set a new world record for the mile, which was beaten a few minutes later by Bowden in his two-engined Mercedes. F. R. Thomas, who later built the Thomas car, Paul Sartori, chauffeur of Alfred G. Vanderbilt, and H. W. Fletcher of New York, in his first race also set records. Henry Ford, the penniless inventor, again living in a tent on the beach, was unable to race one of his early cars because of a broken crankshaft. Vanderbilt, Christy, Ross, Oldfield and Rollin W. White of White Sewing Machines, Steamer, and later Rollin car fame were among the