

Foreword

In presenting this revised edition of *Saga of the Roaring Road* it is my desire to preserve for posterity some of the many interesting anecdotes of early-day automobile racing as seen and experienced by Fred J. Wagner.

Fred Wagner was the dean of race starters, and during his career officiated at auto races at nearly every track and course in the United States. He supervised auto races over a long period of years, years which in the opinion of many, were the most colorful of the entire auto racing era.

I have secured the rights for reprinting this edition from Mrs. Wagner, and have not changed the original text in any way, preferring rather to present the story just as it was originally told. I have however, added numerous colorful photographs of early racing events.

Mr. Wagner's personal story is by no means intended as a complete history of automobile racing in the United States, but rather a recounting of events and personalities with which he had direct contact. It was originally written in 1937. I mention this because events during the past twelve years have changed several specific things of which Mr. Wagner speaks. For example, the land speed record at Bonneville Salts Flats has been broken several times since the original book was written, and the course of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway has been constantly improved so that the surface is practically entirely paved at this time, with wide aprons on the infield side of the track. Other safety measures have been taken to further protect the drivers at this annual speed classic. It is interesting to note however, that Jimmy Murphy's record for the 250 Mile Race at the Los Angeles Board Track at Beverly Hills in 1924 was 126 miles per hour, thus despite the improvement of machines, tires, and tracks since that time, credit must be given to the great drivers and car builders of two decades ago.

I hope that you like this book. We hope to publish similar books on different phases of the history of automobile racing in the United States in the future.—*Floyd Clymer.*

THE MARTYRS

*Think what you will of the racing man,
Say what you like as well,
Call him a "nut with a heavy foot,"
Crazed by the Speed Imp's spell.
Brand him as greedy for purse and fame,
Jest at his playlike toil —
Riding hell-bent in a roaring bowl,
Blackened with grime and oil.
Give him a cheer or scoff at his kind,
But when he leaves the track—
A broken thing 'mid a wreck of steel
To ride through vales of black—
Be square to him and just ask yourself
As fairly as you can:
"Would I give as much as he has spent
For the good of my fellow man?"
Remember, too, as you roll along
Security's Highway,
You owe a debt to this "speed-mad fool,"
A debt you'll never pay.
For he's taken tires, bolts, and rods
To prove them false or true,
And his O.K. is your guaranty
That you'll ride safely through.*

—By J. C. BURTON.