



Top: Early-day race enthusiasts survey Barney Oldfield's famed Peerless "Green Dragon."

Center: The Mercer entry in the Elgin Road Race stops for "minor adjustments."

Bottom: Cars lined up for the start at the Maywood, Illinois, Speedway. Earl Cooper's No. 8 Stutz in the middle. —Mecham Photos

IX.

"All brave men aren't in the army."
So did Homer McKee, of Indianapolis, preface his eulogy, of the automobile race driver near the close of the World War.

In subscribing, unequivocally, to a declaration so eloquently piquant, I get the privilege of making an amendment and of here stating that all the brave men on a race course do not wear the colorful panoply of deliver and mechanic.

At times, and especially in the infancy of automobile racing when the promotion and conduct of meets was in the hands of amateur sportsmen with little or no experience and precedent to guide them, occasions have arisen that called for prompt and heroic action on the part of men serving in drab and routine capacities, far without the focus of the inspiring spotlight—fateful occasions in which tragedy was averted only by quick thinking and quicker movement.

Such a crisis; and stamped upon my memory as the most dramatic of them all, came in the opening minutes of one of the early Vanderbilt Cup road races, run over the Long Island course, and were it not so splendidly as it was, this classic of the roaring road undoubtedly would have added four or more names to its red roster of human toll.

At Westbury, nine miles from the starting line, was the first turn on the course, and here we had swung a telegraph pole, mounted like a toll gate, across the road