

THE SAGA OF THE ROARING ROAD

the first car to crowd a mile in sixty fleeting seconds. It was, while it lasted, a partnership of mutual advantage, Ford and Oldfield riding figuratively, in the 999 into the headlines of the metropolitan newspapers, there to gain the priceless publicity that was no minor ingredient in their success.

Where I had lacked foresight in my dealings with Ford, Oldfield lacked patience. For Ford, in those days, was liberal with promises of stock in the new company and of lucrative positions as soon as the dream-organization was perfected, but he could not give freely of dollars that he did not have. Oldfield, however, was no different from most men—he had to eat occasionally—and “Hot Dog” John, immortal proprietor and chef of a Detroit lunch wagon, eventually refused to extend Barney further credit. The last entry that went on the cuff, according to Oldfield, was a five dollar loan to defray the cost of shipping old 999 and its driver from Detroit to Toledo to participate in a dirt track meet, and there Oldfield, broke and impatient, opened successful negotiations with Alexander Winton to pilot the Winton Bullet.

Ten years now elapse, as they say in the theatre programs, and this anecdote has Los Angeles for the scene of its denouement.

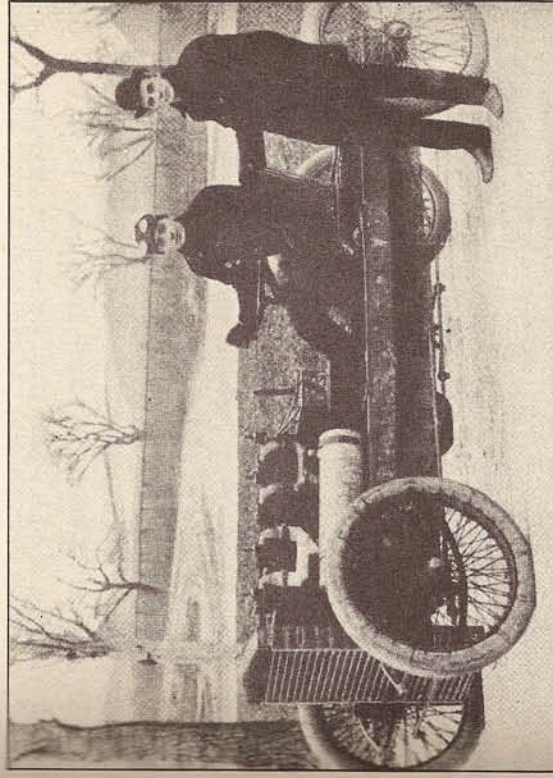
Ford, on a business trip to the Pacific Coast decided to call upon Oldfield, and sought him out in Barney's saloon on Spring Street. Under the circumstances, it was more than a friendly gesture and an act of courtesy, for in entering a barroom the millionaire manufacturer, a sincere prohibitionist from boyhood, cast his scruples to the winds.

“Well, Barney,” he said, in greeting his former driver, “you made me, and I made you.”

THE SAGA OF THE ROARING ROAD

“Yes,” Oldfield acquiesced, “but I did a damn sight better job of it than you did!”

Oh, for the gift of a barbed tongue! I fear I'd be tempted to wag it the next time Henry Ford reminds me of the day he offered to make me his partner for a paltry \$5,000.



Henry Ford (standing), with Barney Oldfield in Ford's famous pioneer racing car “999”.