

with tunnels, cost over a quarter million more. At the present time, over a million dollars had been invested.

Since the inception of the 500-mile event in 1911, I have looked upon the Indianapolis course as Heaven's gift to the morticians! And thereby hangs a tale—a tale reddened by the blood of the many courageous drivers who have ridden the Indianapolis bricks to their doom!

The first races were held over the Indianapolis two and one-half mile oval in 1909, the program continuing for several days and climaxing in a 250-mile event.

The second program was staged over the new brick surfacing in May, 1910, again culminating in the 250-mile race on Memorial Day.

While this card brought a huge financial profit for the owners of the speedway, it drew groans from the drivers. They had sped over bricks for the first time in their careers, and they only had condemnation for that type of track.

"Never again!" declared the majority of the pilots.

The millionaire builders of the speedway were panicked. What they had launched as a sporting proposition had assumed gigantic financial possibilities they did not want to part with. Then, too, there was the million and more dollars of their original investment. It became a question of what to do, when Carl Fisher, who was president of the corporation, conceived his idea of staging one event each year—the 500-mile Decoration Day contest—with purses totaling \$75,000.

Naturally, the dangle of this record-making distance before their eyes; the jingling of that much gold in their ears, caused the drivers to reconsider.

It had seemed to me, from the very beginning, that

most moves of the speedway founders lacked decision based upon experience, but I was only a soldier in the movement, taking my orders from the Contest Board of the A.A.A.

There had been an ache in my heart that day in 1909 when I lined the cars up at the starting line for the christening of the speedway, for I knew the skidding possibilities of macadam, and there were even greater aches in my heart the first time I sent the boys off over the brick surface. Neither is suited to racing.

The opening year on the bricks resulted in shrieks from the pilots because the brick dust had seeped into motors and axles, ruining bearings and even scoring cylinders—protests that increased in volume after May 30, 1911, as they tore down their cars following completion of the inaugural 500-mile contest.

Even with the fattest cash prices of competition before the drivers, there was some question as 1911 gave way to 1912 whether they would enter the event the next May. They did however!

For sustained excitement, for strenuous competition, in which both human and mechanical element is involved, for the doggonedest five hours or so of never-know-what-will-happen-next, it is this same 500-mile classic.

Permit me to cite a few instances and bring back to you the thrilling moment of the start of these memorable contests.

Of the 30 cars entered in that initial 500-mile derby, the name of only one of the American-made vehicles survives today. That is Buick.

One life was sacrificed and several boys were injured that day but out of the gloom came Ray Harroun, driving his Marmon car to victory. Closely pressing