

The following is a book excerpt from Marci Lynn McGuinness'  
*Yesteryear at the Uniontown Speedway* board track

# Yesteryear at the Uniontown Speedway 1916

Just five days prior to the 1916 fourth annual Summit Mountain Hill Climb, the Pennsylvania State Highway Department banned racing on the mountain. Charles Johnson, Uniontown Buick dealer and the man who held the record time set for climbing the hill, took his post as President of the Uniontown Motoring Association seriously. This was a time when steel, coal, and coke had made many men rich as World War 1 was going on in Europe. Johnson solicited local barons and merchants, collecting \$100,000.00 to build a wooden race track in Hopwood. He had been to races at the board track in Sheepshead Bay, New York and knew Uniontown had to have one for its own.

John C. "Jack" Prince was brought in. From 1881 to 1884 Prince was the champion cyclist of Europe. He then came to America where he won the world title, by beating all competition for two years from Boston to San Francisco. He moved to Omaha, Nebraska in 1886 and held races at the Exposition building on Capital Avenue where world famous cyclists such as Dingle, Shock, Knapp, Martin, Reading, and Morton competed. In 1887, he built a Coliseum on Lake and 20th Streets. It was considered the best ten-lap bicycle track in all the world.

At the Coliseum, he held an array of events in addition to professional bicycle races. These caused a great stir and filled the arena beyond capacity. He held an international tug-of-war that went on for nine consecutive evenings, matches between horses and bikes, wolf chases, and the grand opera. There was a skating rink. Billy Muldoon the champion wrestler, and even Jack Dempsey fought in Prince's palace. He promoted and organized the first exposition that was ever held in the city. This packed the place for two weeks.

Prince went on to build bicycle tracks around the country and after automobiles became the rage, he was commissioned to design and supervise the construction of wooden race tracks across America.

Johnson contacted the famous man and hired him to build a 1 and 1/8 mile oval track and a grand stand that would hold 20,000 fans, in the meadow on the southern side of the National Road at the west end of Hopwood, Pennsylvania. He gave the builder a three month deadline and Prince assured the Uniontown hot shot that he was up to the challenge.

They built the board track of 2 by 4's with a 100 man crew working long hours to meet their deadline. America was not yet in the fighting in Europe, but the Germans had torpedoed the British liner Lusitania, killing 139 Americans and the armed forces were preparing for war. This made workers difficult to find, so many high school boys pitched in after school. Lumber was hauled on horse drawn wagons as the transition from horse and buggy to automobile was a slow one for the average family. The two forms of transportation co-existed for decades before the one car family became the norm.

Johnson realized his request to have the track completed for a Thanksgiving race would take a miracle. In the program for the opening race they stated that "The construction of the U.S.A. planked speedway will go down in the annals of history as an accomplishment that in retrospective view shows has never been equaled." They went on to say that board tracks take millions of feet of lumber of special grade and quality which made filling the order a slow and tedious process. During normal times it would have taken at least six months to deliver the lumber. With the war going on, they explain that it would take at least nine months if the lumber mills would accept such a large order at all. These companies were working at top speed already. Because one of the members of the American Lumber Company of Pittsburgh "had a great interest" in the speedway, Johnson succeeded in doing what many said could not be done. The Uniontown Speedway Association's board of directors conceded that "to him (Johnson) and him alone is due the honor, the praise, and the glory of achieving that which even the most optimistic of us said could not be accomplished."

On August 21, 1916 the property for the speedway was surveyed. Two days later the ground lease was attested. At this time there were cows, sheep, horses, and their young grazing lazily in the meadow; innocent of the tremendous noises that would soon fill the air. The first day of September saw the first stake driven. On September 8 the lumber order was placed with the American Lumber Company. One week later the first of the boards were delivered to Hopwood. The first supporting timber was raised on the eighteenth. By November 1 they were laying surface plank. On the 21st of that month Barney Newgard's Crawford became the first car to be admitted to the track. Three days later the boxes were begun and the next day the track's wooden surface was completed. They laid 2 by 4's flat against each other to form the strong wooden floor. Because of the size of the natural amphitheatre in the meadow the track was a 1 and 1/8 mile oval. At 100mph, a lap was made at 40.50 seconds. It was written that a speed of 100mph on a board track was less dangerous than going 50mph on a flat dirt track.

The management of the Uniontown Speedway, in addition to Johnson being President and General Manager were as follows: First Vice President, Frank D. Saupp; Secretary, A.M. Husted; Treasurer, Wendell A. Stone.

The officials were: Chairman of the Contest Board, Richard Kennerdell of New York; Representative of the Contest Board, F.H. Rosboro of Uniontown; Technical Committee Chairman, W.R. Strickler of Cleveland; Referee, Frank Rosboro of Uniontown; Starter, Webb Jay of Chicago; Assistant Starter, Jno. L. Cadwalader of Pittsburgh; Director of Timing, A.M. Crichton of Uniontown; Assistant Dir. of Timing, Wallace Miller of Uniontown; Director of Scoring, E.E. Porter of Uniontown; Clerk of Course, Don Beamer, Uniontown; Speed Reporter, Homer Burchinal of Uniontown.

The judges were: John J. Bell and C. E. Jackson of Pittsburgh.

Track doctors were C.M. Luman, E.H. Rebok, A.S. Hagan, and Dr. Jackson.

Technical Committee members were John C. Donahue, Jos. Cronick, and Bert Abel.

Manager of Publicity was Ed F. Korbel of New York City.

Manager of Events was Neil Whalen from New York City.

Chairman of the Press was George B. Smith of Uniontown.

Scoreboard Manager was W.R. Smith of Connellsville.

Concession Committee members were R.S. Cook, H. Keller, Amadee Hagan, and Zed Francis.

Manager of Pyrotechnics was A. Bufano of Dunbar.

Telegraph service was provided by the Western Union and Postal Telegraph. Tri-State Telephone set up and conducted telephone communications.

In a note from the speedway management in the program they described their maiden race this way:

"We have brought here for your entertainment, the world's rising stars. Men and mounts who hold numerous world records. Men to whom fear is an unknown quantity and yet whose nerves have been tried in many prior contests. Men who could tell you of many harrowing moments, when a fraction of a second determined life or death for them and the destruction of their cars. Men whose vocation requires clean living. Men who follow the straight and narrow path possibly more closely than the exponents of any other line of sport. Men whom it is a pleasure to mingle and associate with, whose education and intelligence is considerably above the average, many of whom are graduates of the leading colleges of this and other countries. The rapid development of the pleasure car is due entirely to the research and mechanical knowledge of the racing driver."

Neil Whalen, Manager of Events, first drove a Matheson at Lowell, Mass in 1908. He did not win that race because a fly got in his carburetor and he lost time looking for flypaper to snag it! He won many of the "twice around the clock" grinds for the next year and in October 1909 he won the New York to Atlanta road race, covering 1063 miles in 54 hours and 15 minutes. The next year he won 10 of the 11 hill climbs he entered losing only to Ralph DePalma in Wilkes-Barre.

In 1912 Whalen upset his Case race car during the Indy 500 when an outside wheel came off. The car rolled and rolled but neither man was hurt. Days before the opening race in Uniontown Whalen said, "Thanksgiving Day the People of Uniontown will have something to be really-truly thankful for." At this time Harry Miller of L.A. was building Whalen the "U.S.A. Special". Whalen would represent the U.S.A. Speedway at all the big events around the circuit in this 165hp racer.

E.F. Corbel and M.W. Colwell were New York's number one promoters. They were hired to direct publicity for this and other major racing events around the country.

## How Ill Fated National Team Came to Death

Just two minutes after the Uniontown Speedway opened for its initial practice runs on Monday November 27, 1916, Frank Bush laughed and kissed his partner Charlie Heist's (driving) cheek and yelled, "We're off!" They were traveling over 60mph when coming around the steep back curve. The rear right tire blew as they came within two feet of the top of the embankment. Five hundred spectators watched as the car shot up and almost went over the back of the track. When the car crashed it rolled twice breaking through the guard rails and spinning forward. It then swerved back to the track, mowed down more of the railing and finally came to a stop after dragging along the bottom of the track. Bush was lifeless when the crowds approached the wreck and track doctors placed Heist on

two planks to transport him to a car and then to the Uniontown Hospital. He never regained consciousness and was badly mashed as was Bush.

The team had been traveling together for a year racing on dirt tracks. They had been chosen by Pete Galanot, who ran a string of National race cars, for the National Motor Car Company of Pittsburgh, to go for the W.D. Johnston trophy in the dealer's race. Both men had raced at Indianapolis in addition to many state fairs and tracks around the country. After the second man died at 5:15pm that evening, their employer said, "Both of the boys are personal friends of mine, and I regret their death more than I can say. They drove my cars in almost every meet in which we have participated this year and I considered them to be the most conservative and careful drivers of the many who handled my cars. I have followed the racing game for the last five years, but you can say for me now that I am through. I want no more of it. The National car was one of the best equipped of any put on the track, and fate which proved unkind to that car can play the same trick with any other."

Heist's mother resided in Los Angeles, California and Bush's parents lived in Richmond, Virginia.

The following is the list of entries for the first event; Class E Non Stock. 300 cu. in. piston displacement, or under. Maximum weight 2500 pounds, 100 laps, 112 1/2 miles:

Driver	Mechanic	Car
Ralph DePalma	Louis Fontaine	Mercedes
Dave Lewis	J. McAllister	Premier
Frank Galvin	Gaston Weigle	Premier
Barney Newgard	Emeret N. Pala	Crawford
Arthur H. Klein	E.J. Longchamps	Crawford
Hughie Hughes		Hoskins
John DePalma	Billy Darragh	J.J.R. Special
M.F. McBride	George Baldini	Olsen
Bert Watson	William Claus	Olsen
James R. Meyer	George Downs	Pugh Special
Otto Henning		Ogren Special
Louis Chevrolet	R.C. Searles	Frontenac
H.L. Robinson		Haynes
Jack Conway	George J. Halley	Haynes
George Adams		Adams Special
J. Mason		Ogren

The following is the list of entries for the second event - Class D, Non Stock. Free-For-All. For dealers residing within 150 miles of Uniontown, PA: 48 laps, 54 miles. The drivers and mechanics had to be from the specified area and the cars from the dealer's factory. The automobiles could be stripped and fitted with gears, timed, and tuned at the dealer's discretion:

Driver	Mechanic	Car
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Fred McCarthy	Charles McFarland	Murray Special
Wilmer Monahan	Brady Williams	Packard Special
Mike Hudoc	R. W. Patterson	Buick Special
N.P. Fetterman	Burton Bailey	Haynes Special
J.E. Conway	George J. Halley	Haynes Special
I.P. Fetterman		Peerless Special
H.L. Robinson		Haynes Special
C.S. Jones	F.M. Carthyor	Stearns Knight
Alva Hughson		Pathfinder
Barney Newgard	Emert N. Pala	Crawford
Arthur Klein	E.J. Longchamps	Crawford
F.M. Seanor		Haynes Speciall

The English Hughie Hughes was scheduled to give an exhibition in the 12 cylinder Sunbeam owned by a wealthy New York sportsman, Richard Adams. The car was accredited with 132mph on the Brooklands track. He had recently beat the speed king, Bob Burman in Corona, California with the Sunbeam. During that race Burman lost his life. He was driving what they afterward referred to as the "jinx car". Burman had built the car with a Puegeot motor and had reconstructed it making it several mph faster. Burman was known to be "the man who traveled the mile and kilometer faster than any man who ever lived." In Corona his car jumped a curb and the back wheel got caught in a steel cable from a telegraph pole trying to catch Hughes in the Sunbeam. The pole snapped like a toothpick as Burman had hit it at 106mph. At this 1916 Uniontown Speedway race, Burman's mechanic, Jack Cable was to drive the "jinx car", but was eliminated at the trials.

The Sunbeam had been disqualified from the Universal Trophy race because of its exceptional power. The piston displacement and motor were twice the size of the average race car. Officials also agreed the car could not take the strain from the 100 lap board race.

Elimination trials were held on Wednesday for the fastest professional drivers in the world. Trials had been scheduled to be held on Sunday, but this was stopped because the contract held with the Brownfield's (property owners), prohibited it. They were ready to compete for the \$3,000.00 Universal Film Trophy. Carl Laemmle, President of the Universal Film Manufacturing Company, donated the solid silver automobile racing trophy; the first offered this popular sport by any film company. This gesture, by such a powerful businessman, lent credibility to the track and racing around the world. Winners from Indianapolis, California, and New York tracks were revved up to smash speed records in the struggle to win the three feet tall work of art. The following prizes were offered:

The Universal Trophy Race, Class E, Non-Stock:  
 First prize.....\$1,000.00  
 Second place.....700.00

Third place.....	600.00
Fourth place.....	500.00
Fifth place.....	100.00
The car leading on the 45th lap.....	100.00

W.D. Johnston Cup dealer's race, Class D, Non-Stock:

First prize.....	500.00
Second place.....	300.00
Third place.....	200.00
Fourth place.....	100.00
Fifth place.....	50.00

## Unique System of Timing and Recording this Race was Devised and Constructed by Local Men

"The system of timing races on the U.S.A. Speedway differs vastly from the system in vogue at other speedways, and the racing drivers are loud in their praise of it. In this unique system are incorporated the salient points of all other timing systems and the improved unique ideas of some of the brightest minds of the electrical and mechanical world. A great amount of credit is due A.M. Crichton, of the Tri-State-Telephone company, for the successful completion of the timing system. The cars mechanically register their own time in crossing the starting line. The number of laps made are electrically registered simultaneously at the timing table, the field scoreboard and the pit, thereby eliminating the possibility of an error in registering the number of laps made. The U.S.A. scoreboard is the only speedway where the number of laps is electrically registered. This same is true with reference to the registering of laps in the pits. The time made by the leading car and the rate of speed at which the car is running is posted on the big scoreboard every eighth lap. This serves to keep the audience thoroughly posted on the progress of the race."

The Thanksgiving Day race was delayed because of rain until Monday December 2, but trials were held where Hughie Hughes clipped off several laps at 102mph. During these trials two serious accidents were caused by inexperienced drivers on the wooden track. They both disobeyed official's orders. One man locked his brakes up skidding into a crowd of officials and another broke a front axle. Five thousand people watched these trials at the admission fee of 25 cents each. Seats for the Universal race went for \$1.00. Reserved seats ran \$2.00 and \$3.00 dollars.

### Driver's Biographies

Hughie Hughes was 30 and from England. He was known as one of the best race car driver's the world had thus far seen. In 1904 he drove a Detrich car in the Gordon Bennett race in France. He won the Savannah trophy in 1911. That same year he took third place in the grand prize race in an Ono. In 1914 he won the Tacoma Potlatch in a Maxwell.

Since then he won several hill climbs with the Allen-Kingstons team. He established a record of 110mph at Indianapolis in Walter Christie's front drive car.

Arthur Klein was head of the Crawford team from Hagerstown, MD. He began racing in 1909 and made his way to Indianapolis by 1914. Reports show that it looked like he had a good chance to win that race, but he broke a valve stem about half way through. He came in 2nd soon after that in the Potlatch trophy race at Tacoma, WA and 3rd in the Mont marathon. He was winning the latter race, but acquired carburetor and tire troubles. He had raced around the country and found himself in Uniontown at the new speedway.

Barney Newgard was a member of the Crawford team. He had been around racing for some time. He was head mechanic of the winning Duisenberg team. He rode with Eddie O'Donnell until the accident in Kansas City. He then joined the Devlin team with Hughie Hughes driving.. When he joined the Crawford team he rode with Arthur Klein. This was his first driving race!

Frank Galvin began as a world class cyclist in both America and Europe. When he caught the car racing fever, he was in Europe driving a German Opel. He was the only American on a foreign team and soon ran a Buick "Bug" which caused quite a stir on dirt tracks. Galvin joined the famous Peugeot team which took him all over the U.S. and on to Indianapolis. He began driving a Sunbeam which won him cash prizes everywhere he went. In 1915 he finished 3rd in Cincinnati in a field of 32 starters. In New York's Harkness trophy race he came in 2nd setting world records for distance and averaging 106 mph. He was beat by Aitken, his teammate, by 9 seconds.

Ralph DePalma was born in Italy but lived in New York since early childhood. He was known for several years as the best all around race car driver yet seen. This judgement was made because of his courage, resourcefulness, and conservative driving. He was also known to be cool, steady, deliberate, and of heady character whether winning or losing. The man was always smiling and happy, with a lilt of cheerfulness in his voice. This is why he was followed by thousands of friends and fans.

DePalma was one of two drivers who had at that time captured the Vanderbilt cup two consecutive times. He was unlucky in road races during his early career (1908-) but crowned "mile-track king" because of his success in track events. In the 1908 Grand Prix at Savannah he out-drove both American and European rivals only to brake a cylinder nearing the last lap. In 1908 he took 10 firsts and 3 seconds out of 16 starts; 1909 he won 34 out of 47 starts, came in second 8 times and third 1 time. He went on to win well over 100 track, speedway, and road races holding many records. In May 1914 he won the International 500-Mile Sweepstakes at Indianapolis, establishing a new record for the brick course.

Bert Watson was from New York and had been racing on dirt tracks and at all the Sheepshead Bay speedway races, placing in three.

M.F. McBride was Bert Watson's teammate and had the reputation of a nervy, cool courteous man about the tracks.

John DePalma was Ralph's brother. He was an up and coming driver and drove the Universal Film Trophy car from New York to Uniontown.

James Benedict hailed from New York and fully expected to take the trophy back there. He had attended the last Summit Mountain Hill Climb and had plenty of board track experience as well. He finished fifth in the 100-mile Harkness Gold Trophy Race at Sheepshead just a month before and brought his high powered car here in top condition.

Dave Lewis began driving dirt track races in 1902. Before that he was the amateur bicycle champion of California. In 1912 at Brighton Beach, New York, he won 20 out of 30 starts. He won several races at the Ascot track in California, and held the 100 mile beach race record at Old Orchard Beach, ME. He scored places in a number of races with the Stutz team and broke the world's 5 mile record in DeMoines; that same day winning the 50 mile race there. He also scored second in the Chicago Grand Prix, Tacoma Road Race, the Sioux City speedway races, and the 50 mile race in Omaha.

Otto Henning had raced for six years when entering the Uniontown opening race with an Ogren. This car showed a continued speed of 105mph on the two mile track in Chicago, going 115mph on the straights.

Louis Chevrolet came here from France in 1908 and started in the racing game as Hemery's mechanic. He was as famous as an automobile engineer as he was a race driver. When Hemery went back to France in 1909 Chevrolet started on a barnstorming trip in a Buick. That year he earned the distinction of being the first man to drive 70mph in a road race. He won the Long Island trophy contest then. He went about breaking records and driving in every event he could get to. Chevrolet had invented the Frontenac car which was popular on the board track circuit. In 1918 his automobile firm was added to General Motors.

I.P. "Red" Fetterman came in 2nd in the 1915 Summit Mountain Hill Climb and was a locally famous driver hailing from Pittsburgh. He had piloted many dirt track races winning several and was here to race the entry of Hiland Automobile Company of Pittsburgh.

Wilmer "Monnie" Monahan drove the Packard Greyhound owned by the Standard Garage in Uniontown. He was known to be daring and fearless. This was his first race on a wooden track, but he had an enviable record on dirt.

Mike Hudoc of Uniontown piloted a Buick "Yellow Kid" owned by the Standard Garage. He was popular among local drivers and had a lot of dirt track experience.

Fred McCarthy worked for several years as the mechanic for Dario Resta, the world famous champion of the racing season. He was driving here for the Murray Motor Car Company and was known as a nervy capable opponent.

N.P. Fetterman, "Red's" brother, had been racing four years on dirt. He was one of the most popular Pittsburgh drivers.

## How the Race was Run

### A Concise Account of How the Big Event was Managed

**SANCTION** - The opening race was run under the supervision of the American Automobile Association, the governing body of the sport. F.H. Rosboro, official representative of the association was in supreme control, with Web Jay and A.M. Crichton assisting in the roles of starter and chairman of timing. Minor appointments were made only with the sanction of these officials.

**JUDGES** - The order of the finish in the event of a close race was decided by the board of judges, while cases of unfair driving were passed on by umpires stationed at regular intervals about the course.

**ELIGIBILITY** - Drivers must pass a physical examination before the race to assure physical fitness and capability. Cars were also inspected to be sure they did not exceed the 300 cubic inches allowed and to prove that vital parts such as front axles and steering connections had been placed at least two days before the races. On the morning of the race all entries have their brakes tested.

**ELIMINATIONS** - Of those entered only fifteen of the fastest cars could enter the professional race. Time trials were held to establish the top racers. They ran one lap each in the reverse order of entry.

**START** - The start was flying. All contestants were placed around the course by Pres. Charlie Johnson, accompanied by Carl Laemmle of Universal Films. When the starter's flag drops the first time around, the race has begun.

**SCORING** - The official scores were kept by hand because no device had yet been invented that was as accurate as the old fashioned way. Ready information was displayed on a special scoring machine which had thirty odometers with push buttons attached. The device made it possible to arrive at lap and total standings instantaneously, for the benefit of the contestants.

**ANNOUNCING** - Announcers and scoreboards transmitted information as to the progress of the race to spectators. There were more than 250 men engaged in this work. Scoreboards were constantly checked through a telephone system centering in the judge's stand, while announcing data was supplied through the Speedway press bureau, which covered every inch of the ground with a network of telephone wires.

**SIGNALS** - Signal flags used by the starter and assistants were: Red, clear course; yellow, stop immediately; green, starting last lap; checkered, you are finished; white, stop for consultation; and blue, accident on course.

**PRESS** - The Press Stand accommodated 200 people, plus telegraph operators and the officials paddock, several hundred more. Information was furnished to these workers as quickly as possible and they relayed it through the myriad of trunk lines to all parts of the world. The day before the races more than 5,000 sport extras were published on the upcoming race. They had estimated that more than 25,000 publications would carry the opening day races the day after.

**POLICE** - Guards, detectives, and special officers were organized to keep spectators safe throughout the events.

HOSPITAL - A complete hospital was maintained on the speedway grounds with every facility to care for contestants.

### Important Rules Governing the Race

All automobile contests held in this country are conducted with the sanction and under the rules of the American Automobile Association. To a certain extent the same rules prevailing in road races govern contests on specially constructed courses, but the following may be cited as important speedway rules and will give a fair idea of what is expected of the contestants once the race is started:

The driver and mechanic of a car may be changed, if need be, during a race, but only at the end of a lap and upon application to the Referee. In case of disability or accident to the driver-but in no other case-the mechanic may replace him at any part of the course.

Should the mechanic leave his seat for any reason whatsoever at any time during the race, the driver must not continue until the mechanic is again seated in the car. In case of disability or accident to the mechanic which may necessitate his leaving the car, the driver may after stopping and investigating, proceed alone to the pits and make application to the referee for instructions.

All mechanical repairs and adjustments must be made exclusively by the crew of the car. At the repair pits each contestant entering one car is entitled to have five attendants, including the team manager. For each additional car entered by the same contestant, he is entitled to three pit attendants. In either case only two pit attendants shall be permitted to make replacement of gasoline, oil, and water and replacement or refreshment of tires, or crank the motor when contestant's car is at a standstill at the pits, but these attendants shall in no case make any mechanical repairs or adjustments to the car or assist in any manner in such repairs or adjustments.

Pit attendants are not allowed under any circumstances to pump air or oil into the car.

Spare parts, tools, etc. may be laid on the shelf or ledge in front of the pit, and pit attendants, while in the pit, but not otherwise, may hand same to the driver or mechanic. No car is permitted to leave its pit, until all tools, tires, etc., on the ground in front of the pit have been removed.

All renewals of fuel, oil, water and replenishments of damaged parts have to be made at the repair pits at the start and finish line, except in case of emergency. Where a car is disabled on the track and cannot proceed under its own power to the pits, the crew of the car may report to the referee, who, in his discretion may allow the crew to obtain necessary fuel and parts (except tires) as will enable the car to proceed under its own power. Such replenishments or replacements must be made by the crew unassisted.

Tires may be taken on at the pits, and, if necessary, at any section of the course, provided in the latter case that extra tires are carried on the car. Any competing car voluntarily leaving the course will be disqualified.

#### Event No. 2

Any dealer whose residence is within 150 miles of Uniontown may enter in this event, one or more cars, of the same make he represents, providing the driver and mechanic also come within the residence qualification.

A dealer must be representative of a factory marketing pleasure cars and the cars entered must be of this manufacture. The car can be stripped and fitted with any gears, timed and tuned at the discretion of the dealer.

In addition to the general rules and conditions, note carefully the following approved special conditions which will apply to the Dealer's Race:

1st - All tires must be fastened on the rims with 13 lugs exclusive of valve lugs.

2nd - If more than 15 cars qualify, the following conditions will finally determine the starters:

(a) The individual car of the make which is represented by the largest number of entries, making the best time in the official speed trials, will be awarded first starting position. Succeeding positions will be awarded in the same manner until the fastest cars of each make which is represented by more than one qualified entry shall have been placed.

(b) The fastest cars representing makes of which only one car has qualified will then be given the next open starting positions in order.

(c) If the methods outlined in the paragraphs do not fill fifteen positions, the starters in the remaining positions will be determined by a special five-lap race, open only to the remaining cars which have qualified in the official speed trials, but have been eliminated by the above conditions, to be held on the last day of the qualifying trials (November 29th), and the order of finish of the necessary number of cars in this event will govern, except that under no conditions may more than three cars of any one make start.

This was the headline the day before the races:

## Drivers Hope to Smash Records on Speedway Tomorrow

This was the headline the evening after the races:

## HUGHES AND WEIGLE DEAD; GALVIN TO DIE

### GALVIN'S PREMIER HITS PRESS STAND; KILLS TWO AT ONCE; INJURES SEVERAL; CHEVROLET WINS 20,000 SEE RACES

On a bright and sunny December 2, 1916, the Uniontown Speedway opened its gates. It was a proud day for the county seat and all of racing. The new board track was said to be of superior construction compared to those built in prior years. Universal Film stars and businessmen caught the eyes of the thousands of spectators when they weren't watching the track. The town and mountains were filled to capacity. Hotels, restaurants, and shops saw their biggest intakes in the history of the area. From starlets to farmers, they were all there. Those who could not get into the arena watched from the hoods of cars and the backs of their horses from surrounding knobs. It was estimated that another 10,000 watched from outside the fences.

Imagine the excitement! Famous drivers from all over the world revved up their engines, and life was good for Fayette Countians. They were in the national and

international spotlight. The money and prestige were rolling in. At 9am a Salute was held. At 9:30 , 10:30, and 11:30 a "Bomb" with 25 tickets for the May 1917 Grand Opening Race was put off. At noon Hughie Hughes held a 1 mile exhibition in a 12 cylinder Sunbeam. After another Salute and Figured shell, Hughes ran a five mile run to set a record. 1pm saw the brake test. At 1:30 a Salute was held. Cars were put in position and drivers and mechanics lined up for a photo, parade and introduction of drivers. At 1:50 a Salute and ten minute signal was given. 2pm -the American flag with a U.S.A. pennant and ticket bomb. This started the 100-lap race.

Hughie Hughes was to run a 10 mile exhibition later, but on the 64th lap he ran his Hoskins high on the lower turn to pass Frank Galvin and got into a pocket making it necessary to swerve sharply to the left in order to avoid hitting Galvin. He coasted over the turn and into the guardrail driving through the fences at least 100 yards into the field. George Titlow ran out to escort the driver from his car. As they walked over to the press stand, Hughes reached out to shake his car owner's hand (J.C. Hoskins). Galvin's Premier unaccountably turned directly toward the press stand. Hughes was crushed when Galvin, who Hughes had just sacrificed the race for, hit him head on, smashing the famous driver to his death. The Premier then plowed into the press box where 100 people watched in terror. The machine overturned killing the riding mechanic Gaston Weigle. Galvin died two days later, never knowing what happened. The other drivers agreed that the knowledge of how the accident happened would have killed him, had he survived. F.W. Kelly was hurled head first into the press stand and died as did an unknown man, bringing the death toll to five for the day. Mont W. McCormick suffered a broken leg and many who were injured were taken to the Uniontown Hospital. The track was closed to the public as the race went on. The drivers did not know how serious the accident was until the end of the race.

Louis Chevrolet won the trophy cup with a time of 1 hour 14 minutes, 12 and 2/5 seconds. Dave Lewis took 2nd, Ralph DePalma 3rd, and Barney Newgard tied Milt McBride for the 4th and 5th spots. 105mph was the top speed set by Ralph DePalma. The dealer's race was wrought with excitement, too. The Haynes car number 9 driven by J. Conway, caught fire just 100 yards from the grand stand. The track also caught fire but was saved. The car was a total loss. I.P. Fetterman drove the last 18 miles of this race with a wooden splinter in his eye, winning with an average speed of 80mph. Fred McCarthy came in 2nd, and H.L. Robinson was 3rd.

The entire race was filmed by Universal Studios. It is said that track officials and cameramen came to blows while cameramen were filming the blood bath that occurred when Galvin hit the press box. The film of the entire opening day's action was shown for four days at Uniontown theatres.

As the press box collapsed, Alex W. Frerich, a local reporter who was buried under the debris, found himself next to the telephone. He phoned Mary Kate O'Bryon at the Evening Standard and relayed the amazing story as it occurred. This race made headlines all over the world and still goes down in history as one of the most tragic races of all time.