

Atlantic City Beach Races

The Vanderbilt and the Christie Speed Achievements

When W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., drove his big Mercedes car a mile in :39 at Ormond, in January of 1904, the entire world stood aghast and a cry of fake came from Europe. Nor would that cry



STARTING POINT AT ATLANTIC CITY RACE
April 25, 26 and 27

down, for such remarkable speed seemed impossible. When in 1905 H. L. Bowden, in a freak eight-cylinder racer, did :32 4/5, there was no cry of fake, but people wondered at such speed nevertheless. This year Demogeot in the big 200 H. P. Darracq drove two miles in :58 4/5, and the world again stood aghast. Not one of these performances ever compared for one minute with the drive of one mile in :35 1/5 by Walter Christie at Atlantic City Beach, April 27, for Mr. Christie did not have like conditions to those enjoyed by Messrs. Vanderbilt, Bowden and Demogeot. In the first place the Atlantic Beach course of about three miles is little better than a road, in fact not as good. The Ormond Beach course is known as ideal, and Atlantic City's course is far from that, for the driver who operates an automobile at 103 miles an hour there, as Chris-

tie did, must wind in and out, avoiding soft spots here and wet spots there, as Christie did. When wise men speculated upon a possible record at this year's Atlantic City meet, they did not speculate upon :35 1/5. Rather they speculated upon broken necks and so on. There was no trouble at all, and the fastest mile ever made by a four-cylinder car went to the man who everyone wanted to succeed, Walter Christie. For years this amiable gentleman has been spending his money like a drunken sailor; they say he has spent \$150,000 to construct a world beater. Starting out as an enthusiast only, he finally decided that he would construct touring cars. This decision made, he decided to wait until the racing car was a success, and he waited and waited, for failure came to him as it has come to many a pioneer in a new field. Mr. Christie was not



MRS. ERNEST ROGERS
Granddaughter of H. H. Rogers, a winner

worried, in fact he maintained his equilibrium and persevered. The daily papers of New York and the trade papers throughout the country supported him loyally for a time, and gave him encouragement. After a number of failures

some friends backed up on Mr. Christie and said hard things of his efforts. He passed these over, however, and persevered. His success has been hailed by every one, and this led to his remark: "They knocked me, but I am now successful and they'll all pat me on the



Chairman Thompson, Ex-Chairman Morrell, Chairman Cook, Manager Reeves and Starter Wagner. The men who made the meet.

back once more." And Mr. Christie was right.

Speed such as Christie made on Atlantic City Beach completely puts in the shade any speed of even two miles in :58 4/5 made at Ormond, for on Ormond Beach the driver need but turn his car loose and sail for miles as straight as a crow flies with no thought of the surfacing beneath him. Driving Atlantic City Beach was far more of an effort than driving any good stretch of road in this country. As Christie sailed down the beach at a speed, oftentimes of more than two miles a minute, he rocked from side to side as his great juggernaut hurled itself at rough wet spots in the beach or at soft spots found frequently at about the half-way point. It took consummate skill to steer through the maze of bad spots at such a speed, to send the car along at two miles a minute at the right point and at much slower speed at the right point. As Christie flew the wonder grew that one mere man could risk his life in the

search for the almighty dollars and honor. Probably Christie thought of the honors and not of the dollars, for he is of that sort. At any rate, whatever he thought, he turned the trick and the world over has rung with his praises for many a day now.

When W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., drove that mile in :39 and the world stood aghast at the remarkable speed, the young millionaire was interviewed for columns upon the hazard of the game, upon the sensations of flying at that speed, and upon every imaginable subject until his name became a household word the country over. To-day a man does a greater feat and is mentioned slightly and his great feat is a rather ordinary occurrence. True that Mr. Christie is not Mr. Vanderbilt, both are men and America must doff its hat to an American who drives a purely American car at world record speed, for no four-cylinder car ever traveled as fast before. America must now welcome royally the man who has brought forth a distinctive American idea and perfected it to



WALTER CHRISTIE
The sensation of Atlantic City

that point where in all probability the record held by a French car may be brought to America under like conditions and that is not impossible.

Incidentally the Atlantic City race meet was run on April 25, 26, and 27, and each day's program was carried out

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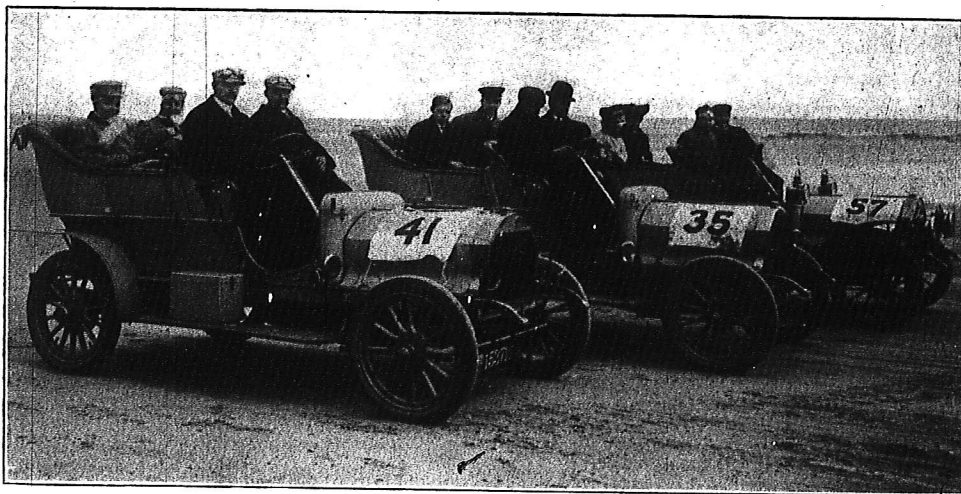
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to the letter. The meet started on time and finished according to schedule. To those who have attended beach race meets before, this is really a remarkable record. In part the great feat is due to the officials who were in every case well trained men and also to the drivers who did as they were told and endeavored to the best of their ability to carry out the program as arranged. The meet was interesting, for touring car races formed a large part of the meet and touring cars apparently can do no wrong nowadays. They shape up for races with regularity, and as the main part of the program insure certain success. Or-

souri, these spectators of to-day, and they want to see and be shown, as do all those who hail from the State in which St. Louis is located.

When friends advised W. J. Morgan to cut out touring car competition at Ormond as out of place and uninteresting, they did not realize that contests between stock cars with loads of people on board, driven under regulation touring competition, could be made real races. Mr. Morgan states that in future touring cars will have prominent places assigned them in the lists of races arranged for Ormond, and that these events will fill was demonstrated by the



P. F. ROCKETT AND THE TRIO OF STODDARD DAYTON WINNERS

mond had no touring car events, and this alone prevented entire success, for a large field of racing cars always reduces nearly 90 per cent. when it comes times to race.

And the interest is in touring car competition largely as a matter of fact. Those not up on automobiles, and the number grows fewer each day, look for the freak racing car. Those posted, and their number is large to-day, look for contests in which the car with which they have dallied while looking for a car, take part. They are all from Mis-

success at Atlantic City when nine of ten cars present were touring cars, and when interest did not abate for one moment.

It was chilly at the meet, but few of the thousands and thousands who saw the races thought of that, for one event followed another, as only Fred J. Wagner and his able corps of assistants can make them follow. President Edge and Chairman of the Racing Board Cook, of the Atlantic City Association; ex-Chairman Morrell, of the A. A. A. Racing Board, and Chairman J. De Mont

Thompson, of the present Racing Board, together with Messrs. S. M. Butler, J. C. Kerrison and Alden McMurtry, the timers, and last, but by no means least, Manager Alfred Reeves, will bring success to any meet, and they brought success to Atlantic City and showed conclusively that a horde of cars and drivers may be controlled and may be made to start on time and in good order. Starter Wagner insisted that things must be run just so and so and he won the day and things were run. That run should be spelled with a Capital R, for every one went away from Atlantic City satisfied with the races and the way in which they were conducted.

And those who figure that close automobile races may not be run, must ask the people who journeyed to Atlantic City. They will find that touring car races, even races between big cars, may be conducted and brought to close and exciting finishes. Hair raising finishes between three or more racing cars, other hair raising finishes between five or more touring cars, were ordinary rather than extraordinary at Atlantic City. Take nearly three score touring cars and as many clever drivers, tune up these cars right, mix them up well in classes which will bring cars of like nature against like nature, and then give these cars a fair start and there will be a fight to-day that will be a hummer. It was real racing at Atlantic City, racing in which no result was certain until the tape was crossed, racing in which the drivers worked like Trojans and in which every driver was called upon to exercise his good judgment and ability from the start to the finish to bring his mount through to victory. No such finishes were ever witnessed before at an automobile meet.

Distance, too, had much to do with the great races, for none was above the mile, the under, and the cars were

tuned up for the events. Drivers spent days on the beach trying everything to get the utmost speed out of their cars. They improved fractions of a second each day, and were satisfied. Men who did not prepare especially were left far in the rear by cars of the same make, for a car may be trained just as an athlete is trained.

Increase in Automobile Industry

From an advance bulletin issued by the Census Bureau last month, it appears that the increase in the automobile industry surpasses the record of any previously recorded industry.

In 1904 the amount of capital invested was \$20,555,247, as against \$5,768,857, or an increase of 256 per cent. The value of products increased 461 per cent., the amounts being stated at \$26,645,064 in 1904, as against \$4,748,011 in 1900.

Work will shortly commence upon the building of a factory in Jamestown, N. Y., for the manufacture of a cold-rolled and pressed-steel car body. The process of manufacture is a secret one, and the inventor, C. R. Olson, has perfected a machine for making angles and curves that does away with all filing of rough edges and gives a beauty of construction hitherto unattained by steel car bodies.

The Mercedes car boasts of the number of royal drivers of its cars. Perhaps more rulers are driving that machine than any other car. Among the royal owners of Mercedes machines are: King Edward of England; the king of Portugal, the king of Bulgaria, and the duke of Leuchtenberg. President Diaz is another owner of a Mercedes.

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