

ENDURANCE TOUR'S STEADY PROGRESS

Fifteen Years of Reliability Runs
Bring Contest to Stage of
System and Utility.

Fifteen years ago the history of endurance and reliability in America really began with a contest held in Chicago on Thanksgiving Day, 1895. Although nominally a race, this was in reality a reliability and endurance contest. It was run for cash prizes aggregating \$5,000, offered by H. H. Kohlsaat, and in the light of subsequent developments it was a ludicrous affair indeed. Even so long ago as then many inventors and experimenters were sitting up nights expending much gray matter over the problem of self-propelling road vehicles, and from the fact that eighty-eight entries had been made up to the day before the start it is evident that there was no lack of sanguinity on the part of these pioneers. Had all the entries, or even a considerable number of them, actually put in an appearance it would without doubt have been the most remarkable aggregation of vehicles of any type ever brought together in the world's history.

Th confidence of those early inventors was misguided. Few of the machines were ready to run when the appointed time came, and of the eleven that were promised to start on the evening before the race all but a bare half dozen were kept safely and solicitously under cover when a heavy snowstorm set in that night. On the morning of Thanksgiving Day from six to eight inches of snow and slush lay on the roads—a decidedly wet blanket to throw over a budding sport and industry.

As originally selected the route for the race was 100 miles long, but, as this course, part of which was later made famous by the bicycle wheeling road races, embraced nearly 50 per cent. of the country roads and some "hills," as hills go in the immediate vicinity of Chicago, better judgment prevailed and the route was altered and greatly reduced in length, eliminating all of the country roads and leaving only such difficulties as any fairly meritorious "horseless carriage" of the period might reasonably be expected to overcome. The total distance was 54.36 miles, and a time limit of thirteen hours was set for a race over city boulevards and paved streets. Awards were made by the point system on: (a) General utility; (b) speed; (c) cost; (d) economy and operation; (e) general appearance.

The line-up at the start was as follows: Duryea gasoline machine, made by the Duryea Motor Wagon Company; Electrobat, made by Morris and Salmon, (which in later years became the Columbia electric); two German Benz gasoline cars, with belt drive, one entered by the De la Vergne Refrigerating Machinery Company, and the other by the H. Mueller Manufacturing Company; a French Roger gasoline machine, and an electric vehicle made and entered by Harold Sturges.

The Duryea brothers had been unable to complete their new machine in time and so started an experimental machine, built two years previously. J. Frank Duryea drove it. He was first to start and he led all the way, except for a short time following the breaking of the steering apparatus, when the Macy wagon went ahead of him. The Duryea was not only the first to finish, but was the only car to complete the course, and it returned under its own power to the place where it was kept in the city. It started about 9 A. M. and finished after dark at 7:15 P. M., having been 10 hours and 28 minutes on the road, making an average speed of 7½ miles an hour.

Such was the first reliability and endurance run in America, and the showing did not awaken any great furor of enthusiasm among the public. Of course, the prizes went to the Duryea.

The next milestone in the development of motoring in America was planned on Decoration Day, May 30, of the following year, (1896,) when the Cosmopolitan race was run from City Hall, New York, to Irvington-on-the-Hudson and return, for prizes aggregating \$3,000, offered by John Brisben Walker. The distance was fifty-two miles. This event drew six starters, of which four were Duryeas, one driven by J. Frank and another by Charles E. Duryea, a third by E. B. Meekins, and the fourth by Henry Wells. In addition to these were a Roger, driven by T. W. Brander, and a wagon built by W. Lee Crouch. The progress of the machines was interfered with by dense crowds and several Decoration Day processions. One of the cars knocked down a pedestrian, and Henry Wells was arrested for knocking a bicyclist off of his machine. Interesting light is thrown on construction in those days by the statement that the Duryea machines ran away from the Rogers' going up the hill and on the upper Boulevard. (Broadway,) because the Rogers' had only one hill climbing speed, and also that a stop was made by all the cars at Kingsbridge to refill their water tanks. The Ardsley Club, which was the turning point, was reached first by Duryea No. 1 at 3:15 P. M. Duryea No. 2 made the run in 1 hour 15 minutes, or at the rate of just about twenty miles an hour. The Duryea won this race, too.

The following three or four years seem to have been a period of quiescence in public demonstrations of the new class of road vehicles, the next long run of motor cars having been the first club run of the Automobile Club of America, chartered in 1899 under the laws of the State of New York. This run was made on

Jan. 27, 1900, from New York to Kingsland Point, north to Tarrytown, upon the invitation of John Brisben Walker, who provided luncheon for the members. Thirteen cars took part. Of the ten steamers five froze up on the way, so that only five steam machines and three gasoline cars that started reached their destination.

A more propitious time was selected for the next club run—June 2, of the same year, when club members started in twenty cars at 7:30 A. M., on a run of 117 miles to Philadelphia. A stop of one and a half hours was made for luncheon at Princeton, and the first car finished at 7:20 P. M.—10 hours and 20 minutes to cover the distance, or at the rate of 11½ miles an hour. Only four cars dropped out, however, showing that already cars were made that would run awhile.

In the latter part of 1900 the club determined, "for the purpose of promoting original investigation and the development of the motor carriages," to hold frequent contests for reliability and endurance. In accordance with this decision, the first endurance run, so designated, held in America, was promoted for Sept. 9 to 15, 1901. As the Pan-American Exposition was then drawing to a close, Buffalo was chosen as the destination of the run, the 500-mile route out of New York lying along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. The distance was divided into six daily stages. Of eighty-nine vehicles entered, no less than eighty started—an extraordinary showing.

The start was made in fine weather early in the morning, and by 6 P. M. forty-four cars had reached Poughkeepsie. The famous Nelson Hill climb was included in this day's run, and it proved a serious obstacle to many of the machines, which had to be pushed up. Good weather prevailed on the second day also, and by 9 P. M. sixty-four cars had arrived at the control in Albany. Two more came in before morning, but somewhere along the road nine had dropped out since leaving Poughkeepsie.

On the third day the weather continued fair after leaving Schenectady after luncheon. About the time the cars reached Fonda, however, rain descended in a heavy downpour, and the machines began skidding and slipping very badly, so that several went over the embankment. Tire chains, non-skids, and tire protectors were unknown in those days, and the only provision against slipping was to wrap rope around the tires.

The fifth day proved the worst of the run, and the roads were very slippery and deep with mud and water. It rained again soon after the start. Of the fifty-one starters only forty-two had reached Rochester by 10:30 P. M., when the control closed, and the run came to an unexpected end. News of the assassination of President McKinley at Buffalo had reached the officials and contestants, and out of respect to the Nation's Chief Executive the run was abandoned.

It was on April 26 of the following year (1902) that the Long Island Automobile Club pulled off a very successful 100-mile endurance run over the roads of Long Island. Like the other events chronicled, this was also of National importance. There were eighty-two entries and sixty-six actual starters. The start was made at Pettit's Hotel, since demolished, and an irregular course was followed over the island's highways. There were fifteen controls along the way, at each of which the contestants were required to be within certain speed limits. The weather was raw and a stiff south wind blew sand and dust into the faces of all the contestants and passengers, making the run anything but a pleasant jaunt. Precisely one-third of the starters made clean non-stop runs within the time limits. They embraced the following: Toledo steamers, 2; Pierce, 1; Panhard, 1; Lane steamer, 1; White steamers, 2; Packard, 2; Century, 1; Elmore, 1; Knickerbocker, 1; Haynes-Apperson, 2; Autocar, 1; Winton, 2; Peugeot, 1; Oldsmobile, 1, and Rochet-Schneider, 1.

Just a little more than a month later, on May 30, the Automobile Club of America ran a 100-mile non-stop test from New York to Southport, Conn., and return. It, too, was very successful. Out of fifty-five contesting vehicles that started all but eleven finished, and twenty-eight made non-stop records.

The largest endurance run ever held by the club was that from New York to Boston and return, a distance of 488 miles, in October, 1902. Delightful Fall weather prevailed throughout the week, the roads were excellent for the most part, and the daily runs were only about seventy or eighty miles. The conditions were so easy, in fact, that it was more like an ideal tour than a serious contest, except for the time limitations that many found it hard to hold the car down to. Of the seventy-five cars that started sixty-eight completed the run, including two White steam delivery wagons. The procession was comprised of forty-six gasoline cars, including four foreign machines and twenty-six steamers. The only poor roads traversed were found in the hilly part of Massachusetts between Springfield and Worcester, where many miles of highway had not been improved. Among the perfect score makers were four Whites, two Packards, two Stevens-Duryeas, a Hayes-Apperson, a Knox, and an Oldsmobile. Besides these there were five steamers that have since gone out of the market as well as three gasoline cars of makes no longer manufactured.

At this juncture in the affairs of motoring the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers, which had been organized some three years previously, decided to take into its own hands the conduct of the next annual long-distance endurance run. The manufacturers desired something more strenuous than the A. C. A. had given them. So the association promoted the endurance run of 1903, and picked out the beautiful Fall month of October for its settled weather, and laid out a mountainous route through the Catskills to Buffalo and Cleveland, and thence again over mountain roads through the Alleghanies to Pittsburg in the very heart of them.

The thirty-four contesting cars that started out of forty-two entries on the morning of October 7 left Weehawken, opposite Forty-second Street, New York, on the west bank of the Hudson, in a cold drizzle, drifting before a northeast wind. The rain that started on the first day continued almost incessantly for four days, deluging the whole country, causing washouts across the roads, swelling all the streams and rivers out of

their banks, and making the roads exceedingly dangerous for motor travel.

However, the predominating sentiment was to go on, and on they went, with the result that the total of twenty-five contestants out of the thirty-four starters finally reached Pittsburg, although the stragglers kept coming in all night and most of the next day, more than twenty-four hours after the first arrivals. A heavy Columbia car was driven by L. Duffie, which was the last arrival reported, at 4:35 P. M. Oct. 16, twenty-nine hours after the first arrival, who was Webb Jay, in a White steamer.

On the night of the day following the official close of the run the Executive Committee, with S. A. Miles at the head, issued a statement saying: "It has been demonstrated that, under ordinary circumstances, practically all of the competing cars would have reached their garages on time. The storm in the Catskills and throughout New York State, which made it impossible for the trains to run and carried away telegraph and telephone wires, resulted in the demolition of bridges and washouts of roadways to such an extent that it was impossible for some of the cars to reach the garages until many hours after the closing time. Despite all obstacles nine cars reached all of the garages on time or within a few minutes after closing time. The records indicate that the total number of points lost by the nine cars above referred to, despite the extraordinary conditions, barely exceed the total number it would be possible for a single car to have lost on the journey.

The cars that met all the requirements, stated in their apparent order of merit, were: Toledo, operated by George Soules; Pierce-Stanhope, Percy P. Pierce; White, Paul Deming; Pierce-Arrow, Charles Sheppy; White, Webb Jay; Rambler, Arthur Gardner; Packard, E. Tom Fetch; Columbia, B. B. Molcomb; Stearns, F. M. Stearns. The total distance of the run was 793 miles, covered in eight running days.

The first annual tour of the American Automobile Association, starting July 25, 1904, had as its objective point St. Louis, where the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was being held. Sixteen machines started from New York and joined themselves to eleven others from various New England towns. The ranks of the travelers were swelled by additions from all points, continuing by way of Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, Toledo, South Bend, Chicago, Pontiac, Ill.; Springfield, Ill., to St. Louis. At the same time another portion of the tour was being run over the National highway and through Columbus, Indianapolis, and Terre Haute to the exposition City, bringing the total number of participants to 108. Practically all the machines reached St. Louis, the tour being more of the nature of a combined run than a competition.

Thirty-two automobiles competed in the 870-mile association tour in 1905, the first contest for the Charles J. Glidden Touring Trophy. Starting from New York, the itinerary was through Hartford, Boston, and Plymouth, N. H., to Bretton Woods, and returning by way of Concord, Worcester, and Lenox, Mass., to New York. Percy P. Pierce was awarded the trophy. Others finishing with clean scores were: Ezra H. Fitch, White; Ralph Colburn, Maxwell; S. B. Stevens, Darracq, and J. Kerrison, Cadillac.

No official observers were carried, the contestants as a whole observing the performance of the competing cars, and at the end of the tour voting for the three entrants whose cars, in their opinion, had made the best records. In addition the Glidden commission employed a formula which took price, equipment, and general touring conditions into consideration in awarding the trophy. First-class certificates were issued to twenty-two contestants who completed the tour and arrived at all-night controls before the official closing time. Four second-class certificates were awarded to others who completed the tour but failed to make one or more of the controls on time.

The third annual association tour in 1906 and the second competition for the Glidden trophy was a 1,200-mile run from Buffalo to Breton Woods, N. H., by way of Utica, Saratoga, Elizabethtown, Lake Champlain, Montreal, Quebec, Jackman, and Rangeley, Me. Forty-eight machines started, thirteen secured perfect scores, nineteen completed the journey with a greater or less number of penalizations, and twenty retired at various points on the journey. Of the six cars competing for the Deming trophy two obtained perfect scores and four were penalized. The trophy was awarded to C. W. Kelsey, driving a Maxwell.

The thirteen perfect scores for the Glidden Trophy were Percy P. Pierce, (Pierce,) A. E. Heghes, (Pierce,) P. S. Flinn, (Pierce,) W. E. Wright, (Knox,) George Soules, (Pope-Toledo,) Frank E. Wing, (Marmon,) G. M. Davis, (Thomas,) C. F. Barrett, (Columbia,) L. J. Petrie, (Stearns,) Charles Burnham, (Peerless,) W. C. Walker, (Pope-Hartford,) Ernest Keller, (Oldsmobile,) G. G. Buse, (Packard.) Since no winner has evolved and Percy Pierce was one of the perfect score performers the trophy, according to the deed of gift, remained in the possession of the club which he represented.

The route of the fourth annual A. A. A. tour in 1906 was from Cleveland, Ohio, July 10, to Toledo, South Bend, Chicago, Indianapolis, Columbus, Pittsburg, Bedford Springs, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York July 24; distance, 1,570 miles. Forty-nine touring cars competed for the Glidden Trophy, twelve runabouts entered for the Hower Trophy contest, and fourteen cars accompanied the tour on various services or as non-contestants.

Thirty cars divided into ten club teams each contested for the Glidden Trophy on the fifth annual A. A. A. tour in 1908, and were accompanied by fourteen cars entered for the Hower certificates, and ten non-competing cars. The tour started at Buffalo and daily runs of 106 to 194 miles were made over a mountainous route through Cambridge Springs, Pittsburg, Bedford Springs, Harrisburg, Reading, Philadelphia, Delaware Water Gap, Newburg, Albany, Springfield, Worcester, Boston, Portsmouth, Poland Springs, Augusta, Rangeley, Rumford Falls, Bethlehem, Bradford, Woodstock, Rutland, and Glens Falls to Saratoga, where the tour ended on July 23. This made a total distance of 1,675 miles in fourteen days, with two Sabbath stopovers.