

THE LAWRENCE HUGHES COLLECTION

By Don Radbruch

Lawrence Hughes is one of the many racers who have been all but forgotten by history. Just about the only mark Hughes has left in the record books is a notation in John Gerber's autobiography, *Outlaw Sprint Car Racer*. On page 72, Gerber writes, "In the feature, Brisco lost control and L.O. Hughes hit him broadside, putting both of them through the fence. "

Lawrence Hughes was born in 1899 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. A mechanic by trade he had his own business in Beatrice, Nebraska in the 1920s. He later moved to Belleville, Kansas and in 1941 migrated westward to Oregon where he concentrated on the body and fender repairs. In addition to his automotive skills Hughes was a fine musician and played the guitar as well as singing in a rich Irish tenor voice. Hughes died in 1978.

Lawrence Hughes raced from 1922 to 1934. He campaigned in the dusty horse tracks of Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and maybe some other states in that area. He traveled the primitive highways of the day to scores of forgotten race tracks. He won his share of the races and, even during the depths of the Depression, was good enough to make money racing. The details of Lawrence Hughes' exploits remain hidden but, fortunately, he left behind a remarkable collection of photos.

Thanks to Hughes' son, Ed Hughes, of Wilsonville, Oregon the photos have been preserved and are now shared with the readers of *Secrets of Speed*.

Ed Hughes is a member of the Northwest Vintage Speedsters Club.

Don Shreve of that organizations was instrumental in arranging for me to borrow and copy some one hundred wonderful photos.

As with so many old collections there was almost no information available on the photos. A few of the drivers can be recognized, some of the places are obvious but, for the most part, all we can do is relax and let the photos speak for themselves. Enjoy!