

The MONTANA ROAD RACES

(Editor's note: Most of the text for this article was written for Motorcade Magazine (Oct. 1965), by Spencer Murry and is reproduced here with their permission. Photos by member Glenn Embree.



While most of us take old Liz out for a short drive once and a while; and others, more daring, drive for hundreds of miles "at a leisurely pace just for the fun of it, we are all just pikers!

Up Montana way there is a group of enthusiasts who delight in racing their T s - not for a lap or two, but across the state for over 500 miles! And this is no leisurely tour either. Average speeds for the event are better than 50MPH!



Carl Rosenthal and Fred Upshaw and Fred's 1915 roadster. Fred placed 6th in a field of 35.

This year's Montana Hare starts on June 1 at Laurel, Montana. For more information, write: Mrs. Russ Gensemer, 506 No. Tracy Ave. Bozeman, Montana.

You may believe it, or you may not. But it's still true. 500 miles of flat-out T racing is enough to shame even Le Mans drivers who, after all, have the comfort of deep bucket seats, enough power to handle, a controlled slide, and safety equipment unheard of several generations ago. Not so in T country. Drivers in the annual Montana races wear no helmets or seat belts. They leap into their Lizzies and dash off with reckless abandon, all to see who can return to the starting line first.

It started last year in Great Falls, a city of some 50,000 near the center of Montana. The route lead north toward the Canadian border, then jogged a bit west to an out-of-the-way border station where the Canadians were kind enough to let the intrepid men and their strange machines cross nearly un-hindered.



Joe Herbst and his mud-splattered T. Joe and other contestants had to cross a washed out bridge near the Canadian border.

Up and across southern Alberta Province they went, terminating after a grinding eight hours at the community of Lethridge. The next day the rested machines took again to Provincial rural roads, tearing east to Medicine Hat, then southeasterly toward a second border station. But disaster befell the game machines, for an un-



Roadside repairs for Bob Braun, of Bozeman, Montana, and a "local competitor".

scheduled cloudburst washed out the only connecting bridge, Undaunted, all pressed on into Saskatchewan and finally across the border - and into a sea of mud of unbelievable consistency - and so to Havre, where mud-splattered and and exhausted after fourteen hours of bone-jarring T-ing, weary drivers ended Day Two.

The third day was nearly all flat-out. Mud and dirt country roads were behind, and the day's leg was less than a hundred miles to bring the survivors of the ordeal back into Great Falls - 28 of the starting 35 crossing the line under their own power. And as if all this wasn't enough, let it be said that the winner averaged 52 miles an hour!

What kind of T's are these? Ordinary Model T's, That's what! Let's take a look at a typical entrant - one that was the favorite of the '65 bash and who led for a considerable distance until, like many a T out of the past, pulled off with water pump trouble and a dire knocking that heralded an approaching burned rod bearing.

The man is John Frick, a wheat farmer from Dutton, Montana. Though his 2500 acres was due for harvesting, John turned his back on all that land to test his T against the others. Basically, John's T is a '26 - but not all the parts of which it is composed were from the *same* '26. The body had come from northern Montana, the engine from



the south. Bits and pieces were located over in Idaho, and other components were found in the Dakotas. John dragged all this "junk" into his

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barn and when each day's chores were over he tended his pride and joy - a restored T destined to take part in many a race but one which would also reliably take he and his wife to their weekly shopping, haul the kids to school, or bounce off across the fields to carry a sack of grain to distant cattle.

Outside the T looks decrepit - dented fenders were hammered back into only reasonable shape and body rust was hastily backed from the inside with rags and papers. Under the hood things were not at their best appearance-wise but inside that engine - that's different. A thorough balancing job to fractions of a gram permits a great increase in available RPM - even though everything there must be of T origin. The hard-to-find T accessory wire wheels decrease weight and provide a great measure of security over the standard wooden-spoked jobs. Tires are new, transmission innards are precisely assembled, and today's gasoline is a mite more powerful than it was 40 years back. But other than that the black pickup is all T, through and through. On the level f-rick's machine can get mighty close to CO mph. Downhill speeds can approach 70 and even exceed it. Uphill - well, racing is relative. As long as you're about as fast as the next guy, it's a race. And that's what counts.

Last Barn Opening!

In San Diego, Calif. on January 23, 1966 was probably the last barn opening and unveiling of antique cars. Sixteen pre-1912 automobiles were removed from their storage place. The automobiles were collected by Glen Shell during the Thirties and even as late as the early Forties. Most of the vehicles have been stored for over twenty years. All are in excellent unrestored condition, having in most cases their complete complement of brass lights, horn and gas generator. Glen Shell collected the automobiles using two important guides: a, the vehicles must be in running condition and driven to his place of business and b, the manufacturer must still be in the automobile business. He did deviate from this, however, for a Duro and Locomobile Steamer were not in running condition when he purchased them. Several times a year he would remove the jacks from under one of the automobiles, fill it with gas, pump up the tires and start it up. The neighborhood children would come running for they really enjoyed being driven around the block in the old antiques. Several times the Grossmont High

School shop teacher, Vernon Hill, was able to take his class on a field trip to see the automobiles. It was on one of these trips that Carl Burnett was first to view the automobiles he was to purchase seventeen years later.

While discussing the collection with an old friend, Bill Meier, last year, Carl and Bill decided to investigate the availability of the collection. It took several months to locate and contact Jerdine Shell, Glen Shell's daughter who was left the collection. Just before Christmas, Carl and Bill were able to arrange to view the cars just as they had been left when the doors were closed upon Glen's death. So, on January 23, the doors were again thrown open and the collection moved to Carl and Bill's place of business at 4124 Popular St. in San Diego.

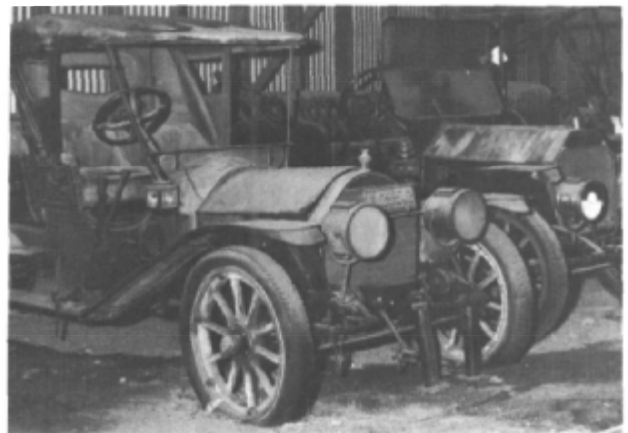
The first automobile moved from the barn was the last driven in; a 1908 Hupmobile Touring. All cars were found to be in excellent unrestored condition. As Bill stated, all engines are free as I have personally cranked each one. They all rolled on their own, as I pushed each one on the trailer and my back has complained ever since!

The sixteen automobiles are as follows:

1901 Baker Electric	1908 Hupmobile Touring
1903 Locomobile Steamer	1908 Reo Touring
1905 Franklin Roadster	1909 Brush Roadster
1905 Reo Roadster	1910 Cadillac Touring
1906 Baker Roadster	1910 Oakland Touring
1907 Maxwell Roadster	1910 Duro Touring
1910 Buick Roadster	1910 Reo Truck
1908 Cadillac Roadster	1912 Ford Touring

The automobiles are on display to the public daily and will be sold individually starting approximately the first of April. Carl and Bill both cordially invite all to see the collection as they first saw it - still with the twenty-years accumulation of dust!

Bill Meier



1910 Cadillac & 1910 Oakland