



# *Fast Fords*

*Text and photos by Bruce McCalley*

One year ago (July-August 1971, *The Vintage Ford*) we ran an article on "The Model T in Speed and Sport" which covered the fast Fords which appeared at the Shell Hill Climb in Long Beach, and the Speedster Endurance Run at San Jose, California. Orders for additional copies of that issue indicate that it was one of the most popular subjects we have ever covered.

The Long Beach Model T Club and the Santa Clara Valley Model T Club have both re-run these events this year and this, of course, opens the door to more pictures and some new material.

This was the Sixteenth Annual Shell Hill Climb! Over one-hundred cars, all Model T but not all speedsters, were entered this year. In addition, a number of Model Ts were present that did not attempt the hill, plus a crowd of thousands! This was to be the year in which records were shattered, both in elapsed time and in the number of entries. The official record for the Hill has stood for several years at 8.15 seconds, held by Clem Sala who comes from Roseville, California. For a number of years it has either been Clem or his arch competitor, Doc Pruden, who has walked away with the trophy for the fastest time. Doc announced his "retirement" from competition after last year's event and therefore was not



entered this year. Clem had a valve hang up and it in turn broke a piston during a trial run and so he, too, was not running this year.

During the trial runs, Ellis Gray unofficially broke the record with a time of 8.145. Things looked good for Ellis but, alas, he broke an axle during the timed runs and ended with an official best time of 8.61.

Chris Egsgaard entered his "bomb" and made a top time of 8.19.

Al Uslanghi, entering with a rear-engined racer, came up to the line, roared off with an almost effortless flash, gained speed all the way up the hill and shook the competition with a time of just 7.75 seconds! His



second run was 7.81 and his third was slower — but he could have cared less. He had it made!

While it is in the fast cars that the most excitement is to be found, the Hill Climb is an event for any Model T. The average stock touring will make it in about twenty-five seconds — low pedal all the way. Even trucks enter, and is that exciting! Best time for a truck: 33.34. Slowest time this year was two minutes, five seconds (woman driver!).

All cars must be licensed for street operation, including the cars that run in the unlimited (and usually fastest) class. Cars are inspected for safety; no cars that have unsound wheels, tires, etc., are allowed to compete.



The Model T Ford Endurance Run is a different story. The actual “race” is open only to Model T Speedsters. Speedsters are defined as Model T Fords with an other than stock racer type body, and must have Ford engines and running gear. Since the event is run over public roads, all cars must be licensed. Each car is inspected for safety, with particular attention given to tires and steering gear.

While the Endurance Run is limited to speedsters, another tour, called the Lowland Tour, in which any





antique car can be entered, runs concurrently. Routes are chosen so that the Lowland Tour will meet the speedsters at noon and at the finish line. This arrangement allows a good deal of activity for everyone at the starting line, the lunch stop and at the finish.

The event begins early in the morning with the speedsters lined up in the center of San Jose. The streets are lined with antique cars and the participants of the Lowland Tour. Announcements and introductions of the racers are made, music fills the air. The green flag drops and the Run begins. The Lowlanders pack up and head for the lunch stop in Livermore.

The stop in Livermore is at Codioli Ford, the Ford dealer there. Lunch is provided by the Ford agency for all participants at no charge. The Lowland Tour has arrived and the participating cars are parked by the



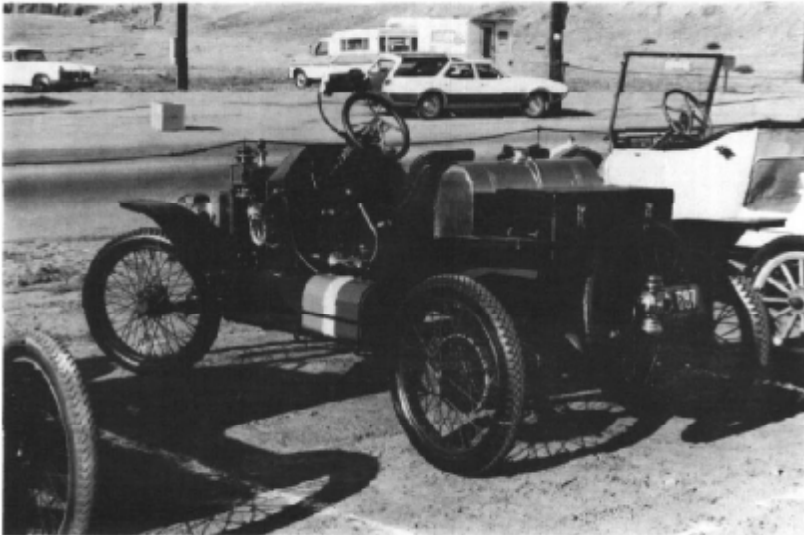
time the speedsters pull in. A band is there to entertain the crowd, announcements of the arriving cars add to the excitement.

The event ends about 4:30 P.M. with more fanfare. Trophies are awarded to the winners.

This year, over two hundred antique cars participated in the Lowland Tour. There were over forty speedsters in the Run. Entries in either event are open to any club — in fact a trophy is awarded to the club with the most cars participating.

The Endurance Run is not a “race. A route is chosen and prior to the Run a stock Model T Speedster drives the route at average driving speeds. Its time is checked and this becomes the “official time. The Run is then won by that car which comes in closest to this time. Such a system tends to prevent any speeding or careless driving. The official time includes a one-hour lunch stop and a fifteen-minute rest stop. This way, if a car has trouble, he can make his repairs and cut his lunch short and still win. This may not sound as exciting as an out and out race but the planning that goes into trying to meet that “time (which is unknown to the participants, incidentally) adds something.





### STOCK SPEEDSTER

This beautiful "stock speedster is owned by D. Daleo. While entered in the Hill Climb, no time was posted.



## THE HOT ONES

Running in the "Unlimited" class, these were the fastest cars of the day.



Chris Egsgaard with his Rajo equipped racer came in second for the day with a best time of 8.19. That exhaust pipe gave his car the sound of real authority.



Al Usalangi, with his rear-engined Rajo equipped speedster broke the all time record of 8.15, setting a new one of 7.75 seconds.

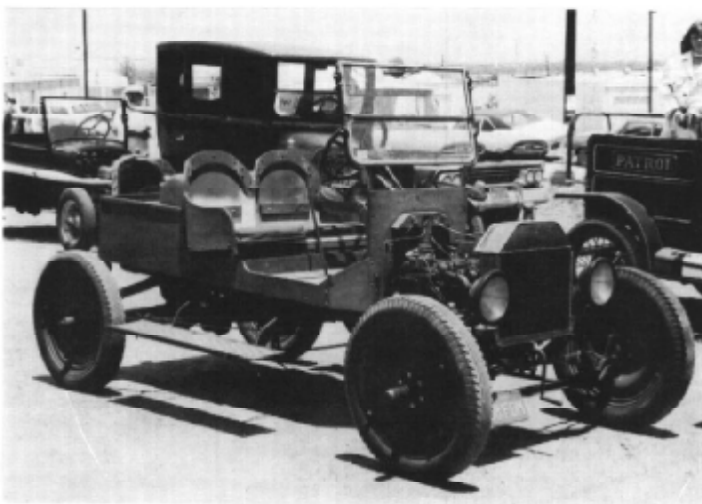
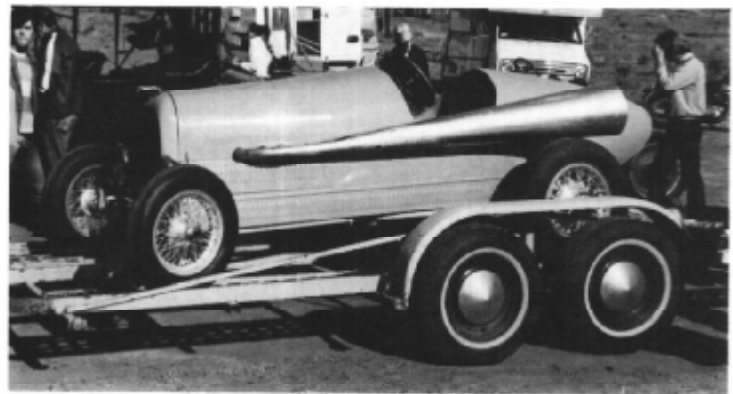


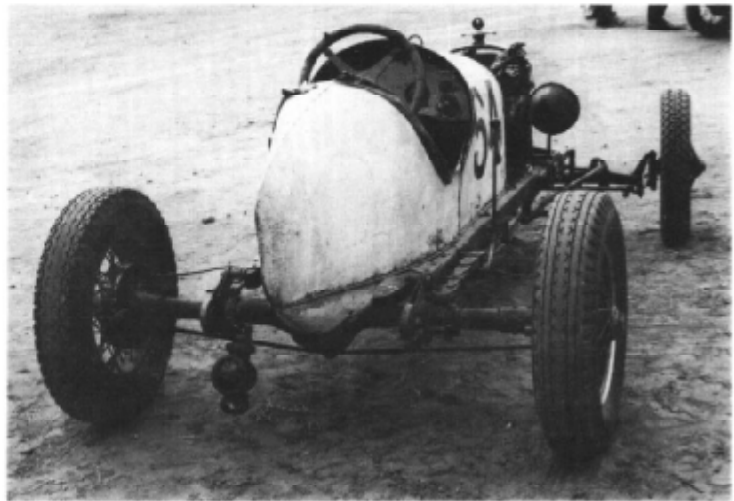
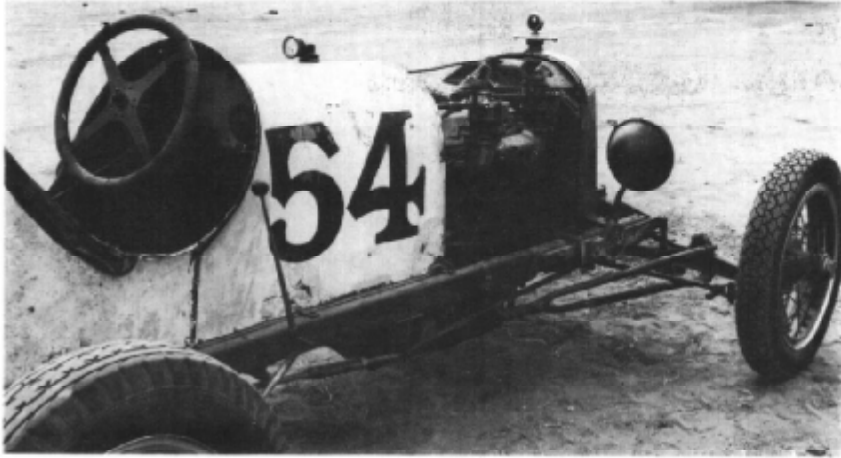
Fourth was Milt Uhler in a Fronty '26 roadster. His time was 8.91, which is pretty good considering the extra weight of the body.

Ellis Gray, the original hard-luck kid, made a trial run of 8.15, tying the record unofficially. During the official runs, his best time was 8.61 on the first run but on the second he broke an axle. Even so, he took third place.

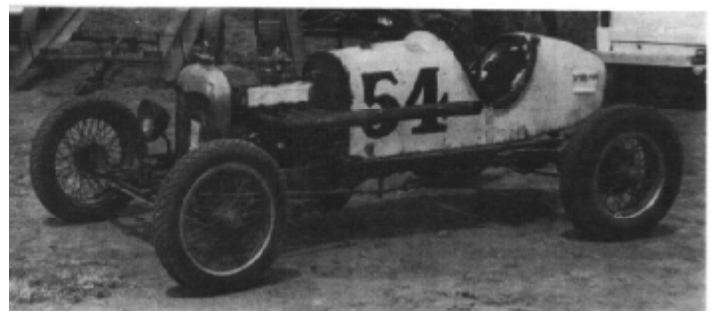
One of the prettiest race cars on the Hill was this custom-bodied job built by Chris Egsgaard. The car runs a Rajo head, plus a number of "secret goodies. Regardless of what is in the engine, that exhaust pipe sure gives it the sound of power.

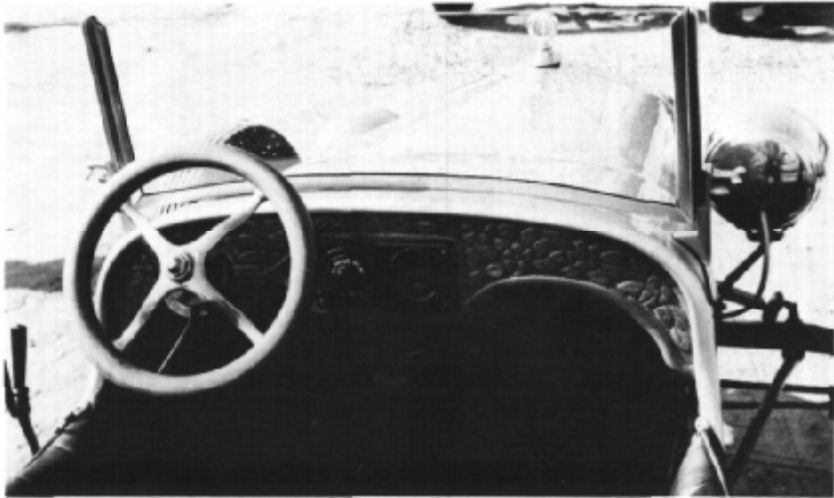
Chris made the second best time of the day with a roaring 8.19.



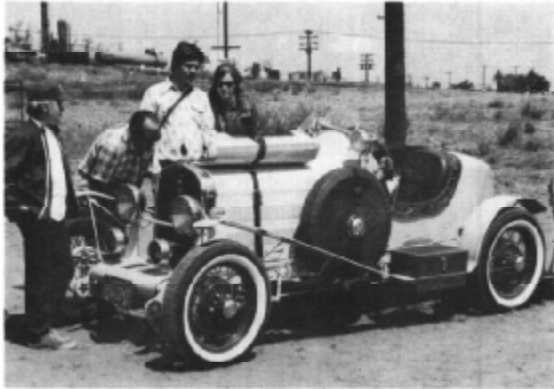


This Rajo powered original T race car is owned by Jim Lattin. In "as found condition, it took First Place in the Modified T Crank Overhead class with a top time of 9.20. Note all the interesting "goodies" on this car.











### IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN

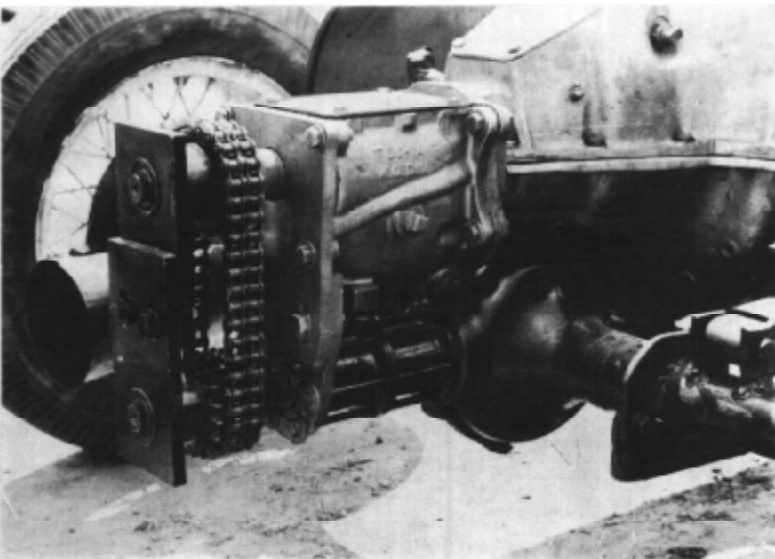
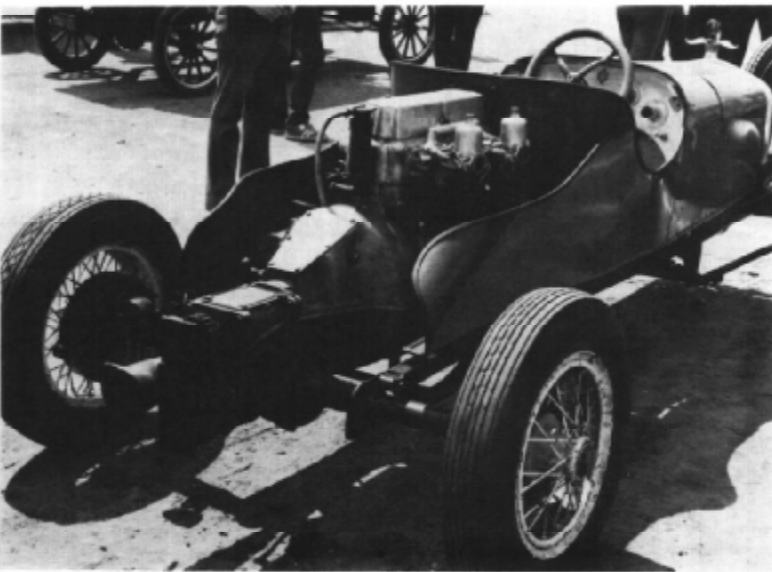
Early in the morning a most unusual car appeared; a rear-engined Model T. The usual comments such as, "a lot of work but no chance" or "I'll bet it won't even make the grade" could be overheard as a crowd gathered.

Well, meet the new Champ! The very first timed run up the Hill broke the all-time record! We should say, "smashed the record; the time was 7.75, the record had been 8.15 seconds.

The car was built and driven by Al Usalangi who had come from Northern California to show the Southerners just how it's done. (Clem Sala, also from the North, has held the record for a few years so we Southerners are beginning to get the message.)

The engine is Model T with a Rajo head and dual carburetors. The engine is coupled to a single-plate clutch which is enclosed in the regular T transmission housing. Bolted to the rear of this is a Studebaker transmission. Both clutch and transmission are operated by remote control. The Model T rear axle is mounted backwards and is coupled to the transmission by a chain drive.

No provision has been made for cooling the engine. Up the Hill and that's it!





One of the highlights of the Hill Climb each year is Grover Seguire's entry. It's not that Grover has the fastest truck; it's that each year it's a different truck. He has run a hay truck, a load of outhouses and a medicine show over the hill in recent years but none have been cuter than this year's circus wagon with a load of stuffed lions.

Grover is to be congratulated for adding so much color to the event.

We had a long time to watch it on the hill, too. 42.29 seconds!





**WHAT YOU SEE -  
AIN'T NECESSARILY WHAT YOU GET**

As you may have noticed, not all of the cars that attempt the Hill are restored. In fact several looked just "as found. The 1922 Runabout here is just such an example.

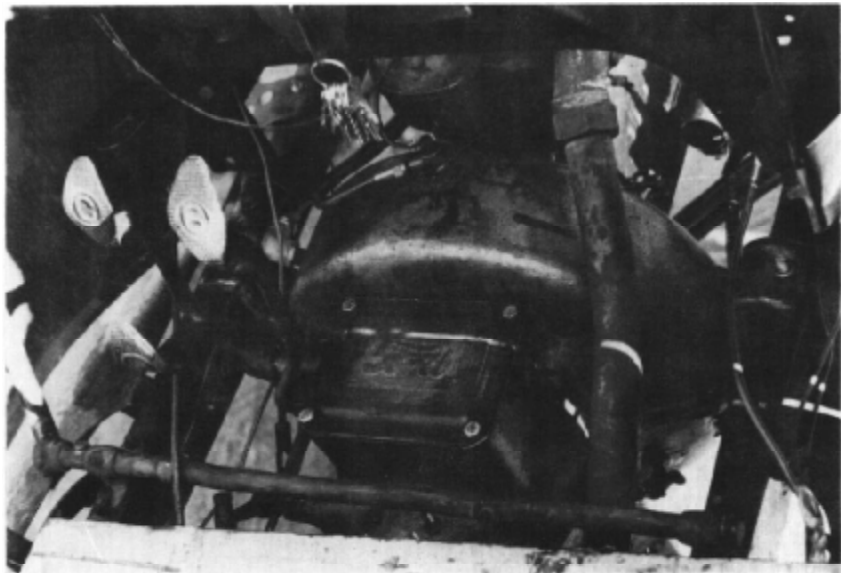
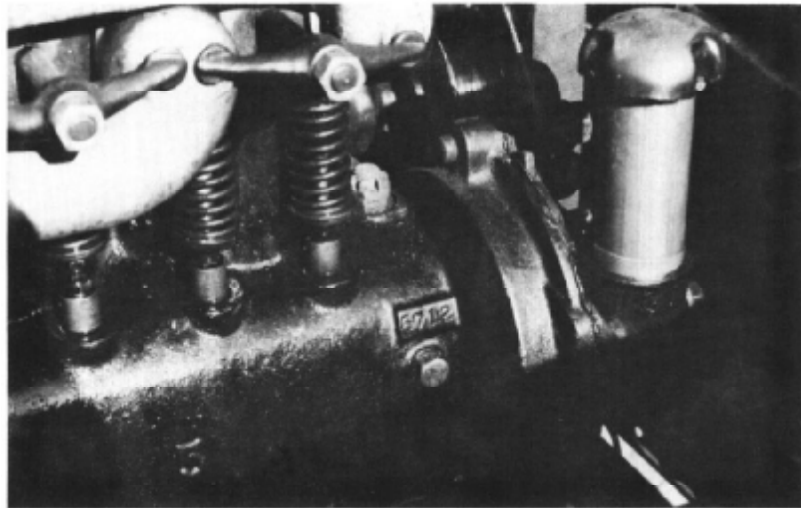
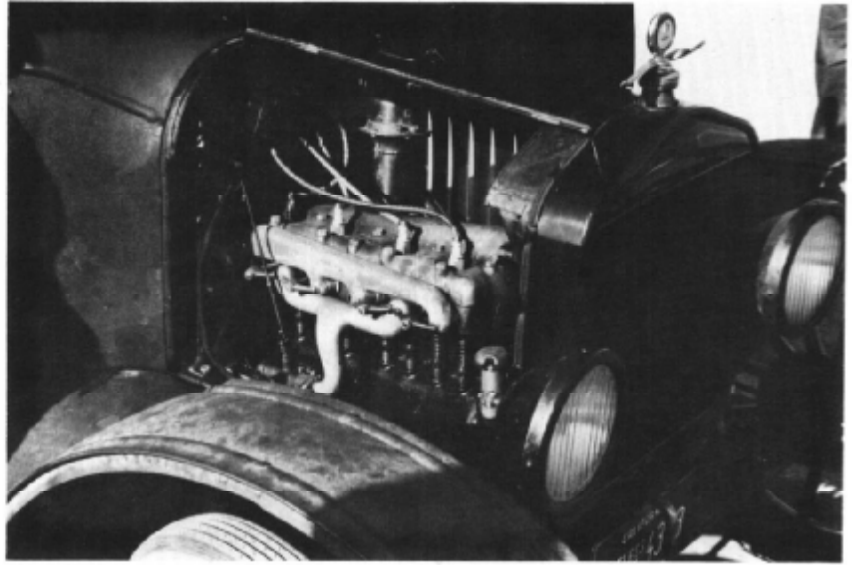
As we walked by our attention was drawn to the early wheels (thin spokes) and the white-wall tires. We looked it over and discovered in addition that it had a 1909 rear axle.

Lifting the hood we found the engine was an open valve type with serial number 6712! The floorboards were missing; notice the square-hole transmission cover.

There is only one man that we know of that would (or could) commit such a sin - Orville Enyeart. Seems that he is building the 1909 body and since the car must be street-legal to run the Hill, he just put this body together so as to not miss out on the fun.

The best time over the hill for this car was 17.27, driven by *Julia* Enyeart!





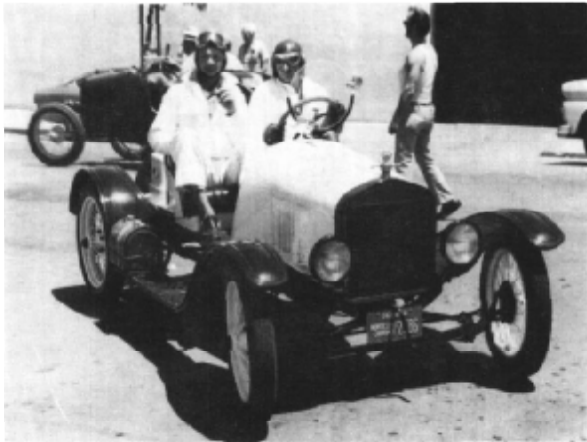
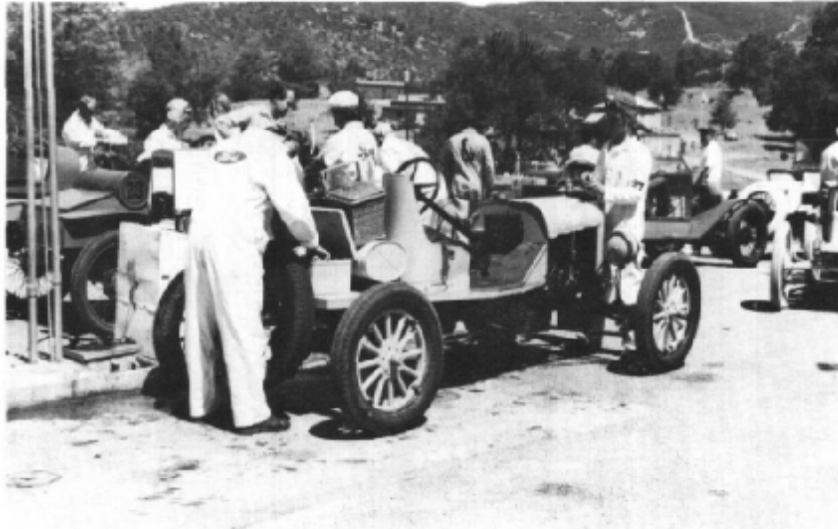


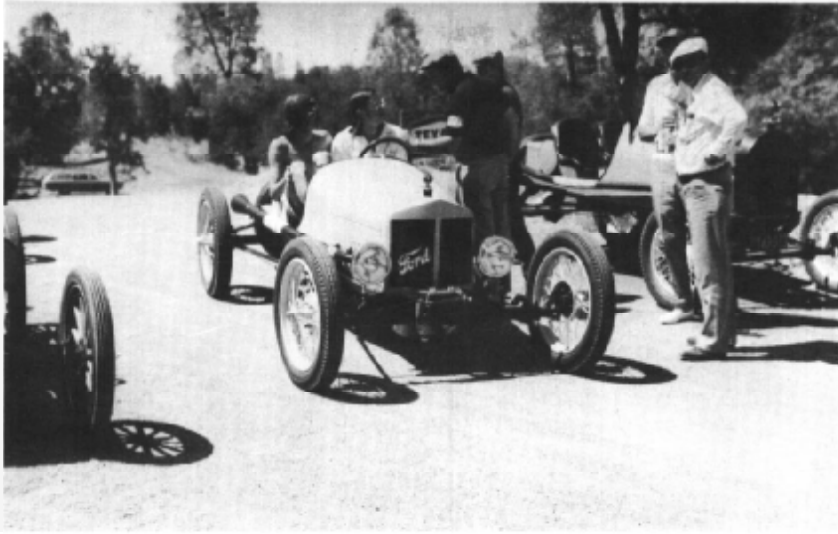
*In the center of San Jose, the cars line up and the crowd gathers. Somewhere in the upper photo you could find forty-odd speedsters if it were not for the drivers, mechanics and other enthusiasts (center). The announcer introduces the contestants, the green flag drops, and the Third Annual Endurance Run is on its way.*



*The route covers a little less than 200 miles, through hills and valleys. Rest stops are planned for fuel and water (for cars and drivers).*

*The half-way point is Codioli Ford, in Livermore, where a crowd of hundreds (over 200 antique cars) greets the racers as they pull in for lunch.*



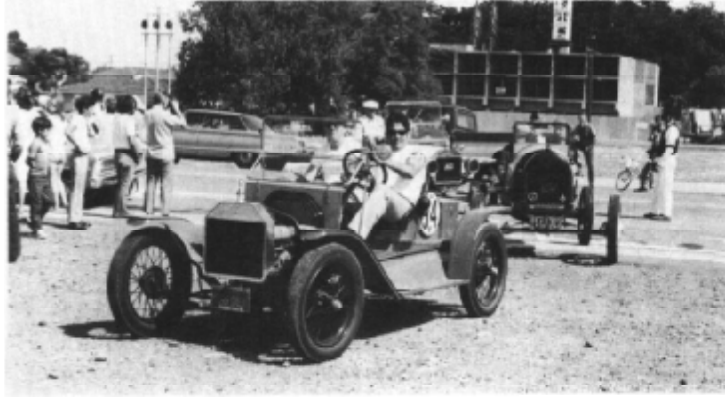


*From Livermore the race continues, heading for Santa Clara. In the meantime the participants in the Lowland Tour take a shorter route and then await the appearance of the speedsters.*

*A band plays era music, the arrivals are announced, and finally the trophies are awarded.*

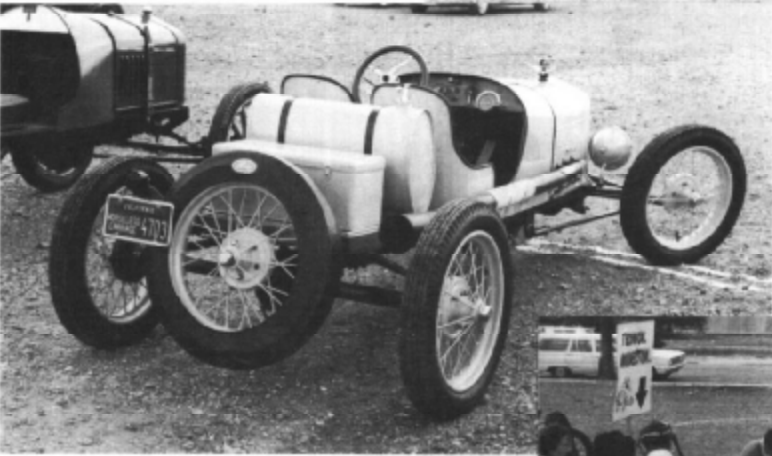


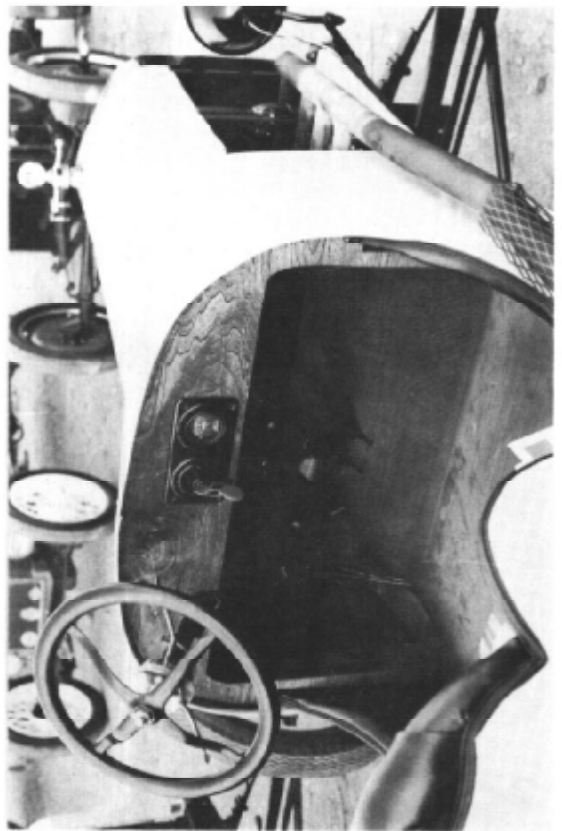
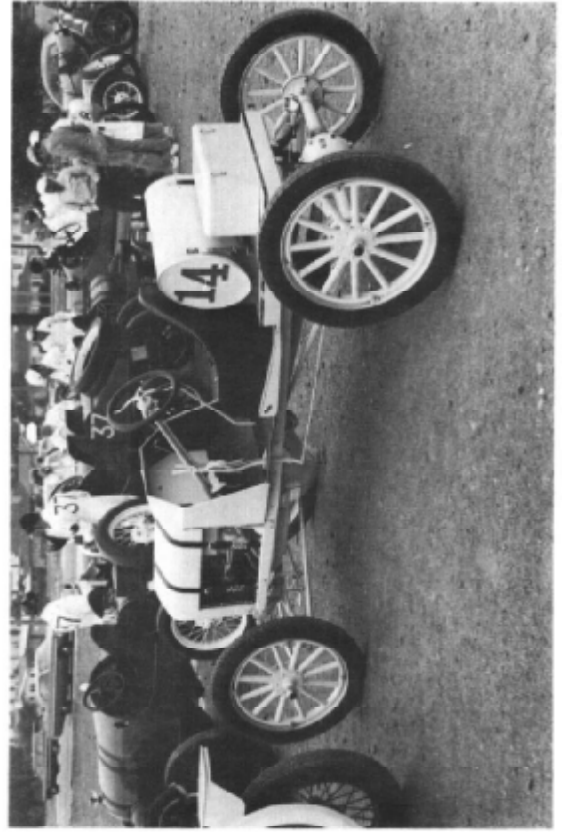




*It's been a long and tiring day. Some of the cars never made it. The Run takes its toll of men and machines; Ed Archer's tire, new at the beginning, has not survived, The dangling headlight on another car eloquently describes our feelings. We're tired and worn out but we'll be back again next year. You can bet on it!*









### YOUTH JOINS IN ON THE EXCITEMENT

Car Number 21 was built as a shop project in the auto shop of Cupertino High School, where Tim Stangland (car 8) is instructor. The driving was shared by the students, who changed places along the route.

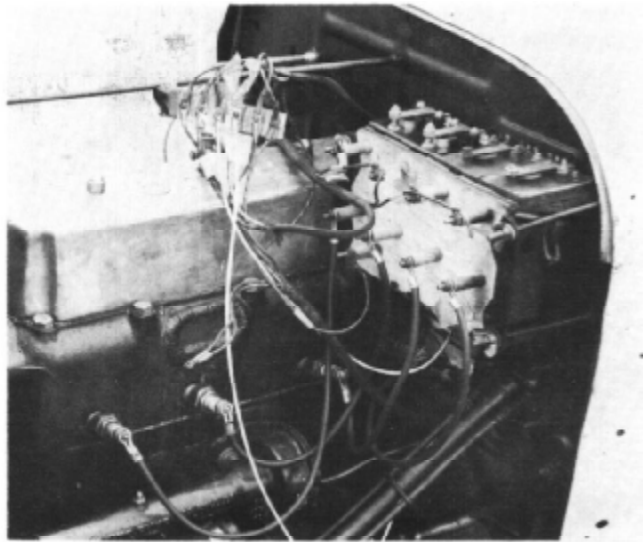
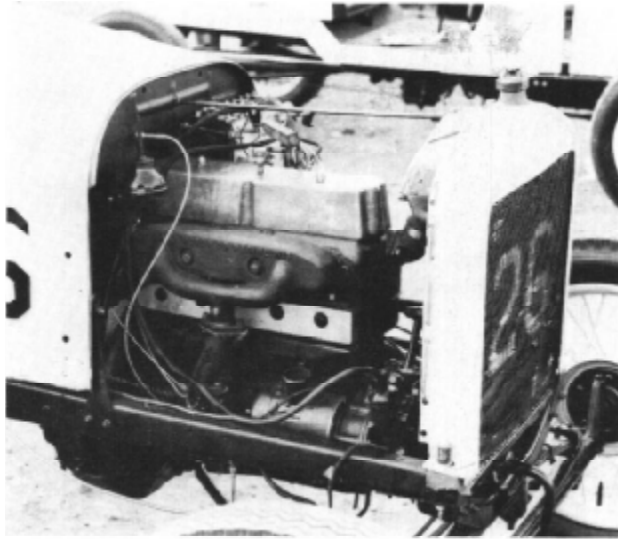
Car Number 26 was entered by fourteen-year-old Duke Marshall. Duke built the car himself, buying the parts with money he earned. His dad, Don, drove the car in the Run, with Duke as mechanic - you have to be at least sixteen to get a driver's license in California.

Duke began construction on the car when he was just nine. During the period in between he had most of the parts stolen and had to begin all over again. All that survived the theft was the Rajo head and the basic body of the car.

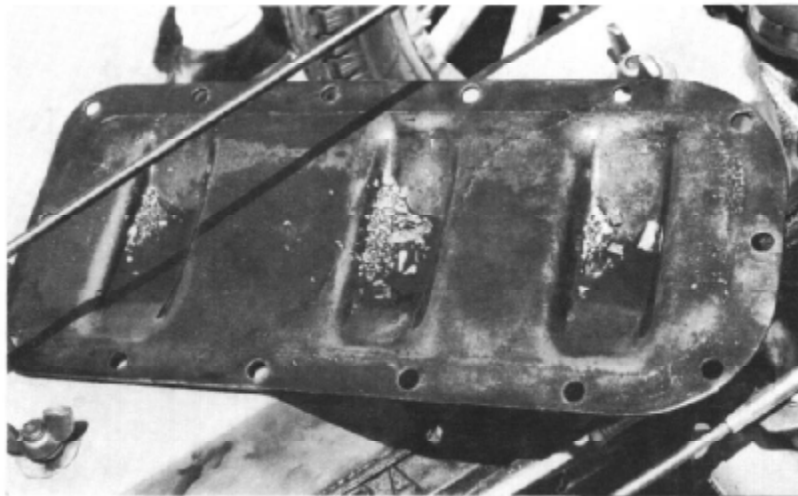
Duke's dad writes, "But Duke never lost sight of completing his speedster and now it is done. I think he was the youngest owner-builder in the event but, of course, I had to drive. Old 26 didn't fare too well after the Mount Hamilton climb, but we did get about sixty miles further than I thought we would (I expected to stop at the starting line). Duke had confidence in his car and when the rod finally blew he immediately started planning for next year's race.

Don continued, "Engraved on the rocker arm cover of Duke's Rajo is, 'Ascot Speedway. L.A., Calif. Speedy Neil. 87.6 MPH. June 16, 1929. SJ-Lockwood-S=B'."

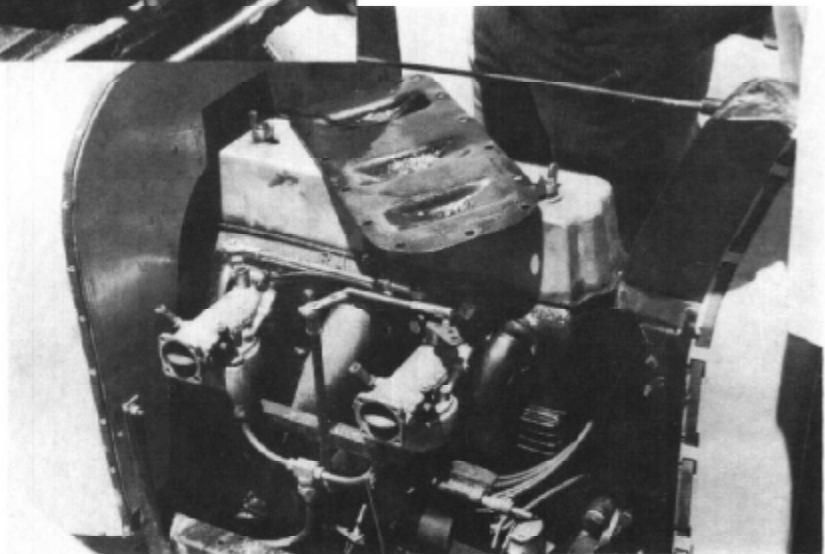


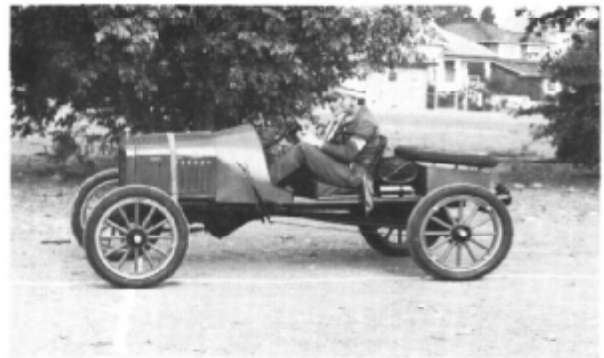
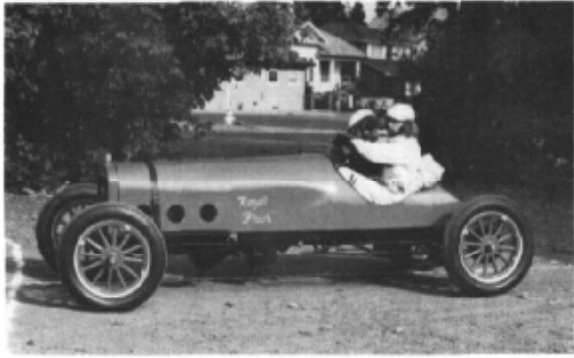


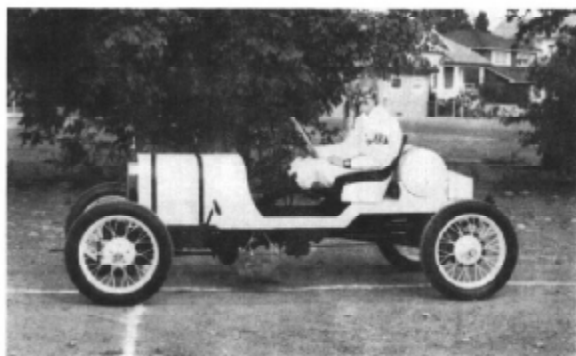
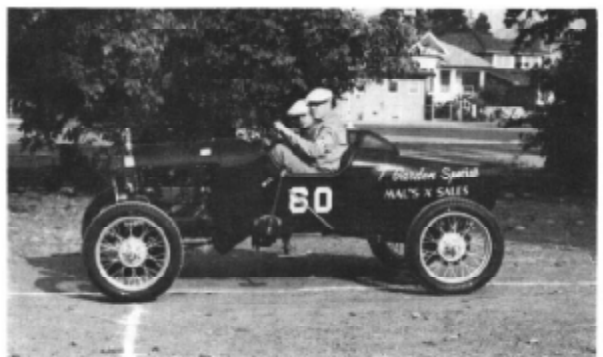
*Young Duke Marshall's Rajo-equipped speedster shows the results of a limited budget and of the last minute rush to get it together for the Endurance Run. In spite of the hay wire appearance, this part of the car gave no trouble. A bad rod bearing ended the fun after just sixty miles.*

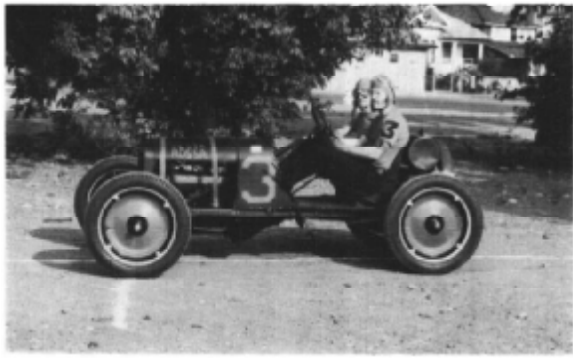
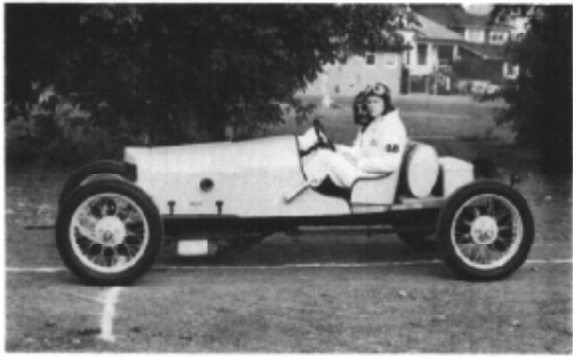


*Another car limped into Livermore with a fair knock. Pulling the pan uncovered the reason. In spite of the damage, the bearing cap was filed and the car completed the race.*

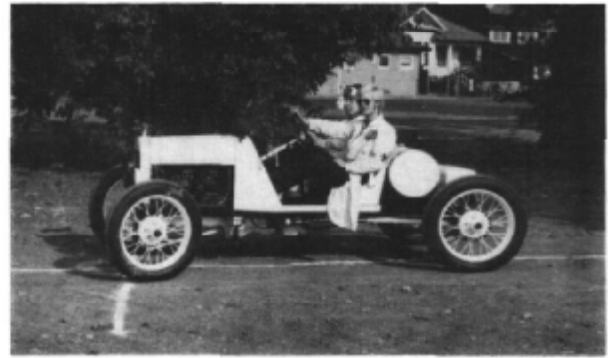
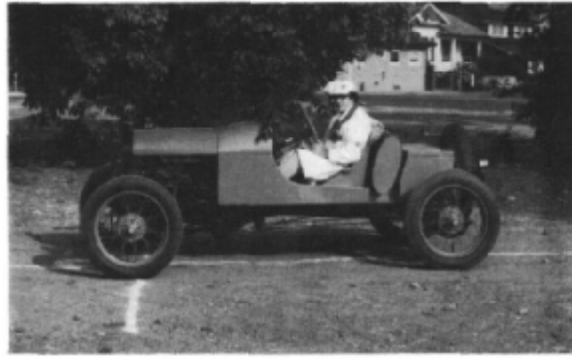
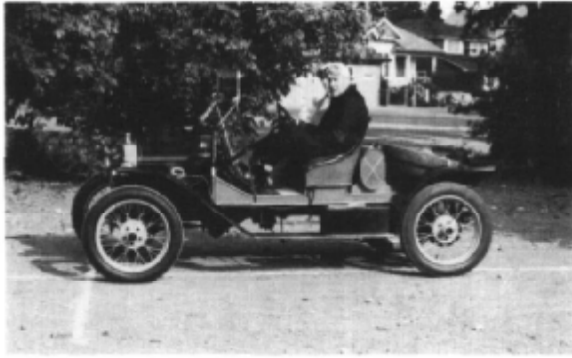
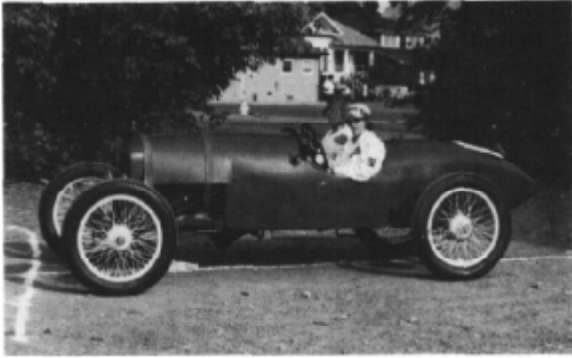












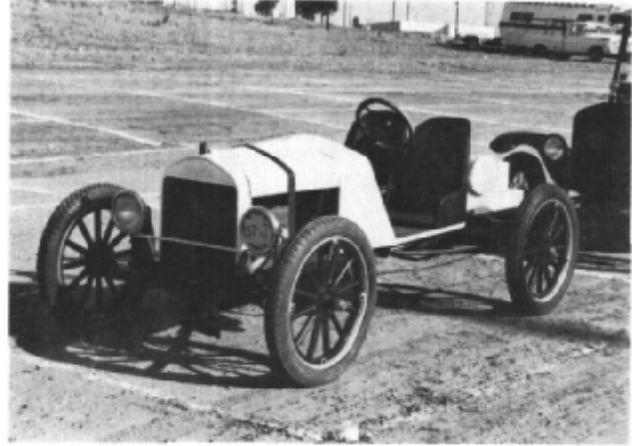
Both the Hill Climb and the Endurance Run are planned to bring back the spirit of the era when similar events were a relatively common part of the American scene. The enthusiasm stirred has rekindled the interest in Fast Fords today. The Model T Speedster in its best form would be a poor match for the most underpowered modern car over any distance, but no modern car can even approach the looks, the sound, the feel of one of these speedsters.

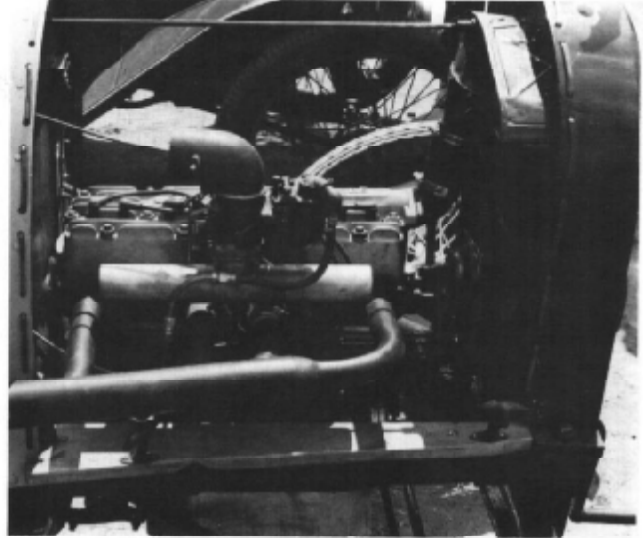
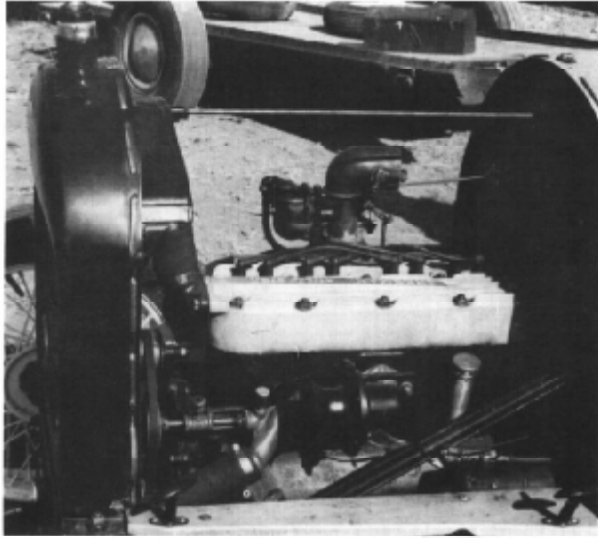
During the heyday of the T, speed equipment could be had from many sources- if you had the money to buy it. Not only engine parts but new bodies as well. Lowering kits, new front axles, special steering gears, shock absorbers, special heads, exhaust systems — you name it and it was made. The story is a little different today. What little speed equipment that has survived brings top dollars and even if the money is available, the stuff is hard to find. As a result, today's speedster is a combination of the old and the new. Very few of the cars shown on these pages could have been duplicated in the days of the Model T. As a result, no effort has been made to identify any of these speedsters by a certain year. They are what they are; individual owners approaches to the problem of creating today's Fast Fords. By looking at the many variations in the construction of these cars perhaps some of you may find the answer for a problem with your speedster.

The simplest speedster is nothing more than a stock Model T frame and running gear with bucket seats and a simple body added. Common practice is to place a fuel tank to the rear of the seats, and perhaps, a tool box to the rear of that.

Lowering the frame adds much to the racy look; the methods used vary from heating and bending the springs, to sectioning the frame.

The stock speedster, being much lighter than the standard Ford, will give pretty good performance. Just being out in the open and closer to the ground makes it seem faster, even if it is not. Man, unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your viewpoint) never seems satisfied, though. Sooner or later he wants "just a little bit more."



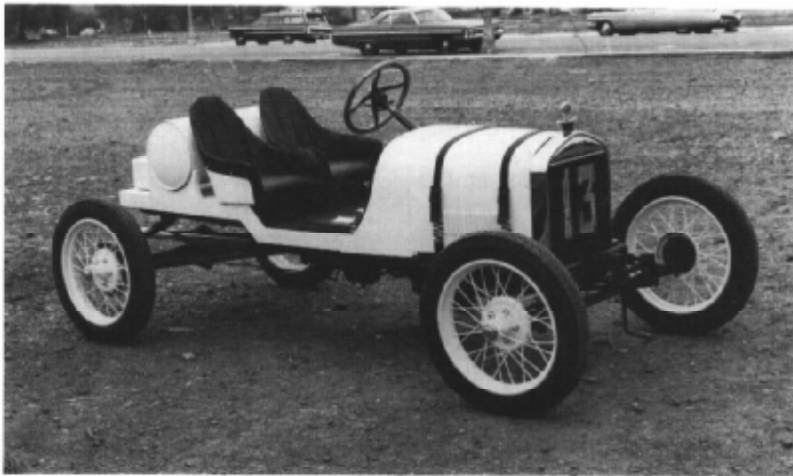


The easiest and often the cheapest way to get a little more pep from a T is to improve the carburetion. A larger manifold (that is, a manifold with larger passages through it) plus a larger carburetor can make the T run like a Model A, if chosen and adjusted properly. This is the place to start, especially if your budget is limited.

From this point "every little bit helps. Raising the compression, preferably using one of the "Ricardo type heads might be the next step. The thing to remember is that the more fuel you can get into the cylinder and the higher you compress it, the more power you will get. It's that simple. The only thing that overhead valve heads, such as Frontenac and Rajo, do is allow more fuel into the cylinder because of their greater port size and efficiency (plus, of course, a more compact combustion chamber). In other words, it isn't just because the valves are overhead; it's because such a design makes it easier for the fuel to move from the carburetor to the cylinder because of the larger valves, larger ports and smoother air flow.

One can only go so far with the T engine before other problems appear. As more power is developed, a greater load is placed on the bearings and on the crankshaft. In addition, the greater speeds compound this problem. The stock T is pretty hard pressed to turn faster than, say, 2500 rpm. Change just the carburetion and she may turn another 1000 rpm! Well, she just won't take it for long.

The most common present day solution is to install a Model A crankshaft. This is not an easy task. The A crank is longer which requires that it either be shortened or that the transmission be moved back. Both approaches have been made but shortening the crank is the more common. Since the bearings of the A crank are larger, the block must be bored and new main caps made to fit. New connecting rods are also required. Fortunately there are a number of people who are equipped to do this sort of work, and the cost is not out of reason.





The new crank presents a lubrication problem. The Model T system works fine for the Model T but when you put in larger bearings and run them faster, care must be taken to assure proper lubrication.

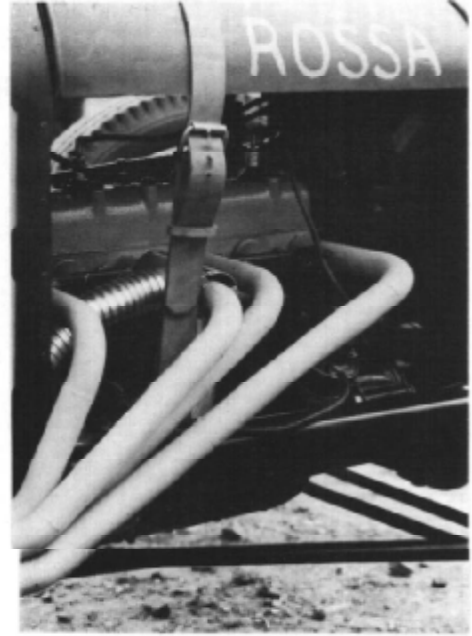
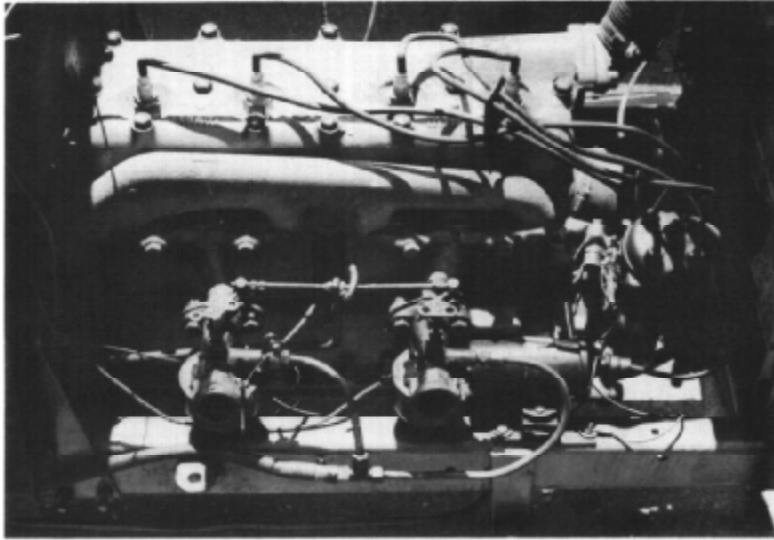
Many remove the Ford magneto magnets from the flywheel and use a distributor for ignition. This makes the flywheel lighter, allowing quicker acceleration, and also cuts some of the load created as the magnets scoop through the oil. Unless a pump is added to circulate the oil, one of the functions of these magnets, serious problems can occur. Many leave the aluminum spools on the flywheel. This helps but is not as effective as the magnets are.

Larger valves, accompanied by enlarged ports, in the T block are a help. The camshaft can be ground to

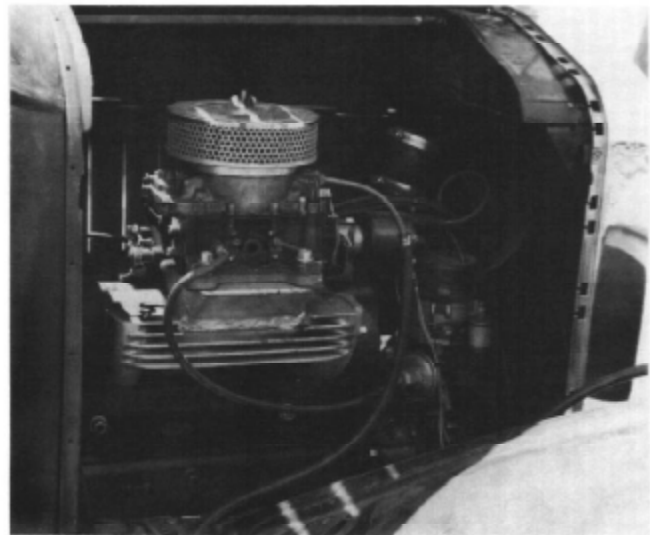
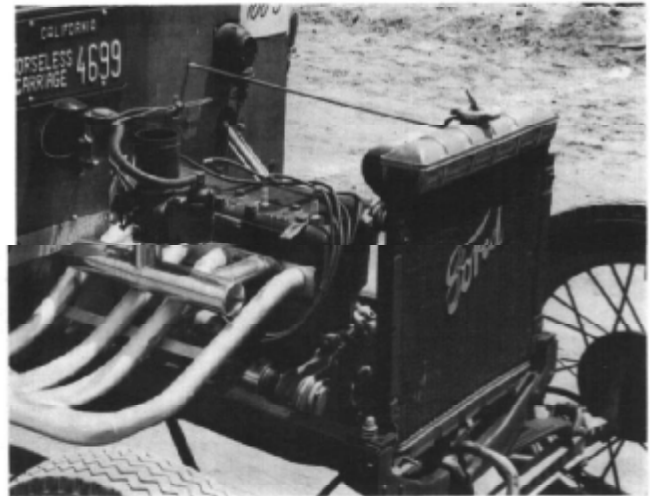
give greater lift and duration but major changes in this department are limited by the size of the camshaft.

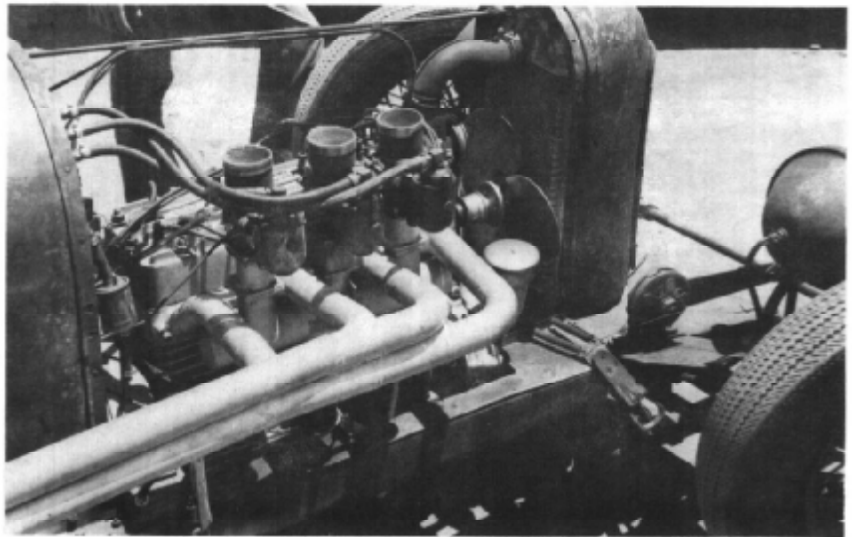
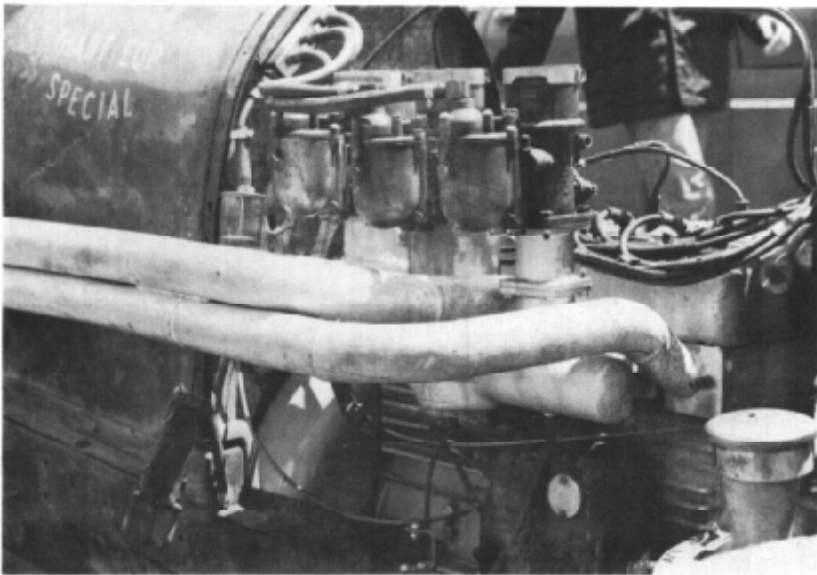
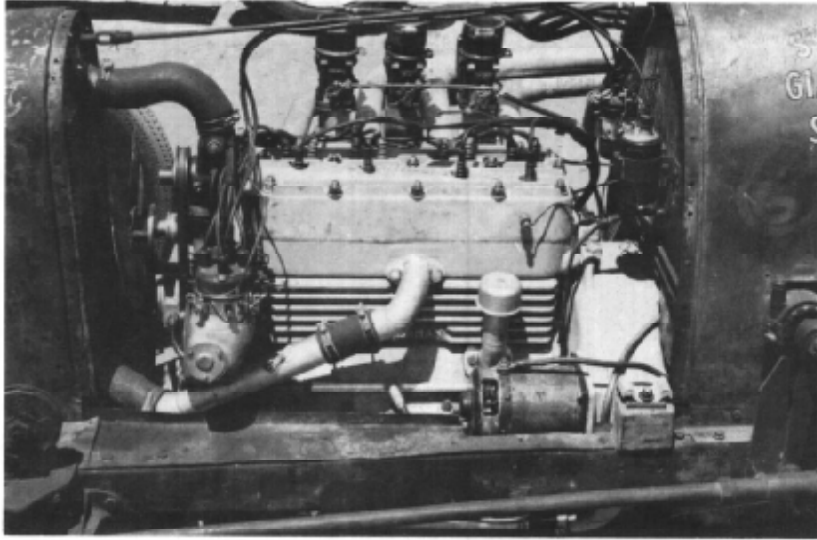
The stock Model T ignition system, in proper operation, is good enough for the average relatively stock engine. However, if the engine is run up above around 3000 rpm, those coils just can't keep up. Here is where the auxillary distributors and magnetos become a necessity.

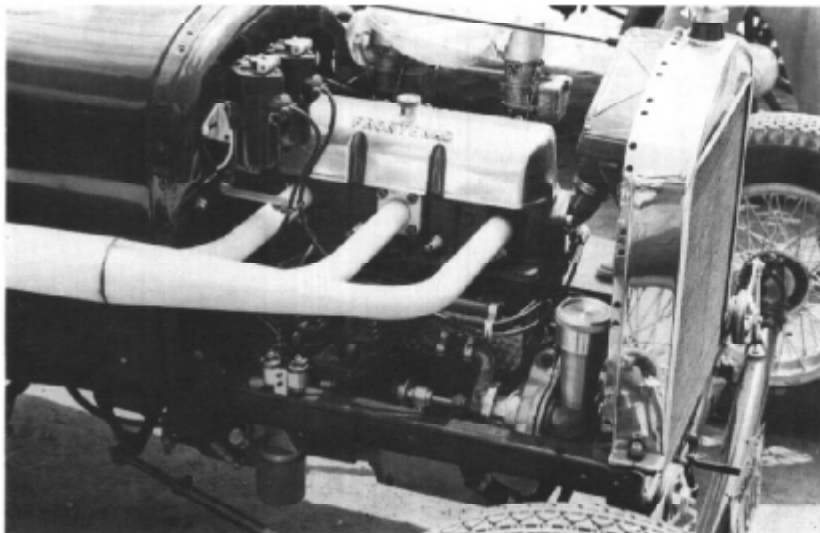
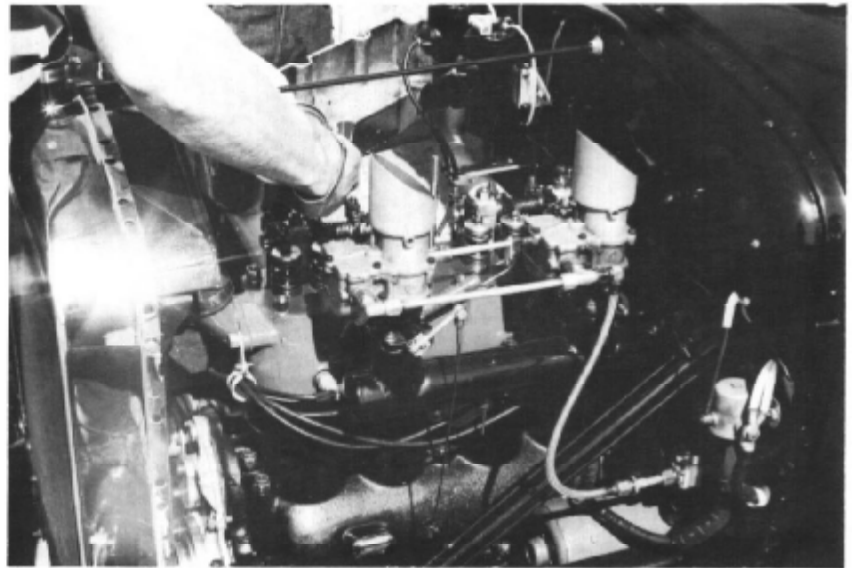
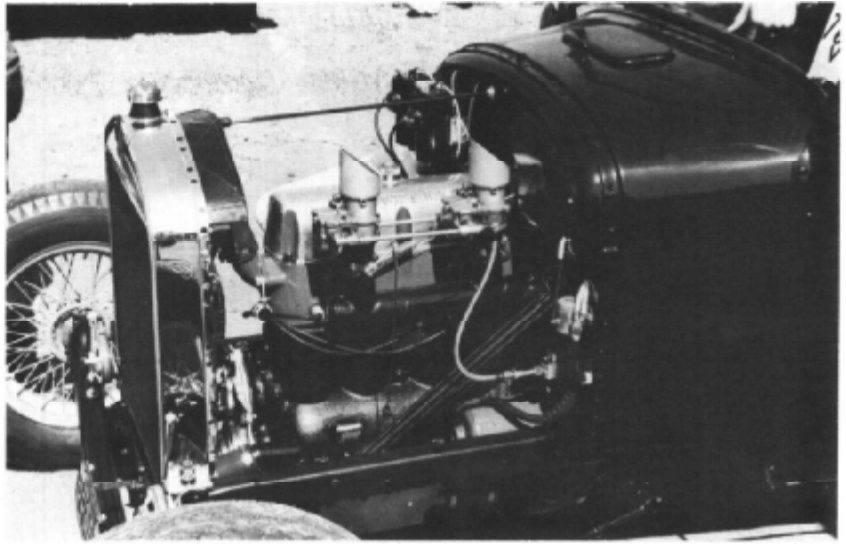
There really is no limit to how much one could do to gain more power and speed from the T engine - if cost is not an important factor. Two good books, *The Model T Ford in Speed and Sport*, and *The Fast Ford Handbook*, available from Post Publications contain more information and ideas than we could possibly cover here, and are very highly recommended.

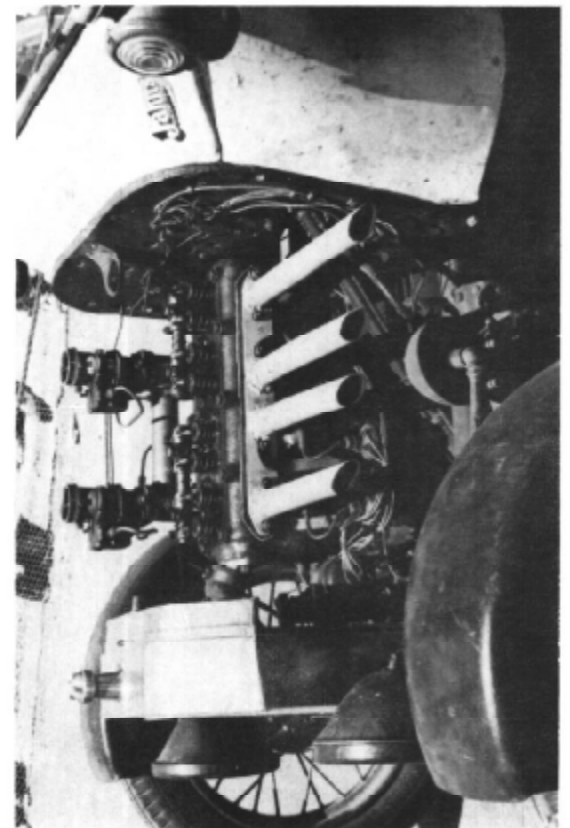
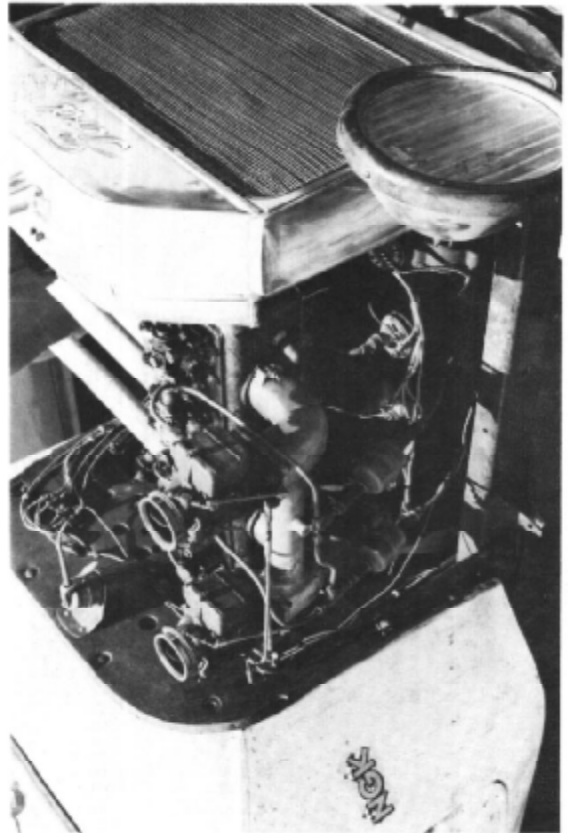
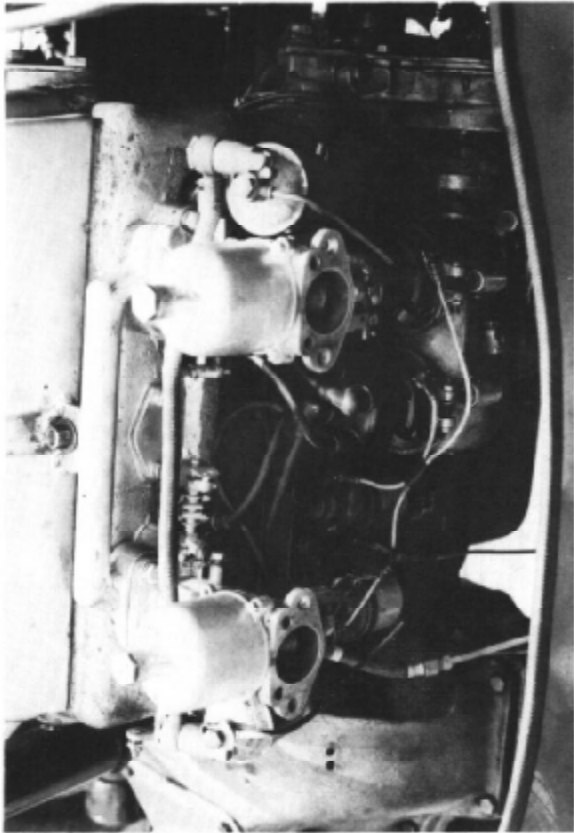


*Carburetion and the flat-head T. Everything from dual Ford Holley NH to a modern four-barrel. The only limit is in the imagination of the builder.*

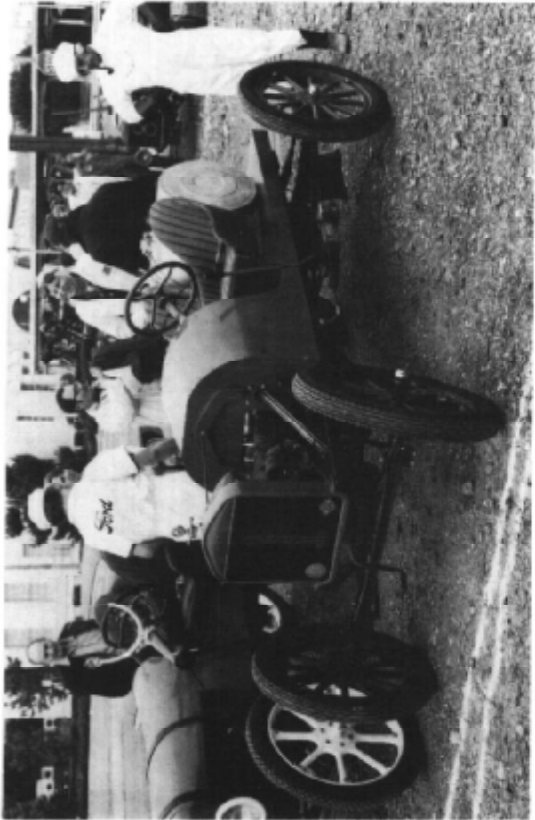
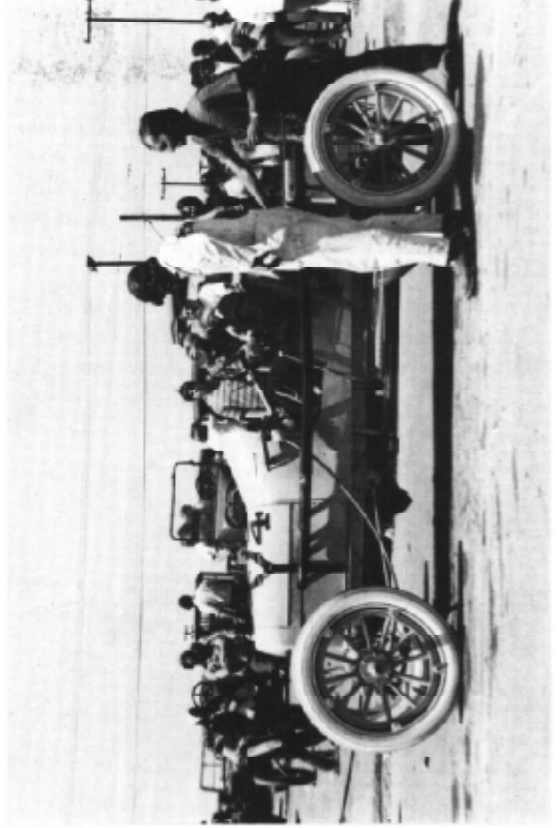












## CLEM SALA S SPEEDSTER

Those of you who have been reading our stories of the Long Beach Hill Climb are no doubt aware of the name, Clem Sala. Clem is the "Mr. Fast Ford" of the Northern California area and has for years made it a point to come south and show the southerners how it should be done. This is Clem's story -

"I have been racing at the Hill since 1961 and have never missed a year up to 1971. I used to race my Roadster every year until 1968 when I built my Speed-

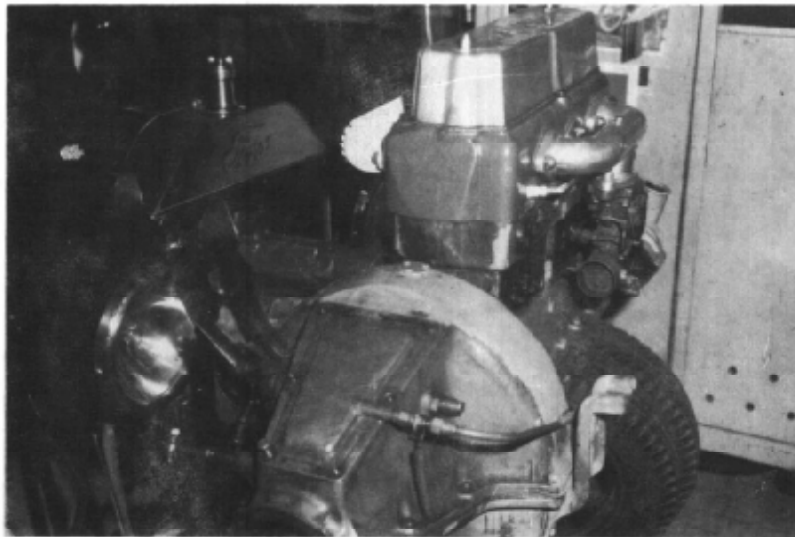


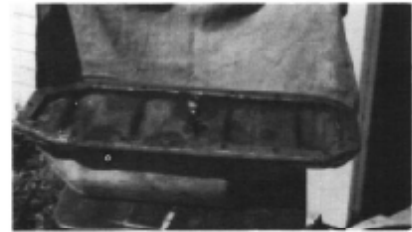
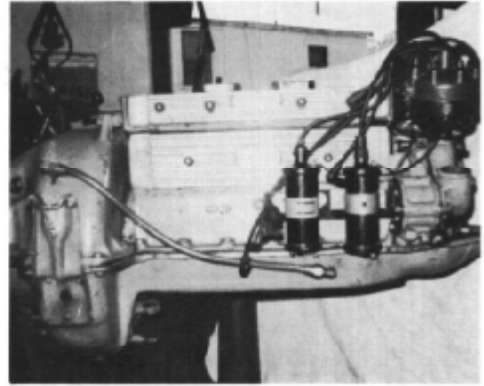
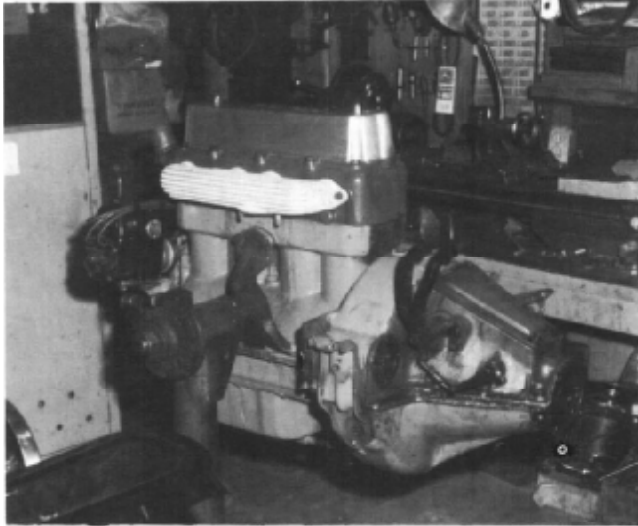
ster. I decided to keep the roadster home as it was getting pretty well used up at the Hill.

"In looking at all the past Club records, I have won two First Places, two Second Places, one Fourth Place with the roadster. I have won three First Places with the speedster and broke the Hill record in 1970. Both of these cars are street jobs with stock transmissions and bands and a splash oil system.

"I also built the engine in my brother Vic's speedster. He has won four times in a row and no one has been able to beat it since it was built.

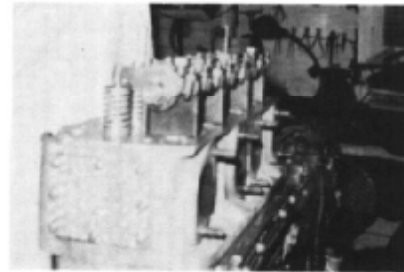
"The roadster is a 1923 model and was restored by me in 1956. It was a genuine Roaring Twenties hot rod. It was originally built by a friend of mine back in 1927. I found it in his back yard under some berry bushes in 1955.





“The engine in the roadster has a Model B Rajo head, an “A” crank, a 1½-inch Winfield carburetor, and a Bosch magneto. The car is also equipped with a Warford transmission and Buffalo wire wheels.

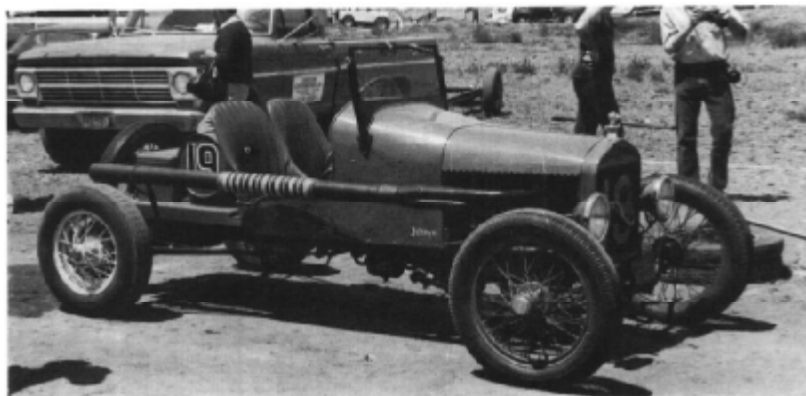
“The speedster was originally built as a flat head engine with a “Rocky Mountain” head. An “A” crank was installed and was not cut shorter to fit the T engine. Instead of making the crank shorter, a shim was added at the rear (picture) which allows the transmission to be moved back [after the engine pan is also lengthened]. The block was ported; exhaust ports were made 1-3/8 and the intakes were 2¼ by 1¼”. The valve ports are 1-5/8” and the valves themselves are 1-3/4”. The oil system remains splash as in the original engine.

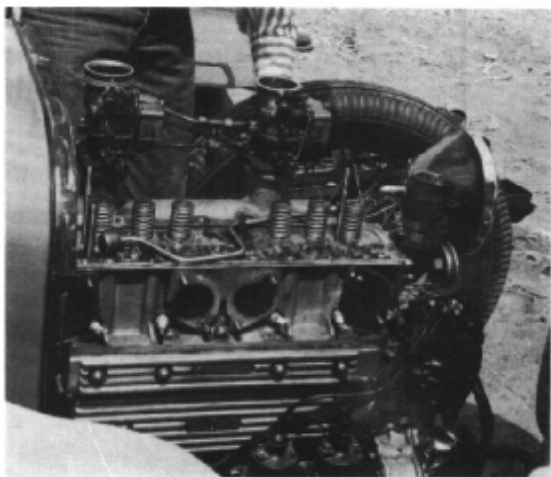
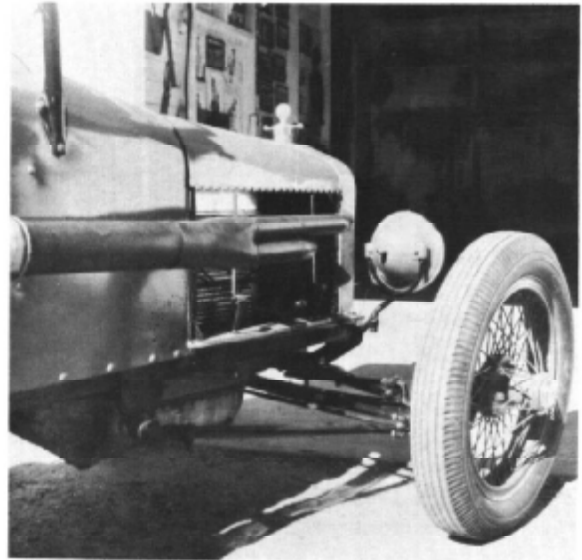
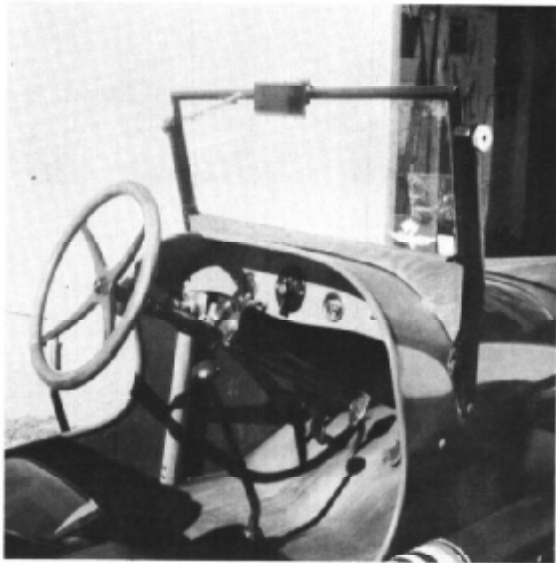
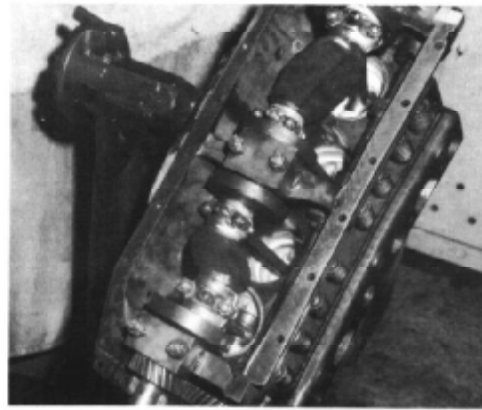


“In 1971 a Gemsa head was installed. This head has four intake and four exhaust ports and is of the overhead valve type. We used two Stromberg “97 carburetors. The engine also has a twin ignition system using two distributors and two coils. An eightquart oil sump is mounted under the crankcase.

*Clem's speedster engine during the process of the installation of a Gemsa head. The oil sump is shown in the center photo. A view of the head is in the lower.*

“The speedster also has a Warford transmission plus Chevrolet brakes which are installed on a '26 T rear end.





*Top Left: The speedster engine as first built with the flat head. Note the large valves and ports, plus the heavy valve springs. The extension on the rear of the block is necessary due to the added length of the Model A crankshaft.*

*Top Right: The Model A crankshaft and main bearing caps.*

*Center: Two views of the speedster after the change to the Gemsa overhead valve setup.*

*Lower: The Gemsa head as it appeared at the Hill at which a valve stuck and destroyed a piston. Note the huge exhaust ports in this head.*

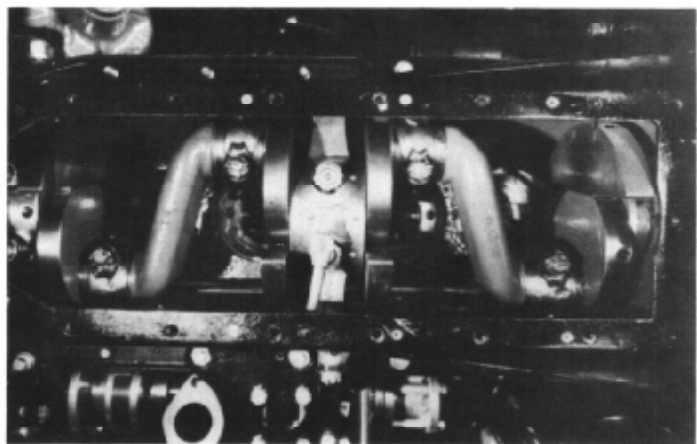
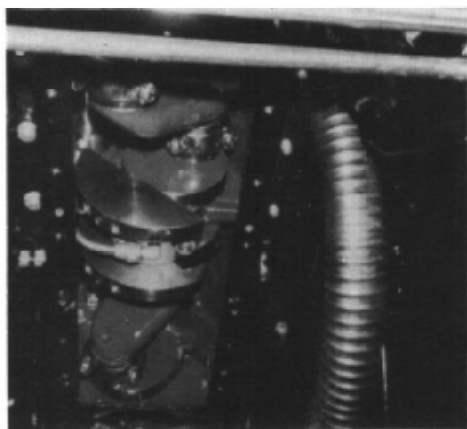
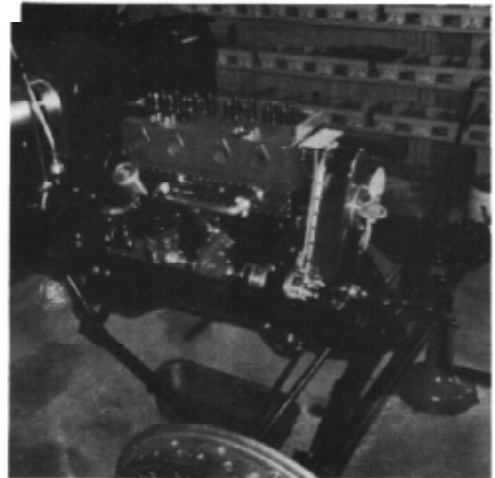
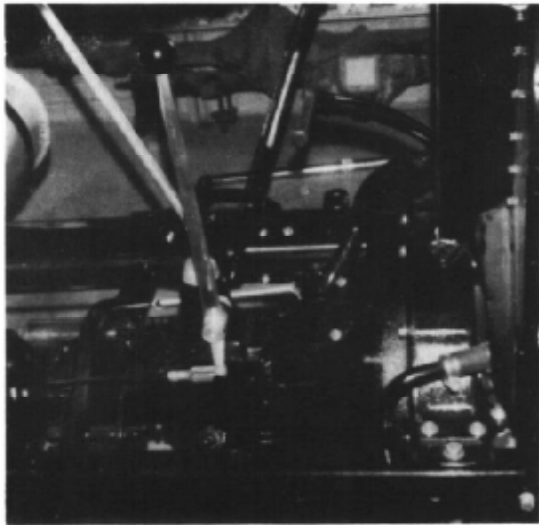
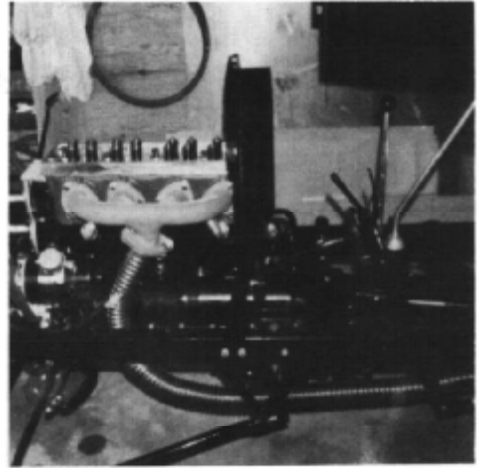
CHARLES CONDRON S MODIFIED ROOF MODEL C

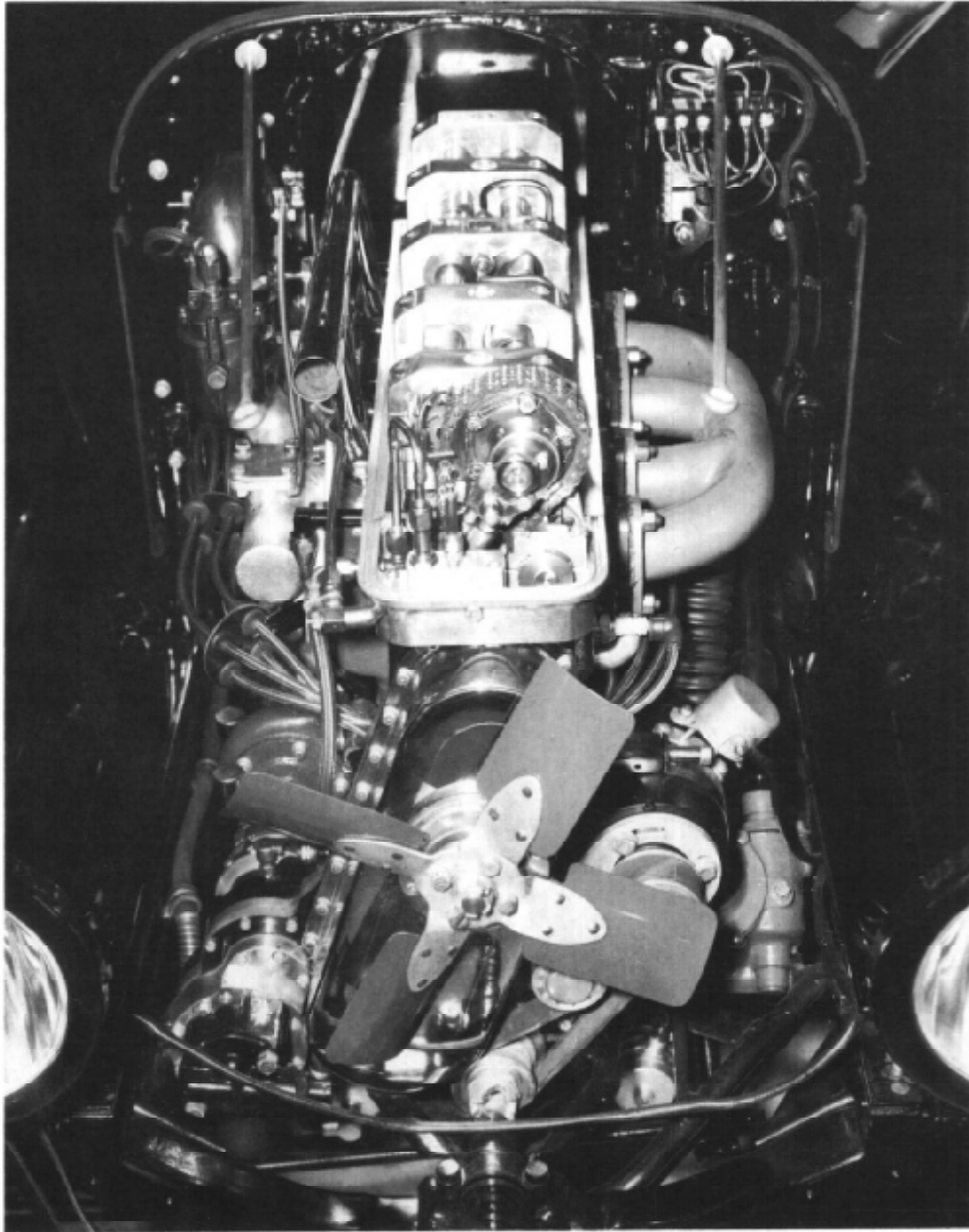
Originally supplied as either a push-rod operated or dual overhead cam, sixteen valve racing head, this installation features a built-from-scratch overhead cam setup.

The block is a 1919 Model T. The engine is installed in a 1923 Runabout. Little else is Model T.

The engine has a Model A crankshaft which has been drilled for oil pressure and has been fitted with counterweights. The flywheel runs dry and is fitted with a single plate clutch. The transmission is Model A and is coupled to a Model AA transmission mounted in reverse for an overdrive effect.

The rear axle is a modified Model T which has been fitted with ball bearings and twelve-inch Star brake drums.





The Model C Roof head featured four valves per cylinder, four intake ports and four exhaust ports. When originally manufactured, the head could be had with either pushrod-operated valves or with a dual overhead cam setup. The original mechanism on this head has been replaced with a new dual cam arrangement which appears to be much better than the original.

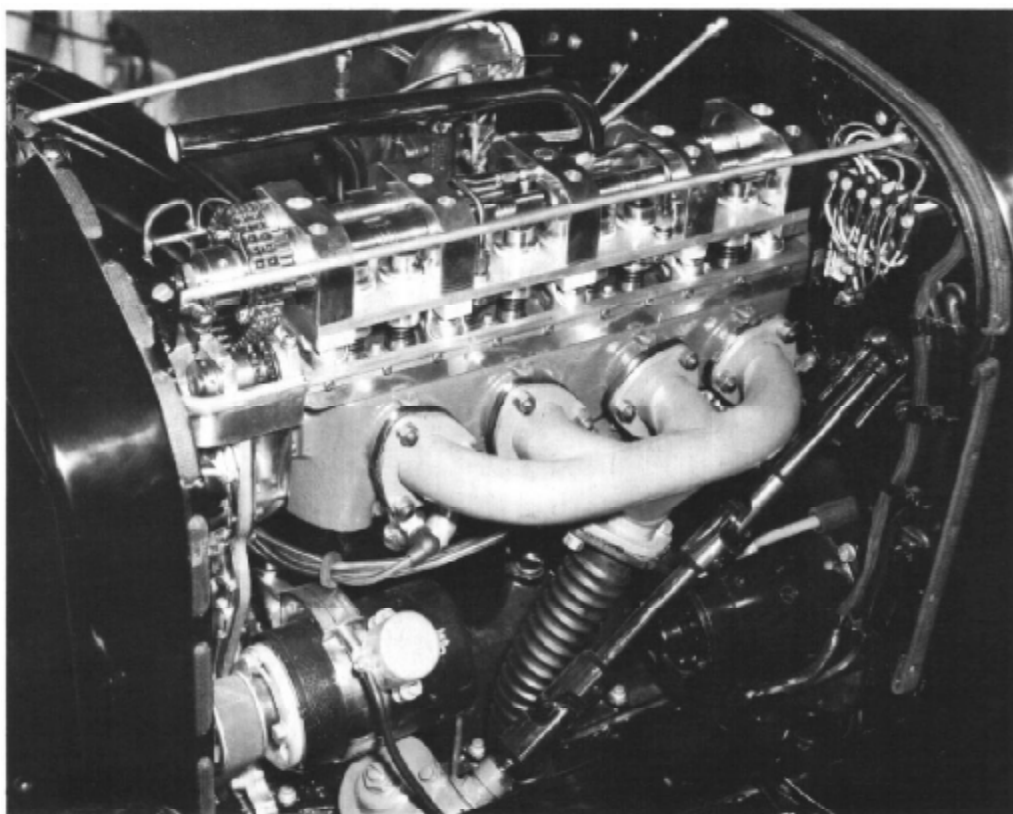
An accessory drive assembly runs a Packard oil pump, a Dodge water pump and an Autolite distributor.

A four port log intake manifold utilizes one 1-5/8 Winfield Model S carburetor, with provision for the use of two carburetors if desired.

The front cover houses the reduction gears for the camshafts as well as the chain drive. The chain drives the exhaust cam which in turn drives the intake cam by means of gears just behind the chain. A separate piston type oil pump supplies oil to the cam shafts, etc.

The generator is a modified Model T which is driven by a belt. The fan is driven by the timing gear-chain system. The starter is Model A Ford.

This engine features, in addition to the Model A crankshaft, "292 Ford pistons and four valves per cylinder. The valves are each 1-3/4 in diameter.



**CHARLES CONDRON S MODEL "C" ROOF**

