

# RACING IN THE 1920s

## -A Photo Album-

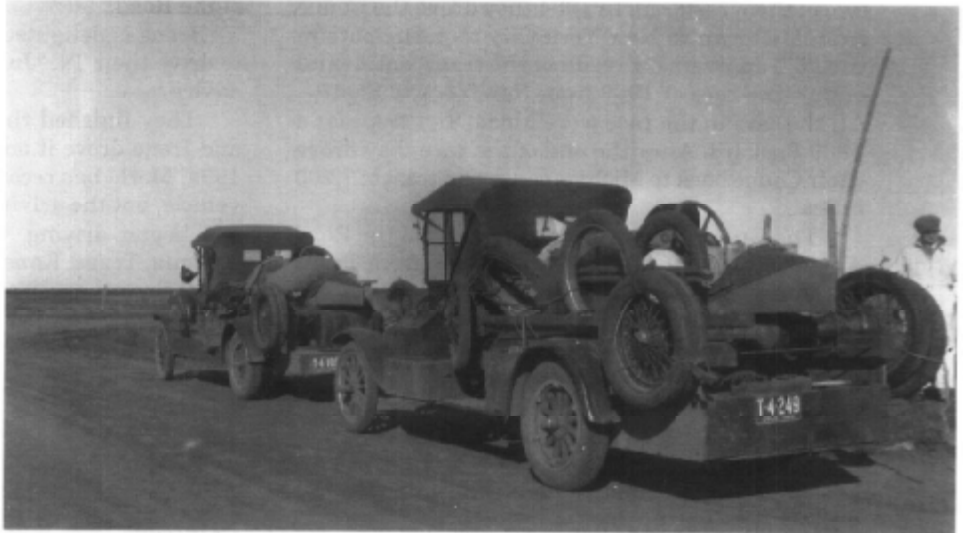
By Don Radbruch

Photos from the Howard Gardner Collection\*

In the 1920s, Ray and Chet Gardner traveled the West racing their Rajo Model T Fords. For both men this was the beginning of lifetimes devoted to auto racing. Both were fine drivers. Because of family obligations, Ray Gardner restricted his driving activities—he was a mechanic at Indianapolis up until the 1970s. Chet Gardner was a winning driver at legendary Legion Ascot and raced at Indy from 1929 to 1938. His best finish was a fourth in 1933. Chet Gardner was killed racing in 1938.

This is not meant to be the story of the Gardners, although a book could be written about these men and the generations of Gardners still involved in racing today. These photos tell a bit of what it was like to race in the mid-1920s.

*\*Howard Gardner raced in the 1950s and was a winning driver in California Racing Association's roadster and sprint car divisions.*



*Above: While a far cry from the eighteen wheelers that haul race cars today, these Model T rigs were pretty much state-of-the-art in 1926. Many racers simply towed the race car or, in some cases, drove it to the track.*

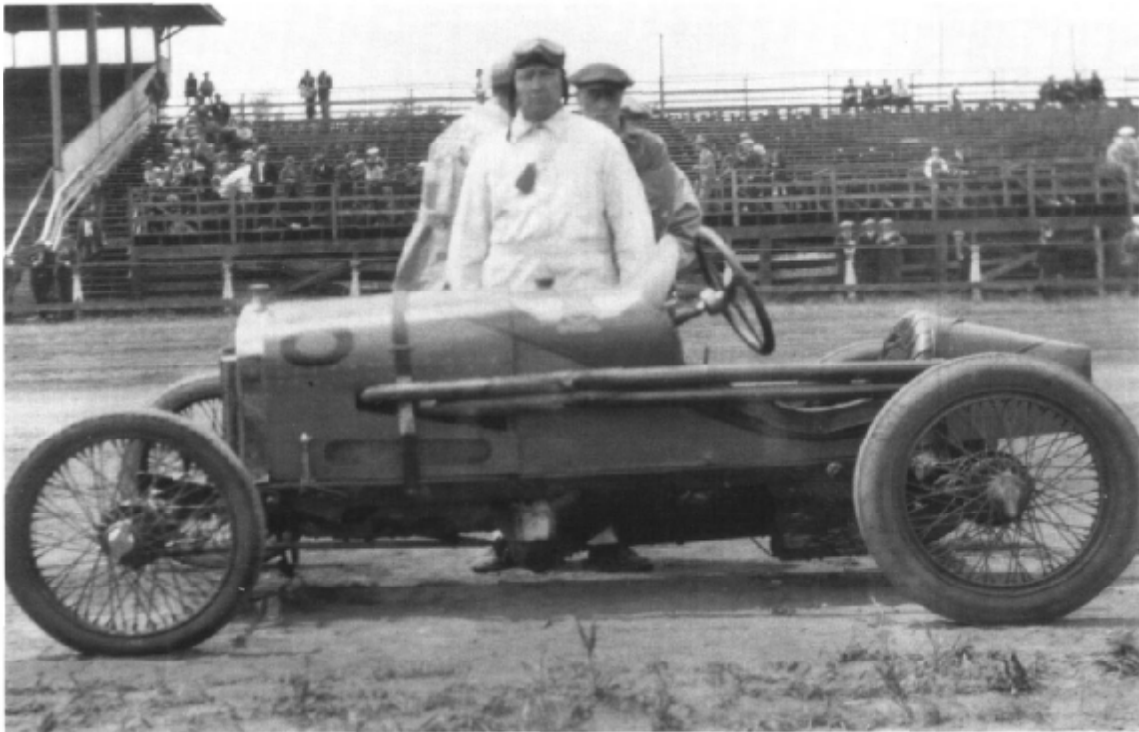
*Below: Ray Gardner is shown with his wife, Augusta, and son, Howard. The photo was taken in 1927 someplace in Oklahoma on the way to several races in Texas.*

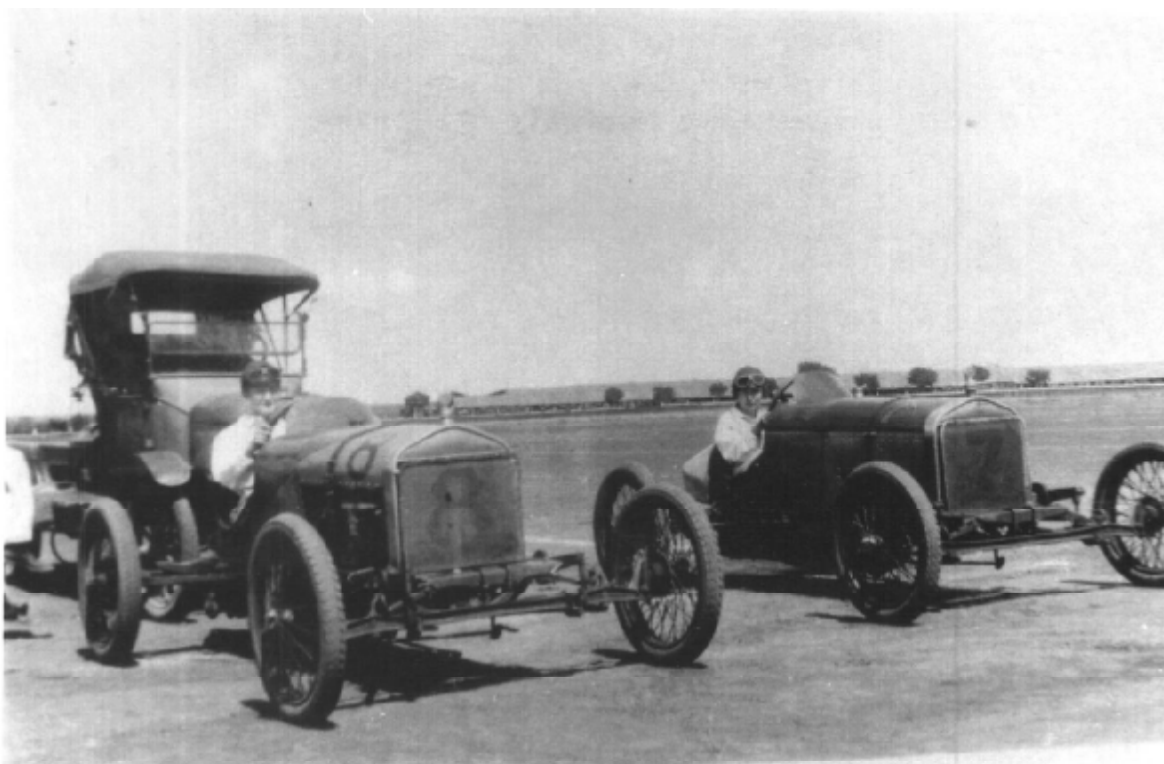




*Above: Ray Gardner in 1924. While not as well known as his brother, Chef, Ray drove intermittently until 1959. His last race was a win in a 50-mile race on the high banked oval at Oakland, California.*

*Below: Chef Gardner is shown before a race at Overland Park in Denver in 1924. The Model T engine is a Rajo but it is not known if it was a flathead or an overhead valve conversion.*





*Above: Chef Gardner, #8 and Ray Gardner, #7, get ready to go at Denver's Overland Park in 1924. At some of the Overland races the "Ford Races" served as a support group for a half dozen or so Indy Millers and Duesenbergs with big-name drivers.*

*Below: Ray Gardner won the Bisbee Cup at Douglas, Arizona on October 2, 1927. A very impressive trophy-it is still in the Gardner family. The payoff was about \$200-not bad in 1927 dollars.*



# FIELD AT SP



*Above: The field lines up for the "Ford Race" at Breckenridge, Texas in 1927. Ray Gardner is in #7-no record of how he finished in the race. It was a long tow from his home in Albuquerque.*

*Below: Among the tough competitors the Gardner s faced in the mid-1920s was Noel Bullock. Bullock won the 1922 Pikes Peak race in this Fronty Ford. In 1926 this car was the first ride for racing great Ted Horn.*

