

# NOEL BULLOCK

## 1922 Pike's Peak Hill Climb Champion

By FRED HOUSTON  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

© 1979 by Fred Houston



Noel Bullock, handsome twenty-three-year-old from North Platte, Nebraska, having already won eighty dirt track races and the Pike's Peak Hill Climb.

What's in a name?

"So he took four spools and an old coal hod.

Called it a Ford, and it ran -- by God!

Lawrence S. Clark

Noel Bullock referred to the RAJO Special that he designed, built and raced as "Old Liz. On the racing programs she was listed as a "Ford Special or the "Bullock Special.

She was originally constructed in the blacksmith

shop in Madrid, Nebraska, around 1918 and was steadily improved over the next six years. The pattern for construction was shade tree engineering, primitive techniques of the era, and a liberal dose of trial and error. Noel would race "Old Liz, bring her home and improve her, race again, bring her home for more improvement, repeating the process many times. She was a blend of cast-off parts, Ford components and carefully selected accessories. An endless stream of accessories were available for the Model T builder in Noel's day. The trick

## NOEL BULLOCK BIOGRAPHY UNDER WAY

Fred Houston has granted The Vintage Ford the right to print these excerpts and photographs from his yet-to-be-released book on the life of Noel Bullock.

Almost sixty years ago a country youth from North Platte, Nebraska, won the Pike s Peak Hill Climb Championship in a dilapidated-appearing Model T Ford Speedster. His competition included some of the finest factory prepared automobiles of the day.

Winning the Pike s Peak Hill Climb in a Model T Ford! What an exciting story! But, I wondered - what happened to Bullock after the hill climb victory? Did he return in 1923 to defend his title? Further, why didn t we hear of Model T s competing at Pike s Peak after 1922? Certainly they would have been competitive. The legendary Fronty-Fords surely would have blown the competition off that famous pile of granite. They didn t - but - why didn t they?

The search for answers to these questions resulted in not only the answers but also a story of primitive racing, flying, glory and death.

Although Noel Bullock is best known for his magnificent hill climb victory, he was also a dirt track race driver of considerable note. For six years, from 1918 through 1924, Bullock stormed the dusty mile and half-mile tracks of the Great Plains and Colorado areas and was almost unbeatable against some creditable competition. Bullock s competitors included many great drivers of the era - King Rhiley, Leonard Kerbs, Tommy Garrett, Fred Merzney, Walt Higley, Roy Gardner, Lyle Bodenner, Albert Prietauer, Bob Weir, Hans Brinker, Red Majors, Parker Abbott, J. A. Maise, Albert Koepke, Schrader and others. Bullock retired from racing at the age of twenty-five, after chalking up over 150 victories! But that s not all! Bullock was also master of the "Model T of the Air!

Bullock purchased a Curtiss Jenny biplane and learned to fly in 1919. Aviation became his career. The Victory Flyer Barnstorming team (including movie stunt flying), North Platte Aviation Company, Bullock Flying School, the opening of the Boulder City Airport and the Bullock Airlines are included.

Tragically, Noel Bullock died in 1934 when his passenger plane went down in the Gulf of Lower California.

### CREDITS

The author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance of Lorma Linda Bullock Gobbel (Noel s daughter) in generously making grandmother Bullock s scrapbook available to the project, and to Wayne and Genevive Bullock (brother and wife), and Noel Bullock, Wayne s son, named after his famous uncle, for their assistance and the use of photographs and other material. I am also indebted to Reed Davis (who taught Noel to fly) for photographs and other information. Thanks, too, to Bob and Bonnie Plegge who dug through tons of old photographs to locate the Pike s Peak photos. I also had the good fortune to interview several men who had seen Bullock race. Included were Wayne Bullock, Reed Davis and Louie Unser (who was a Pike s Peak road patrolman at the 1922 hill climb).

Bullock s dirt track racing exploits are yet another exciting Model T related story which I plan to share with readers of The Vintage Ford.

Fred Houston

was to select only the well-engineered, quality components.

"I got a set of Dayton wire wheels and four new tires, said Bullock, describing his brain child, "because I knew I couldn t get anywhere in auto racing unless the wheels stood up. The wheels and tires cost me more than the rest of the machine.

In the early years Noel gave the appearance of "Old Liz very little attention. It amused him to drive a race car dilapidated in appearance -- with the body rough and uncouth on the outside but soundly constructed on the inside.

As a result, the press at various times referred to his car as a "Contraption - a "Low Caste Tin Can -- an "Unpainted Hoodless Burlesque of an Automobile -- a "Cross Between a Kiddie-Kar and a Pushmobile - an "Unpainted Bug - a "Home Brewed Flivver and even a "Collection of Junk.

A bit harsh and overly critical, maybe, but keep in mind, in context, the name-calling was to emphasize the contrast between Bullock s machine and others. This contrast was never greater than at the 1922 Pike s Peak Hill Climb, where very sleek and beautiful machines were entered, such as Packards, Mercers and Pierce Arrows. Some were factory prepared.

Noel didn t mind the razzing because his RAJO Special just kept on winning - and everyone knows its okey to poke fun at a winner.

Following his Hill Climb victory, Noel said, "I always had good intentions of building a better body, one that looks more respectable. However, I was always too busy racing, testing and putting a little more "poison under the hood.

In September of 1922, however, Noel found the time. About one month after the hill climb victory, "Old Liz was on display at several Western Auto Stores in the Denver area, and she had a sleek new body. Western Auto was the distributor of the RAJO head in the Denver area. Whether Western Auto or the RAJO Motor Company wielded their influence in the matter is not known. Whatever the reason, "Old Liz suddenly attained respectability, for in the weeks to follow, the *Denver Post* now touted the machine as Bullock s "White Flivver.

Chief among the many accessories Noel bolted on his racer was the RAJO overhead-valve kit. "RAJO was coined from RAcine, Wisconsin, and the designer, JOe Jagersberger. The model of Noel s RAJO is not known but it was likely an early Model B. Photos verify that it was an eight-valve, crossflow, rocker arm head, and it is known that Noel installed the latest RAJO racing head available, just a few weeks prior to the hill climb in September 1922. The new racing carburetor that he ordered with it didn t arrive in time for the hill climb but he did all right without it.

RAJO s were generally considered number two behind the Chevrolet brother s famous Frontenac overheads. However, Noel raced his RAJO Special several years

before the first Frontenac appeared (1921) and continued to win even with Frontys in the field.

#### FORD SPECIAL THROWS DUST OF DEFEAT ON STATELY CARS

"The Pike s Peak Hill Climb races are nothing more than a bunch of fools risking their lives in an attempt to get nearer to Heaven than most of them will ever get again!

Lawrence S. Clark

Lacking the funds to ship "Old Liz" by train, Noel drove the 300 miles from North Platte to Colorado Springs, at the base of the famous peak up which the race course winds. He drove the final fifty-mile leg from Denver on Friday morning, three days before the Labor Day contest. Noel had rebuilt his engine and installed a new RAJO racing head about one week earlier.

"The engine needed limbering up anyway," Noel explained, "and the trip across the plains from North Platte gave me the opportunity to get a good line on just what my machine would do.

When Noel pulled his dusty, stripped down Model T up in front of the posh Broadmore Garage where most of the entrants were quartered, a crowd of racing enthusiasts and drivers quickly gathered to inspect the latest arrival. Some of the crowd were quick to make comparisons - his Flivver to the beautifully-prepared machinery residing in the Broadmore garage. "Maybe in its own class but a 'Tin Lizzie' has no chance against the power of a Packard or a Mercer," said an onlooker.

Some bantering and ribbing continued but it was good-natured, as Noel's ready smile and wit soon captured the crowd.

Here was an underdog they could relate to - a pleasant country boy in a Model T Ford. If only he could win . . . . .

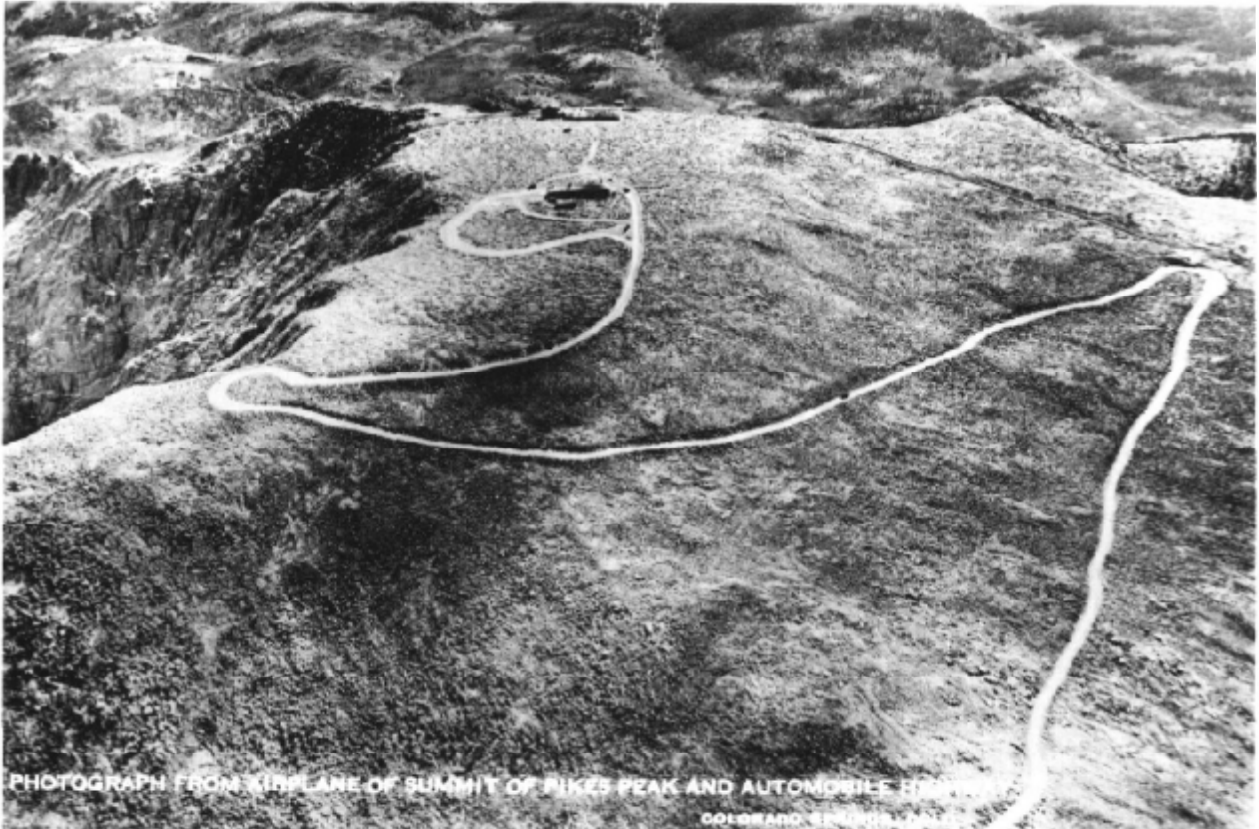
"I've attended all of the Pike s Peak hill climbs, added one knowledgeable spectator. "High speed driving on the mountain takes lots of experience. It's one thing to compete successfully on the dirt tracks but quite another to drive the switch backs and sharp inclines of Pike s Peak.

Those expecting to "get under his skin" were disappointed, as the blond youth from Nebraska gave



PHOTOGRAPH FROM AIRPLANE OF THE SWITCHBACKS ON PIKE'S PEAK AUTO HIGHWAY  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

A breathtaking view of the early Pike s Peak Hill Climb route with its many switchbacks and hairpin curves. About seven miles (and the most treacherous) of the twelve and one-half mile course are shown in this spectacular photo.



PHOTOGRAPH FROM KIMPLANE OF SUMMIT OF PIKE'S PEAK AND AUTOMOBILE HIGHWAY  
 COLLEMAN, DENVER, COLORADO

A view of Pike's Peak summit as it was in 1922. The near building served as the finish line and was touted as "the highest building in America. It is gone today, with the auto highway continuing on up to the cog railway area. The cog railway is on the right. The "Bottomless Pit" is on the left.

more than he took, obviously enjoying the notoriety of his conversation-generating machine. For, in spite of the laughter, Noel was confident and left little doubt that he intended to win.

At least two of the drivers knew Bullock would be exceedingly tough competition. Hans Brinker, who drove the Wills Sainte Claire "Gray Goose" to a first place finish in Class 2, said after the race, "I'm not surprised that he won as Bullock is one of the best race drivers in the whole country. Ring Rhiley, 1921 Pike's Peak champion, knew even better than Hans -- Bullock had beaten him about one week earlier back in Nebraska.

The Pike's Peak auto highway ran from the picturesque little town of Cascade in the Ute Pass to the very tiptop of America's most famous mountain. Eighteen miles in length, the race course was the upper twelve and one-half miles, with 147 curves, many of the hairpin and "W" variety. The average grade was seven percent, and the maximum grade ten percent. The starting elevation was 9,050 feet, the top of the mountain 14,109, for a total rise in elevation of 5,059 feet -- almost a mile!

Noel arrived too late for Thursday's time trials, an inconsequential event staged to establish starting positions. Using the "tame" first five and one-half miles of

the course, the drivers opened up only enough to assure themselves of starting positions near the top. Only twelve of the twenty-seven entries were in the speed trials, with the remaining starting positions to be determined by draw Sunday night.

Noel "camped out" on the mountain over the weekend and Saturday morning he took "Old Liz" at speed over the course, both to test her climbing ability on a real mountain and to familiarize himself with the numerous curves and steep ditches in the course. Entrants were allowed fast practice runs over the course only from seven to eight each morning during the week preceding the event.

Labor Day, Monday, September 4th, 1922, dawned with an overcast sky and a chill north wind. The track was in good condition except for the top three miles which had been drenched with rain, pelted with hail and blanketed with snow the afternoon and night before.

Noel was at the starting point bright and early - Crystal Creek Bridge, between mile-posts 5 and 6 on the highway. With the starting time of the first driver but a few minutes away, one of the officials noticed Bullock had no number on his car.

"Where's your number?"

"Haven't been given one, Bullock responded.

The official consulted his list and found Bullock had drawn starting position twenty-four. Bullock poked around in his tool box and found a small can of black enamel. He dipped a finger into the paint and drew a not-too-symmetrical '24' on both sides of the cowl.

"Guess that'll do," he remarked as he stepped back to survey his work.

Because the top three miles of the course were slushy there would be no chance today to break Ralph Mulford's 1916 record of 18.24.7.

W. S. Haines, veteran Mercer Special driver, had won the time trials and started first, finishing in the surprisingly fast time of 20.31.

Harold Brinker, in his Wills Sainte Claire, 'hurdled the hill' in 20.45.8. King Rhiley, last year's champion, took his Hudson to the top in 20.05. Parker Abbott's Packard went up in 20.07.

More than two hours after the start, Bullock, the outsider, crouched over the wheel of what his rivals called a "Tin Can" and roared away from the starting line.

Spectators who had seen previous races reported Bullock put on the most startling exhibition of driving they had ever seen. He took the dangerous curves with the throttle wide open and exhaust roaring like a battery of machine guns. Once he was on the brink of disaster; when his machine skidded to the outer edge of a curve and his left rear wheel dropped over the side. The Warford transmission housing stopped the threatened plunge and the tire on the right bit into the roadway and pulled him back.

#### SPECIFICATIONS OF BULLOCK'S RAJO SPECIAL (as of Labor Day, 1922)

Total weight -- 975 pounds  
Body - By Bullock  
Frame - Length, 76 inches; weight, 95 pounds  
Wheelbase - 83 inches  
Underslinging - Incorporated into the frame through the use of special spring seat cross members  
Wheels - Dayton 28 by 3  
Tires - Firestone Cord  
Brakes - Outside accessory  
Radiator - Accessory, oversized  
Transmission (auxiliary) - Warford 3 speed (6 speed when coupled with Ford transmission)  
Engine - Block, crankshaft, transmission, connecting rods and bearings, stock Model T Ford  
Cylinder head -- RAJO 8-valve overhead (crossflow)  
Oil System -- Regular Ford splash oiling with a large gravity-feed oil pipe  
Cam Shaft - Bullock special grind  
Carburetor - Accessory racing  
Ignition - American Bosch distributor  
Pistons - Dow Metal (Magnesium)  
Battery - Williard Storage (aircraft)  
Spark Plugs -- Champion.



September 4, 1922. Labor Day - New "King of the Mountain" Noel Bullock in his home built RAJO Ford Special at the Pike's Peak summit, surrounded by a throng of admirers. (From a September 5, 1922, Denver Post newspaper clipping.)

THE OFFICIAL RESULTS OF THE 1922 PIKE S PEAK HILL CLIMB

CAR	DRIVER	TIME	PLACE
<b>Class 1 - Less than 183 cubic inches piston displacement</b>			
Ford Special	Noel E. Bullock	19.5 4/5	First
Essex Special	Glen Shultz	20.41	Second
Chevrolet Special	Roy W. Beavers	23.03 3/5	Third
Essex Special	Art Hillis	23.05 3/5	Fourth
Chevrolet Special	Al Guthner	32.14 2/5	Fifth
<b>Class 2 - 184 to 300 cubic inches displacement</b>			
Wills St. Claire	Harold Brinker	20.45 4/5	First
Dodge Special	H. L. Chapin	23.25 4/5	Second
Dash s Special	R. G. Dashbach	23.27 2/5	Third
Haynes Special	Sam Marcus	24.18 4/5	Fourth
Stephens Special	Harry O Brien	29.01 2/5	Fifth
<b>Class 3 - Over 300 cubic inches displacement</b>			
Hudson Special	King Rhiley	20.05	First
Packard Special	P. B. Abbott	20.07	Second
Mercer Special	W. S. Haines	20.31	Third
* Broadmoor Yellow Devil	Harry McMillen	23.11 1/5	Fourth
Mercer Special	Jerry Chambers	25.29 4/5	Fifth

\*The Broadmoor Yellow Devil was a Pierce-Arrow belonging to Spencer Penrose, owner of the famous Broadmoor Hotel and the Pike s Peak Highway.

Bullock averaged about 38 miles per hour. He ripped off the first 3-1/4 miles in 3-3/4 minutes. Rhiley, Brinker and Abbott were clocked at 4 minutes each on the first 3-3/4 miles.

Bullocks winning time was the third best time that had ever been made in the championship climb. Ralph Mulford, in a Hudson (on dry roads), set the record of 18.24.7 in 1916. Rhiley s winning time in 1921 was 19.16.2

E. E. Sommers of Denver refereed the climb. Tom Roberts of Denver acted as assistant referee. There were no protests.



**RAJO HEAD  
WINS  
PIKES PEAK  
CLIMB**

Noel E. Bullock, Driving a Ford Car Equipped with the Famous RAJO Valve in Head Motor, won the Pikes Peak Climb in the Record Time of Nineteen (19) Minutes and Fifty (50) Seconds.

See This Remarkable Motor at Any of Our Stores

**Western Auto Supply Co.**  
ALL OVER THE WEST

Denver: 1568-84 Broadway-42 So. Broadway

PUEBLO, COLO. COLORADO SPRINGS GREELEY, COLO. FORT COLLINS

Western Auto s half-page Denver Post ad, Sunday, September 10, 1922.

Pike s Peak, September 4, 1922. Bullock 'taking it through a turn at mile post 14 above the timberline (near mile post 16 today). Yes, those are people in the background. Mile post 14 was a favorite observation point, and among the observers in 1922 was a young motorcycle patrolman by the name of Louis Unser. Uncle Louie today is the "Grand Old Man of the Mountain, having won the Pike s Peak championship nine times!



## RAJO Leads in Speed and Power!

On Labor Day, up Pike's Peak in 19 minutes 50  $\frac{4}{5}$  seconds, winning the world's 1922 hill climbing championship, competing with leading makes of cars-

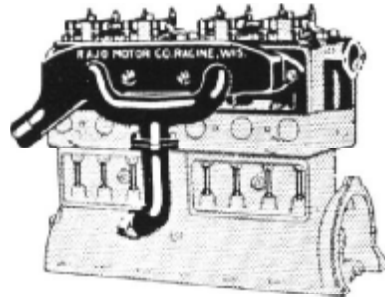
On Sept. 3rd, at San Luis Obispo, Cal., around the mile oval in 4- $\frac{1}{2}$  seconds flat, breaking all previous records for one mile on a dirt track-  
On Sept. 4th, at San Luis Obispo, 15 miles in 12 minutes flat; 20 miles in 15 minutes, 55 seconds; 25 miles in 20 minutes, 1 second-all world's records, as of that date-

On Sept. 8th, around the half-mile dirt track at Longmont, Colo., in 32 seconds flat, breaking the Colorado state record for the half-mile-

These are a few of the latest 1922 speed and power records made by Fords equipped with the RAJO Valve-in-Head -records made possible only by RAJO superior overhead valve design and absolutely accurate machining of combustion chambers.

**POWER, SPEED, ECONOMY**-they are all yours when you equip your Ford with a RAJO. Be a leader! Put your Ford in the champion class. Write for descriptive information and prices.

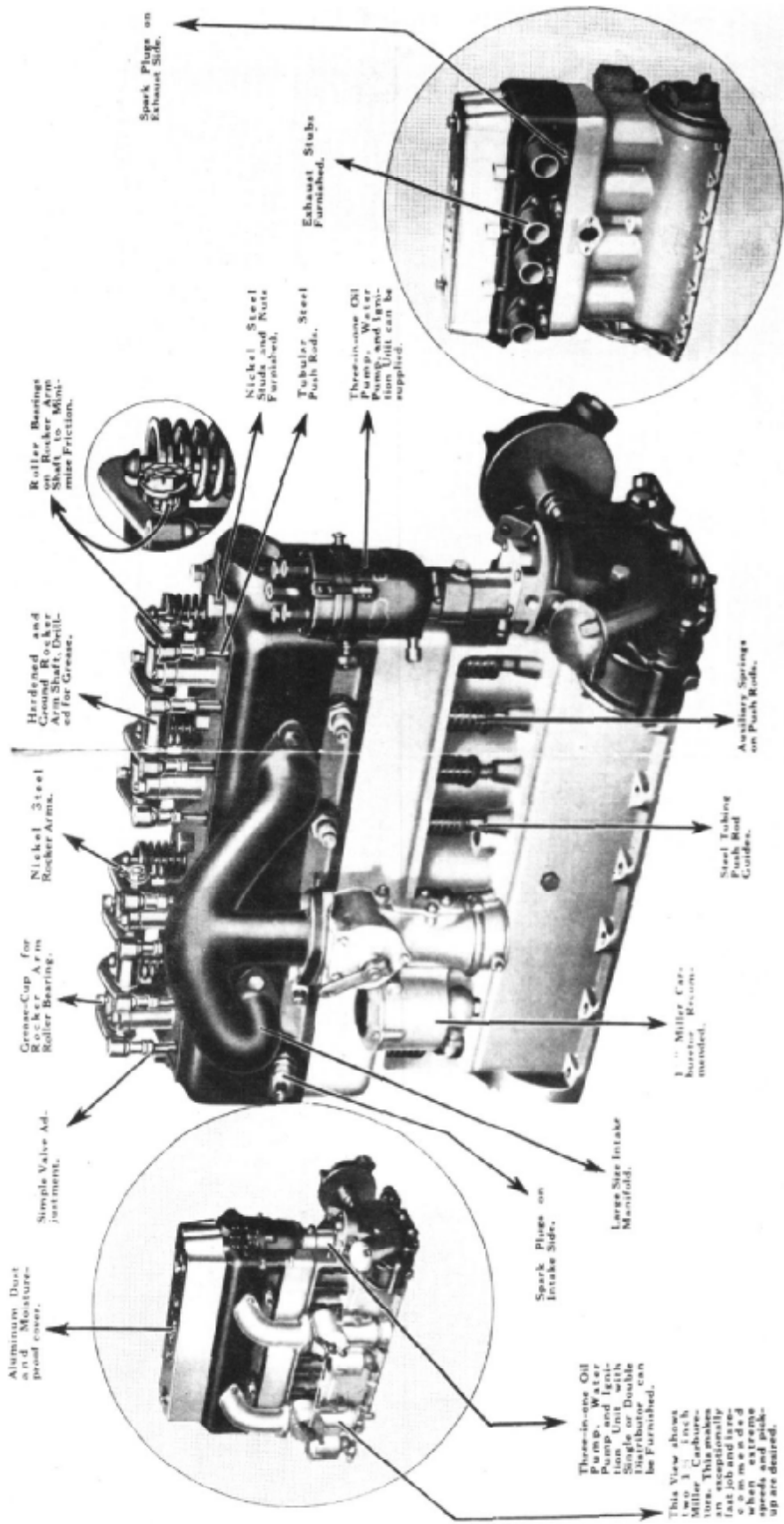
**RAJO MOTOR COMPANY**  
1355 Racine Street Racine, Wisconsin



The standard type RAJO Valve-in-Head for stock model Fords adds from 8 to 14 H. P. to the capacity of the Ford motor, makes possible speeds of more than 55 miles an hour with standard gear ratio, develops pick-up of from 5 to 40 miles in 14 seconds, and saves gas. The RAJO duplex "hot spot," double capacity Tungsten steel valves, direct firing, and better cooling make RAJO marvelous performance possible.



The RAJO ads. The RAJO Motor Company ran a series of ads in the "Ford Owner and Dealer" trade magazine proclaiming the RAJO Ford victories at Pike's Peak. In addition, RAJO distributed a colorful flyer featuring Bullock's sensational victory.



# These Features Make Rajo Supreme!

The Rajo Valve-in-Head is built to "stand the gaff." Only the finest materials and most careful workmanship enter into its construction. The tests of racing are too severe to take chances. Rajo supremacy is based on Rajo quality.

The head casting itself is of the best grade gray iron. The large 1 5/16" valves are made of Tungsten steel. The hardened and ground rocker arm shaft is drilled for oiling, the oil being fed by oil cups located on the bearings. The rocker arms are of nickel steel and are fitted with roller bearings. This eliminates friction to the last degree. The cylinder head studs are

nickel steel, the push rods and push rod guides are steel tubing. The head is drilled for the use of two sets of spark plugs—a set to each side. Auxiliary valve springs are furnished.

The Rajo Valve-in-Head for racing purposes is a quality job clear through. It leads the field of racing models just the same as its powerful mate, the "Model A." Rajo head leads the field for commercial use and ordinary driving. This racing model will develop speeds as high as 110 miles an hour. It will make any Ford the speediest car, per pound of weight and piston displacement, that it is possible to build.



"It s a Flivver! It s a Flivver! It s a Flivver!", shouted a small boy among the thousands of fans as Bullock roared by mile-post 14. Also at mile-post 14 that day was youthful Pike s Peak motorcycle patrolman, Louie Unser (Louie caught the fever himself and by 1953 had won the championship nine times!).

Noel Bullock, the kid from Nebraska, counted out by the wise guys before the race, stormed past the finish line, adjacent to the 'highest building in America, with a time of 19.50.8, the best of the day.

He was smiling as he climbed from his machine. He had driven his race and "Old Liz had performed beautifully. Noel had beaten the elite of the automotive world; he was king of the hill climbers, owner of 500 big, round simoleons - the prize for his victory and proud possessor, for a year at least, of the Penrose Trophy, a magnificent thirty-eight inch cup of Colorado gold and silver.

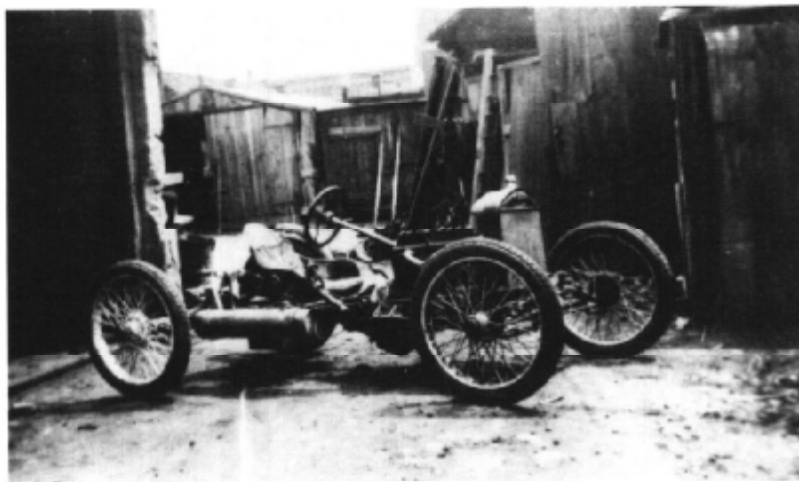
Bruce A. Gustin, writer for the *Denver Post*, asked Bullock his impressions of racing up the winding, hazardous highway:

"I wouldn t want to drive it after dark was Bullock s quick response.

#### THE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

##### The 1923 Pike s Peak Hill Climb

The staccato roar from the straight pipes of Bullock s RAJO echoed off the granite walls of Pike s Peak and was heard all the way back East where the large class factory entries were prepared. Bullock s unexpected victory in a stripped-down Model T Ford generated lots of publicity; some the promoters didn t want. The early Pike s Peak contests were class events attracting the elite of the automotive world; Packards, Hudsons, Wills Sainte Claires, Mercers, Pierce Arrows and so on. The World s Hill Climb Championship was co-sponsored by



Bullock s RAJO Special under construction in the alley behind the blacksmith shop in Madrid, Nebraska. The blacksmith shop was soon torn down and well-known pioneer Doctor Slocumb built his office on the site.

# MILE TRACK AUTO MILE TRACK RACES

OVER  
\$2200.00  
IN  
PURSES



OVER  
\$2200.00  
IN  
PURSES

Franklin, Neb., Speedway

ONE MILE EAST OF FRANKLIN

AUGUST 14, 15, 16, '24

Fast Track Fast Races

Rhley, Bullock, Reynolds, Higley, Jonas and other fast drivers will be here.

This meet is the first of the Southwestern Nebraska Auto Race Circuit—followed by Holdrege Aug. 21, 22 and 23, half mile track, purses \$2200.00; Lexington Aug. 27-29, half mile track, purses \$1500.00; and North Platte Sept. 1 and 4, half mile track, purses \$1500.00. Total Circuit Purses \$7,430.00.

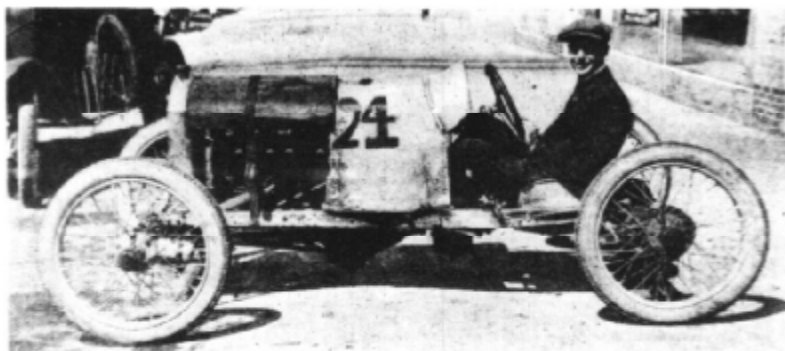
SENER PARK: FEATURING THE HOLDSBEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ALL PRICES ALL INSTRUMENTA. PLAYING A DANCE EACH EVENING OF THE RACES.

Prices First Day Includes Concessions at Blacksmith Shop. Fast Races Fast Races Qualification Races. Extra Charge for Concessions and Blacksmith Shop and Third Day. Tickets Fast Races Race Day Second and Third Days.

Gate Adm.: Adults .68, Tax .07, Total .75

CHILDREN 40c. RESERVED SEATS AT NADEN'S PHARMACY

Full page newspaper ad. The early dirt track races were gala affairs, spanning several days; in this case, three days.



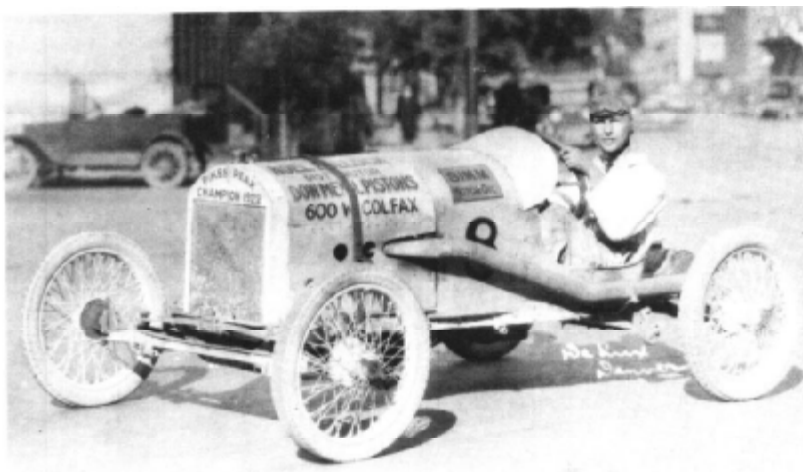
Bullock's Close-Coupled Racer

The evolution of Bullock's Model T racing machine. The upper photo is from about 1918, has a flat-head and the front end is not yet lowered.

The center photo shows the car, still a flat-head, but lowered and with the gas tank moved to the cowl.

The lower photo shows the car in September 1922 with the RAJO installed, after the hill climb.

Right - The latest photo of the car, about 1923. Where is Bullock's car today? It should be in California if it escaped the WWII scrap drives. Bullock moved to Los Angeles in 1924 and took the racer with him. It was last heard of in 1926 when Ted Horn drove it at Banning.



Pablo Beach, Florida, about January 1920. Noel Bullock on the beach with partner and instructor, Reed Davis, and "Old Trusty". Only twenty years old, the lanky Bullock was a strapping six feet, four inches tall.

millionaire sportsman and financier Spencer Penrose and the *Denver Post*, with sanction provided by the AAA.

Adding insult to injury was an article by J. B. Day in the *New York Evening World*, which was expanded to full page coverage and published in Sunday supplements all across the country, boldly headlined, "Nebraska 'Kid Mechanic 'Built Flivver out of Junk - Won Pike's Peak. Plus four-column national coverage in the October 7, 1922. issue of the prestigious *Literary Digest*, entitled, "The Junk Flivver that Won the Pike's Peak Climb. And covered again in the December 1922 issue of *Boys Life* magazine. Small wonder that there would be changes on the mountain next year.

With an almost uncanny sense of vision, B. J. Paulson, writing for the *Ford Owner and Dealer* magazine in October, 1922. said. "The 'Big Fellows would do their darndest to wrest the championship from Bullock as it would never do to permit the lowly Ford to continue to boast the hill-climbing speed and stamina not possessed by any other car.

The lightened, underslung, Model T Ford Speedster presented an unfair advantage to the more expensive, factory prepared machines competing at Pike's Peak. At least this was the decision of the Contest Board of the American Automobile Association following Bullock's great u-in in 1922. The 1923 rules announcing the establishment of a new minimum weight of 1600 pounds for the small car class were accompanied by this terse statement:

"The establishment in 1923 of a minimum weight limit in each of the three classes of cars entered

insures a better motor test and makes the hill climb more of a sporting proposition than it has ever been.

Noel was faced with a formidable task. In order to qualify he would need to increase the weight of his machine more than forty percent! Undaunted, he began preparations to defend his title. First, he continued to improve his car by making refinements to boost the RAJO's output. He then met the weight requirement by casting a 625 pound plate of babbitt which could be bolted under the driver's seat.

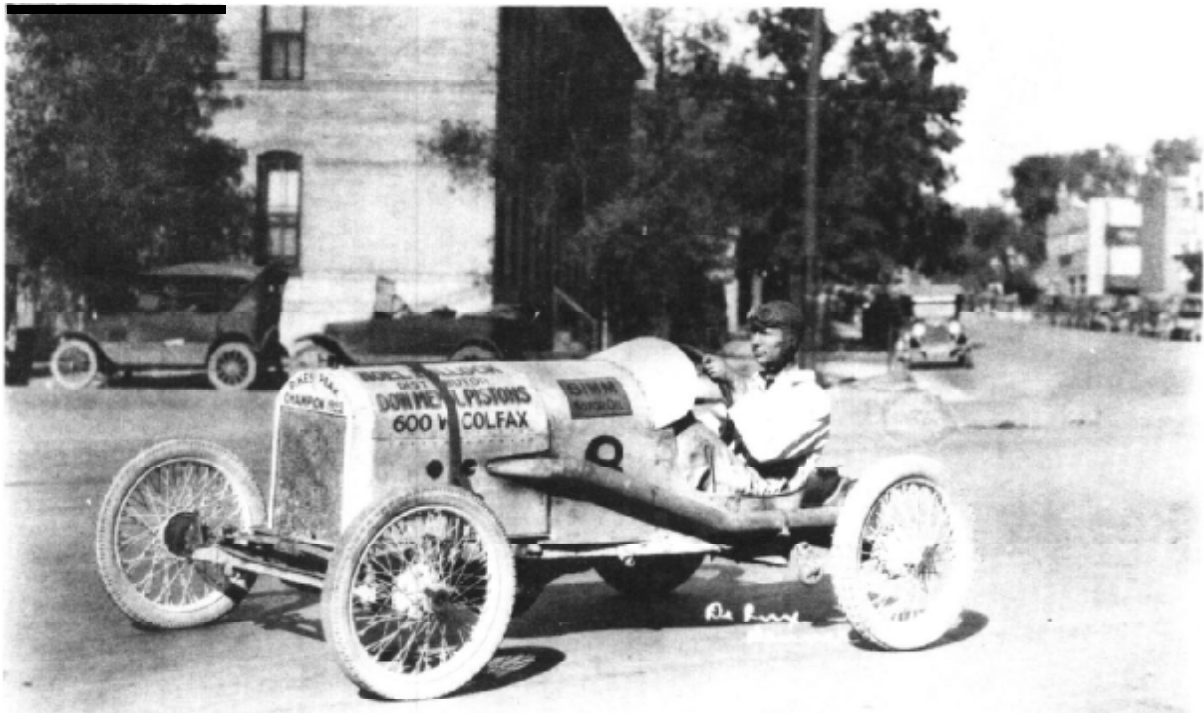
About one week before Labor Day 1923, Noel's wife, Bea, his mother, Mary Elizabeth, and nine-year-old brother Wayne came over from Madrid, Nebraska to visit friends in Brighton and Denver before continuing on to the Springs to see Noel race up Pike's Peak on Labor Day. But, it was not to be.

For the AAA now administered the Coup de Grace. On Sunday, August 26th, just nine days prior to the hill climb, AAA announced that the winners of the two previous hill climbs had been disqualified. Noel and fellow Nebraskan, King Rhiley, were both blacklisted for having participated in a nonsanctioned dirt track race held at Sturgis, South Dakota, in July 1923. The following excerpt is from the *Denver Post* announcement:

PIKE'S PEAK CLIMB CHAMPIONS ARE BARRED  
FROM DENVER POST CONTEST, BLACKLISTED  
BY AAA

Noel Bullock, 1922 Pike's Peak hill climb champion, and King Rhiley, the 1921 titleholder, have been barred

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Wes Sheffield's 1926 roadster with a reproduction Rex rumble seat installed.

ANOTHER LOOK AT ACCESSORY

## Model T Ford Rumble Seats

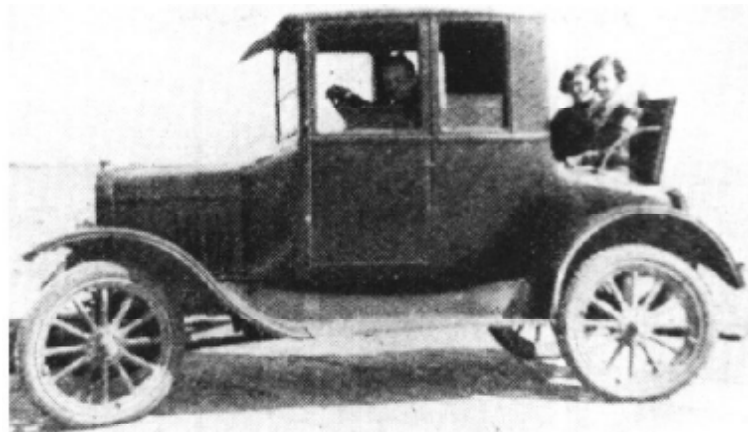
By FRED HOUSTON  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Henry Ford didn't make a rumble seat for the Model T, but several other enterprising "tin benders" did. In fact, Ford didn't produce a rumble seat until the 1928 Model A. Model T rumble seats ranged from the simple homemade jobs to some pretty sophisticated kits from the accessory manufacturers of the day.

Several readers responded to my May-June 1978 *Vintage Ford* article on Model T rumble seats and provided enough material for yet another pass at this subject. These members provided several new brands and their efforts are certainly appreciated. They have added considerably to our knowledge of Model T rumble seats.

The early Ford runabouts employed a concept similar to the rumble seat - known as the "mother-in-law seat." This single-width seat was perched alone high a-top the rear deck. The name "mother-in-law seat" no doubt communicates the feeling of the day toward this somewhat impractical concept. These seats soon gave way to the more common turtle deck which was used by Ford throughout the "T" years and beyond.





H. T. Holman s homemade rumble seat conversion

The embedded rear deck seat of the early Twenties was a vast improvement over the mother-in-law seat; offering more room and greater passenger protection. A national rage by the mid-Twenties, someone coined a "catchy name and today rear deck seating is fondly remembered as the "rumble seat.

The earliest mention of rear deck seating for the Model T Ford is found in the 1922 Federal accessory body ad; followed closely by the 1923 Morton and Brett, and Faultless speedster body ads. Note that this concept was not yet referred to as a "rumble seat. Apparently the immense popularity and use of the term did not blossom until around 1925.

Five different types of Model T rumble seats are presented here:

- Homemade,
- Accessory bodies with turtle deck seating,
- Replacement decks with built-in seating,
- Rumble seat kits for the 1926-27 coupe and roadsters,
- Modern reproduction rumble seat kits.

#### HOMEMADE RUMBLE SEATS

Apparently it was not an uncommon practice to "rig a rumble seat for the kids, particularly after the 1926 "Improved Ford with the larger turtle deck became available. The one original concept shown here is a rumble seat installation in an earlier coupe, taken from the October 1926 issue of the *Ford Dealer and Service* magazine. This conversion is described by H. T. Holman of Summerside, Prince Edward Island, Canada:

"The change was very easily made, as the back cover (with hinges and catch) was merely reversed and a quarter-circle of iron attached at each side to hold this cover firmly when tilted in the back-rest position. The

inside of the cover was upholstered and a removable seat was fitted in the body of the car. The cost of making the change was nominal.

#### ACCESSORY BODIES WITH TURTLE DECK SEATING

Five different brands of accessory Ford bodies with rumble seating are shown in this article:

- Federal Body - 1922,
- Faultless "Purdue Speedster - 1923,
- Morton and Brett Model 4 - 1923,
- Sport Factories of America, Chummy Sportster,
- RED-I-CUT Life-Size Patterns - 1926.

While the Red-I-Cut patterns are not a body, the

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