

1903

-first speed run on the beach is made by Ransom E. Olds (creator of Oldsmobile) at 50 mph in his creation “the Pirate”, beginning the tradition of using the measured mile

Alexander Winton, Horace Thomas (worked with Oldsmobile). Winton, in the Winton Bullet #1 (Ohio based company), won a one mile drag race down the beach over Horace “H.T.” Thomas’s “Pirate” automobile (Ransom E. Old’s

1904

William K Vanderbilt comes to the beach from NY and sets speed records in a 90-horsepower Mercedes.

Barney Oldfield beats Vanderbilt in a contest on the beach. The first and only head to head battle between two motorsports legends. One from NY high-society and a daredevil son of a farmer (Oldfield).

Although Vanderbilt’s european machine may have been more superior, Oldfield went flat out over the ripples that were known as “washboards” in the sands.

Winton had hired Oldfield to run his car. So Oldfield was Motorsports first hired professional driver.

An electric car competed known as “The Electric Kid” It was unsuccessful compared to the steam cars but was aerodynamic and futuristic looking. Looked way ahead of its time.

1905

Louis Ross in The Stanley Steamer, a steam powered automobile, wins over ER Thomas and William K Vanderbilt’s Mercedes.

42 cars entered over the seven day meet.

Fiat, Napier, Darracq, Mercedes and other European entries.

In one race, Walter Clifford-Earp drove an English Napier 63 of the 100 miles on a bare right rear wheel. He won.

This is the birth of a rivalry between gas powered engines and steam. Gasoline guys called them “freaks”

Feelings were so negative between gasoline and steamers that one competitor tried to set fire to a steam car by running his exhaust next to a steamers wooden frame. The driver was suspended from the event.

1907

Only four cars entered

Glenn Curtis goes 136.364 mph

1909

Indian Factory backed Motorcycle team sets new land speed records on the beach.

1920

Tommy Milton breaks into the 150mph barrier in “The Duesenberg Special”

1922

Sig Haugdahl (remember that name) goes 180 (three miles a minute) in the Miller 8 Special.

1927

Henry Segrave petitioned the FIA to have the AAA be the official governing body of events at Daytona beach. This was huge and put Daytona on the map internationally.

Segrave was the first driver in America to wear a safety helmet.

-March 29th Henry Seagrave sets landspeed world record of 203.79 mph in his Sunbeam 1000 hp “Mystery”

1928

-during a land speed trial, Frank Lockhart, winner of the 1926 Indy 500, crashed into the ocean. He spun after hitting a rut and flipped end over end into the ocean. Gil Farrell, a barrel racer saved him from drowning in the car by climbing onto the headrest and keeping the waves from getting to him. Farrell covered his mouth and kept him from breathing when the waves crashed down. When the tide retreated others were able to free Lockhart’s legs. Lockhart would perish in another land speed attempt later the same year. Ironically, Farrell would drown years later in a creek in Daytona.

1935

-Bill France moves to area to escape Great Depression and set up garage in Ormond Beach.

-March 7th Sir Malcolm Campbell accomplishes a speed of 276.820 mph in the Bluebird. **This would be the last attempt on the World land speed record to be held at Daytona Beach**, due to increasing speeds and ever changing conditions. Fatalities in the speed runs were rising, and the decision was made to shift to the hard surface of the Bonneville Salt Flats

1936

-With no speed runs scheduled for the year, Daytona Beach dreamt up another speed event to keep automobile/speed focus on Daytona.

-City asks Sig Haugdahl to promote an auto race along the 3.2 mile course, crediting Haugdahl with creating the track layout. AAA Stock Car Race won by Milt Marion

-Original course proposed by Haugdahl would be 4 miles down beach, and then 4 miles back up highway incorporating many hairpin turns. Kaye Don, who participated in the 1930 World Record Trials in his "Silver Bullet" suggested a shorter course. He said a shorter course would "magnify the hazards of competition, thereby stimulating more interest for the spectators." Also suggested that cars conform to manufacturers speed rating to provide more even competition.

-Another suggestion was to make the field strictly stock automobiles.

-Work began in January to connect the north end of the course to the blacktop highway, using road graders.

-Eventually Haugdahl and city official Millard Conklin agreed on the 3.2 mile course, making their decision based on the most ideal southern connection from the highway back to the beach.

-Haugdahl reached out to AAA for sanctioning to attract top drivers, and the event was announced on January 25th. AAA reportedly drug their feet on the official rule set, so Haugdahl had to travel to Washington DC to confront the Contest Board.

Rules:

-Class A cars could not exceed \$665

-Class B cars were from \$666-900

-Class C \$901-1,300

-Class D was \$1,301 and up

-Qualifications determined handicaps given to each car, with slower cars getting a head start of the fastest cars.

-Cars that covered the course 3 MPH faster during the race than they did during qualifications would be disqualified from race

-Cars had to be strictly stock, from 1935/36, could only carry one spare tire, must remove bumpers, keep windshields and had to be US made

-was billed as first “stock car” race since 1934.

-the city had to hire a automotive technical engineer to fly in from Michigan to make sure cars were strictly stock

-1935 AAA dirt track champion George MacKenzie, 1934 Indianapolis 500 winner “Wild” Bill Cummings, Bill Schindler, Jack Rutherford, Bob Sall, Milt Marion, Goldie Gardner and Bill France all enter

-Many locals began speaking out against track and its dangers ahead of race, it received by publicity

-CM Jenkins was first official qualifier of 27-car field

-track turns became very rutty and a lot of cars got stuck in the sand

-Wild Bill Cummings sets fast time, only car to break 70 mph

-Bob Sall flips three times and crashes into ocean, knocked unconscious, he returns to make time and enter the race

-ahead of race, city officials confiscated the prize money and tickets. Haugdahl rallied a group of reporters and went and confronted the city. The city finally released the money and tickets, but this led to several spectators getting in for free. At least 20,000 fans attended the race

-Sam Collier was first to get the green flag, cars were staggered in starting to avoid pile up in first turn. Cummings was the last car to start, almost 30 minutes and 40 seconds after Collier. Only race in history that took a half-hour to start the whole field

-Race immediately had scoring problems, as slower cars got several lap lead start on fastest cars. No one knew who was leading.

- Every car got stuck at least once in the ruts in the sand and had to be towed out by a wrecker.
- Goldie Gardner retired in disgust after 45 laps, calling it an “obstacle race”.
- race was called short because the north turn became so cluttered with disabled cars that you couldn’t pass through.
- Tommy Elmore thought he was the winner, but officials declared Milt Marion the winner. There were major discrepancies with the results. Elmore had passed Marion several times while Marion was stuck in the sand. Elmore filed an official protest, but AAA and city officials declared none would be accepted
- Only 10 cars finished the race
- The city lost \$22k and wanted no part of any future stock car races**

1937

- after 36 debacle, city ruled out another stock car race, but made suggestion to bring in motorcycles instead and strike up a deal with the Southeastern Motorcycle Association
- the SMA promotes a race at Daytona on January 24th 1937. Inaugural Daytona 200 Motorcycle Race.
- ED KRETZ wins inaugural Daytona 200 on an Indian Motorcycle.
- Promoters bring in truckloads of “marl”, a tacky substance turned rock hard when packed to redo the north and south turns
- 20,000 fans watch Ed Kretz win on an Indian, and the race is a financial success
- Sig Haugdahl and Bill France** join forces and approach the Daytona Elks Club about giving stock car racing one more try. Elks group agreed but wouldn’t spend much money, with a total purse of \$100 being offered.
- They agreed to hold a Labor Day three-race bill, with motorcycles, stock cars and “race cars” (modifieds), which ended up attracting mainly local drivers
- Smokey Purser won the stock car race, winning \$43.56.

1938

- In January of 38, the city was in full support of keeping some sort of racing on tap

“Without racing, Daytona Beach would be like a prize fighter with a wooden leg or a pitcher with a wooden head,” Ray Eberling, city recreational officer.

-since the track held up during the 37 stock races, they were open to having more 4-wheeled racing and reached out to Ralph Hankinson about promoting. He then asked for a \$20k purse and they shut down discussions.

-after a number of local figures tried and failed to get a deal together to promote a race, Bill France stepped up and formed the Daytona Beach Racing Association with money backing from local restaurateur Charlie Reese. France convinced the city to put a team of 20 highway workers on the task of getting the track in order for a July race.

-after rain washed out the July 4th race, France checked the “tide table” and the next ideal low tide was July 10th.

-France was able to secure some high-profile lap sponsors, such as Hav-A-Tampa cigars and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer

July 10th Danny Murphy beats Bill France, Mike Cone and Harold Brasington, Lloyd Moody. race only made \$200. The night before the race, someone stole Smokey Purser’s car and returned it the following morning. Purser was out to a big lead when his car broke down on the third lap. He claimed someone cut his fan belt in an act of sabotage. At one point a thunderstorm rolled in, but since the tide was coming the officials elected to keep the racing going in the rain.

-due to the success (a \$200 profit mind you) of the July race, France and Reese got to work on a Labor Day race. A scoreboard and grandstands were added to the North turn, along with a primitive PA system.

-France was able to secure some high-profile lap sponsors, such as Hav-A-Tampa cigars and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer

September 5th, Bill France over Lloyd Moody, Woodrow Ridings, Joe Littlejohn and Al Wheatly. This race turns profit of \$2k. Smokey Purser dominated the race, and once the checkered fell he raced off the course and disappeared, before a post-race inspection could be conducted. Reese and France, who finished 2nd had a meeting, and decided that if they disqualified Purser it would look suspicious, as it would declare promoter France the winner. They put the decision up to a vote with the rest of the drivers, and they voted to disqualify. The promoters awarded the first place prize to Lloyd Moody who finished 3rd, and gave France 2nd place money. Hours later, Purser showed up at the post-inspection site claiming he was on time, even though he clearly took modifications off his car to get it to pass inspection. Purser became the first driver to be disqualified

from a racing event under the emerging NASCAR rules. Purser would advertise for months that he was the winner, and for years it was regarded that he was the true winner.

1939

-The first race of the year had a real “national championship” feel as entrants from 14 states came. Reese announced that engine compression ratio could be increased in light of Purser’s disqualification in 38, and because of the reinstallation of qualifications. Reese wanted to set a new track record.

-Smokey Purser told everyone he had installed a Miller motor in his Ford, which led to a widespread uproar. He actually hadn’t, just wanted to get into the mind of his competitors.

-March 2nd Sam Rice in a Mercury over Bill France, Joe Littlejohn, Stewart Joyce and Smokey Purser. Rice won after Mad Marion McDonald, who would drive through the turns often up on two wheels, capsized in the north turn. Rice wore a full-brimmed hat instead of a crash helmet.

-July 4th race draws a record crowd of 10k. Smokey Purser advertises that hes bringing a mystery car, the Mockingbird. Pole sitter Jimmy Gibson was stuck in traffic of the crowd and missed the race. Stewart Joyce was leading until he crashed into a sand dune in the south turn and flipped. Bill France assumed the lead. Joyce with the help of some spectators righted his car and he continued on, chasing France back down and retaking the lead. Joyce would take the win over Purser. Purser’s “mystery car” just ended up being his family’s car with the hubcaps removed and headlights taped. He loaded his family in the car after the race and drove home.

-the success of out-of-town rookies in the first two events led to France thinking that cars should lean more toward the showroom models, which caused a return to the “strictly-stock” model for the Labor Day event.

Sept 4 Smokey Purser over Bill France, Stewart Joyce, Joe Littlejohn, Jimmy Gibson. Bill France had set a new record and was leading when his car overheated with six laps to go. France returned and caught Purser, leading to the closest race to date. The strictly-stock race was the crowd pleaser of the year, and all three events were financial successes.

1940

-Smokey Purser comes on board as additional partner with Reese and France, lending extra promotional duties

-19 year old Roy Hall from GA amongst first to enter the winter race. He was known for having little to no regard for safety or rules. Was entered in Andy Beardon's Atlanta based car, and had mechanic Red Vogt with him, considered to be the best stock car mechanic in the business. Vogt had gained experience from working on moonshiner's cars.

-Bob Flock also entered, and made sure to call out Smokey Purser on his entry form, claiming he could beat him in any distance race.

-local papers publicized feud between France and Hall, as they had competed against each other in late 39 season, with Hall winning both times. Hall had won big races at Lakewood and Salisbury NC, with papers claiming him to be the National Stock Car Champion of 39. Hall was well known whiskey runner, and had finally been caught at the end of 39. He was out on several federal bonds, and his license was suspended.

-March 10 Roy Hall wins over Joe Littlejohn, Cannonball Baker, Bill France and Smokey Purser.

- Hall had beaten Bill France in his own back yard with his own brand of swagger. After the race cockily said "I could run 160 more"

- Hall in the North Turn went into the turn so hard and cut the wheel looking as if he'd flip into the stands and right into Daytona Mayor Ucal Cunningham. But it dug in and he throttled throwing a rooster tail of sand on the mayor and the crowd.

- Larry Grant flipped in the North Turn in front of the mayor. He was unconscious. After being pulled from the wrecked car he woke up on the way to the ambulance. He said "Fraid Not" returned to the car getting some National Guardsman to help flip his car back over so he could get in and rejoin the race.

- Red Vogt devised a way to gain time using pneumatic drills and air equipment in a pit stop to make the stop faster. Typically stops were around 2-min. Vogt had their stops (including Hall) down to around 40-seconds.

-George Ruse and Lloyd Moody entered pick-up trucks in the July race, and engaged in a grudge match during pre-race ceremonies.

July 7 Bill France over Joe Littlejohn, Smoky Purser, Bill Snowden and Norman Wrigley.

- Hall missed the July 7 race because he was serving a short jail sentence on prohibition charges. Lloyd Seay wasn't there either. France won without Raymond Parks cars there.

- France had won races at Salisbury NC and Spartanburg SC leading up to the beach race.

- France led the entire race, which had 39 entries

- France intentionally let off the gas, as he thought they would be upset about the promoter running off with the victory

- After France won, several spectators began crossing the course, and Ruse in his pick-up truck had to swerve to miss an elderly woman, who had fallen on the course. Ruse got stuck and was unable to finish in a paying position

-After winning the summer beach race, France went on the road representing southern "outlaw" racers. They were deemed outlaws by AAA's Ralph Hankinson, who after a foiled attempt of taking over the beach races in 39 barred any Daytona-entrants from running AAA-sanctioned races in the North. France would occupy Roy Hall's ride, the Andy Beardon car with Vogt on the wrenches, while Hall served his prison sentence. France would win a big race at Ft Wayne Speedway, and then Hankinson allowed him to enter a big stock finale at Langhorne. France was leading with a few to go when his car slowed, allowing Henry Banks to win. France would return to Daytona a hero.

-for the Labor Day beach race, France limited entries to cars with a pricetag less than \$1,100, eliminating the big production cars with bigger engines. Cars were limited to engines with less than 120 HP.

-it would also be a pivotal moment for France as a promoter as he was going head to head with a big race at Lakewood. Bob Flock decided to leave Atlanta and race at the beach.

-in an effort to build up anticipation for the Labor Day race, France staged a woman's only race, won by Evelyn Reed. Bill's wife Anne was also entered, as well as Betty Vogt and Bob Flock's sister Ethel Mobley. Race garnered more interest than the regular stock race planned.

Sept 2 Buck Mathis over Smokey Purser, Joe Littlejohn, Cannonball Baker and Bill Snowden. France finishes 6th. Bob Flock 9th. Purser had missed qualifications and started last, putting on a great show racing through the field. Afterwards Littlejohn filed a protest of the first two finishers. None of the top three cars were strictly stock, and to avoid the bad publicity France let it slide.

-France was awarded the then unofficial title of National Stock Car Champion. This is also considered to be the year he became a grade-A promoter.

1941

(FRANCE PACKED THE SCHEDULE WITH AS MANY RACES AT THE BEACH AS HE COULD AS TO GET MOMENTUM OVER TO HIS EVENTS AND EFFORTS TO MAKE DAYTONA BEACH THE STOCK CAR CAPITAL.

-Hall returned to Daytona, freshly out of GA State Pen. Andy Beardon sold the car operation to Raymond Parks, who retained Vogt's mechanical position and brought on drivers Hall and Bill France

-The Parks team also recruited Roy Hall's 18 year old cousin Lloyd Seay, who had made a name for himself the year before with big wins at Allentown, High Point, Greensboro and Deland FL. He was also considered the 1938 National Stock Car Champion

-Drivers agree to give portions of their winnings to help the Ally war effort

March 2 Roy Hall over Smokey Purser, Tommy Elmore, Stewart Joyce and Clint McMillan. During qualifying Bill Snowden slammed into a passenger car, driven by a lost motorist. Sam Nunis served as a track emcee, and pleaded with the crowd of 10k plus to move back from the race surface.

- Alvin Hawkins finishes 9th.

- Joe Littlejohn skidded over the North turn lip and flipped into crowd. Two people were rushed to the hospital. One spectator lost teeth. This led to the first ever yellow flag being displayed. After helping the injured spectators Littlejohn returned to the race.

- Lots of Mayhem in this race. Massey Atkins car flipped into stands at north turn. Nobody hurt except for a woman who fainted. Atkins again flipped & ejected on paved straight. His body landed on sand dune. Atkins walked to the pits. Some cars nearly hit announcers tower.

- Massey Atkin's brother Elbert swung wide in the south turn, and his car's fender caught a spectators pants and ripped them off of him.

- Nunis said he grew enough gray hairs during race to stuff a mattress, and started running every time the cars came by after they hit the announcer's stand earlier.

- Lloyd Seay was witnessed multiple times Two wheelin by cars in north turn. He flipped twice in this race but still finished 7th.

- Hall said to have "little respect for life and limb", "when it's my time, I'll go, until then, I have nothing to lose."

-the mishaps in the race led to improvements for spectator safety for the next race. the front row box seats would be moved back and a catch fence was installed.

March 30 Frank Lockhart Memorial 160 won by Smokey Purser over Roy Hall, Littlejohn, Skim Hersey and Robby Robertson. An interesting entrant in the race was Joe Engel, who was the president of the Chattanooga Lookouts minor league baseball team. He entered a "mystery car", and asked for an early test session since he had never driven before. Reese and France allowed it, and Engel shattered the track record by more than 10 mph, by going 92 mph. He later crashed in another practice session, taking him out of

contention. Race had a record turnout of 12k fans. “Crazy” Cy Clark pulled a primitive slide job on Ed Eng, causing Eng to lose control and smash through one of the new fences, crashing into Mayor Ucal Cunningham’s box seat.

July 27 Bernard Long wins in a Mercury. Bill Snowden, Littlejohn, Lloyd Seay and Lloyd Moody round out top five. Seay flipped twice during race and finished fourth! At one point Seay rolled over in the North turn, the car landed on its wheels and he drove off.

- France was eager to win. Announces that Only top 33 (inspired by Indy) make field. France then Failed to qualify. So did Smokey Purser. TWO BIG STARS. Idea didn’t work out as planned. France let himself & Purser in field. Would be first provisional start in stock car racing.

- Roy Hall wrecked Fonty Flock on the first lap. He went flying over the bank in the South turn. Flock suffered a Broken pelvis. Bruised kidneys, lungs, back. It was so bad they couldn’t X-ray him for days. Flock’s seat belts actually broke and he was launched from the car.

- Purser made a charge from 33rd to 3rd in just three laps.

- Last Daytona start for local Cannonball Baker, who would be severely injured at Lakewood in Nov

- Crazy Cy Clark finishes 10th

August 24 for the first time ever there would be a fourth race in a year, and France lifted all horsepower limits. After nearly a dozen attempts Lloyd Seay wins his first on the beach (North Georgia moonshiner).

- Littlejohn, Harley Taylor, Bill Snowden and Elbert Atkins top-five. Alvin Hawkins and his buddy Bill France finish 6th and 7th.

- France grumpy that GA boys had upper-hand all of 41 at his track.

- Would be Seay's last race at Daytona, and he would go on to win two more major stock races at High Point and Lakewood, before being shot to death by his cousin Woodrow Anderson over sugar content in the family owned moonshine enterprise. He was 21.

LAST RACE AT BEACH BEFORE THE WAR. France was in process of planning 1942 events, with the first to be run on March 2nd, when Japan invaded Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. All racing was postponed indefinitely on December 31st, due to restrictions placed upon the use of tires and fuel.

France and Reese issued the statement: "The stock car races call for the use of fuel, rubber and many motor parts and mechanical workers all needed to win this war."

Charlie Reese died in 1945, having all promotional duties fall onto France's shoulders.

Newly opened Seminole Speedway captured spotlight in December of 1945, when a match race between France and Roy Hall was held on the mile-dirt oval. Hall was victorious.

In another highly publicized race, with entries from France, Hall, the Flocks and others, Red Byron (who had just spent 27 months in Army hospitals after being shot down over Kikta in WWII) shocked the racing world and won his first race back. His leg had been badly damaged and needed help in and out of his car. "This racing game is still fun."

1946

the beach had fallen into disrepair during the war, and France had to delay his planned March 17th opener to April 14th. The grandstands in the turns had completely rotted away.

-France went to visit Ringling Brothers, which was resting for the winter in Sarasota, and struck up a deal to rent some portable bleachers.

-Red Byron wins the first race back on the beach after Roy Hall cuts a tire and wrecks.

-Hall arrives in Daytona a few days ahead of the next race at 4:00 AM, and is immediately picked up by Daytona Beach Police for reckless driving down Main Street. After getting ticketed for reckless driving, he asked if he could be taken to jail because "The hotel rates are too high in this city"

-Once in his cell he said "What no sheets? I've driven non-stop from Virginia and I need a good day's rest." He got out of jail in time to qualify for the race, where he set a new record of 98.5 mph.

June 30th Roy Hall wins (National Championship Stock Car Circuit), leading the entire race and breaking the race speed average by 10 mph, set by Seay in 1941. This race would also be France's last attempt at racing, when he finished out of the money once again. He had competed in all 16 beach events at this point, winning twice along with 6 more top 5s.

-after this race, France planned to have the usual Labor Day race but local merchants complained about the disruption of the beach races. The Oceanfront Cottage Association tried to get the track declared no longer available for racing.

-France had started the National Championship Stock Car Circuit and taken his show on the road to replace the beach event, pulling in huge crowds at Greenville SC, Salisbury NC, Allentown PA, Greensboro NC, Thompson CT.

-Hall would once again be incarcerated and replaced by Bob Flock.

1947

Opening race in 47 had Universal and Paramount films there filming the races.

-France proclaimed the opening race at the beach would be the biggest to date. The January 26th race was called the "Battle of Champions".

-Red Byron would go on to win the January 26th race. Bob Flock lost a wheel and it flew into the crowd, injuring two spectators.

-France immediately announced a shorter race on March 9th, so drivers could run all out the entire time. Bob Flock dominated the race, leading the duration and finishing 4 miles ahead of Hugh Lanford.

-NCSCC returns to the beach on August 17th. Fonty Flock returns to the beach for the first time since his critical injuries in 1941. Bob Flock was unable to qualify and had to start at the back of the field. Flock sliced through the field and in one lap when from last to first. He would go on to lead the rest of the race and win. This race was Fireball Roberts' debut at the beach.

-December 14th Bill France calls meeting at the Ebony Bar at the Streamline Hotel that leads to eventual formation of NASCAR. 35 men attended, car owners, drivers, promoters

and moonshiners. The meeting was focused on building up stock car racing to the level of big car racing, establishing a national championship and point fund.

-they also voted on a name, with the majority going with National Stock Car Racing Association. Red Vogt suggested National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing. Another group in GA was using the NSCRA tag, so the group used NASCAR. Local attorney Louis Ossinsky was put in charge of incorporating NASCAR, and paperwork wasn't passed until February 12th 1948.

1948

-France relented to pressure from the Oceanfront Cottage Association and moved racing to Ponce Inlet. AMA had also pressured France to move after they deemed the old course unsafe after a 1947 fatality in the south turn. The high tides had washed out a lot of the original course, and development of the property had snuck into the middle of the course, with owners asking France to move to a less populated area.

-a new 2.2 mile course was designed for stock cars, with a 4 mile layout for motorcycles

-a record number of entries poured into the new NASCAR headquarters, 62 entries from 12 states

Feb 15 Reb Byron Modified in a Raymond Parks car. 1939 Ford famed 22. Rayson Memorial race.

- FIRST EVER NASCAR RACE - 50 cars start
- a record audience of 14k attended
- to avoid a massive pile up, officials staggered the starts of each row
- Marshall Teague became the first person to lead a NASCAR lap
- Gober Sosebee likely the first person to drive a "late model" (strictly stock 47 Buick) in a NASCAR sanctioned event "Bill was hopin' some of us would drive strictly stocks in the race, he was talkin' all along about runnin' tem cars, so I did him a favor, but them modifieds are much faster."

- Bob Flock, in a Raymond Parks' owned #14 drops out mechanical woes. Park's third car had entered the race (spare car) with a driver named J.E. Fricks. Fricks' car pulled in next to Flock. Raymond Parks was JE Fricks. Parks motioned to Flock to get in the car. Flock hopped in and continued to race.

- 16 to go RedByron passed Marshall Teague in dramatic fashion on outside three wide around lapped Micky Rhodes to take the lead. .

- Flock/fricks fin 3rd. Bloodied by wear of back brace he wore from injuries..

- Red Byron's win marked RAYMOND PARKS 7th Daytona win in a row!!!!

- If you won the Rayson Memorial race three times, they gave you the trophy to take home. In a kind and respectful gesture, Red gave trophy to Raymond.

-Feb 21st NASCAR is officially formed

-NASCAR returns August 8th. A tragic accident in July where Byron had a tire blow and flew into the crowd, killing a young boy (Columbus Georgia), led to France building up crowd protection for the race.

Aug 8 Fonty Flock wins after Red Byron had a rock go through his oil pan with four laps to go.

1949

-the turns in both 1948 races became so treacherous that France decided to only concentrate on the 4.3 mile configuration originally just intended for motorcycles. 87 cars entered the January race.

Jan 16 Marshall Teague wins a race that saw 75-cars start, in his first start back after being injured at North Wilkesboro the previous year.

-France had a growing problem with crowd control, as spectators began crossing track during race again like they did prewar. They also snuck in under the guise of being fishermen, and were sneaking in across the field of palmettos on the backstretch. France hung up “beware of rattlesnake” signs to deter this.

-due to a shortage of new cars (late models) after the war, and an influx of prewar cars (which were becoming modifieds), all races thus far had been modified races. but due to the success of stock car racing, France wanted to attempt another strictly stock late model tour.

-he began experimenting, holding a strictly stock race at Broward in January. to set himself apart from competing sanctioning bodies, he surprised everyone and held a strictly stock race at Charlotte on June 19th, which was the first NASCAR Strictly Stock race, which leads to the eventual Grand National series. (Jim Roper wins)

-The course is again shortened to 4.15 miles.

July Race Second race for NASCAR Strictly Stock Series (July). Only 5,000 people showed up, lowest attendance in memory

- Red Byron wins and went on to become NASCAR’s first champion. After years of Ford Domination on the sands,

- It was the first ever win for GM General Motors. In fact, the top-four finishers were all Oldsmobiles.

- Women in race: Ethel Mobley 11th am radio, Sara Christian 8th, Louis smith flipped. Last.

- Tim Flock finished second.

- local papers said race was uneventful compared to modified races, the lowest attended Strictly Stock race of the year

1950

- France coins the term “Speed Weeks” for early year festivities in Daytona
- He also renames the Strictly Stock series to Grand National, indicating “superior qualities”, as he felt “strictly stock” was more of a guideline for rules and “grand national” would appeal to the general public
- track measurement once again changed from 4.15 to 4.17 miles
- during the off season France struck up an alignment deal with Ed Otto, which garnered hundreds of new members from new areas.
- debut of Bob Fish’s famous modifieds (M-1, M-5 etc) at the beach. Fish was the inventor of an innovative carburetor and hailed from
- time trials were changed, as racing the course for each entrant was time consuming. instead all qualifying was done through the measured mile on the front stretch.
- 46 cars start the modified race on February 4th, and 17-cars pile up in the first turn, causing a 35 minute red flag period. on the restart, another six car pile up in the south turn leads to another red flag. Gober Sosebee wins over Fireball Roberts.
- Harold Kite wins the Grand National race in a 1949 Lincoln over Red Byron, when Byron has mechanical problems.
- this race received far more favorable reviews than the previous year, and led to the “win on Sunday, sell on Monday” mentality of the Grand National strictly stock program.

1951

- the newly 1950 formed “NASCAR Sportsman” division was invited to Daytona for Speedweeks this year. This division started out as being a “novice class” of racing, which intended to be inexpensive for competitors, who raced for little to no purse money. The division was developed by Alvin Hawkins, promoter of Bowman Gray (Co-promoted Bowman Gray with Bill France), who held the initial meeting at his track “This is incredible, look at all those cars out there, there is no prize money to speak of, so these guys sure must be ‘Sportsmen’”.
- in an effort to spice up Speedweeks, France brought back the speed trials on the beach, with a goal of an over 200 mph run. Headlining the efforts would be Don Bailey in the Xydias-Batchelor So-Cal Special, who had set a record at Bonneville Salt Flats last year. On his qualifying lap Bailey hit a dip in the sand and became airborne, flipping for 1000 feet and would be taken to the hospital in critical condition.

-France replaced the modifieds with the sportsman division as it would attract more entries and the cars wouldn't go quite as fast. the main difference in the class was that Sportsman banned the use of dual carburetors and racing heads, but modified drivers could put a less sophisticated engine in their car and still run, so most drivers did.

-91 drivers would start the inaugural Sportsman beach race on February 10th, with each row of 6 being started in 5-second intervals to avoid a first lap pile-up. Gober Sosebee goes on to win over Frankie Schneider.

-Indy star Bill Holland enters the race. France struck up a deal with the Nash Motor Co to give him a factory car. Nash had also recruited Curtis Turner, Johnny Mantz and Bill Rexford. This would be the first example of "factory backed cars". However this "factory" deal was very minimal, basically just providing new cars to drivers.

Feb 11 - Marshall Teague wins in the Fabulous Hudson Hornet over Tim Flock. Flock was in control of the race when he pitted for gas. His crew, who had drained a bottle of whiskey during the first portion of the race, began celebrating instead of servicing the car, thinking they had won. By the time they realized the situation, Teague had passed and was able to secure the victory.

-After the race, France and other officials were perplexed as to how the Hudson could outrun the other cars, when they realized they had no actual information on the Hudsons and if they were actually legal for the race. The following Monday, France called Hudson to seek information on their cars and was connected to Tom Rhoades in their Public Relations department. Rhoades admitted he had never heard of Teague or stock car racing, but was pleased to hear they had won the race. Teague was invited to Hudson headquarters, where he impressed the board of directors and was offered the first full-blown factory deal in stock car racing, which included new cars, a monthly salary and inside line on parts and equipment. Teague also had input on parts built for the production vehicles, which gave them a tremendous advantage in NASCAR Grand National competition.

THIS was the beginning of the Dominant era of the Hudson in NASCAR. (Herb Thomas, teamed with Smokey Yunick, and Teague finished season one-two in points driving Hudson Hornets. Hudsons would win the NASCAR Title four years in a row. In all Hudson's took 80 wins during their big four year run. Including 27 of 34 in 1952.

1952

-France received such a large interest in booking Grand National races, that he decided to start the Short Track Grand National tour for tracks ½ mile or less, coining the term "short tracks".

-France also debuted the short lived NASCAR attempt at open wheel promotions, the Speedway Division. In an effort to capitalize on AAA drivers who were upset with the rising costs of competition engines, he offered Indy-type cars with passenger car engines. The new cars debuted at Daytona Speedweeks, with \$1000 being offered to the fastest driver on the measured mile. Buck Baker would easily take home the paycheck.

-a record number of entries were submitted, as the modified and sportsman races were combined. the minimum age for competition was also lowered to 18.

-a crash in a January GN race at West Palm Beach led to roll-bars being mandated for all entries. Tim Flock's car did not have roll-bars during inspection, and France instructed some of the track workers to construct some for him out of wood, as he wanted him to run.

-beach debuts for Ralph Earnhardt, Joe Weatherly and Ray Hendrick.

-Roy Hall returns for the first time since 1946, who had been seriously injured at a wreck at High Point in 1949, and sets fast time for the mod-sportsman race

-118 cars took the green flag in the mod-sportsman race

-driver Al Stevens installed a two-way radio in his car, which marked the first time a driver spoke with his crew during a race via radio. He also staged spotters sitting in passenger cars in both turns.

-Jack Smith was originally awarded the win, but Tim Flock reminded officials that he never pitted, and the win was overturned. However, Smith protested Flock's wooden roll-bars, and Flock was disqualified completely. Smith was recognized as the final winner.

-first year that car manufacturers took a real interest in the Grand National race, with representatives from Hudson, Nash and Chrysler all present.

-Teague had to pay a fine for competing in the Pan-American Mexican road race, which NASCAR deemed off limits.

-race was delayed by huge attendance, which caused traffic jams and spilled onto the beach. over 20k attended. the race was cut short due to the incoming tide

-61 cars start the GN race. Marshall Teague easily wins, making it two in a row (1952 Hudson). He ran out of gas on his victory lap and had to be pushed back. Smokey Purser returned and flipped, breaking his arm.

-after Daytona, Teague would have success in a couple more GN races, before leaving for AAA with his eyes set on Indianapolis. He also said NASCAR stripping his points due to the Pan-American participation played into his decision.

1953

-France makes Daytona modified-sportsman race open to every NASCAR license holder, and pushes cut-off on car models to 1934.

Bob Pronger surprises most by coming out of Chicagoland and breaking several speed records on the beach in an Oldsmobile. Pronger was relatively unknown on the NASCAR scene, and was rumored to have underworld ties. The car used a “severe usage kit” which Hudson had developed a couple years prior.

-136 cars start the modified-sportsman race, with 86 failing to finish. This would be the biggest field in NASCAR history. Cotton Owens would win.

-Bob Pronger switched out exhausts and broke the track record to set the pole position for the GN race. Fonty Flock who qualified second began ribbing Pronger about his driving abilities. This led to a bet between the two drivers as to who would lead the opening lap.

-Speculation began about Pronger’s land speed records, and it was discovered that the inspection forms were “missing”. NASCAR decided to disallow Pronger’s records. Pronger attempted to physically intimidate NASCAR Commissioner Cannonball Baker and was hit with a fine. Afterwards the Baker ruled to uphold Pronger’s records.

-At the start of the GN race, Pronger and Flock roared down the beach in a dead heat entering the first turn side by side. Flock braked, and Pronger took a slight lead, only to overshoot the turn, hit a wooden platform and flip twice. Pronger would land on his wheels and continue, but Flock won the wager.

-Pronger’s roof was caved in, so he continued to drive with his knees while smashing the roof back up with his fists

-Flock led most of the race but ran out of gas with a lap and a half to go. Flock’s teammate Slick Smith passed by and noticed Flock coasting, slowed down and pushed Flock around the track back to his pit. In the meantime Bill Blair passed by and won the race.

-France announced that this was the most successful year at Daytona to date, but said that the crowds were getting out of hand and it was becoming unfeasible to continue having races on the beach. He proposed to the city building a million dollar speedway to

help insure that racing could continue in Daytona on April 4th. The mayor asked the state legislature to create a racing authority to study the feasibility of building the track.

-In October a pitch was made to France to move Speedweeks down to Palm Beach. Local newspapers put pressure on Halifax County officials and Daytona Beach city officials to convince France to stay, or Daytona's 50 year history would vanish. In the end, France agreed to stage one final year of beach races while plans were drawn up for a super speedway, and turned down Palm Beach's red carpet pitch to move the races.

1954

-the 54 Speedweeks were intended to be the last held on the beach, and were advertised as "Farewell to the Beach". The souvenir program mentioned the planning of a new "two and half mile super speedway" to be built in Volusia County.

-crowds were so large that all hotels/motels were at capacity, and private homes were used to house spectators.

-a triple header was planned: Sportsman race on Friday, then the 50 fastest Sportsman could enter a modified race on Saturday by switching engines, and then the Grand National race on Sunday.

-69 cars started the 100 mile Sportsman race, and Dick Joslin won after Curtis Turner had mechanical woes.

-104 cars started in the modified-sportsman race, with Fred Thompson becoming the first person to break the 130 mph mark in a race car and capturing the pole. Although the start was clean, Dick Kaufman (fresh back from the Korean War) lost a wheel and flipped wildly, bouncing like a ragdoll in his car. He died from his injuries on the way to the hospital, marking the first automobile fatality in the history of beach racing.

-Ned Jarrett at one point flipped his car into the ocean, suffered broken ribs and other injuries.

-Cotton Owens would go on to win his second beach race in a row.

-27,000 spectators turned out for the GN event, the largest crowd to date. Tim Flock driving for Ernest Woods would be the first GN team to use a two-way radio in their car.

-Tim Flock beat Lee Petty to the finish line, but upon engine inspection it was revealed that Flock had an illegal carburetor and was disqualified. Flock swore to never race in NASCAR again.

-in March of 1954 Milwaukee Braves owner Lou Perini becomes interested in funding the new superspeedway, and travels to Daytona, offering \$3 mil to build a world renown state of the art speedway that would put Daytona on the map for decades to come.

-a few months later Perini pulls out of the deal, claiming the local roadways to be inadequate for transporting large crowds the speedway was hoping to draw. regardless, plans to build a less ambitious speedway were still a go.

-the set back led to the Racing and Recreation Facilities Authority to ask France to promote Speed Weeks on the beach "one more time".

1955

-Bob Fish, inventor of the innovative Fish Carburetor, set out to prove his product by building a fleet of car and recruiting the best talent at Daytona. In the Sportsman race he had Fireball Roberts, Speedy Thompson and Milton Hartlauf. In the modified race he had Thompson, Roberts, Hartlauf and Herb Thomas. He also had Roberts for the GN race on Sunday, which would be his first attempt at GN racing. He also recruited Red Vogt as a chief mechanic for the stable.

-Hartlauf set a record for the Sportsman cars on the beach at 119.641 mph.

-75 cars started the Sportsman race in inclement weather, Speedy Thompson would go on to win. This would be Fish's first victory on the beach.

-On Lap 19 of the modified-sportsman race, Jimmy Thompson and Al Briggs tangled on the backstretch, causing both cars to begin spinning and flipping, bursting into flames. A number of other cars piled into the wreckage and mayhem ensued. Briggs was hospitalized with burns on 90 percent of his body. He would pass away from his injuries the next morning.

-The race was called, and Banjo Matthews was declared the winner.

-Carl Kiekhaefer arrives on the beach with no driver. He had tried stock car racing before with Tony Bettenhausen at a AAA-race at Milwaukee, and wanted Bettenhausen to race for him at Daytona, but couldn't because of his AAA contract. Herschel McGriff, Buck Baker and Herb Thomas also turned him down. Tim Flock, who had quit NASCAR the year before after disqualification was eventually hired to drive the new Chrysler ride.

-Flock broke the track record during qualification

-28k spectators turned out to see Fireball Roberts dominate in the new Fish car, but upon engine inspection it was found that the push rods had been shortened, and he was

disqualified, handing the win over to Tim Flock. Flock would go on to win 18 races and the championship with the new team.

-events continued to unfold for the building of the new speedway. The budget was around \$1 mil, and the opening offer made by Griffin and Gomon was \$1.75 mil. This quickly rose to \$3.5 mil.

-The decision was made to make improvements to the beach course while the plans for the speedway were developed. Bill France signs a contract to operate the proposed \$2.5 mil speedway, which was slated to be finished by July 4th, 1957.

-The speedway was proposed to be built on a 500-acre plot of land adjacent to the Municipal Airport. The property proposed for the Speedway was still under government control from WWII, where the Army had operated the Welsh Convalescent Hospital and the Navy operated an air base. Afterwards the government gave the new facilities to Daytona for free, under the agreement that any profits turned from the property would be used to improve the airport. Once permission was asked about building the speedway there, the Civil Aeronautics Administration discovered that Daytona had been pocketing money instead of abiding by the agreement, which led to further disagreement.

-During the summer of 55 further upgrades were made to the beach, including new photography stands and improved grandstands. A deal was struck up to televise some of the beach races the following year.

1956

-NASCAR took much heat in the press for the disqualifications in the 54 and 55 races, so it was announced that no disqualifications would be made in the 56 race, and all inspections had to be completed beforehand.

-Speedweeks were extended to 15-days, but beach conditions washed out the first week. Conditions persisted and qualifications were made on a 132 speed trap on the measured mile.

-Tim Flock set the pole speed in the modified race in Joe Wolf's radical modified, said to be one of the most "modified" cars ever to be run at the beach. The engine had many replacement parts and was set back, causing Flock to sit where the backseat normally would be. This led to the joke that Flock was "America's Number One Back Seat Driver."

-Over 70 cars started, and at one point Curtis Turner's car burst into flames while driving down the backstretch.

-Tim Flock would dominate the race, winning over Glen Wood. Michigan driver Joy Fair stated one of the most spectacular charges in beach history, racing from 75th the 5th.

-This year marked the first appearance of the new NASCAR Convertible series, which came about when France merged with the SAFE (Society of Autosports Fellowship and Education) group from Indiana, which had been making a name for itself with full-sized convertible racing.

-following the Le Mans tragedy of 1955, safety concerns were high for the beach races. each spectator was given a typed form on dangers and risks of watching the race, and were instructed to get to the top of the sand dunes to watch.

-Turner would win the convertible race over Fireball Roberts, making it a 1-2 victory for the factory Ford team. It was Turner's first victory in 20 starts.

-Kiekhaefer had built a stable of stix great drivers: Tim Flock, Fonty Flock, Frank Mundy (1955 AAA stock champ had to pay a \$1,000 bond to get back into NASCAR), Buck Baker, Speedy Thompson and Charlie Scott, a black driver from GA who broke the color barrier in NASCAR.

-76 cars took the green in the GN race, 2nd largest field in NASCAR GN history only to the 1951 Southern 500 which had 82. The race was shortened due to the incoming tide, which at one point claimed Lee Petty's car, and Tim Flock won from the pole, claiming his 2nd GN beach race in a row. The tires on Flock's car were filled with dry nitrogen, making them blowout proof.

Russ Truelove, from Connecticut, Flips Wildly down the beach. Rolled six times heading into the north turn. His car still exists and is often parked at the restaurant. (Spent some time with him a few years back where he showed me the helmet he wore that day and how he was tied in with a rope in the car (as his seatbelt) and that's what saved him. He climbed out and waved to the car after the wreck and spent the night in the hospital. There is GREAT video of the wreck. Orange #226.

-as Speedweeks drew to a close, France recognized the weather was becoming an deciding factor on the future of beach racing, the new speedway was imperative to keeping Daytona's identity in stock car racing.

-In the autumn of this year, the country started going through a recession, and the speedway project was delayed even more.

1957

-Kiekhaefer cars dominance in 56 (at one point winning 16 races in a row) led to an influx of money and support from other manufacturers, leading to prices skyrocketing in racing. Teams were suddenly spending \$7 to 10 mil to prepare for the upcoming NASCAR season.

-Kiekhaefer would exit, due to feeling like the world was ganging up on him and bad publicity. This led to the beginning of the factory wars, Chevy, Ford, Plymouth and Pontiac battling for supremacy. The interest generated in the factory battle also led to the modifieds, which had also been equally popular if not more popular than the GN races, being regarded as a "preliminary event".

-Fuel-injected late models began turning times as fast as the modifieds, moving them further down the ranks. However, Bob Reuther broke all racing qualification records with a special engine developed specifically for the qualifications, going 150 mph for the first time. (coincidentally the engine detonated on the second lap of the race)

-78 cars took the green in the modified-sportsman race, and ultimately Speedy Thompson won

-Tim Flock wins the convertible race, tying the record for most wins at the beach with 4.

-The GN race draws 35k spectators, by far the largest crowd to date.

-Cotton Owens wins when Paul Goldsmith, who had amassed a 25-second lead hit a rut in the North Turn and broke with a few laps to go. It would be both Pontiac and Owens' first wins in GN competition.

-work finally begins on Daytona International Speedway, would be ready by February of 1959. the project was to cost \$2.9 mil, and Daytona was having difficulty finding the funds. The Speedway District Commission set a deadline at November 8th that if no one would buy the \$2.9 mil bond issue for construction, it would sign a contract with France to build a far-less elaborate speedway.

-the deadline came and went, and France signed a contract, posting \$27k advance rent for a 50-year land lease. He would build the speedway for an estimated \$750k. On November 25th the ground clearing began.

-in June of 57, the Automobile Manufacturers Association voted to suspend all participation in stock car racing, due to accidents on speedways and highways in cars that had special horsepower additives. This led to factory-backed teams turning the cars over to the owners and drivers, and cut off the money being supplied to the teams. This

caused most drivers to struggle through the rest of 57. Some teams continued their support in secrecy, behind the backs of the Board of Directors.

1958 FINALE

-by the time drivers began arriving in Daytona, it was obvious this would be the actual final running on the beach

-the final Speedweeks on the beach kicks off on February 9th. temperatures were the lowest in history of the event, dipping into the 20s at night.

-Glen Wood nosed out Banjo Matthews for the pole of the mod-sportsman race, marking the first time a Sportsman car had done-so in the combined events.

-Banjo Matthews takes the final Sportsman-Modified race on Friday, which started 71 cars. At one point his windshield wipers broke, and the windshield became caked with wet sand. He ended up sailing past the entry point of the North Turn, had to make a U-turn and returned, retaining his lead. It would be Bob Fish's last win as a NASCAR owner, as he fell ill and died on May 9th. Matthews would go on to win the opening modified race at the new Daytona Speedway, winning both the last beach race and the first speedway race as a tribute to Fish.

-Curtis Turner wins the last convertible race after a captivating drive through the field. Lee Petty and Joe Weatherly crashed at the finish, causing several fans to run down onto the track. Bob Pronger and Glen Wood had to scramble through fans to finish the race.

-35k spectators turned out on a chilly Sunday afternoon, February 23rd to watch the final Daytona beach GN race. Goldsmith led from the pole, but at one point had his windshield wipers falter due to high winds and wet sand. At one point he actually over shot the North Turn and went off the course. He was able to establish where he was and sped back onto the course to retain the lead. This same situation would almost bite him again after he took the white flag, but he would prevail. Paul Goldsmith wins final race in a Smokey Yunick Car with Ray Fox followed by Curtis Turner, Jack Smith, Joe Weatherly and Lee Petty.

-Fittingly, after the race the day ended under a cold, gray sky with no picturesque sunset.

"There have been other tracks that separated the men from the boys. This is the track that will separate the brave from the weak, after the boys are gone," Jimmy Thompson.

THE END OF THE BEACH

1958 Paul Goldsmith wins the last Daytona Beach Race for the GN cars.

1959 Daytona Int'l Speedway Opens.

First Daytona 500 on Purpose built track was Feb 22 1959 (Lee)

Last Daytona 200 for Motorcycles on the beach in 1960.

SPEED TRIAL EVENTS continued for the measured mile (flying mile) and standing mile through 1961.