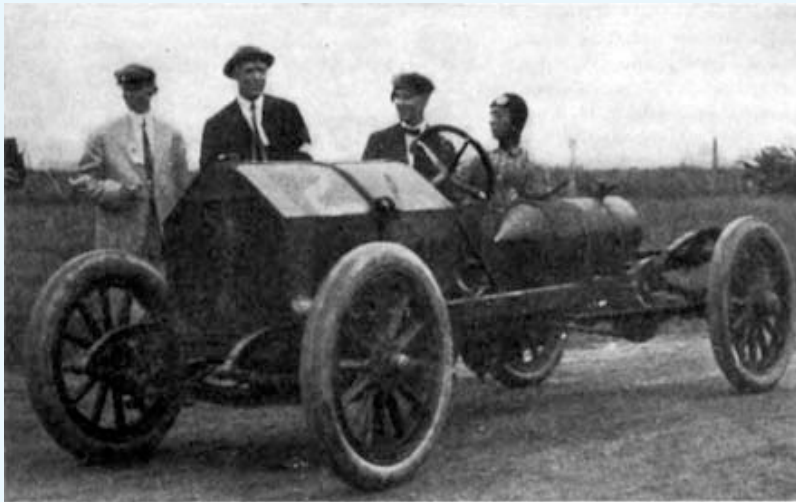


# Westcott Car at the Brickyard



Fred W. "Jap" Clemens, Memorial Day Weekend, 1910



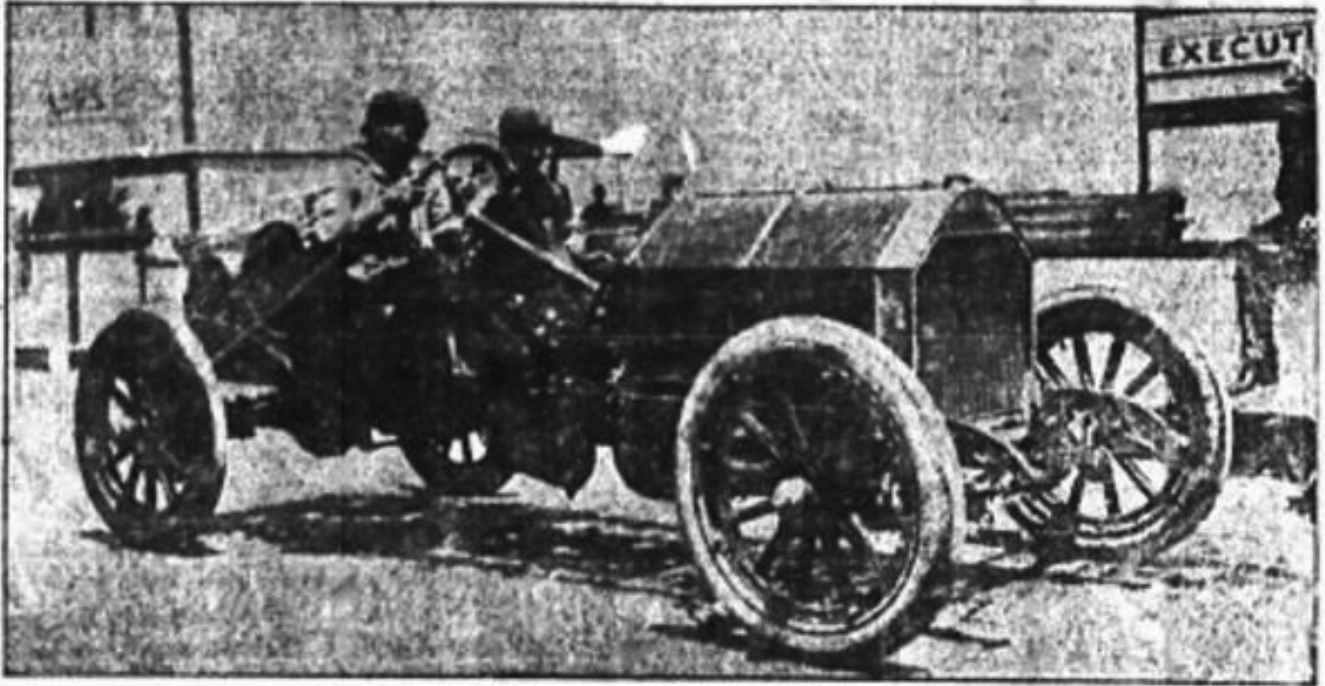
Harry Knight, Labor Day Weekend, 1910



Harry Knight, Indianapolis 500, Memorial Day Weekend, 1911

Fred W. "Jap" Clemens  
Indianapolis Motor Speedway  
Memorial Day Weekend Races, 1910  
[FirstSuperSpeedway.com](http://FirstSuperSpeedway.com)

**Clemens in His Fast Westcott Racer**



Jap Clemens has re-entered the racing game and will appear at the Speedway in a new Westcott "40" racer, which has just been completed for him. Clemens is one of the most daring of the local colony of drivers and no doubt will win some of the events in which he is entered. The Westcott car in which he is entered is a new arrival in the racing game and this will be the first track race in which it has ever competed.

First Super Speedway Photo Gallery:

This image originally appeared in the May 27, 1910 Indianapolis Sun complementing articles previewing the first day of racing at the May 1910 race meet at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. These contests were part of the May 1910 weekend that included "national championships," a newly-announced distinction by the American Automobile Association (AAA) for select race meets. Car manufactur-

ers were keen to make a great showing.

The driver noted, "Jap" Clemens was a well-known local talent who had enjoyed a great deal of success including the 1905 24 Hour speed record event at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. He is pictured here with the central Indiana-based company, Westcott and their debut in auto racing. Below is the text of the caption that originally appeared with the photo.

"Jap Clemens has re-entered the racing game and will appear at the Speedway in a new Westcott "40" racer, which has just been completed for him. Clemens is one of the most daring of the local colony of drivers and no doubt will win some of the events in which he is entered. The Westcott car in which he is entered is a new arrival in the racing game and this will be the first track race in which it has ever competed."

## RICHMOND MACHINE MAKES FINE RACE

Driven by Unknown Young Driver,  
Westcott Car Second in 100 Mile Event.

NOT ONE STOP WAS MADE

THIS FEAT WAS ONLY EQUALLED ONCE BEFORE ON INDIANAPOLIS SPEEDWAY TRACK—DRIVER SETS AN OVATION.

(Palladium special)

Indianapolis, Motor Speedway, Ind., Sept. 3 - The Westcott car made in Richmond, driven by Harry Knight, just turned of age, ran the most consistent 100 mile race that has ever been driven on the speedway track. The Westcott took second place in the event, pushing Eddie Hearne in his famous Benz every lap of the distance. For a young driver stacking up against the real thing in the motor racing game for the first time, Knight's performance is looked upon as little less than a marvel.

He kept his car to the track for lap alter lap never stopping once, a feat that has not been equaled upon the Indianapolis track since last May, when Ray Harroun in margin negotiated the same distance without a stop. Prior to Harroun's performance nothing of the kind had ever before been accomplished. Knight place both himself and his car in top-most position.

### Hearne Takes Lead.

Hearne took the lead at the start, and maintained it throughout, making only one

very short stop for oil. He finished exactly one lap, two and one half miles, ahead of Knight who led all others by lap or better. The third car in the race was a National, driven Livingstone, who into fame is by his sensational driving at the Elgin meet. Ray Harroun, in his Marmon, finished fourth. When young Knight stopped in front of the grandstand he was treated to an ovation. He is being touted as one of the new stars in the automobile world. Every other car in cue race had to make one or more from some cause or other. The Westcott again proved mettle under Knight's pilotage in the five-mile free-for-all handicap. With the leaders in the race, one minute, three seconds ahead of him, Knight drove his car at tremendous speed, taking third, pushing hard the famous old man driver, Basle, in a Matheson. The Matheson car finished second.

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The Westcott Motor Car Company ran an ad in the *Evening Item* (Richmond, Indiana) on Saturday, May 27, 1911 (Page Nine) touting reliability of its autos. The race preview featured Harry Knight who would drive the car for the local company.

### WESTCOTT ENTERS LONG RACE

Automobile Made at Richmond, Ind., to Try for Honors at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Indianapolis, Ind. -

One of the entries which has been made in the 500-mile International Sweepstakes Race for \$25,000 in gold, to be held on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway next Memorial Day, is a Westcott specially built car, with Harry Knight, one of the youngest speedway drivers in the business, nominated as the pilot. The big motor which the Westcott Company is building for this long race is identical in construction with the motor which is used in the Westcott stock cars, excepting that it is increased in size and horsepower. The smaller Westcott car that Knight has been driving has been a consistent performer in Speedway events of the past and has been especially successful in long races. Although Knight did not drive in many events in the 1910 season, he piloted his small car through a free-, for-all race of 100 miles, and finished second to Eddie Hearne in his big Benz. Later in the season Knight finished second in the Coca Cola Trophy race at Atlanta, losing that event by a margin of about twenty-two seconds. The young driver sent his car over the 100-mile distance at Atlanta in eighty-, six minutes and thirty-two seconds. The Westcott car is manufactured at Richmond, Indiana, and entered the racing fame only last season. It proved to be speedy and several times it has 'gone through the long grinds with a nonstop record to its credit.

The Evening Item, Richmond, Ind., Saturday, May 27, 1911. Page Nine.

**WESTCOTT CAR HAS Young Track Pilot**



Harry Knight, who will be the pilot of the Westcott special motor car entered in the Indianapolis International Sweepstakes race over the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, is shown in the picture above. Knight is one of the youngest drivers in the business, and is a very successful one. He has won several races in the past, and is a very successful one. He is a very successful one. He is a very successful one.

**AUTO MAKERS HELPED MOTOR RACE OVER FAULTS IN CONSTRUCTION**

Motor makers have helped in the construction of the Westcott car. They have helped in the construction of the Westcott car. They have helped in the construction of the Westcott car. They have helped in the construction of the Westcott car.

# Westcott

## The Absolutely Dependable Car

It is not necessary for you to buy a car manufactured out of your own home town when a car in the Westcott, built by home labor and home capital can be purchased for less money. We realize that it would be the wisest thing to approach the motor car buying public in these days of strenuous competition. In modernized cars with anything but obviously the best of class for the money ever offered. Westcott by perfect innovation, construction—appearance, durability, dependability, performance and economy in operation—the Westcott 45-hp is the best motor car value money can buy, and the greater your knowledge of motor cars, the better will be your appreciation of this.

We urge that you study the specifications of the Westcott 45-hp, compare them—detail by detail—with specifications of any other car costing twice as much. You will see the unusual value represented in the Westcott.

For \$2,250 the 1911 Westcott, Model "R" (as our best) offers a seven-passenger, four-door, high-powered touring car, with 16-horse draw, 11-horse full-floating axle, Timken roller bearings throughout and a 14-horse 4-cylinder motor, the efficiency of which has never been questioned.

For \$2,100 we give you the Model "S," the same general construction as Model "R," the exception being that the business is shorter, making it strictly a 5-passenger car.

In the Westcott Speedster, Model "U," you will find a Roadster to be proud of—the same general construction as Models "R" and "S." Price, \$2,100.

To the man who values the more subtle and satisfying points of the automobile, the 1911 Westcott will be a source of unlimited satisfaction.





### THE WESTCOTT MEETS ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MOTOR WISE

It is apparent that the price of cars selling at twice the money, to have the same of elegance and refinement, and its big, money business, even with its two extra passenger seats, makes of Professor luxury. There is no other thing as valuable as a car can represent more good in the heart of its owner than a Westcott.

You will never know what utter, unadmitted indifference means all you feel the thrill of a Westcott motor and its never-failing pull under the most trying conditions. There is a thrill, which comes with that sense of security, arising from absolute efficiency and familiar to Westcott owners. There are cars as good as the Westcott, but there are no cars as good as anything like the money.



Model "R" 7 Passenger—45-hp  
H. P. Touring Car—\$2,250

#### WESTCOTT SPECIFICATIONS Models "R," "S" and "U."

<p><b>Engine</b>—45-hp power, 4-cylinder, four strokes, cast iron, 4 1/2 in. bore, 5 in. stroke. Compression ratio 10 to 1. Piston rings, 2 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Clutch</b>—Single plate, cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Transmission</b>—3-speed, cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Overhaul</b>—Single plate, cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p>	<p><b>Chassis</b>—Cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Front axle</b>—Timken roller bearings, 1 1/2 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Rear axle</b>—Timken roller bearings, 1 1/2 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Wheels</b>—16 in. diameter, 1 1/2 in. wide. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p>	<p><b>Body</b>—Cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Interior</b>—Cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Exterior</b>—Cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p> <p><b>Paint</b>—Cast iron, 10 in. diameter. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder. Piston pins, 1 per cylinder.</p>
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**Westcott Motor Car Co.**  
12th and No. E1 Sts. Phone 1635 for Demonstration.



HARRY KNIGHT IN HIS WESTCOTT, ENTERED IN THE 500 MILE RACE AT INDIANAPOLIS, SEPTEMBER 2001.



EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT PHONE 1121

VOL. XXXV. NO. 263.

TOBACCO SHARES TAKE A BIG DROP IN MARKET TODAY

Opening at 500, Trust Stock Sold as Low as 425, in the First Trading Since Recent Decision.

DEPT. OF JUSTICE CONSIDERS RULING

Considers Whether Defendants in the Case Shall Face Criminal Action—Case Is Complicated.

(Associated Press Association) New York, May 31.—The American Tobacco company shares today were five points on the stock market this morning, closing at 500 and selling down to 425. This was the first trading since Monday's supreme court decision.

NO ACTION TAKEN

Washington, May 31.—Whether in the tobacco case the department will prosecute was still undecided by the department of justice today. By the terms of the decision the government can proceed criminally against all of the defendants or against some of them. The case is now being considered by the department of justice and assistant attorney general W. H. Clegg. It is said that the department of justice will make a statement on this subject some time in the near future.

NEW C. & D. SERVICE

From Washington, D. C. Through to Chicago.

Through trains from Washington, D. C. to Chicago will be operated on the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad and its subsidiary lines, beginning on July 2, according to Bulletin no. 1000, issued by the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad company. It is stated that the company expects the route to become one of the most popular with the traveling public who are to be benefited by the new service.

ASKS DAMAGES FOR DEATH OF CATTLE

For the killing of four cattle last March, John H. Keller has brought suit against the Indiana and Michigan Electric company. Keller had purchased several cows, which were in charge of the County stock grounds when a city car struck the herd and injured them. Keller brought suit for the value of the animals and for their injury. The suit was filed in the circuit court at Terre Haute.

THE WEATHER

Thunder showers in south portion; clear in extreme south portion, Thursday forenoon.

LOCAL.—Thunder showers this afternoon and evening. Thursday forenoon and night clear in temperature.

HIGH SCHOOL OBSERVATORY

Highest temperature Tuesday, 76 degrees at 4 p. m. Lowest temperature Wednesday, 47 degrees at 9 p. m. Tomorrow at 11 a. m. Wednesday, 60 degrees at 11 a. m. Thursday, 60 degrees at 11 a. m. Friday, 60 degrees at 11 a. m. Saturday, 60 degrees at 11 a. m.

WOMAN WAS KILLED IN AUTO ACCIDENT

(Associated Press Association) Bloomington, Ind., May 31.—Mrs. John H. Hartwell, wife of Henry Hartwell, was killed last night when an automobile skidded over a trestle over the Indiana and Michigan Electric road near the town of Hartwell. The woman passed over the trestle and fell into a ravine below. Her husband was not injured.

RICKED TO DEATH BY HIS OWN TEAM

(Associated Press Association) Auburn, Ind., May 31.—August Kunkin, a farmer of the city, was killed last night when his own team took him over a trestle over the Indiana and Michigan Electric road near the town of Hartwell. The team passed over the trestle and fell into a ravine below. Kunkin was killed.

FARMER KILLED

(Associated Press Association) Columbus, Ind., May 31.—Benjamin D. Evans, a farmer, was killed last night when his horse fell over a trestle over the Indiana and Michigan Electric road near the town of Hartwell. Evans was killed.

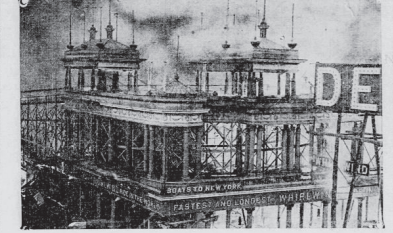
# THE RICHMOND PALLADIUM AND SUN-TELEGRAM.

RICHMOND, IND., WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 31, 1911.

BUSINESS OFFICE PHONE 2566

SINGLE COPY 5 CENTS.

## "Whirlwind" During the Coney Island Fire



The great 44,000,000 fire at Coney Island—flames hurrying forth in the whirlwind, the greatest fire in the world, just after the monster blaze in Richmond. The flames were blowing in the direction of the fire. The fire was burning in the direction of the fire. The fire was burning in the direction of the fire.

### GILA MONSTER FOR GLEN MILLER PARK

Arizona Man Offers to the "Zoo"—Increase in the EK Family.

### MILTON OBSERVES DECORATION DAY

Honors Memory of Woman Who Starred Movement in the Country.

### AEROPLANE MEET IS A POSSIBILITY

Commercial Club Will Take Some Definite Action.

### TO OPEN NEW STORE

H. H. Engelbert Leaves Room at 5th and Main.

### FRITZ MUCH BETTER

Lad Hurt in Railway Mishap Returned Home.

### DEAD AND INJURED

Called by Death.

### WOMAN WAS KILLED IN AUTO ACCIDENT

RICKED TO DEATH BY HIS OWN TEAM

### FARMER KILLED

Called by Death.

### POST OFFICE MEN SING THE PRAISE OF OLD RICHMOND

At Banquet Last Evening State Postal Clerks Composed a Song in Honor of Hospitable City.

### ELECT MUNCIE MAN AS THE PRESIDENT

Next Place of Meeting Is Indianapolis—Splendid Program of Toasts at Banquet Last Night.

### THRILL EVERY MOMENT

One Hundred Thousand People Witness the World's Automobile Classic.

### HARROUN WINS CLASSIC RACE; HARRY KNIGHT IS QUITE LOW

Harroun won the classic race at Chicago in a record time. Harry Knight was quite low in the race.

### SACRIFICES FAME TO SAVE COMRADE

Knight, in a Westcott, Purposely Wrecks Car to Prevent Killing a Man.

### WAS ONE OF LEADERS

But for the Accident Youthful Driver Had Chance to Win the Contest.

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# HARROUN WINS CLASSIC RACE HARRY KNIGHT IS QUITE LOW; SACRIFICES FAME TO SAVE COMRADE

Knight in a Westcott Purposely Wrecks Car to Prevent Killing a Man.

WAS ONE OF THE LEADERS

But for Accident Youthful Driver Had Chance to Win the Contest.

"I didn't hit him. I didn't hit him," were the first words uttered by Harry Knight, the plucky young driver of the Westcott racer in the thrilling 500 mile sweepstakes at Indianapolis yesterday, as he was picked up after being hurled through the air when his car skidded, overturned Lytle's Apperson, and then upset directly in front of the grandstand. Knight's wild dash toward the pits where the Apperson car was undergoing repairs resulted when, thundering along a 80 miles per hour, he turned his car sharply in that direction at the risk of his life to avoid striking C.L. Anderson, a mechanic on a Case car, who was lying prostrate in the center of the track.

Two courses were open to Knight as he swept along at a breakneck speed with Anderson prostrate on the track directly in the car's path, but about 20 feet away — he could hold his car straight and run over Anderson or he could turn toward the pits to his right with a slight chance of escaping death or serious injury. While spectators in the grandstand stood with bated breath and gazed horrified at the scene where in the twinkling of an eye some

terrible catastrophe would surely result, twenty-two-year-old Harry Knight made his decision on the instant the situation confronted him, and turned his car toward the pits, at the same time jamming on the emergency brake.

## **Made the Car Skid**

The sharp turn made the car skid on the oily track and it turned entirely around facing the opposite direction. Then the pent up speed, the most horrific momentum having been temporarily checked by the skid, and when around, broke loose and the car lurched forward, striking the Apperson in the rear and hurling it over in the air. The impact threw the Westcott racer into space, and John Glover, the mechanic, was hurled about twenty feet, landing beyond the pits in a muddy pool. Knight clung to the steering wheel and his seat until the car smashed to the ground when he was thrown out to the side. "I didn't hit him," was all he muttered as he was borne away from the scene of the disaster.

How Knight and Glover missed death seems almost miraculous, but both escaped with only sever injuries. Glover was the most severely

injured of the two, sustaining a wrenched back and bad cuts an bruises. Knight received a bad wound on his head, numerous bruises and a bad jolting.

A broke steering knuckle on a Case car driven by Jagensburger was the cause of the thrilling accident. The car had just left the pits when the knuckle broke and the machine, beyond the control of the driver swerved against the concrete wall and then wobbled out onto the middle of the track.

## **Apperson Jumped**

A half dozen thundering machines were bearing down on it, and apparently to avoid a smash-up, Anderson, mechanic, jumped from the car no doubt for the purpose of shoving the crippled machine to the wall. As .he jumped to the track, however, the rear wheel passed over his foot and he was thrown to the ground. The first two cars some way passed Anderson and the crippled Case — it all happened so quick that it was over before anyone realized what had occurred — and Knight was next. The nerve-racking skid and dash into the Apperson car followed.

By his choice of risking his



own life rather than that of a prostate comrade, Knight forfeited his splendid chance of winning the race or at least placing his car at the finish. He was in third place when the accident happened, and weel up among the leaders and apparently one of the strongest contenders on the track. His car was performing

splendidly, and in the 196 laps which he had covered, he had to stop but only once – that on account of tire trouble. There is little doubt but that Knight would have placed his machine if the probability of taking a life had not demanded his sacrifice of a chance of fame and glory.

# People

Scott Hinkley, features editor.....973-4457

## HISTORY on WHEELS

Westcott Motor Car Company got its start in Richmond



As we were  
**ANNETTE WARFEL**

In 1984, Betty Westcott Acker of Nashport, Ohio, discovered that a man named James McMahon Westcott from Richmond, Ind., had put the Westcott Car on the map of automotive history.

Twelve years of research later, Acker still isn't sure if she's related to J.M. Nevertheless, she turned the research into a book entitled "Westcott Car Pictorial Booklet," which she presented at the 1996 reunion of the Society of Stukely Westcott Descendants of America in Des Moines, Iowa.

Since 1990, Acker has been the society's historian. Two weeks ago, Acker brought the book to Richmond to share with "As we were" readers and Wayne County Genealogical Society members.

The 24-page soft cover book contains many photo copies of old and new pictures, several of them in color, with detailed captions about local Westcott history.

J.M. Westcott, with his sons Burton and Harry, founded Westcott Carriage Company here in 1896 and Westcott Motor Car Company in 1909. Burton moved the car company to Springfield, Ohio, in 1916 because J.M. didn't really like automobiles and their competition with carriages. (J.M. also owned Hoosier Drill Co., which later became American Seeding Machine Co. and eventually International Harvester).

The book contains some interesting historical tidbits. One is a photo copy of Harry Knight, 22, of Indianapolis, in the Westcott he drove in the first Indy 500 in 1911.

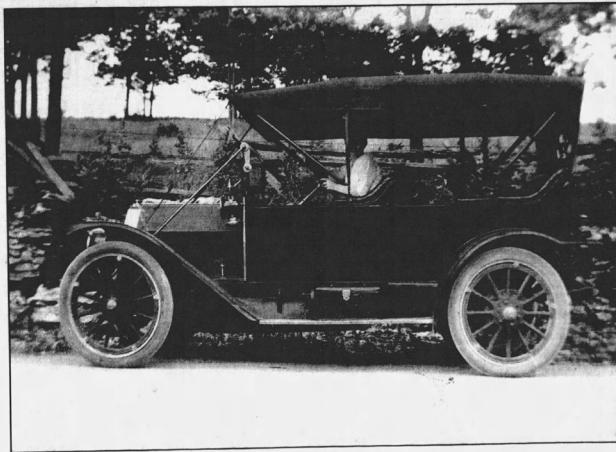
The caption notes that Knight was in third place after 196 laps when the mechanic fell out of the car ahead of him. Knight swerved to miss the man, smashed the Westcott against a repair pit, and injured himself and his own mechanic. The press praised him for risking his life to save the man. The Westcott still came in 30th in a field of 40 cars.

When Burton moved the company to Springfield, he wanted two things, Acker said: "He wanted a quality car and he wanted his employees taken care of. He took many Richmond workers with him, and so many of them moved to North Limestone Street that it was called 'Richmond row.'"

Acker said Burton's goal was to make 5,000 cars, but she estimates he made about 3,000. She and her husband, Clarence, have located only 12 Westcott cars across the country and parts of two others in New Zealand.

"The car was so well known as a luxury car, in Washington, D.C. they gave it to ambassadors," Clarence Acker said. "The car was a good car, but competition from other big car makers just put him out of business."

Acker's book includes a photo of Burton Westcott's Springfield home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright during the golden age of Wright's work. Burton eventually went bankrupt, and although he battled against his million dollar life insurance policy, he died penniless in 1926.



Palladium-Item

This photo from the Palladium-Item archives is also reproduced in "Westcott Car Pictorial Booklet" by Betty Acker of Nashport, Ohio. It shows Ruth Tyler Hough of Richmond in her 1912 Westcott, which Westcott employees taught her how to drive and repair.

### How to order

To order the "Westcott Car Pictorial Booklet," send \$22 plus \$2.39 for first class postage to: Betty W. Acker, 2145 Richevie Road, Nashport, OH 43830.

Even if you don't order the book, Acker would still like to hear from you if you have information about the Westcott family and Westcott cars.

Her phone number is (614) 454-1076.

### Magazine Club celebrates 100 years

This month marks a milestone for a club that may well be one of the longest lived social service clubs in Richmond history. It's the Magazine Club, chartered Oct. 6, 1896, by 15 women who wanted an outlet where they could not only socialize but read, learn and donate their dues to charitable causes.

In celebration of their golden anniversary, present club members Jean Kleinkecht, Jane McCrea and Julia Coons began re-searching a box of old minutes that has been preserved at Morrison-Reeves Library. Member Linda Jackson typed up a history for the group, which now numbers 26 active members and 16 honorary members who remain on the rolls, though they have moved away or retired.

"It's pretty exciting that a club like this could go on for 100 years and still stay together," Jackson said.

"Regular members pay yearly dues, and around the middle of December we send checks usually



Photo supplied

Members of the Magazine Club, circa 1915. Founded in 1896, the club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this October.

to three different entities around town. We spend all of our dues basically every year doing that," Jackson said.

Originally the club met every week and now meets on the first and third Mondays of the month. The focus is still the same as it was 100 years ago: To select an article from a magazine or book that is meaningful and read it to the group. Last November, for example, Jackson read about past Thanksgiving customs.

A look at minutes from 1903

shows a diversity of topics occupied early club members: March 16, Mrs. C. Holton read "The Necessity of Checking the Growth of the Degenerate Class"; March 23, Ella Bond Johnston, long-time director of Richmond Art Museum, read "A Democratic Art Movement"; and Nov. 16, Mrs. Gilbert read "Does a Union Man Violate the Mandates of Trade Unionism When He Allows His Wife to Mend a Rent in His Trousers."

The anniversary history committee also compiled some inter-

esting facts about the way we were a century ago: In 1896, the U.S. had 70,885,000 people compared to 264,738,000 in 1996; the average three bedroom home cost \$2,350; way down from today's \$112,864; eggs were 19 cents a dozen, bread was 5 cents a pound, and milk, 27 cents a gallon.

As we were appears on the People page each Tuesday. If you would like to suggest topics for the column, contact Annette Warfel at the Palladium-Item, 1175 N. A St., Richmond, IN 47374; call her at (317) 973-4461 or, outside Richmond, (800) 686-1330.



<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/77865547/>

May 24, 2010, Richmond, Indiana

## Our Past: Quick thinking saves life at Indy 500, by Steve Martin for the Palladium-Item

At the very first Indianapolis 500 race, a courageous man driving a Richmond-made car won the hearts of more than 80,000 fans and stole the headlines from the winner.

The first race was held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Memorial Day, May 30, 1911. To qualify, entrants had to maintain speeds of at least 75 mph for more than a quarter mile.

The first race ever was a spell-binder and a testament of human courage and sacrifice.

Ray Harroun — piloting a Marmon "Wasp" outfitted with his "newfangled" invention, a rear-view mirror — raced to victory, but it was a man driving a Wayne County-made car that won the hearts of the spectators paying a dollar a piece to witness the competition.

The driver of the Richmond-made Westcott was a young man named Harry Knight, who had won the hand of a beautiful Hungarian dancer named Jennie Dollie. Their nuptials were contingent on Knight winning big money at the race.

He didn't. He wrecked.

The Indianapolis headline

read: "HARRY KNIGHT, IN A RICHMOND WESTCOTT, PURPOSELY WRECKS CAR TO PREVENT KILLING A MAN."

The unthinkable occurred 196 laps into the race.

Knight was in third place and gaining, when another car left the pits with a broken steering knuckle. The unwieldy machine swerved out of control, then careened off a cement wall, wobbling to the middle of the congested track.

According to the Richmond Palladium, "A half dozen thundering machines bore down upon it."

To avoid a smash-up, mechanic Charlie L. Anderson jumped from the sidelines toward the car to shove the crippled machine back to the wall. As he jumped onto the track, a rear wheel passed over his foot and he was thrown flat on his back in front of speeding racers.

The news story went on: "If ever a man was within a hair's breath of eternity without going across, Charlie Anderson has that distinction. Nothing in the history of the auto race game approaches the situation... Lying there in the midst of 40 machines passing the spot two seconds apart at more than 70 miles an hour,

it seemed that Charlie's time had come.

"At the prospect of seeing a man mangled alive and ground to death, the crowd arose and waited in horror...

"Starter Fred Wagner ran onto the course and vainly sought to stop the race. The riders couldn't stop, and two of them swerved aside miraculously, without hitting Anderson or the stranded car. Two more cars passed... It happened so quick it was over before anyone realized what had occurred.

"Then Harry Knight was next... The Richmond Westcott sped along at almost eighty miles an hour, with Knight and mechanic John Glover inside. Knight saw Anderson in his path... Thundering along at break-neck speed, two courses of action were open to Knight as a prostrate man sprawled helplessly on the ground directly before him — he could hold the car straight and run over Anderson — or he could purposely crash by swerving to the pits to his right, with just a slight chance of escaping death or severe injury.

"While spectators stood in the grandstand with bated breath, and gazed horrified at the

scene, where in the twinkling of an eye a snap decision had to be made or some horrible catastrophe would surely result... the 22-year-old Knight made his decision the instant the situation confronted him, and yanked his car toward the pits, at the same time jamming his emergency brake to stop.

"Instantly applying the emergency brakes at this speed, at the risk of his life, Knight caused the machine to perform one of the strangest pirouettes in auto history. The sharp turn made his car slide on the oily track. Burning rubber created a smoky vista as it skidded entirely around, facing the opposite direction... The pent-up speed, the terrifying momentum checked by the sudden skid and whirl, broke it loose from the pavement and the car launched airborne, as if shot from a canon, striking the stalled car in the rear and hurtling over it... The now-flying Westcott clipped the broken car and turned it completely over, knocking it toward the pit, from which four men scrambled out for their lives...

"The impact of both racers caused the mechanic in the Richmond Westcott, John Glover, to be hurled about 20 feet in the air. He landed beyond the pits in a muddy pool, with a wrenched back.

"Knight clung to the wheel until the car smashed into the grounds... then was thrown like a rag-doll out the side."

The Westcott smashed up against a post, completely wrecked.

Knight suffered a severe brain concussion and bruises. The first words he cried, "I didn't hit him, I didn't hit him!"

Many witnesses thought had it not been for the accident, the youthful driver of the Richmond car might have won.

"By his choice of risking his life rather than to take that of a prostrate comrade, Harry Knight forfeited his chance of winning the race, or at least placing his Richmond car at the finish. He was in third place when the accident happened, and running well up with the leaders."

The 22-year-old Knight won more adulation than the race winner.

His heroism was described in detail by national news outlets. Bulletins of his condition as he recovered were issued hourly from Indianapolis Methodist Hospital. He later was recommended for the hero's medal presented by the Carnegie Hero Commission because "he sacrificed fame and glory" as race leader and wrecked his car to avoid killing another man.

There was an additional cost, though, as Knight now could not marry the Hungarian dancer to which he was betrothed.

Sadly, the young man dubbed the "hero of Indianapolis"

tragically lost his life two years later, at the age of 24, in a Columbus, Ohio, 200-mile dirt track race.

It is not known if he was married at the time.

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