



The Early Laps of Stock Car Racing: A History of the Sport and Business through 1974

Betty Boles Ellison

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The book begins with the nation's first organized, sanctioned stock car road race over the Briarcliff, New York, course--staged in 1908 by one of America's early speed mavens, William K. Vanderbilt, Jr. A veteran of the early Ormond-Daytona Beach speed trials, Vanderbilt brought the Grand Prize races to Savannah, Georgia, in 1908. What began as a rich man's sport eventually became the working man's sport, finding a home in the South with the infusion of moonshiners and their souped-up cars. The book is based, for the most part, on statements of drivers, car owners and others garnered from archived newspaper articles. Readers are given an expanded look at the National Association for Stock Car Automobile Racing's 1948 incorporation documents; how they clash with the agreements adopted at NASCAR's organization meeting two months earlier in December 1947. The meeting's participants soon realized that their sport was actually owned by William H.G. "Bill" France, and its consequential growth turned his family into billionaires. In addition to the sport's earlier races, the book covers NASCAR's first decades of stock car racing, through 1974--with an astonishing lack of safety requirements and minuscule race purses paid by Bill France compared to his gate receipts.

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