

University of North Carolina at Asheville

And Here They Come to the White Flag:
The Piedmont-Triad's Role in
Early NASCAR History: 1940 - 1958

A Senior Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Department of History
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in History

by
William Tate

Asheville, North Carolina
22 November 2004

**And Here They Come to the White Flag: The Piedmont-Triad's Role in
Early NASCAR History: 1940 - 1958**

On a late October day in 1958, a young rookie driver was running a race at the old Lakewood Speedway in Atlanta, Georgia. On the 110th lap of the race, a car ahead of him lost control, hit the wall and began flipping violently down the straightaway. As the car was flipping, the rookie driver saw the driver of the wrecking car ahead ejected from his seat, landing on the dirt, and the mangled car falling on top of him. Fred Harb, the rookie driver, looked in the mirror and saw the onslaught of cars coming towards the accident scene. He pulled his car up to the accident scene, stopped and blocked the wreck from the mass of cars approaching his injured comrade. Harb, from High Point, North Carolina, saved his friend Bill Morton's life that day in the NASCAR race at Lakewood. Because Harb put his own life in danger to save Morton's life in such an honorable fashion, he was given the John Naughton Sportsmanship Award.¹ On that day, Fred Harb was not concerned with winning the race, what place he would finish in, or how much money he would win at the end of the race. This is just one example of a local driver from the Piedmont-Triad that influenced and drove in the early years of NASCAR, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. The early days of stockcar racing in the South, specifically in the Piedmont-Triad region of North Carolina, were about the people, families and values. Yet over the course of NASCAR's brief fifty-seven year history, the Piedmont-Triad has, in some respects, fallen by the wayside and has been forgotten for its importance to the birth and growth of stockcar racing itself. By analyzing the actual races in the Triad during the periods before and at the beginning of

¹ *Forty Years of Stock Car Racing*, ed. Greg Fielden, vol. 1 of *The Beginning: 1949-1958* (Surfside Beach, SC: The Garfield Press, 1992), 335.

NASCAR, as well as the local drivers that raced in these races, it becomes clear that the Piedmont-Triad region of North Carolina was one of the premier locations for the birth of stockcar racing.

A variety of source material exists on the subject of stockcar racing. One particular type of research that has been done by some authors revolves around a reference/encyclopedia style of writing. Greg Fielden has published several volumes of his book, *40 Years of Stock Car Racing*, which examine the race-by-race story of the sport. Through the use of statistics, chronology, and stories of the day, Fielden has compiled this unique history of NASCAR from the first race forward.² Allan Brown has another publication that is similar to Fielden's books. Brown has researched and compiled a list of all automobile racing speedways from every corner of the nation. These lists are divided by state. Also listed are the name of the track, its length, its surface, and the dates in which racing occurred on them.³ These reference style books are useful sources that can be employed as reference guides for accessing more information from other sources using dates and names to aid in the process.

Academic journals are one source that has examined various topics regarding the sport of stockcar racing. One example of an academic journal entry is in the *Professional Geographer*, by Derek Alderman, Preston Mitchell, Jeff Webb, and Derek Hanak, which examines the sport's growth. Their argument is based on the idea that NASCAR has grown due to traditional and regional forces. Their analysis does give specific links to how NASCAR has grown from the rural South, to the national sport that it is today. This

² Fielden, 2.

³ Allan E. Brown, *History of America's Speedways, Past and Present* (Comstock Park, MI: Slideways Publications, 1994).

article does use the region of the Piedmont-Triad, in conjunction with the rest of the South to examine how the area has influenced the sport.⁴

Another journal-style essay comes from Dan Pierce. In his article, *Bib Overalls and Bad Teeth*, Pierce takes a more precise look at the Piedmont working class in North Carolina, and their control on the sport as spectators, promoters, drivers, and mechanics. His examination includes the work put into local tracks of the Piedmont by these individuals, while also arguing that self-confidence and a desire for freedom was a motivating push for individuality during the early period of NASCAR and stockcar racing. His argument does not center on the Piedmont-Triad area specifically, though it does apply in many aspects.⁵

Many books have been published on NASCAR in recent years, due in large part to the growth and popularity of the sport. Some of these books can be useful in compiling research for scholarly topics. One book by Peter Golenbock, entitled *American Zoom*, uses interviews from people directly involved in the sport to tell the story of NASCAR history, past and present. Golenbock uses these interviews to tell the stories from a variety of different perspectives, including that of drivers, crews, owners and fans.⁶ Golenbock also wrote a book, *The Last Lap*, which tells the NASCAR history story, but uses the behind the scenes story of the early drivers and heroes as his backdrop. He interviews drivers, crews and family members to tell the story of early NASCAR

⁴ Derek Alderman, Preston Mitchell, Jeffery Webb, Derek Hanak, "Carolina Thunder Revisited: Toward a Transcultural View of Winston Cup Racing," *The Professional Geographer* 55, no. 2 (2003): 238-249.

⁵ Dan Pierce, "Bib Overalls and Bad Teeth: The Piedmont Working Class Roots of NASCAR" (*Unpublished Manuscript*, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2004).

⁶ Peter Golenbock, *American Zoom: Stock Car Racing – from the Dirt Tracks to Daytona* (New York: Macmillan USA, 1993).

history.⁷ Another book that uses a narrative style of writing comes from Jerry Bledsoe. His book observes the sport of stockcar racing, and its links to the South. Bledsoe talks about the driver, the fan and the promoter, and how all of their actions lead to the final product of the business, which is race day.⁸

In Paul Hemphill's book, *Wheels*, he looks at the history of NASCAR through the looking glass of a NASCAR season. The course of the season is used to tell the story of the growth of the sport as a business, the growth of the fan base, and the driver's life behind the wheel. Hemphill describes a season of NASCAR to illustrate his argument.⁹ In Robert Hagstrom's book, *The NASCAR Way*, the business side of the sport is examined. Hagstrom identifies the early components of business in NASCAR, and also observes the reasons behind the growth of NASCAR as a company. This book also examines the impact of the business on the community, the fans and the sport itself while including a historical background for racing as a business.¹⁰

Cultural historian Mark Howell observes the cultural history of NASCAR in his scholarly work, *From Moonshine to Madison Ave*. His book discusses the impact of culture on NASCAR, as well as the impact of NASCAR on culture. By looking at how both ways affect each other differently, Howell makes observations on the history of growth and development that NASCAR has gone through in the course of fifty years.¹¹ Robert Sullivan and his book *American Speed*, use a historical style of writing to look at

⁷ Peter Golenbock, *The Last Lap: The Life and Times of NASCAR's Legendary Heroes*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1998).

⁸ Jerry Bledsoe, *The World's Number One, Flat-Out, All-Time Great Stock Car Racing Book*, (Asheboro, NC: Down Home Press, 1971).

⁹ Paul Hemphill, *Wheels: A Season on NASCAR's Winston Cup Circuit*, (New York: Berkley Books, 1997).

¹⁰ Robert G. Hagstrom, *The NASCAR Way: The Business that Drives the Sport* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998).

¹¹ Mark D. Howell, *From Moonshine to Madison Avenue: A Cultural History of the NASCAR Winston Cup Series* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1997).

a variety of topics in the sport. He includes families, legends, tracks, cars, fans and promotion to follow the historical course of NASCAR and auto-racing. Sullivan also uses pictures to help define his book in the historical context.¹²

Most of the story of racing in the Piedmont-Triad has been told in a very general form. Barbara Taylor and the High Point Museum recently gave an exhibit that focused exclusively on this topic, even though it primarily focused on the drivers that lived in the Triad area. In her publication, *When Racing was Racing*, she gives a brief synopsis of her findings, along with additional biographical information about some local racetracks and local drivers.¹³

Much of the scholarly information that exists on the topic of stockcar racing does not limit itself to a specific national location. Some sources use the southern United States, along with the Midwest and the Southwest to focus their arguments. For the issue of stockcar racing in the Piedmont-Triad of North Carolina, there is little work on a scholarly level that solely focuses on the area, and its association to the growth of the sport. The story surrounding the early days of the sport in this area and region are simply that, a story. The actual racing and story of those events has never been told in great detail. The broad context of many of these secondary scholarly sources has tended to ignore the influence that the Piedmont-Triad has had on the sport of stockcar racing.

One of the first stockcar races in the Piedmont-Triad area brought the excitement and thrills of short track racing at night. The race was scheduled for September 6, 1940 at the Greensboro Fairgrounds. The *Greensboro Daily News* stated that this race, “under the lights at the fairgrounds will be the first ever attempted in stockcars in other than

¹² Robert Sullivan, ed., *American Speed: From Dirt Tracks to Indy to NASCAR*, (New York: Life Books, 2002).

¹³ Barbara Taylor, *When Racing Was Racing* (High Point, NC: High Point Museum, 2002).

daytime.”¹⁴ Among the entries listed for the event included local drivers Bill Sockwell, Paul Stanley, and the Miller brothers, Ernest and Loy. Among other out-of-town entries, “speed-demon Bill France” was also scheduled to compete in the 100-lap shoot out. The September 5th edition of the *Greensboro Daily News* established that the race was sure to be an exciting event with the local drivers vying for the win against the winning machine of Bill France.

He (France), as well as his supporters, may string with the belief that he is in the midst of a winning campaign, but if the crop of Carolinians already signed to take part in the race by Promoter Bruce Thompson get together and conspire, they may put a stop to the string of successes right out at the fairgrounds on the only lighted track in the south.¹⁵

Local driver Paul Stanley was noted as a favorite to win. He won “the first stockcar race in this section of the South, that at Salisbury (North Carolina) in 1939.”¹⁶ The local papers never mentioned the winner of the race, though, a clear link between Bill France and racing in the Triad was established as early as 1940.

The construction of a new race track in High Point, North Carolina, created a promising opportunity for stockcar racing to come and grow in the Piedmont-Triad. Under construction since April of 1940, the mile oval was, “Destined to be second only in importance to the 2½ mile brick Indianapolis Speedway...”¹⁷ The mile dirt track was considered to be one of the fastest in the country, reaching speeds of 120 miles per hour after the dirt had been treated with “either oil or calcium chloride.”¹⁸ Grandstands were built to hold a capacity of 10,000 people, with parking capacity for accommodating

¹⁴ “Local Drivers Enter Stock Car Auto Race,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 4 September 1940.

¹⁵ “Bill France Feared in Local Auto Race,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 5 September 1940.

¹⁶ “Stanley Outstanding Favorite to Capture Auto Race Tonight,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 6 September 1940.

¹⁷ “Finishing Up Mile Oval for Initial Test,” *High Point Enterprise*, 3 October 1940.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

nearly 50,000 cars. The first race at the High Point Motor Speedway was scheduled for October 20, 1940. The American Automobile Association (AAA) sponsored the race. This race was not a stockcar event, but included Indianapolis-style cars or open-wheel racers.

The second event held at the High Point track was a stock car event which related to the local public and fans in the Triad through the use of automobiles that they actually owned. The stock car event was dubbed the “South Atlantic Championship Stock Car Race.”¹⁹ The 100-mile event was scheduled for May 11, 1941. Drivers from as far away as New York, Florida, and Georgia came to compete in the event.²⁰ The May 11th *High Point Enterprise* stated that, “Most of these daredevils of the track are ready to ‘burn’ up the new mile-long runway that was completed last year...”²¹ Atlanta driver Harley Taylor picked up the victory, and captured the Championship in front of 6,000 spectators. The race was not without incident, as Norfolk, Virginia driver Eldridge Tadlock lost his life in a violent crash during one of the warm-up heats. According to the May 12th *High Point Enterprise*, “Tadlock received severe head and chest injuries when the car landed on him after he had been thrown out.”²²

The second strictly-stock event in High Point was the third total event held at the speedway, and proved that the dangers in racing were once again real and potentially life changing. Billed as the 150-mile Championship Stockcar Race, the track had received a special treatment of, “liquid asphalt, (which) according to track officials has made the one mile course faster than it has been in the past, and has successfully eliminated all dust

¹⁹ Taylor, 26.

²⁰ “Smokey Purser to Race Sunday,” *High Point Enterprise*, 9 May 1941.

²¹ “100-Mile Event Scheduled For Speedway at 3,” *High Point Enterprise*, 11 May 1941.

²² “Virginian Dies in a Crash Prior to Big Event,” *High Point Enterprise*, 12 May 1941.

from the racing sport here.”²³ Entries came for the June 29th event from all areas of the eastern coast of the United States, however, one particular entry stuck out as notable. Local driver Bill Blair from High Point competed in the 150-mile event. Lloyd Seay won the event, while Blair finished third in the featured race. Bill France, the founder of NASCAR, was involved in a serious wreck during the first segment of the race, rolling three times down the front-stretch. He escaped the wreck without serious injury.²⁴

The fourth race at the High Point Speedway was only the third and final stockcar race ever held at the track. Slated as the National Championship Stockcar Race, the event was scheduled to run on August 31, 1941. The *High Point Enterprise* noted that the race was sure to bring action.

With the day of the race not far away, around a score of well-known racing drivers from all sections of the country have been listed for the championship race on the one-mile racing course, and the sharply banked track, largest of its kind between Pennsylvania and Georgia, is designed to see plenty of action when the field sweeps by the starter’s flag Sunday.²⁵

Local drivers Jimmie Lewallen, Bill Blair and Joe Blair were all entered to race. The *High Point Enterprise* commented that a variety of racing experience would exist in the race stating that, “A strange dissimilarity was struck between two drivers - Joe Blair from High Point, who drives for the first time in a race Sunday, and Harley Taylor of Atlanta, Ga., who enters upon his 13th year of racing.”²⁶ Lloyd Seay, winner of the previous race at High Point, won again driving his Ford. Second place went to Bill France. The race experienced one major wreck in which Fort Mill, South Carolina driver Harold Mullins overturned his car several times. His injuries include severe eye damage resulting in the

²³ “Stock Car Race Promises Thrills,” *High Point Enterprise*, 27 June 1941.

²⁴ Bill Currie, Jr., “Snowden Takes Second; Mathis Takes Third,” *High Point Enterprise*, 30 June 1941.

²⁵ “Stock Car Race Entries Mounting,” *High Point Enterprise*, 28 August 1941.

²⁶ “Five Races for Sunday Schedule,” *High Point Enterprise*, 30 August 1941.

potential loss of one, thought the paper did not specify if he did, and painful back injuries.²⁷ This race ended the lifespan of the High Point Motor Speedway, as World War II began.

Racing in the Piedmont-Triad, as well as the rest of the nation, screeched to a stand-still at the end of 1941. The United States entered World War II, and southern stock-car racing contributed its part in the war effort with manpower and, “the rationing of gas, tires and other items.”²⁸ Jerry Bledsoe states, “World War II brought most tracks racing to a temporary halt, but at the war’s end stock car racing came back stronger than ever, and the old crowd was there, as rough and rowdy as ever.”²⁹ This was true for most tracks throughout the nation, but not for High Point Motor Speedway. At the start of the war, the track was closed due to rationing, and the fact that racing was banned. The Baity brothers whom had owned the track, decided to sell the track due to the cost of up-keep during the war. At one point, Bill Blair and his brothers debated on whether or not to purchase the track, grandstands and land, but decided against it.³⁰ The track, grandstand and all acreage of land was sold at auction to Deales Hedgecock. Hedgecock tore down the large grandstand, sold the lumber, and destroyed a majority of the track.³¹ The once open field that had turned into the premier racing facility in the South was once again a field.

Many of the early drivers and people involved with racing in the Piedmont-Triad were actively involved in the armed services and supporting roles. Jimmie Lewallen, a future driver of the NASCAR circuit, was a soldier in the U.S. Army during the European

²⁷ “Seay Winner at Speedway,” *High Point Enterprise*, 1 September 1941.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bledsoe, 49.

³⁰ Bill Blair, Jr., interview by author, Thomasville, NC, 30 October 2004.

³¹ Taylor, 27.

Theater of Operations. His son, Gary Lewallen, recalls his father being in, “one of the waves that hit the beach of Normandy, spent four years in the ETO, which included North Africa... and Belgium, which was called ‘Hitler’s Lair’.”³² Lewallen also made note of his father’s Bronze Star with clusters, several Service Metals, and several Battlefield Commissions.³³ The war also put a halt to much of Big Bill France’s plans to develop a stockcar circuit series. Hagstrom refers to France’s contribution in the war noting, “France’s mechanical skills were sent to the shipyards to build submarine chasers, but his mind was constantly working on plans to improve the business of racing.”³⁴

Part of the appeal of the automobile to the average southern Piedmont boy, both before and after World War II, was the mechanical abilities that they had picked up in both the war, and in their own back yard. Barbara Taylor defines these individuals as “Backyard Mechanics”. She notes that, “If a car was wrecked, the driver with friends, often worked late into the night, until they got the car back into running shape... Drivers frequently ran two or three races a week, requiring mechanical knowledge to keep the car running well.”³⁵ Dan Pierce refers to these drivers as “Shade Tree Mechanics”.

As important as the ability to drive an automobile was for men of the piedmont, it became equally necessary to know how to repair them. Indeed, the “shade-tree” mechanic developed into an enduring regional icon. There was a practical side to the significance of mechanical skill as the cheap automobiles that piedmont workers could afford often required repairs. In addition, developing mechanical skill became an important way of advancement in the mill environment and even a way out of the mills or off the farm and into more interesting, less confining – if not more lucrative – work in a garage, body shop or auto dealership.³⁶

³² Gary Lewallen, interview by author, Archdale, NC, 29 August 2004.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Hagstrom, 27.

³⁵ Taylor, 6.

³⁶ Pierce, *Bib Overalls and Bad Teeth*, 11-12.

Local driver Fred Harb recalls, “About every one of them, Jimmie Lewallen, the whole bunch, they just started working on their car in the backyard; everyone was working that way.”³⁷ Gary Lewallen recalls his father as being linked to this “Backyard Mechanic” ideal. When asked if his father worked late hours into the night, he states “Absolutely. He kept us out there even when I was a teenager, running local tracks. We’d work till one, two, three o’clock in the morning trying to get the car ready for the weekend, having to do it about every night after school. It was a family deal.”³⁸ These dedicated mechanics and families put their heart and soul into a racecar. The terms “Backyard Mechanic” and “Shade-Tree Mechanic”, are unique to these types of racers.

Once the war ended in 1945, racing resumed on many of the old racetracks in the in the Piedmont-Triad. They re-opened their gates to loyal fans who wanted to see the show on dirt. Mark Howell expressed the fans’ desire saying, “Our society was anxious to get back on the road following World War II, and NASCAR was all set to take road cars and race them into the history books.”³⁹ During 1946, Bill France returned to promote local races. One of these races was held on August 4, 1946 at the Greensboro Fairgrounds. Among the competitors entered in the event was local driver Jimmie Lewallen.⁴⁰ Billed as the Carolina Title Race, the 30-lap main event boasted that it would include, “More than Thirty... World’s Greatest Drivers.”⁴¹ Ed Samples won the race, adding the Carolinas Title, “to his growing list of stock car victories...”⁴²

³⁷ Fred Harb, interview by author, High Point, NC, 28 August 2004.

³⁸ Lewallen, personal interview.

³⁹ Howell, 12.

⁴⁰ “France Announces Additional Entries for Stock Races,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 1 August 1946.

⁴¹ “100 Laps, Stock Car, Auto Races,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 4 August 1946.

⁴² “Samples Adds Carolinas Stock Car Title to List,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 5 August 1946.

As this wave of racing resumed, Bill France began promoting races again under the National Championship Stock Car Circuit (NCSCC), after he was unable to secure active involvement from AAA for stockcar racing.⁴³ This series was a precursor to NASCAR which would be founded roughly a year later. One race held under the sanction of the NCSCC was at the Greensboro Fairgrounds on June 15, 1947. The bill listed this race as the North Carolina Sprint Championships. A June 8th article in the Greensboro Daily News noted that the upcoming race would surely tighten the points standings stating, “(Buddy) Shuman holds a slim lead on first place with 330 points, just 10 more than (Bob) Flock, while (Ed) Samples, 1946 champion, is in third with 290 points to his credit.”⁴⁴ Among the drivers slated to participate in the event were local drivers Bill Blair and Jimmie Lewallen. An article in the June 15, 1947 *Greensboro Daily News* states, “Bill France, the man who puts on the stock car thrillers throughout Dixie, opined last night that there would be more ‘hot cars,’ racing lingo for the fastest drivers and mechanics, in todays race than any this season. There is no conflicting race today.”⁴⁵ The June 15, 1947 *High Point Enterprise* predicted, “one of the largest crowds in Southern race history to be on hand...”⁴⁶ Racing legend Bob Flock won the main event in front of 9,000 spectators. Flock won the race, however, with some extra special help from the fans watching the race. Flock turned his car over in a wreck, but no serious damage incurred. The *Greensboro Daily News* stated, “Like other wrecks it wasn’t anywhere near as serious, and folks flipped Flock’s car over on its wheels.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Hagstrom, 27-28.

⁴⁴ “Stock Cars Battle Again Next Sunday,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 8 July 1947.

⁴⁵ “Top Stock Car Racers at Fairgrounds Today,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 15 June 1947.

⁴⁶ “Championship Stock Car Slated for Greensboro,” *High Point Enterprise*, 15 June 1947.

⁴⁷ “Flock Car Paces Hot Stock Cars but Flock of Wrecks Takes Show,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 16 June 1947.

Promotions of specific races were common for local tracks, giving flashy names to a race to attract a crowd. The August 24, 1947 race at the Greensboro Fairgrounds was dubbed the Carolina Championship Stock Car race. A total of 101 laps were slated for running, including a 50 lap main event. Local drivers Bill Blair and Jimmie Lewallen from High Point and Henry Weavil of Winston Salem entered the race.⁴⁸ In the August 24th, 1947 *Greensboro Daily News*, time trial runs from the previous day yielded the track record being broken three times. In the actual race, the track record was officially set by Red Byron, winner of the race.⁴⁹ Although close to 10,000 fans saw the track record broken, the *Greensboro Daily News* reported, “the diversion of the afternoon was furnished by the three drivers who took off through the wooden fences. None was injured with all getting up and walking away. One vehicle turned over into the crowd, but fortunately no one was hurt that time either.”⁵⁰ The *National Speed Sport News* notes that, “Byron had to make room in the crowd’s favor for the fence-busting tactics of the 35-automobile field... Gordon Bryant and Harry Earle of Greensboro and Tim Flock of Atlanta, GA., ripped new holes in the wooden stockade, while the wrecker was kept just as busy Sunday.”⁵¹

Pre-existing tracks often had to expand their grandstands to accommodate all of the fans coming to see the action. Before the next race at the Greensboro Fairgrounds, the High Point Enterprise reported, “To take care of the huge throng, extra entrances to the track and addition grandstand seats have been erected.”⁵² Entries for the September

⁴⁸ “101 Laps of Racing on Greensboro Track Today,” *High Point Enterprise*, 24 August 1947.

⁴⁹ “Byron Breaks Track Record; Flock Favored,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 24 August 1947.

⁵⁰ “Byron Wins Stock Car Feature Race as Fairground Fence Takes Beating,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 25 August 1947.

⁵¹ Al Jennings, “Thrilling Stock Car Race at Greensboro,” *National Speed Sport News*, 3 September 1947.

⁵² “Stock Racers to Run in Greensboro,” *High Point Enterprise*, 27 September 1947.

28th race included local drivers Bill Blair and Jimmie Lewallen. The event was marred with several cautions for wrecks that included such big names as Ed Samples, Bob Flock and Buck Baker. Bob's brother Fonty Flock won the 60-lap feature event in front of 8,000 fans.

Another promotional tool used to entice local fans to come to the track focused on using an on-track feud that was sure to create action and excitement. The October 4, 1947 Greensboro Fairgrounds race brought heated feuds from a previous race. The Greensboro Daily News reported that, "there is a slight misunderstanding between Bob, and his younger brother, Fonty (Flock). It seems this little disagreement stemmed from the accident last Sunday when Bob slid wide in the first turn of the initial heat and pushed Fonty into the fence – an act which Fonty didn't take too kindly."⁵³ The paper also reported that a second feud, "the most deadly, is the little feud between Bob (Flock) and Ed Samples, 1946 national champion, which flares anew each time the duo meets on the Greensboro track. Samples is the boy carrying hard feelings, since Bob has caused him two first place finishes."⁵⁴ The Greensboro Daily News also noted that championship stockcar racing in Greensboro had, "attracted more spectators than any single Summertime sports event in the Gate City..."⁵⁵ Local drivers that entered the event included Jimmie Lewallen, Bill Blair and Pap White, all of High Point, along with Henry Weavil and Bernie Sayles of Winston-Salem.⁵⁶ Ed Samples won the featured 30-lap race in front of 4,500 spectators.

⁵³ "Track Feuds Feature Stock Car Race Here Saturday Afternoon," *Greensboro Daily News*, 3 October 1947.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "Samples Favored in Finale for Stock Cars Here Today," *Greensboro Daily News*, 4 October 1947.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The influence of local Piedmont-Triad drivers contributed to the founding of NASCAR in the most direct ways. There are stories and disagreements with the France family as to when and where the first meeting to discuss the organization of the business took place. Jimmie Lewallen was one of the original drivers that competed in the first race that was sponsored under the NASCAR banner at the old Charlotte Speedway.⁵⁷ Born and raised in High Point, North Carolina, Lewallen originally raced motorcycles before moving to stockcars. Lewallen contradicts the story of the first meeting. Gary Lewallen, Jimmie's son, recently pointed out in a personal interview that his father claims he, along with several other drivers, were all present at a meeting on October 12, 1947 in Atlanta with France at the Rex Hotel. Gary Lewallen recalls his father's story stating, "...they discussed starting an organization, they came up NASCAR name."⁵⁸ Barbara Taylor asserts, "High Point drivers Bill Blair, Sr. and Jimmie Lewallen were there with 11 others. Fellow driver Red Vogt drew a sketch of what was later to become the NASCAR logo..."⁵⁹ Peter Golenbock asserts France's official opinion of when he helped develop NASCAR when he says, "On December 12, 1947, William Henry Getty France gathered racing promoters from around the Southeast for a meeting at the Ebony Bar atop the Streamline Inn in Daytona Beach." France was elected president of the new organization at this meeting.⁶⁰ France and his group ran the 1948 season as a test year for the company by running strictly stockcars and a modified series. The actual first season of strictly stockcar racing occurred in 1949.⁶¹ This is the official story and first

⁵⁷ "Jimmie Lewallen Career Statistics," n.d., <<http://www.racing-reference.com/driver?id=lewalji01>> (01 October 2004).

⁵⁸ Lewallen, personal interview.

⁵⁹ Taylor, 5.

⁶⁰ Golenbock, *American Zoom*, 69-72.

⁶¹ Fielden, 6.

meeting of the founding of NASCAR that the France family affirms, even with contradictions from those involved at the heart of the sport.

Local racetracks that were built by area businessmen also became prominent during this period. Though most of these arenas were small dirt tracks that were not widely known outside of a local region, the greatest and best drivers of the era were drawn to them, regardless of purse size or popularity. One track built in Lexington, North Carolina fit the bill of a small, local dirt track measuring 5/8 of a mile. It was built between 1947 and 1948 at the height of short track growth by local businesses and corporations.⁶² Greg Fielden notes that “Fifty-two championship Modified meets comprised the 1948 slate...”⁶³ Lexington and its new Lakeview speedway held five dates on the slate.⁶⁴ The first race scheduled for Lexington was to be held on April 11, 1948. However a problem occurred that has plagued NASCAR from its earliest beginnings to the current day. The April 12th edition of *The Dispatch* describes that, “Rain Saturday night and yesterday morning forced postponement of the Lakeview Speedway stock car races scheduled for yesterday afternoon.”⁶⁵

The make-up date for rained out events usually was placed strategically in the season for when a duel or conflict between drivers would play itself out during the race for the fans. The make-up date for this race was May 2, 1948. *The Dispatch* noted that “the stage is set for one of the greatest two-man duels ever witnessed on any track in the nation, with the prize plum being the leadership of the national point standings.”⁶⁶

Racing legends Fonty Flock and Red Byron were fighting it out from previous weeks’

⁶² “Lakeview Speedway Races Next Sunday Afternoon,” *The Dispatch*, 8 April 1948.

⁶³ Fielden, 6.

⁶⁴ “NASCAR Stock Car Racing Schedule Released to Date,” *National Speed Sport News*, 31 March 1948.

⁶⁵ “Speedway Races Now Set For May 2, Rained Out Here,” *The Dispatch*, 12 April 1948.

⁶⁶ “Nation’s Finest Stock Car Racers To Be Here Sunday,” *The Dispatch*, 29 April 1948.

events to be the sole leader of the points. The event itself encountered several problems during its running. Once again, weather played a part in the race with rain, hail and winds all slowing the action, yet the race continued on after the brief intermission even though thousands of fans left or took cover from the storm. Several accidents also slowed competition with cars crashing into one another and several cars falling down an embankment after missing the “tricky back turn”.⁶⁷ Red Byron won the event and the \$2,500 first prize. In fact, according to *The Dispatch*, the only serious injury from the event was a fan that was, “brought to town for medical treatment by a ready ambulance was some fellow reported ‘beaned’ with a soft drink bottle.”⁶⁸ Lakeview Speedway hosted four more events for the 1948 season, however, lost its races upon the start of the strictly stock division of NASCAR in 1949.

After the war, many new tracks began to emerge alongside the old dirt tracks. These new tracks were faster and more reliable. In the Triad, one such track opened in 1947. Named Tri-City Speedway, the track was built, owned and operated by the Blair family, including local driver Bill Blair. The track was built on land owned by Blair’s brother, Bob. Eventually, Bill Blair dissolved his part of the partnership with his brother and sister-in-law, but he still raced at the track in several races.⁶⁹ Blair’s sister-in-law, Mary Lee, handled promotion for the 100-mile event. “Big Bill” France commonly allowed local track owners to handle promotion of a hometown race, while he supplied the famous drivers, cars and purse money. On June 26, 1953, the series came to Tri-City Speedway in High Point.⁷⁰ Top drivers stated in the June 25th *High Point Enterprise* that,

⁶⁷ “Stock Car Races Are Held Despite Storm Yesterday,” *The Dispatch*, 3 May 1948.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Blair, Jr., personal interview.

⁷⁰ Fielden, 123-124.

“the track already has the reputation for speed.”⁷¹ Fonty Flock stated that Tri-City Speedway was, “...banked nicely. That helps a lot. Then you have that hard red clay. You don’t slip on that like you do on most other tracks. You stick to it.”⁷² Herb Thomas led 182 laps of the slated 200 to pick up the victory. The race itself was conducted at night, which for its time was a race commodity.⁷³ The June 27th *High Point Enterprise* estimated that, “A crowd of about 4,000 fans watched the 23-car field trimmed to 13 at the end.”⁷⁴ Local racers Lee Petty, Jim Paschal, Jimmie Lewallen, Bill Blair and Bob Welborn participated in this race.

The popularity of the local tracks with both fans and drivers brought other famous drivers from the South, as well as other parts of the nation, coming to race during the 1954-1955 seasons. Only one other NASCAR sanctioned, strictly-stock race was conducted at Tri-City Speedway. Greg Fielden describes this race as a “100-mile Grand National lid-lifter for the 1955 season...”⁷⁵ Promoted by Oscar and Vernon Ellington, the race was scheduled for November 7, 1954 as the first race for the 1955 season.⁷⁶ Various big name drivers were slated to run for the \$4,100 purse, including, “a brand new Cadillac, to be piloted by North Wilkesboro’s Junior Johnson.”⁷⁷ The *High Point Enterprise* reported that the Ellington brothers had leased Tri-City for the event, noting that, “they plan to keep the track, rated one of the best in the Piedmont, alive and buzzing in the future if things go well.”⁷⁸ The brothers even printed a letter addressed to the racing fans of High Point asking fans to come out to the race, promising to live up to their

⁷¹ “Lewallen, Blair Set for Battle,” *High Point Enterprise*, 25 June 1953.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Thomas Sweeps To Win in Tri-City Race Here,” *High Point Enterprise*, 27 June 1953.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Fielden, 176.

⁷⁶ “Field Fast Filling Up for Stock Outing Here,” *High Point Enterprise*, 5 November 1954.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Top Drivers Entered in Local Race,” *High Point Enterprise*, 7 November 1954.

word on providing drivers and to run all the laps as advertised.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the race did not meet the great expectations of the Ellington brothers as only 2,000 attended the race due to wintry weather conditions. Local driver Lee Petty won the race and a winner's purse totaling \$1,000. High Pointer Jimmie Lewallen ran fifth and collected \$300 for his efforts.⁸⁰ This was the final strictly-stock NASCAR race at Tri-City, but racing continued there for several years. Bill Blair, Jr. recalled that, "probably the last race was ran there in 1957 or thereabouts, possibly 1958."⁸¹ The track was dismantled shortly thereafter and turned into a golf course, while other parts of the land were sold for other purposes.⁸² Racing on the main circuits never returned to High Point again.

Another track that came on the Grand National circuit from a local or state fairground was Forsyth County Fairgrounds in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Later known as Dixie Fairgrounds, the track was originally built for motorcycles and horse racing. Barbara Taylor asserts that, "the half-mile dirt oval was built circa 1929."⁸³ During the 1955 Grand National NASCAR season, two races were held at the fairgrounds. In fact, they were the only two strictly-stock events held at the track.⁸⁴ The first of the two races took place on May 19, 1955. The 200-lap event was slated to carry a total purse of \$4,200.⁸⁵ On the day of the race, the *Winston-Salem Journal* reported that event promoter Charlie Combs, "predicted that the 300-horsepower Chryslers driven by several of the racers will reach 100 miles per hour or more on the straightaways."⁸⁶

Among local drivers that competed in the race were Lee Petty, Jim Paschal, Bob

⁷⁹ "To: The Stock Car Fans of High Point and Vicinity," *High Point Enterprise*, 7 November 1954.

⁸⁰ Fielden, 176.

⁸¹ Blair, Jr., personal interview.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Taylor, 25.

⁸⁴ Fielden, 188, 196-197.

⁸⁵ "Late-Model Cars to Test Fairgrounds Oval Today," *Winston-Salem Journal*, 29 May 1955.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Welborn, and Bill Blair. Other notable names from other parts of the South included the Flock brothers, Tim and Fonty, Buck Baker and Junior Johnson. For this race, “A crowd of 6,500 watched a caution filled contest. In all, eight yellow flags interrupted the action.” Lee Petty won the 100-mile event, with High Point native Jim Paschal coming in second. Petty collected \$1,000 for the victory.⁸⁷

As NASCAR grew, local drivers that drove on smaller series began to drive on the top circuit. The other race ran at the Forsyth County Fairgrounds took place on August 7, 1955. The *Winston-Salem Journal* stated that among the potential favorites for the upcoming race was, “(Billy) Myers, who dominates sportsman racing but has yet to win a strictly-stock, late model event.”⁸⁸ Including Myers, other local entries consisted of Lee Petty, Jim Paschal and Bob Welborn. According to the August 8th *Winston-Salem Journal*, 5,500 attended the race and saw Lee Petty once again beat Jim Paschal for the victory.⁸⁹ Local racer Billy Myers finished 9th in the field. In only two races at the track, Lee Petty dominated 100% of the time.

Traditional dirt tracks in the Piedmont-Triad continued to see racing well into the mid-1950s. NASCAR and its strictly stock division returned to Greensboro and the fairgrounds dirt track during the 1957 season and again during the 1958 season. During the 1957 season, two races were held at the one-third of a mile oval. The first race occurred on April 28, 1957 in the newly named Greensboro Agricultural Fairgrounds. Local drivers Lee Petty, Jim Paschal, and Billy Myers all competed in the race. Paul Goldsmith won the race with Lee Petty finishing highest among the local drivers in 6th

⁸⁷ Fielden, 188.

⁸⁸ “Petty and Flock Resume Duel Today in Grand National at Fairgrounds,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 7 August 1955.

⁸⁹ “Lee Petty Takes Lead on 126th Lap, Wins Grand National 2d Time Here,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 8 August 1955.

place.⁹⁰ The Greensboro Agricultural Fairgrounds was once again renamed before the next race, and was now called the Central Carolina Fairgrounds. The second strictly stock race was held on October 27, 1957. Slated as the final race of the '57 season, this race included local drivers Fred Harb, Whitey Norman, Ken Rush and Lee Petty. Rookie driver Ken Rush of High Point won the pole position for this race. Legendary driver Buck Baker won the race, ending the season a victor and a champion.⁹¹ The final race in Greensboro occurred during the 1958 season. The race was scheduled as the 16th race of the season and occurred on May 11, 1958. Local drivers Lee Petty, Fred Harb, Bob Welborn and Harvey Hege all participated in the race. Driving a car entered by Lee Petty's brother, Julian, hometown racer Bob Welborn held off Lee Petty by a full lap to win the race.⁹² This was the final race Greensboro would see on the strictly stock division circuit.

Dirt tracks, which most all Piedmont-Triad tracks were, began to disappear from the main NASCAR circuit after the mid-1950s, giving way to new asphalt surfaces. Racing in Winston-Salem moved from the fairgrounds to Bowman Gray Stadium for the 1958 season. The asphalt track hosted two strictly stock races in 1958. The *Winston-Salem Journal* noted that, "Prior to this season, sanctioning NASCAR did not count races toward the Grand National title unless they were on tracks of half a mile or longer."⁹³ Bowman Gray measured only a quarter of a mile. The first race at Bowman Gray took place on May 24, 1958. Among the local entries in the race were Bob Welborn, Fred

⁹⁰ Fielden, 268-269.

⁹¹ Fielden, 295-296.

⁹² Fielden, 311.

⁹³ Hank Schoolfield, "Grand National Draws 30-Plus Cars," *Winston-Salem Journal*, 24 May 1958.

Harb, Ken Rush, Paul Walton, Lee Petty and Harvey Hege.⁹⁴ A crowd of 6,700 came to the night race to see Bob Welborn of Greensboro win the race.⁹⁵ The second race at Bowman Gray also occurred at night on August 22, 1958. Hank Schoolfield reported that, “The best talent in the world of stock car racing moves into Bowman Gray Stadium tonight to challenge Bob Welborn’s recent monopoly on the quarter-mile asphalt course.”⁹⁶ Local contenders included Lee Petty, Ken Rush, Fred Harb, and Bob Welborn. Another addition to the field of local talent was a new young driver named Richard Petty, whom had made his first start only a month earlier. Local racer Lee Petty, however, overshadowed his son to win the 200-lap race in front of 12,000 fans. A future star, the young Richard Petty finished 20th out of 23 cars.⁹⁷ NASCAR’s premier series continued racing at Bowman Gray Stadium until 1971, which was the last track in the Triad to compete on this level.

Several explanations can be given to answer why the Piedmont-Triad area has somewhat fallen from its important place in NASCAR’s premier series. However, one argument tends to give the best reason. During the peak era of stockcar racing in the Triad, around the late 1940’s, most all of the tracks that saw action on the circuit were small, dirt tracks that held a small crowd. Robert Hagstrom defines the change in NASCAR that took racing away from these small dirt tracks.

The 1960s became the decade of superspeedways. With each passing season, the new big tracks – tracks with big attendance, big purses, and big action – got most of the attention. The pendulum was shifting away from short tracks, a change that was already evident when the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company entered the

⁹⁴ Fielden, 314.

⁹⁵ Hank Schoolfield, “6,700 See Bob Welborn Win Grand National at Stadium,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 25 May 1958.

⁹⁶ Hank Schoolfield, “Top Talent in Racing to Challenge Welborn’s ‘Monopoly’ Here Tonight,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 22 August 1958.

⁹⁷ Fielden, 321.

sport... (In 1972, R.J. Reynolds proposed a deal: it would sponsor NASCAR's top racing series if NASCAR would reduce the number of races from forty-six to thirty-one... Which races were cut to accommodate Reynolds? Primarily the ones held at short tracks... In addition to their length, all the tracks had one other common trait: They typically attracted no more than 5,000 people for a NASCAR event.⁹⁸

The tracks that were located in the Triad were mostly dirt, and NASCAR was moving towards a safer establishment on pavement or asphalt. However, it is partly the Triad's fault that racing left it behind because it failed to build a large facility to attract NASCAR's attention. Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, North Carolina is the closest active track on the NASCAR Nextel Cup circuit. Ironically, a Triad company, RJR Tobacco called for this move to large facilities to accommodate a large crowd, which in turn allows for a greater profit.

Stock car racing in the Piedmont-Triad in many ways changed the sport as it is known today. This area of North Carolina produced many of the great early drivers that raced in NASCAR's top series. However, these early competitors were unlike the drivers of today. In many ways, these early era competitors paved the way for where the sport is today. Bill Blair, Jr. commented on the dedication of these early drivers in a recent interview.

You sorta... You know you sitting on pins and needles waiting for something to break. And today they still have problems, but these guys driving the cars today, they wouldn't get out of an electric chair to get in one of those cars back then. And I reckon the point I'm making is that it was a tough deal. You got out of a racecar back then and your hands would be bloody from blisters. Were your goggles were, it would be white, but all around it would be red from dirt and sweat. It would cake your face, and you would be spitting red dirt for days.⁹⁹

Fred Harb comments on his fellow competitors saying, "We did a lot of fighting, but we helped each other. It's a business thing now."¹⁰⁰ Times were different. Tracks were

⁹⁸ Hagstrom, 109-110.

⁹⁹ Blair, Jr., personal interview.

different. Safety rules and regulations changed drastically in the early years. Harb recalls his first race, “in Pageland, South Carolina. I drove a 1934 Ford, and used an army pistol belt for a safety belt.”¹⁰¹ Safety progressed through the experiences of the early races and the driver’s preferences.

Today NASCAR is still influenced heavily by the Piedmont region of North Carolina. Dan Pierce notes that today, “the vast majority of Winston (now Nextel) Cup team garages, crews and drivers are located within a hundred mile radius of Charlotte, NC.”¹⁰² Stockcar facilities and garages that continue to reside in the Triad today include Richard Childress Racing, located in Welcome, North Carolina, Petty Enterprises, located in Level Cross, North Carolina, Roush Racing, located in Liberty, North Carolina, Bill Davis Racing, located in High Point, North Carolina, and Kirk Shelmerdine Racing, located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. There are also several Busch Series and Craftsman Truck Series teams located sporadically in the Piedmont-Triad area. Alderman, Webb, Mitchell and Hanak point out that NASCAR did not start serious expansion outside the South until the early 1990’s with the growth of sponsorship and television coverage.¹⁰³ These local drivers were at the beginning of the sport in driving, mechanical and cultural roles during this era, and should be credited with starting these new trends.

When you look at the early races, the personal stories of those involved, and the drivers that were there at the beginning, it is easy to see the dedication, the tears and the

¹⁰⁰ Harb, personal interview.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Dan Pierce, “The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions,” *Southern Cultures* 7, no. 2 (2001): 9.

¹⁰³ Derek Alderman, Preston Mitchell, Jeffery Webb, and Derek Hanak, “Carolina Thunder Revisited: Toward a Transcultural View of Winston Cup Racing,” *Professional Geographer* 55, no. 2 (2003): 242.

motivation that these drivers used to push their beloved sport. Fred Harb pointed out that racing in the starting period of the sport was not for the money, but it was, “for the sport. Now it’s a completely different thing.”¹⁰⁴ These start-up years proved to be a learning curve for drivers, promoters, car manufacturers, and fans alike. Bill Blair, Jr. commented that driving these cars was like driving, “on pins and needles waiting for something to break.”¹⁰⁵ What drew these early drivers into a cockpit of potential disaster? No one source has put together all the numbers of how many deaths or serious injury occurred behind the wheel of a stock-car, but the number is surely high.¹⁰⁶ These drivers were a rare breed that was at the fore-front of a new, exciting sport. Gary Lewallen commented that his father never dreamed the sport would grow to where it is today.¹⁰⁷ In an editorial note from the *National Speed Sport News* from May 5, 1948, an idea expressed about the growth of the sport sums up basically what is happening today.

We don’t profess to know all about stock cars, but from observation we can see this new type of thrill show is making a deep invasion on many important speedways, linking various new stock car associations into one strong, national association. There are people now being attracted to stock car racing who never cared to see a midget car or a big car race program who will now go out of their way to watch jalopies roll around out of curiosity to learn how much abuse a stock car can stand under the most unusual strain.¹⁰⁸

The first drivers of the strictly stock division had dedication and a love for the sport that paved the way in years to come for a change in American culture, politics and society. Without the contributions of the Piedmont-Triad region as a leader in the sport with drivers, mechanics, tracks and fans, the sport would appear drastically different today.

¹⁰⁴ Harb, personal interview.

¹⁰⁵ Blair, Jr., personal interview.

¹⁰⁶ Hemphill, 118.

¹⁰⁷ Lewallen, personal interview.

¹⁰⁸ “Stock Cars, Editorial,” *National Speed Sport News*, 5 May 1948.

Bibliography

Primary Material

Blair, Jr., Bill. Interviewed by Will Tate. 30 October 2004.

Fielden, Greg. *Forty Years of Stock Car Racing*, 4 vol. Surfside Beach, SC: The Garfield Press, 1990.

Golenbock, Peter. *American Zoom: Stock Car Racing – From the Dirt tracks to Daytona*. New York: MacmillanUSA, 1993

---. *The Last Lap: The Life and Times of NASCAR's Legendary Heroes*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1998.

Greensboro Daily News, 4 September 1940 – 5 October 1947.

Harb, Fred. Interviewed by Will Tate. 28 August 2004.

High Point Enterprise, 3 October 1940 – 12 May 1958.

Kay, William, and Carl Green, eds. *National Speed Sport News*. East Paterson, New Jersey: The Kay Publishing Company, August 1945 – August 1948.

Lewallen, Gary. Interviewed by Will Tate. 29 August 2004.

Winston-Salem Journal, 28 May 1955 – 23 August 1958.

Secondary Material

Alderman, Derek H., Preston W. Mitchell, Jeffrey T. Webb, and Derek Hanak. "Carolina Thunder Revisited: Toward a Transcultural View of Winston Cup Racing." *The Professional Geographer* 55, no. 2 (2003): 238-249.

Bledsoe, Jerry. *The World's Number One, Flat-Out, All-Time Great Stock Car Racing Book*. Asheboro, N.C.: Down Home Press, 1971.

Brown, Allan E. *History of America's Speedways, Past and Present*, 2nd ed. Comstock Park, MI: Slideways Publications, 1994.

Girdler, Allan. *Stock Car Racers: The History and Folklore of NASCAR's Premier Series*. Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers Inc., 1988.

- Hagstrom, Robert G. *The NASCAR Way: The Business that Drives the Sport*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998.
- Hall, Randal L. "Before NASCAR: The Corporate and Civic Promotion". *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (2002): 629 – 668.
- Hembree, Mike. *NASCAR: The Definitive History of America's Sport*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2000.
- Hemphill, Paul. *Wheels: A Season on NASCAR's Winston Cup Circuit*. New York: Berkley Books, 1997.
- Hinton, Ed. *Daytona : From the Birth of Speed to the Death of the Man in Black*. New York: Warner Books, 2001.
- Howell, Mark D. *From Moonshine to Madison Avenue: A Cultural History of the NASCAR Winston Cup Series*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997.
- "Jimmie Lewallen Career Statistics," n.d.,
 <<http://www.racingreference.com/driver?=lewalji01>> (01 October 2004).
- Pierce, Dan. "Bib Overalls and Bad Teeth: The Piedmont Working Class Roots of NASCAR". *Unpublished Manuscript*, Dan Pierce. University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2004.
- . "The Most Southern Sport on Earth: NASCAR and the Unions." *Southern Cultures* 7, no.2 (2001): 8-33.
- Taylor, Barbara. *When Racing Was Racing*. High Point, N.C.: High Point Museum, 2002.
- Sullivan, Robert, ed. *American Speed: From Dirt Tracks to Indy to NASCAR*. New York: Life Books, 2002.
- Wolfe, Tom. "The Last American Hero is Junior Johnson. Yes!." *Esquire*, March 1965, 1-17.