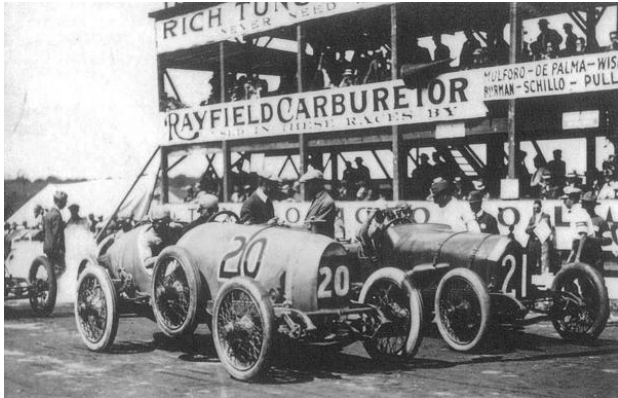

The Elgin Road Race

From 1910 to 1920 there was a big car race in Elgin. Thousands of people came to watch drivers zoom down Elgin roads.



Not too long after cars were invented, people wanted to see how fast they could go. Car races became popular and were fun for families to watch. In 1910, Elgin held its first race.

Drivers came from all over the country to try and win the big prize, \$1,000 and a silver trophy donated by the Elgin National Watch Company! Each car had a two man team, a driver and a mechanic. They wore leather caps and goggles but no other safety gear. The cars had no air bags, seatbelts, windshields or roofs! The race could be dangerous and there were accidents.

The race was not run on a track; it was held on Elgin's streets and roads. A lot of the route on was dirt and oiled gravel roads. Every car that passed made bigger bumps and holes in the road. Each lap was 8 miles and cars did 36 laps for a total of about 300 miles. If you were to



drive this route today, you would go past Larkin High School, up MacLean Blvd, down Highland Avenue and cross over Randall Road as you headed West towards Coombs Road.



The winner of the first race was Smiling Ralph Mulford. He drove an average of 62.5 miles an hour to win the race. The day before the race, Ralph practiced for hours so he knew how to handle the roads.

Congratulations Ralph!

Make Your Own Racing Goggles

Smiling Ralph Mulford and the other race car drivers wore goggles to protect their eyes. You can make your own racing goggles from a paper tube or a Pringles potato chip can. Ask a grown-up to help cut the paper tube into circles.

Use sidewalk chalk to draw out your race course. How fast can you do 36 laps?

