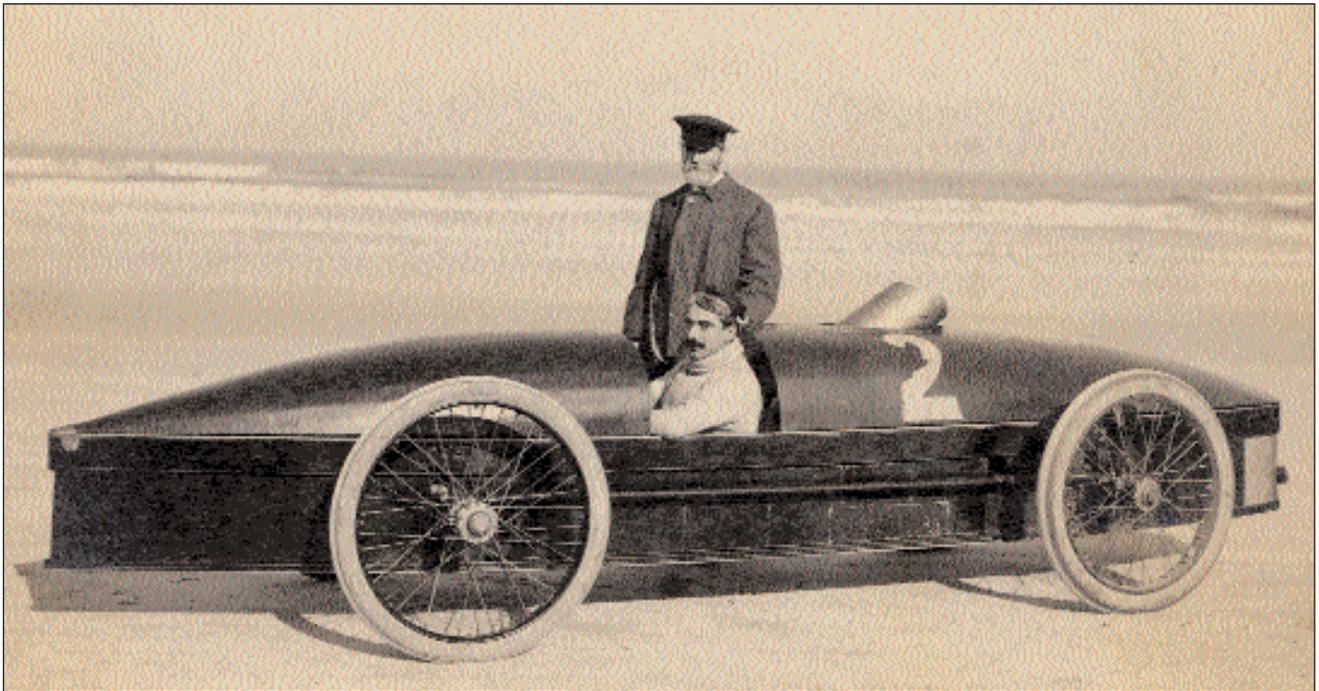


~ Press Kit ~

# Stanley Land Speed Record

## 1906 ~ Centennial ~ 2006

~127.659 mph, Friday, January 26~  
at the Birthplace of Speed  
Ormond Beach, Florida



*Stanley* MUSEUM

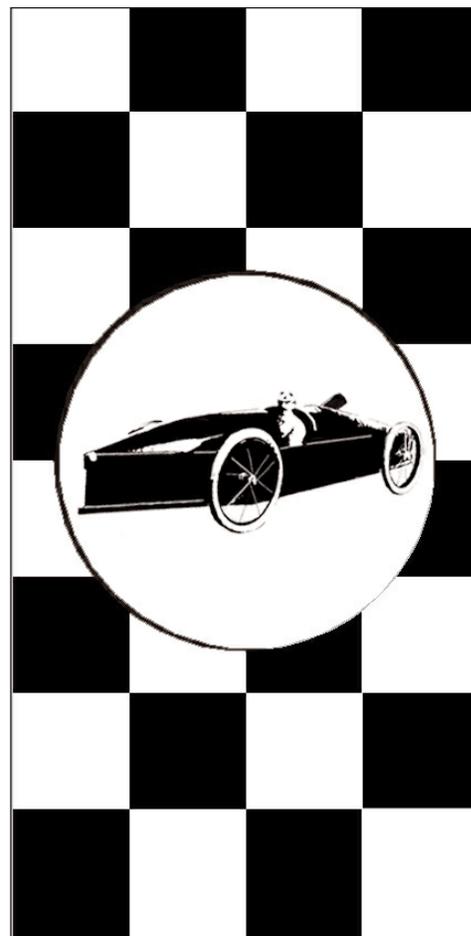
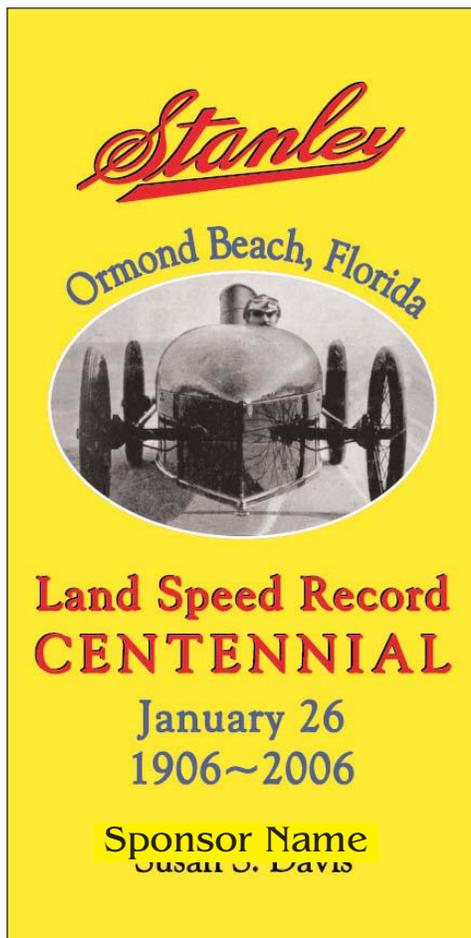
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www.birthplaceofspeed2006.com



*These sponsor banners—\$300 each or \$400 for the pair—will fly on the streets of Ormond Beach in January 2006, to be delivered to their owners after the Centennial. Call the Stanley Museum to order as an individual or business sponsor.*

**1-On front cover: F.E. Stanley with Marriott and racer, Ormond.** *Probably taken Sunday, January 28, 1906. Note the metal at the back of the car, denoting the repair when the engine cylinder blew out the day before. The number “2” was used on the car in both 1906 and 1907; this is the 1906 configuration.*

*Stanley Museum Archives*

## 1

## The history of speed in Ormond Beach

ORMOND BEACH, Fla. - In 1903, the smooth, hard-packed sands of Ormond Beach became a proving ground for automobile inventors and drivers. These first speed tournaments in the US earned Ormond the title “Birthplace of Speed.”

Records set here during speed trial tournaments for much of the next eight years would be the first significant marks recorded outside of Europe. Motorcycle and automobile owners and racers brought vehicles that used gasoline, steam and electric engines. They came from France, Germany, and England as well as from across the United States.

The Ormond Garage, the first gasoline alley before Indianapolis Speedway, was built in 1905 by Henry Flagler, owner of the Ormond Hotel, to accommodate participating race cars during the beach races. The Ormond Garage would house the drivers and mechanics during the speed time trials. Owners and manufacturers stayed, of course, at Flagler’s Ormond Hotel.

Tragically, the Ormond Garage caught fire and burned to the ground in 1976, destroying one

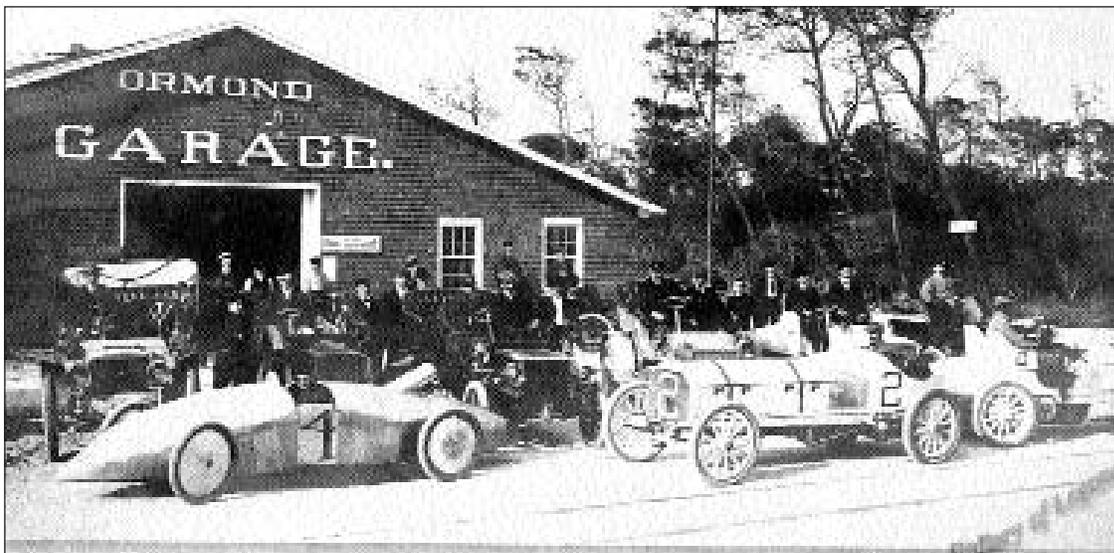
of auto history’s most important landmarks as well as antique cars owned by local residents who used the Garage as a museum. Sadly, all that remains is a historic marker, in front of SunTrust Bank, built on its ashes on East Granada Boulevard.

Racing on Ormond Beach started in 1902. But the city’s famous connection with racing began in 1903 when the Winton Bullet won a Challenge Cup against the Olds Pirate by two-tenths of a second. American records were set that year, and the world took notice.

The very next year, world records were set during the 1904 speed tournaments, including one for motorcycles that lasted for seven years — 67.36 mph set by Glenn H. Curtiss on his two-cylinder motorcycle. Though poorly organized, the event was a huge success, according to Dick Punnett’s book, *Racing on the Rim*.

Incredibly, the flying mile world record was broken three different times by three different drivers in a 30-minute period that same year. The standing record of 92.31 mph was broken by

*History continued on page 4*



**2-Ormond Garage.** *Louis Ross in his steam-powered “Wogglebug” #4 poses in 1905 with other participants in front of the new Ormond Garage, built by Ormond Hotel owner Henry Flagler in 1904, the year after the races started. The garage addition helped support the automobile tourism the new races on the beach were designed to attract.*  
Stanley Museum Archives

*History continued from page 3*

Louis Ross in his steam-powered racer, the famous Wogglebug, at 94.73 mph.

Five minutes later that record was broken by Arthur Macdonald in his Napier with a speed of 104.65 mph. The final—but unofficial—world record for the mile race went to H. L. Bowden, who drove his Mercedes at 109.76 mph to break the previously set record. That final time was later disallowed because Bowden's car weighed more than 1,000-kg, a limit set by the Automobile Club de France.

The Stanley legacy that led to Ormond Beach's longest-lasting automobile land speed record began in 1897. That year, twin brothers F.E. and F.O. Stanley from Massachusetts built their first steam car. By the turn of the century, their Stanley-Locomobile car was selling better than gas powered cars. The Stanleys competitive nature drove them to demonstrate their car's speed and durability.

With impressive wins and near-wins behind them by late 1905, F.E. Stanley designed, built and tested the Stanley Rocket, the most aerodynamic racer of the day. In January of 1906, the Rocket was brought to Ormond Beach to participate in the annual speed tournament.

January 26, 1906, F.E. Stanley's Rocket Racer, driven by dare-devil Fred Marriott, set the mark that became Ormond Beach's most famous land speed record. The incredible speed of 127.659 mph held for four years, a remarkable achievement in a speed age where records sometimes fell within the hour.

This record confirmed the reputation of Ormond-Daytona as the first proving ground for both auto racers and manufacturers. The Marriott record was finally broken in 1910 by 4 mph, when Barney Oldfield raced his Lightning Benz at 131.72 mph.

Racing moved to Indianapolis in 1911, but it wasn't long before Bill France and friends started racing on the beach, beginning what later became

NASCAR. Daytona Beach soon took over the game started by its neighbor to the north, becoming a racing juggernaut of its own, today ironically overshadowing even Indianapolis. A proud heritage by any standard.

In the meantime, Ormond is proud of its heritage as "Birthplace of Speed." In addition to the winter event that started with the 2003 Centennial, Ormond Beach has long celebrated this heritage with an annual Antique Car Show and nighttime Gaslight Parade on Thanksgiving Day weekend.

Organizations and places of business alike in Ormond Beach celebrate the city's history of speed. Historic Billy's Tap Room, located near The Casements, has many historic photographs. Woody's BBQ restaurant on Granada has a new dining room decorated with historic racing photographs and murals.

The MacDonald House, a Leisure Services facility for the city located on east Granada, is the headquarters and office for the Ormond Beach Historical Trust. The Trust maintains a small gallery with many photographs of the cars and personalities that drove and raced on the beach. It also has historic books and other items for sale.

The Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial at the Birthplace of Speed is being presented by the Stanley Museum in collaboration with Ormond Beach Leisure Services. Major sponsors include the Motor Racing Heritage Association, the Ormond Beach Historical Trust, Carrabba's Italian Grill and National Parts Depot.

####

## Nonprofit Organization Sponsors

### Stanley Museum

- Founded: 1981 in Kingfield, Maine (birthplace of the Stanleys);  
1997 in Estes Park, Colorado (F.O. Stanley businesses, including the Stanley Hotel (famous as inspiration for Stephen King's *The Shining* in 1974).
- Location: 1981: Kingfield, Maine: present headquarters;  
1997: Estes Park, Colorado: program & retail site.
- Mission: To keep and share ingenuity and creativity as represented by the Stanley Family in order to inspire those values in children and adults.
- Program areas: Steam cars, photography (Stanley Dry Plate Co. and sister Chansonetta Stanley Emmons's photography), airbrush, violins, social and intellectual history of the era.
- Members: Approx. 700 world-wide.
- Steam programs: Centennials (1997, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2006);  
Steam car tours (1989, 1994, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2006);  
Steam Cars and Parts Auctions (1995, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2004);  
Three-day Stanley Steamer Driver's Ed course.

### Motor Racing Heritage Association

- Founded: 1996.
- Location: Daytona Beach, world center of racing, south of Ormond Beach, the Birthplace Of Speed.
- Mission: To further the public's understanding of the great motorsport history of the Daytona Beach area.
- Purpose: Sanctioning body of the Ormond Beach Centennial Beach Time Trials.
- Program areas: Handles entries and staging for annual historic automotive beach reenactments;  
Library of Motorsport history often called on to verify items of history;  
Published Motor Racing History Locator map of the entire area, in 2000; revised and reissued in 2003 with help from International Speedway Corp.
- Members: 150 members including Dan Smith, Suzanne Heddy, Bobby Allison, Russ Truelove, Bill France Jr., Jim France, Tim Sullivan, Hilly Rife, Ray Fox, and Preston Root.
- Partners: City Of Ormond Beach; International Speedway Corporation.

### Ormond Beach Historical Trust

- Founded: 1972.
- Location: MacDonald house, Ormond Beach's welcome center.
- Mission: To protect and preserve the historical, cultural and natural resources of Ormond Beach.
- Program areas: Monthly History Lectures by local historians aimed at educating the public to the unique history of Ormond Beach;  
Trolley rides of the historic areas conducted monthly with a trust member on board to point out historic sites.
- Members: Approx. 700.
- Properties: The Cupola from the Ormond Hotel, Anderson-Price Memorial Building.
- Operation: Twenty-member board of directors, and officers.

## Event Details at a Glance

### January 24-28, 2006

Participants:	75-100 vintage steam cars, including Stanley, Doble, and White; Vintage gas racers, 1912 and older.
From:	US and abroad (UK and Australia to date).
Planning:	Since 1995; extensive since 2000.
Date:	Thursday, January 26, 2006—actual centennial of Jan. 26, 1906, LSR.
Storm dates:	Wed., Jan. 25, Fri., Jan 27, and Sat., Jan. 28.
Commemorative Program:	“Bravo, Stanley!” Book on Stanley racing history and LSR Centennial.
Tuesday, January 24:	Arrival; Registration; Firing-Up Banquet for steam participants at steam headquarter hotel.
Wednesday, Jan. 25:	Loop Tour—50 miles. Española—brick road restoration dedication. Reception for all event participants and Ormond Beach officials—The Casements.
Thursday, January 26:	Centennial event on the beach (see below). Awards Banquet, Ocean Side Country Club.
Friday, January 27:	St. Augustine tour—100 miles.
Saturday, January 28:	Daytona USA—15 miles—Parade lap, exhibit in the infield. Ponce Inlet tour—30 miles. Blow Down Banquet.
Sunday, January 29:	Departure.
Sponsors:	Stanley Museum; Motor Racing Heritage Association; Ormond Beach Historical Trust; City of Ormond Beach/Leisure Services Dept.; Carrabbas Italian Grill, National Parts Depot, and many other individuals and businesses in the museum, automobile and Ormond Beach communities.

### January 26, Thursday morning:

9:00:	Set up track; (barricades, ropes, traffic cones, etc.) Install international flags.
9:30:	Open pits (beach) to participating steamers and gas racers. Open parking area of beach for non-participating steam cars.
10:00:	Fly over of vintage aircraft to national anthem with solo beach run by rocket replica (with possible celebrity driver).
10:15:	Parade lap of cars.
10:30:	Exhibition time-trail runs by cars.
12:00:	Noon closing ceremony and celebration picnic at Birthplace of Speed Park.
1:30:	Display cars at the Casements, Ormond Beach’s cultural and community center.

## 2 2006 Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial

KINGFIELD, Me. - No Stanley celebration has received more attention or energy than the celebration of the 1906 Stanley Land Speed Record. Appropriately so—this is the single event that made the Stanley Steamer the stuff of legend. Starting with the 50th anniversary, collector-dealer-historian Donald Randall tried to get racecar driver Fred Marriott himself to go back to Ormond to celebrate just months before he died in 1956.

After Randall himself died in 1985, his son Howard took up the cause, pushing the Stanley Museum, founded in 1981, to celebrate the 80th, then the 90th. Finally the 100th has arrived. Serious planning began as early as 1995 when the Stanley Museum set the schedule of celebrations with the centennial of the first Stanley Steamer in 1997 in Newton, Mass.

An attempt to build a full-scale replica was shelved, but planning continued. In 2000, Dan Smith, Beach Race Director for Ormond Beach, contacted the Stanley Museum about participation in the 2003 centennial of the race's 1903 beginning. In 2002, Museum president and director Susan Davis and chairman Mike Roach traveled to Ormond Beach. There they met with Smith, interested and sponsoring parties, and governing officials of the City of Ormond Beach and of Volusia County Beach Services, which oversees and controls the Beach itself.

Since that time, the Stanley Museum has had a presence at race centennials in 2003, 2004 and 2005. During this time, Davis has selected hotels, vendors, designed logos, worked with Ormond Beach and other area officials and communicated with the Stanley Museum's worldwide membership.

Without question, this centennial will be the single largest celebration the Stanley Museum has ever mounted. Steam car owners, Stanley family, Stanley Museum members and those affected by the energy the plans have generated are all turning

their attention toward northeast Florida in January of 2006. Many are planning to attend. The Museum is also publishing a book on the history of Stanley racing culminating in the 1906-1907 events as the official commemorative program (see the outline of the book by chapter on page 12).

Governed by the tide, the beach event itself is to start at 9 a.m., Thursday, January 26. Flags and banners on the beach and throughout the city will lend a festive air. Antique airplanes are to fly over at the start of the demonstration runs. Live broadcasting on radio and TV and professional film crews recording for at least one documentary promise to heighten the excitement these vintage vehicles already command on this historic beach.

For northern steam car owners, transporting cars in winter weather has been a concern. But storage locations have begun springing up, allowing steam car owners from the North the opportunity to transport their cars in warmer fall weather and to take them back north in the spring.

In addition to the race celebration itself, the Museum has arranged three days of touring in the area for those attending with steam cars. The scenic Ormond Loop through old Florida forests, visits to historic Saint Augustine to the north and Ponce Inlet to the south, and a planned parade lap around the track at Daytona USA, are arranged to give car owners a taste of both historic and modern Florida.

As official presenter of the steam event, the Stanley Museum shares sponsorship with Ormond Beach Leisure Services, Motor Racing Heritage Association, Ormond Beach Historical Trust, Carrabba's Italian Grill, National Parts Depot and other businesses and individuals in the Ormond Beach, museum and automobile community. The significance of the celebration has found its match in the hospitality of this historic Florida community.

####

## The Stanley Steamer

- First Stanley car: 1897 built by Francis Edgar (F.E.) Stanley.
- Other steam cars: Approx. 130 manufacturers (1896-1930s): e.g.: White, Locomobile, Brooks, Grout, Doble, Prescott, etc.
- Stanley dates: 1899-1904 as Locomobile steam car by Locomobile Company of America (Amzi L. Barber/Samuel T. Davis) (c. 5,000 cars produced as Locomobile); 1902-1904 as Stanley Bros. under corporate name Stanley Dry Plate Co.; 1904-1924 as Stanley by Stanley Motor Carriage Co.:
- Production: Approx. 10,500
- Stanley survivors: Approx. 1,000 worldwide; approx. 400-600 driven frequently and for distance, also worldwide.
- No. of Models: Approx. 60 over 25 years.
- HP range: 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30: determined by cyl. bore/stroke & boiler dimensions.
- Pilot fuel: Gas 1897-1924; hexane, Coleman, gas or equivalent today.
- Burner fuel: Gas, 1897-1913; kerosene, 1913-1924; same or a diesel/no-lead mix today.
- Fuel mileage: 8-12 mpg.
- Fuel capacity: 12-45 gallons, depending on model.
- Water mileage: 1-2 mpg (non-condenser models); approx. 3-10 mpg (condenser models).
- Water capacity: 15-50 gallons, depending on model.
- Speed range: 25-100 mph, depending on model, HP and boiler.
- Highlights: 1899: First auto up Mt. Washington Carriage Road (Locomobile driven by F.O. Stanley).  
 1899: First car ridden in by a sitting U.S. President (McKinley in Locomobile driven by F.O. Stanley).  
 1901: First auto up Pikes Peak (Locomobile).  
 1903: World one-mile steam track record.  
 1904: World one-mile, one-kilometer steam records.  
 1906: World one-mile, five-mile, one-kilometer records.  
 1906: Broke two miles in one minute barrier.  
 1906: World land speed record, 127.659 mph—held for four years.  
 1903-1910: Constant winner of local, regional and national (UK) hill climbs; finally simply barred from competition because they were so unbeatable.

## 3

**Stanley—the fastest car in the world**

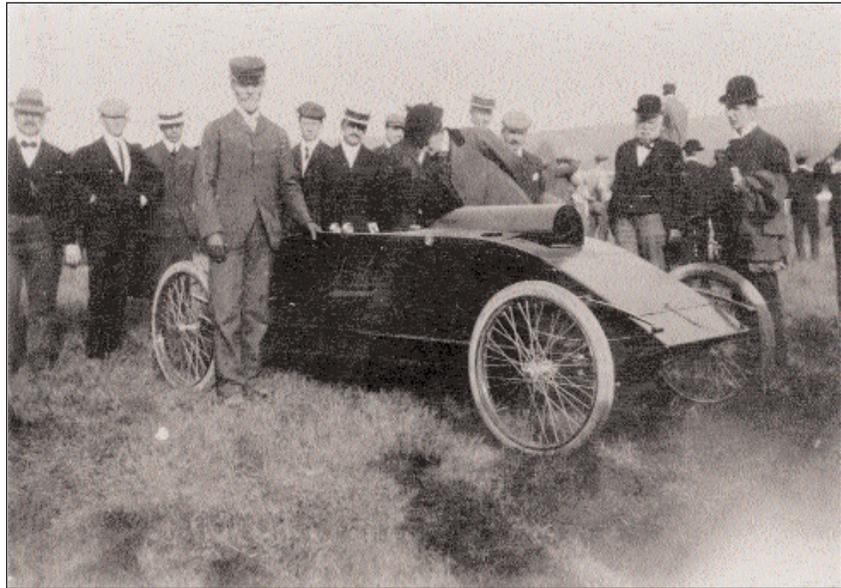
KINGFIELD, Me.— Stanley and speed were a match from the start. In 1898 the famous bearded Stanley Twins built a steam-powered tandem pacing bicycle for cycle racing (a project that may have attracted the cyclist and racing legend Marriott).

After years of setting records with stock cars, F.E. Stanley built his first special racing machine in 1903, a streamlined auto racer nicknamed variously the “Turtle” and “Torpedo” that set a world steam track record at the Readville track near Boston, Mass. Stanley considered entering this racer in the 1904 Ormond Beach races, but final negotiations for the sale of the Twins’ money-maker, the Stanley Dry Plate Co., to George Eastman of Kodak caused him to withdraw his entry.

Louis Ross, however, a Stanley brothers’ colleague and fellow Newton resident, took a stock Stanley to Ormond that year and set steam records for the mile and the kilometer. Having missed the winter event in Florida, F.E. Stanley concentrated on entering cars in Ormond’s sister event the next two summers, the Climb to the Clouds at Mt. Washington in N.H. He scored two close second-place finishes there in 1904 and 1905.

In between these races, Louis Ross, with Stanley assistance, built a Stanley-equipped steam racer, nicknamed the “Wogglebug,” entered it in the January 1905 Ormond tournament and won the Dewar Trophy, and nearly every other record on the Beach.

Ross’s success at Ormond in 1905—plus pressure from race organizers—convinced F.E. Stanley to build his own special streamlined racer,



**3-F.E. Stanley and the Torpedo Racer.** *F.E. stands next to his streamlined 1903 racer at the Readville, Mass., track. Stanley drove this car, also called the “Turtle,” to a world’s steam track record May 30, 1903.*

*Stanley Museum Archives*

the “Rocket,” for the 1906 Ormond races. Louis Ross or Stanley himself was to be the driver, but Ross decided not to race when he found out that his Dewar Trophy would then be held by the Stanleys rather than himself. Stanley’s wife, and the wife of Frank Durbin, another Stanley driver, objected to their husbands’ driving the Racer in the land speed record trials, so on the eve of the 1906 Ormond races, Stanley tapped Fred Marriott to drive the “Rocket.”

An auspicious choice—Marriott would set racing history. On Day One, Marriott won the Dewar Trophy and set a World record in the one-mile steam championship. On Day Two, he set another World record in the Five-Mile Open race. After teammate Frank Durbin won the 15-Mile Handicap race for touring cars in a stock 20 HP Stanley on Day Three, Marriott was ready for the heavyweight time trials. January 26, Marriott set a World record for one kilometer at 121.6 mph, the

**Fastest** *continued on page 10*

## Press Kit

**Fastest** *continued from page 9*

first time anyone had exceeded two miles in one minute; two hours later he drove the mile in 28 1/5 seconds, 127.659 mph, a World Land Speed Record

With this record, unbroken until 1910, the Stanley became the fastest car in the world for the next four years, becoming effectively the fastest automobile for the first decade of the 20th Century.

Gas vs. steam rivalry went over the top the final days of the races. In the 30-mile championship race, the race time was moved up without the steam camp's knowledge. Despite starting more than five minutes behind the gasoline cars, Marriott won handily. In the ten-mile championship race the Stanley racer developed a fuel leak and finished second.

Then came the final Two-Mile-A-Minute race for the vaunted title, "King of the Beach." First, officials refused to disqualify the 200 HP Darracq even though it did not meet the rules for competition. The Stanley steam racer and the Rocket were given unlimited trials with the Rocket going first. Both cars exceeded two-miles-a-minute, the Darracq bettering Marriott's speed on its second run. Then officials declared the race over and the Darracq the winner. Despite protests, the Stanley team was not allowed a third trial, even though the official rules permitted it.

In 1907 Stanley returned to Ormond with an enhanced racer, determined to set more speed

## Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial

records, only to find the beach in poor condition and few competitive European and American cars present. Unbeknownst to them, American automobile manufacturers successfully staged a boycott of the races, refusing to give the Stanley legitimacy, calling it a freak.

Stanley had completed two new steamers intended for the long-distance Vanderbilt Cup race, and these cars further diminished the Ormond competition. However, rough shape of the beach kept speeds down, and mechanical breakdowns marred the Stanley team's performance in many of the races.

Marriott's final attempt to break his own land speed record ended in disaster. Hitting an uneven depression in the surface of the beach at a speed F.E. Stanley clocked at 150 mph, the front wheels of the Stanley Rocket bounced off the beach, and when they came down the racer crashed out of control. The canoe-bodied car was smashed to pieces, the boiler roaring dramatically into the surf.

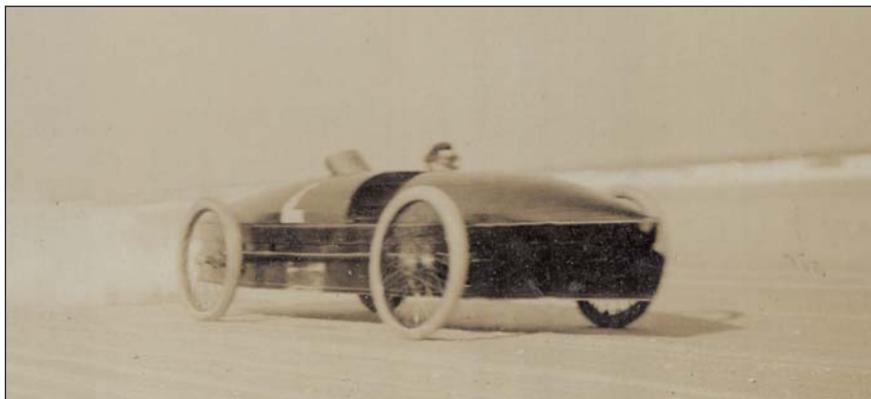
Miraculously, Marriott survived the crash with only a concussion, broken ribs, cuts and lacerations. He insisted that photos of the wreck be taken, and that the wreckage itself be saved, vowing to build an even better racer and return for another tournament.

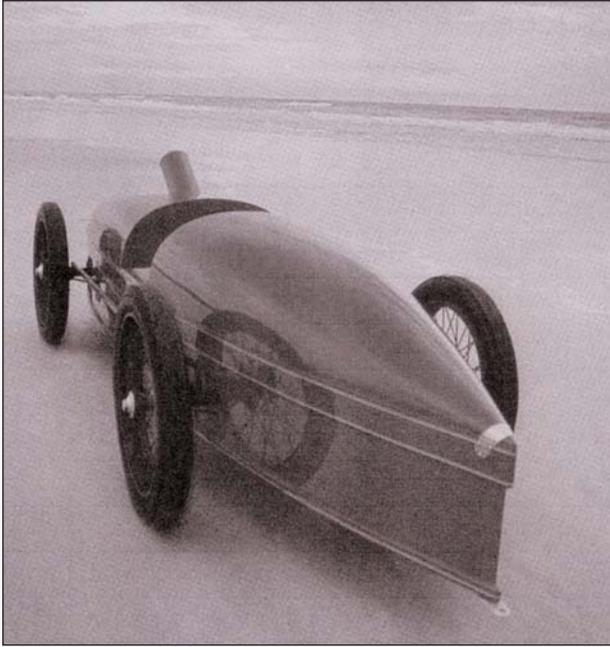
It was not to be. The rules for the Ormond Beach races were changed to exclude short distance steam racers. The Stanleys also decided that further land speed record attempts were not worth

**Fastest** *continued on page 11*

**4-The run that made Stanley legend.** *On this run, Marriott drove the Stanley Rocket Racer to its Land Speed Record of 127.66 mph, a record that would hold for four years, giving the Stanley the legendary title of Fastest Car in the World for the first ten years of the 20th century.*

*Stanley Museum Archives, courtesy the Larz Anderson Auto Museum*





**5-Rocket Replica**

*Photo by Roy D. Query, courtesy Automobile Quarterly*

## 4

## Rocket Replica

ORMOND BEACH, Fla. – This 10-HP replica was built by Morris Frost in the 1960s and first ran on the beach in November 1971. It will appear at the Centennial at Ormond Beach in January and at the Amelia Island Concours d’Elegance in March. A gift to the Birthplace of Speed Museum, the City of Ormond Beach assumed ownership of the historic vehicle when the museum closed.

The replica is currently on loan to Daytona USA, which considers it an important part of the story of racing. The replica is to be returned to running condition by steam car experts for the January and March events, then to return to Daytona USA. #####

**Fastest** *continued from page 10*

the risk to their intrepid drivers.

Marriott made a full recovery, and returned to racing Stanley stock cars on tracks and hill climbs. Neither he nor the Stanleys ever returned to Ormond Beach.

Finally, in 1910, the legendary Barney Oldfield drove one of the equally legendary Blitzen, or Lightning, Benzes 131.723 mph to vanquish—by a mere four miles and hour—the record that put the Stanley Steamer in the record books for four undefeated years, and for all time.

#####



**6-The Stanley wreck, 1907.** *From his recovery bed, Marriott requested the pieces of the Rocket be gathered together and shipped back to the factory in Mass. This crash is the source of the myth that the Stanleys would give a car to anyone who dared open the throttle of a Stanley.*  
Stanley Museum Archives

*Outline of Program Book, “**Bravo, Stanley!**”  
Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial History,  
1906-2006*

*by H. James Merrick*

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**Chapter 1: “Stanley Will Win.”**

An introduction to the 1906 event, focusing on the 1906 pre-race developments as seen through the eyes of the observers and participants, using contemporary newspaper accounts, Mrs. Stanley’s diary entries, photographs, and interviews including a pre-race interview with Vincenzo Lancia in which he states, “Stanley will win.”

**Chapter 2: “An Ideal Race Course.”**

The early history of racing on Ormond Beach, and the “Birthplace of Speed.” J.F. Hathaway, William “Senator” Morgan, and the Mt. Washington connection. Overview of racing up through 1904.

**Chapter 3: “The Hydrocarbon Branch.”**

Louis Ross and the 1905 races.

**Chapter 4: Mr. Stanley, his Foreman, and his Flying Canoe.**

The Twins, Fred Marriott, Robertson Canoe Works, the Stanley cars and the Stanley team at Ormond (Frank Durbin, Burt Holland).

**Chapter 5: Let the Races Begin.**

The 1906 competitors: the owners, their cars, and their drivers. Introduction to Gas vs. Steam rivalry. The 1906 events, the schedule, and the trophies.

**Chapter 6: “Bravo, Stanley!”**

The Land Speed Record—the achievement, the advance, the impact.

**Chapter 7: “For \$1,000 or an Orange.”**

Gas vs. Steam—The Two-Mile-a-Minute race/King of Speed controversy, and other allegations of unfairness. The Chapter heading comes from a quote from the wealthy gas car owner of the Darracq, who brushed aside Stanley’s official challenge saying he would pit his car against Stanley’s “for \$1,000 for an orange.”

**Chapter 8: Can Steam Go the Distance?**

Developments leading up to Ormond 1907—designing and building the long-distance Vanderbilt cars, the Model K, and upgrading the Rocket. Foreign competition stays away on the eve of the 1907 races.

**Chapter 9: “Old Man Stanley.”**

The 1907 events; F.E. takes to the wheel for his last turn at competition, which presages a “last hurrah” for steam as well.

**Chapter 10: “Black Friday.”**

Marriott’s crash, its impact and aftermath. The myths about Marriott’s speed, and the wide-open-throttle “challenge.”

**Chapter 11: Beaten by “Just a Trifle.”**

The Stanley steam achievement and the ascendancy of internal combustion in perspective. The changing of the rules to bar short-distance steam racers from competition. The eventual withdrawal of the Stanleys from world speed record attempts. Augusta Stanley notes in her diary that Oldfield eclipsed the Stanley Land Speed Record at the final Ormond Beach tournament in 1910, “by just a trifle.”

####

5

## Fred Marriott Profile: Driver of the Stanley “Rocket”

KINGFIELD, Me.— Race car driver Fred Marriott entered the record books at Ormond Beach in 1906. That year, Stanleys took the Florida winter competitions by storm (see Stanley sets World Land Speed Record, page 9). From breaking the two-miles-in-one-minute barrier, then two hours later setting a land speed record at 127.659 mph in 1906, to crashing the same machine in 1907—and surviving—Marriott’s name is etched for all time in racing history.



**7-Fred Marriott at Ormond Beach, 1906.**

*Stanley Museum Archives courtesy  
Larz Anderson Auto Museum*

In the summer of 1906, Fred Marriott’s racing exploits went international as he represented the Stanley Motor Carriage Co. in England and Ireland at races and hill climbs. After surviving the crash in 1907, he remained active in racing, especially hill climbs, for the few more years the Stanley steam car remained a force.

Fred Marriott was born December 31, 1872, in Needham, Mass. (a suburb of Boston). He attended public schools in his home town and served an apprenticeship at the Pettee Machine Works, a manufacturer of textile machinery in Newton, Mass. Shortly afterwards, Marriott was hired as a mechanic at the Union Cycle Company in Hylandville, a village in Needham.

Working at the local bicycle works was a natural for Marriott. He had gained a reputation as a skilled and daring bicycle racer in competition on local roads and tracks. At the apex of his cycle racing career he won numerous ribbons, cups and trophies, recognized as the champion of Needham. As with many other early cycling champions, his interests soon turned to the new horseless carriage.

In late 1898 Marriott was hired by the Stanley Brothers who had just begun to manufacture steam cars in Watertown, Mass. The Stanley Twins, famous for speed both in and out of the workplace, were impressed with Marriott’s uncanny ability to diagnose and repair mechanical problems. They promoted Marriott to foreman of the Repair Department, a position he held until he left the Stanley Motor Carriage Co. in 1919.

The term “repair department” is somewhat misleading—repairing frequent problems often required sophisticated redesign and experimental

**Marriott** *continued on page 14*

## Press Kit

**Marriott** *continued from page 13*

work. In the early days of the Stanley factory, “experimental work” meant racecars.

From the start of Marriott’s employment at the Watertown works, the Stanleys were building special racing machines, beginning in 1898 with a steam-powered tandem pacing bicycle for cycle racing, a project that may have attracted the cyclist Marriott in the first place. Fred Marriott’s competition experience in bicycle racing and his ability to get the most out of the racecars naturally made him an early member of the Stanley factory race team.

In his first motor race, the 1904 Commonwealth Avenue Hill Climb in Boston, he won his steamer class. (Press accounts of this race identify him as F. H. Marriott—family legend says he added the middle initial to his name in mock dignity.) In 1905 Marriott won the five-mile race for stock steamers at the Readville track near Boston. That fall he finished first in the Dead Horse Hill Climb in Worcester, Mass.

Then Ormond Beach put him into the history and record books, and launched a reputation that approached the status of legend. Even the decision that Marriott drive the Rocket is the stuff of legends. Both wives of possible drivers F.E. Stanley and factory team member Frank Durbin protested against their husbands driving the dangerous car, so Fred, still single at the time, was tapped to do the honors.

His reputation as a daredevil on the track stood him in good stead as he conquered record after record, while mammoth but defeated gas cars even swapped drivers in their attempt to stop the steam juggernaut.

Then in 1907, the Stanley crashed, giving rise to the most repeated Stanley myth of all time, that the Stanleys would give a car to anyone who dared to open the throttle all the way. Admirers, including M.I.T. professors, possibly the father-son duo of Louis and Thomas S. Derr, even con-

## Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial

vinced Marriott in his later years that he had to have been doing 197 mph when he crashed. F.E. Stanley’s son Raymond dispelled that myth in an article in *Automobile Quarterly* in 1963, citing his father F.E. Stanley’s stop watch recording a speed nearer 150 mph—fast enough.

Fred Marriott continued to serve as foreman of the Repair Department at the Stanley Motor Carriage Co. until 1919, after the Stanley Brothers had retired and F.E. had died in a car crash. F.O. Stanley helped set Marriott up in his own garage business near the factory in Watertown in 1920, a debt he repaid quickly. The F. Marriott Garage continued to repair, store and service Stanley steam cars long after the company went out of business, and served as a focal point for steam hobbyists in later years. Indeed, his steam car training for owners helped sustain and grow the hobby to its present size, creating a new generation of Stanley experts. For some Stanley owners, their debt to Fred stands taller than his record in the history books.

Fred Marriott died on April 28, 1956, not long after the fiftieth anniversary of his land speed record at Ormond Beach.

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**8-Fred H. Marriott in cockpit.**

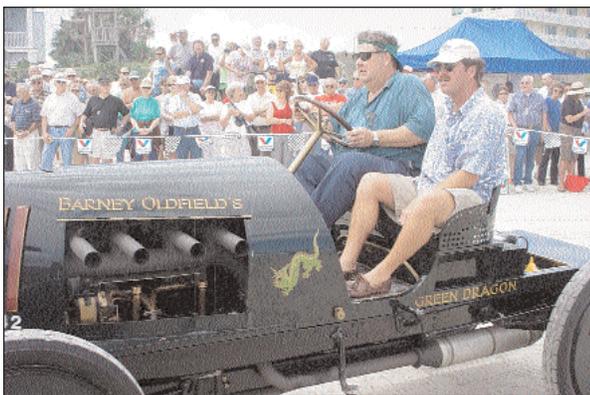
*Stanley Museum Archives, photo  
courtesy Larz Anderson Auto Museum*

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## Internal combustion challenges steam in 2006 on Ormond Beach

ORMOND BEACH, Fla. – Gas and steam go head-to-head. Just as in 1906, the Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial at the Birthplace of Speed on January 26, 2006, will present a formidable field of internal-combustion-powered cars to test the steamers. Some of the cars being invited are legendary performers in their own right that actually ran against the Stanleys and Whites at the turn of the 20th century.

Dick King of Connecticut is to attend with his 1904 Pope Toledo Racer. That is the same Pope Racer that was the fastest finishing American car at the Vanderbilt Cup Road Race on Long Island, NY, in 1905. In addition, King's 1904 Peerless Green Dragon, the fire-breathing beast that raced the beach in the Ormond Tournament of 1905, is expected to return, as it did in the inaugural 2003 and 2004 Birthplace of Speed celebrations.



**9-1904 Peerless Green Dragon.**

*Photos courtesy City of Ormond Beach*

Tony and Joanne Vaccaro, of upstate New York, brought their 1910 National Raceabout to Ormond Beach in 2003 and 2004, when it thrilled the crowds at the Birthplace of Speed centennials. The National is famed for its prowess at Indianapolis when the company was considered the builder of the fastest stock cars in the world. Jim Grundy's 1910 National Indy Racer is the

logo for the Grundy Insurance Company. Joe Dawson drove the same model National to victory at Indy in 1912.

In his spare time, Vaccaro, a radiation oncologist, is president of Champlain Valley Transportation Museum in Plattsburgh N.Y. The museum deals with all modes of historic transportation and features the Lozier automobile built in Plattsburg.

Steve Dana, also of New York, is to bring his rare 1911 Kissel Racer.

Eric Edwards of Ontario, Canada, who brought his 1905 Ford Model K to the 2003 and 2004 Birthplace of Speed Centennials, will bring another Ford racer this year. Ford harbored a desire to set a land speed record of his own, for which he built a special racer designed and driven by the famous driver Frank Kullick. Modified Model Ts with oversized T engines, these racers were already outdated when they finally emerged from the design shop.

If Ford's desire to set a new land speed record had approached his passion for market supremacy, these cars might have appeared early enough to have made their mark. They'll make up for their missed opportunity this year when they appear in Edward's recreation at the Ormond celebration.

January 26, 2006, on the sands of Ormond Beach, promises to be nearly as exciting as the date it celebrates 100 years ago. Lining up these historic gas racers alongside what may be the largest collection of steam cars ever will make the celebration stand on its own.

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***Stanley Land Speed Record Centennial Press Kit***

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**Steam Power Coming to 2006  
Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The steam-propelled vehicles of Stanley Steamer fame will be featured at the 11th annual Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance scheduled for March 10-12, 2006, at the Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. They will join nearly 30 other classes ranging from sports racing cars to classic European coachwork for a three-day celebration of the automobile on Florida's north-east Atlantic coast.

"We are very excited to feature the great cars of The Stanley Motor Carriage Company," says Bill Warner, founder and chairman of the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. "In the early 1900s, steam power was very popular and Stanleys were a leader for a number of years. These cars occupy a very important place in transportation history. We are very fortunate that Stanley owners from across the country will already be in Florida to celebrate the marque's land speed record set in 1906."

The 100th anniversary of the land speed record will take place on the sands of Ormond Beach, Florida, in late January 2006. As many as 100 owners are expected to be there with their cars.

Piloted by race car driver Fred Marriott, F.E. Stanley's streamlined, canoe-bodied, 30-HP Stanley Steamer "Rocket" race car set a land speed record of 127.659 mph January 26, 1906. For the

Amelia Concours, Warner plans to have three classes of Stanleys, including condenser, coffin nose, and tiller styles in addition to other steam marques, including the White, Locomobile and vaunted Doble. Warner also hopes to have the Rocket Replica owned by Ormond Beach and on loan to Daytona USA.

"We are looking forward to another great show with a lot of variety and some special 'one-off' cars, which has become a trademark of Amelia," adds Warner. "People come to our show to see the classics as well as the unexpected and unusual."

*The Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance is one of the nation's most innovative vintage auto shows featuring over 250 rare classics from seldom-seen private collections nationwide. The show is scheduled for March 10-12, 2006, on the grounds of The Ritz-Carlton. For more information, visit [www.ameliaincours.org](http://www.ameliaincours.org) or contact Bill Warner, Chairman, or Chris Hoyt, Director of Operations, at 904-636-0027. #####*

