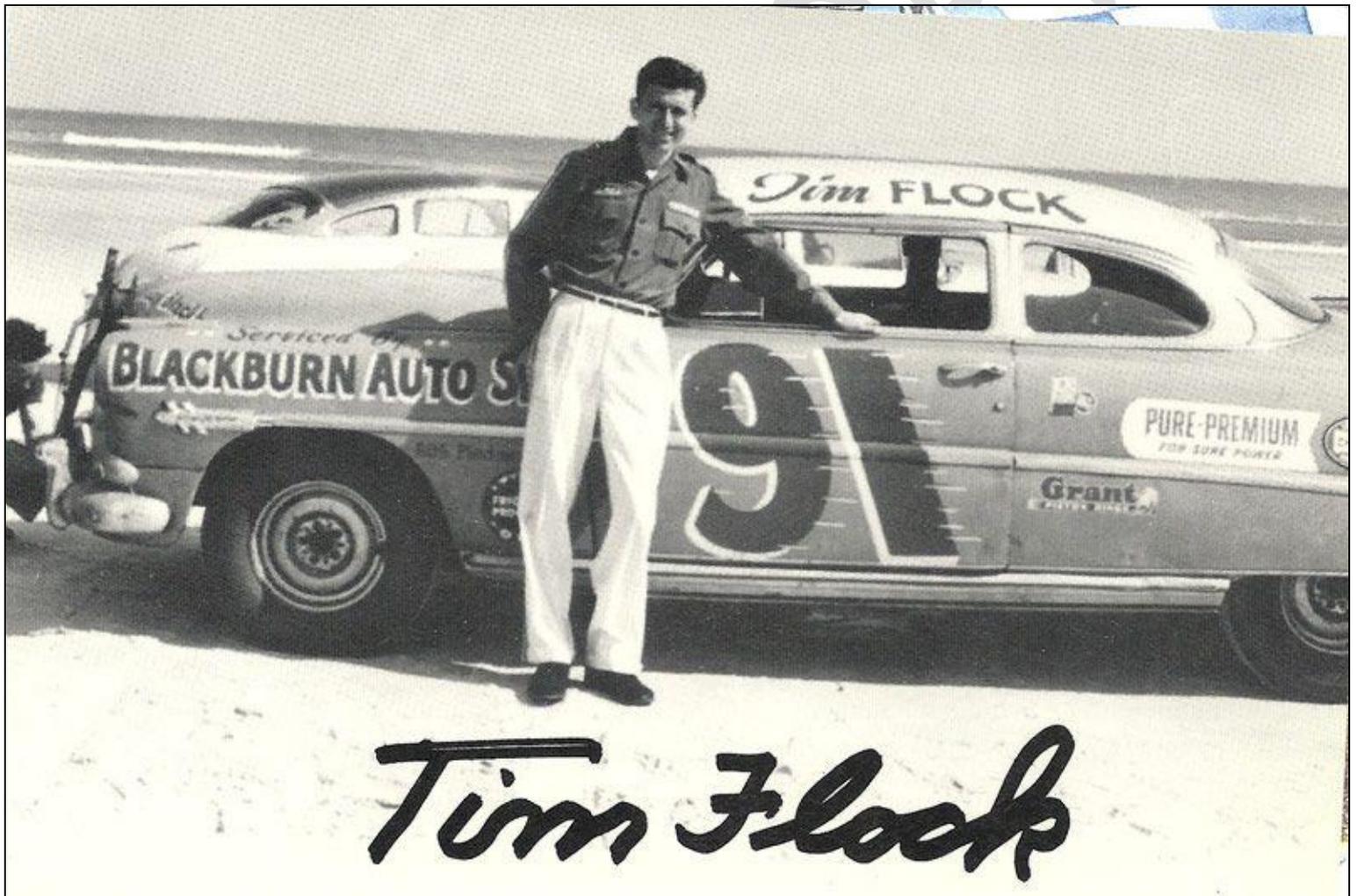


Joe Scalzo's City of Speed and elsewhere

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The great Tim Flock lived for 73 explosive taxicab-racing – late-model stocks -- seasons, and in the course of them he and his soul-mate, the equally great Curtis Turner, virtually co-created NASCAR, the sanctioning body that, finally fed up with the pair of them and their friendship with Jimmy Hoffa and his Teamsters, threw both of them out on their cans.



Grudgingly allowing Curtis back when NASAR needed him, it mulishly deprived NASCAR audiences the pleasure of watching Tim by holding him on ice for almost 40 years, and turning him into the criminal turncoat who betrayed NASCAR. Talk about praising the horizontal man. After Flock had passed on and became “safe” again, the Bill France

dictatorship changed its mind and declared that Tim was an Idol of NASCAR with a winning -- 18 checkers in just one season -- record superior to King Richard Petty's.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, if it had fenders Flock could race it – race it very, very fast: bathtub Hudson Hornets, hot Olds 88s, luxu-tank Lincolns, hemi-head Chrysler 300s, ragtop Bill Stroppe Mercurys, and, especially, Joe Wolf's sportsman modified, a 140 mph creature mating a huge, violently-hyperventilating, fuel-injected V8 to an innocuous coupe Chevrolet. The “Wolf Car,” as it was known, was infamous - its gargantuan motor taking up so much space that Tim had to sit in the monster's back seat, with three gear-shift levers welded together to reach him. Unbeatable as the Wolf was when Tim was inside it, there was nothing about the Wolf that was high-tech, including its cockpit roll-over cage, which was hammered out of wood.

NASCAR's dirt and sand tracks of the pre-super-speedway era (1949-1960) were headlined by the season's opener on Daytona Beach, a sand and coral brawl of 200 miles, four roller-coaster miles per lap. Of all the life-and death matches on the menu of NASCAR, the Daytona 200 was Tim's favorite – five victories in ten years was his unequalled record, and that wasn't counting when France and NASCAR disqualified him because he was winning too frequently.



The long, long front straightaway rumbled right down the bumpy beach-front, but Daytona's back straight was far worse –pavement atop sand with two miles worth of sudden rises and sharp dips. Taxicabs burning out their brakes went careening and leapfrogging off “Jungle Road” to crash-land, off the sandy pavement, blazing, and setting aflame all the wild

flora –bushes as big as houses. Flock won the most races there, so Daytona was his favorite NASCAR racing track.

All members of the Flock tribe were hairpins – ker-snap! Getting the ball rolling, the patriarch, Carl Lee Flock, confused his neighbors in hard scrabble backwoods Georgia by stringing a high wire over his backyard to tight-rope across without a net. Following his lead, some of his daredevil daughters became paratroopers and wing-walkers; some of his sons, led by Tim, served their taxicab-racing kindergartens bootlegging hooch from Georgia.

After first flunking out as a bellhop and parking lot attendant, Tim found his true calling, taxicab racing, and enlisted in NASCAR's great, ragtag, late - model, army. Nobody was playing with a full deck. They were a rollicking, roaring brotherhood of natural racing drivers, strutting their stuff and dressed to kill in florid, Aloha shirts and flashy saddle shoes. Entrance rules were not strict. Anybody who raced fast, liked to laugh, enjoyed the company of the opposite sex, and could party hearty for two or three days and nights at a stretch was most welcome in "The Brotherhood," as Tim, Curtis Turner, and the others labeled themselves.

The joy of NASCAR's dirt tracking era ended at the close of the 1950s – when, many of them kicking their feet and screaming in protest – all the old dirt hogs like Flock, Turner and Bob Welborn stood staring in horror at the looming banking of Daytona, NASCAR's first ultra fast super-speedway, and, upon realizing what they'd be expected to do to hold their taxicabs atop them, decided to double the seat-belts. Good call.

The super-speedway era hit big, and so did NASCAR: greater speeds, greater profits for NASCAR and greater profits for its prime assets, its old dirt track drivers. Wanting himself, Flock and the Brotherhood's other drivers to get what was coming to them, Curtis Turner had

the radical, novel, idea of taxicab drivers uniting in a new and bona fide union. Jimmy Hoffa's Brotherhood of Teamsters.

When the message of Hoffa's and Turner's Teamsters was prohibited within NASCAR's borders, Hoffa, Turner, and Flock continued pedaling it anyway, and, in

Daytona's bitter showdown trial of 1961,France's NASCAR shysters defeated Hoffa's shysters. Tim and Curtis got one-way passages to Siberia, although Curtis finally earned the clemency that Tim never did.



Among the well-meaning things that Curtis and Tim were advocating with their union were pension and health benefits all drivers. Subversive NASCAR ideas in the last century, so they have stayed in this one: Tim Flock died a charity case without benefit of medical insurance.

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