In the fall of 1910 the king of American speed, automobile racer Barney Oldfield, raced boxing's heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson in an automobile race at New York's Sheapshead Bay Track. Like other heavyweight champions before him, Johnson sought numerous ways to capitalize on his name recognition from the moment he won the championship. After his successful July 4th, 1910 defense of his title against the popular Jim Jeffries, he began seeking a match race with a prominent racecar driver. Barney Oldfield was the most famous racecar driver of the era, and as a personal friend of Jeffries, was a logical choice for such a race. The tide of public opinion against the black boxer made it challenging to arrange the race. The AAA Contest Board, the sanctioning body of motor sports at the time attempted to prevent the race from occurring, but the entrepreneurial spirit of the two drivers won out, but at great personal sacrifice to both participants. The event took place in October 1910, and probably did not live up to expectations. It had the disadvantage of being obscured in the newspapers by the carnage that accompanied the annual Vanderbilt Cup race held on Long Island. Although largely forgotten, a careful examination of this important event reveals much about America of the early twentieth century. Through the examination of this important event and the characters involved, this paper illustrates the tensions between old and new world values in a changing America, as well as the institutionalization of racism in America.

Historians commonly call early twentieth century America the progressive era. With the intrusion of the railroad, and the increasing dependency on industrialism, and the creation of a single national market, small agrarian communities were losing independence. Historian Robert Wiebe argued that the progressive era is characterized by a fundamental shift in values, away from small town values to specialization and communities of professionals. (1) As America emerged into the twentieth century, the society was more industrial and less agrarian than it had been before. The automobile industry is an example of industrial progress that succeeded in spite of great social criticism.

Around the turn of the century, a trend emerged where concerned citizens frequently joined forces and organized around a certain issue or common interest for their collective good. Commensurate with this trend, motorists recognized the advantages of organizing. In 1902, the American Automobile Association was formed in order to represent the rights of motorists. The AAA is a national organization that works through a confederacy of local automobile clubs. The AAA worked as a lobbying organization for laws at all levels of government that protected the motorist, and sought to establish uniform licensing regulations, speed limits, and better roads. As a sideline, the AAA organized what became known as the AAA Contest Board as a sanctioning body to govern motor sports. The AAA's interest in establishing some form of legitimate control over motor sports and speed records was to provide manufacturers with an opportunity to test products....
The illustrator and novelist talks race relations, identity politics, and the release of his highly-anticipated ninth book, Loving Day. By Craig D. Lindsey. May 29, 2015. Johnson talked to Esquire.com about his new book, its autobiographical origins, and what it means to be multiracial in 2015. As a struggling, single, middle-aged black writer with no kids and no prospects, this book is depressing to read. It hits way too close to home, especially when your lead character, Warren Duffy, starts getting down on himself. On one hand, things are definitely better. If you say things are not any better than they were in the '60s, you sound shrill, right? On the other hand, things are not nearly as good as we would like to believe. Mr Trump had said he was considering pardoning Johnson back in April, after Mr Stallone brought the case to his attention. “Sylvester Stallone called me with the story of heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson,” Mr Trump said last month on Twitter. "His trials and tribulations were great, his life complex and controversial." Image copyright Getty Images. 

Chapter 3. The Ponies. On October 27th, the Terra Nova arrived in Wellington, New Zealand. I came here to learn about the Antarctic - I'm not interested in Amundsen, or in races! Then he walked back onto his ship, with the newspaper in his hand. Later that day, he talked to his men. He gave them the newspaper, and laughed. 'It doesn't matter,' he said. 'We're in front of Amundsen, and... The Ponies. After beating Tommy Burns in 1908, Jack Johnson became the first ever black world heavyweight champion. He held the belt for six years and Sunday will mark the 100 year anniversary of his last title defence. During a particularly racist period of American history, Johnson's title reign was met with many protests. Racism was rife in America: black people were not supposed to rule over whites in any sphere of life. As the great boxing pundit Bert Sugar put it, 'This was the white man's crown. (To white America), it was as if the white man's slave had become his master.' The same cannot be said of his detractors whose efforts to unseat him became increasingly desperate. In 1912, one opponent, 'Fireman' Jim Flynn, was disqualified for repeatedly trying to headbutt Johnson. Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life (1913) is a silent comedy short, directed and produced by Mack Sennett and starring Sennett, Mabel Normand, and Barney Oldfield as himself. It is considered one of the earliest to include the plot of a villain tying a young damsel to the tracks of an oncoming locomotive; a holdover from the Gaslight era of Victorian stage melodrama. Barney Oldfield races a speeding locomotive to rescue a damsel in distress tied up on the tracks by evil villain Ford Sterling.