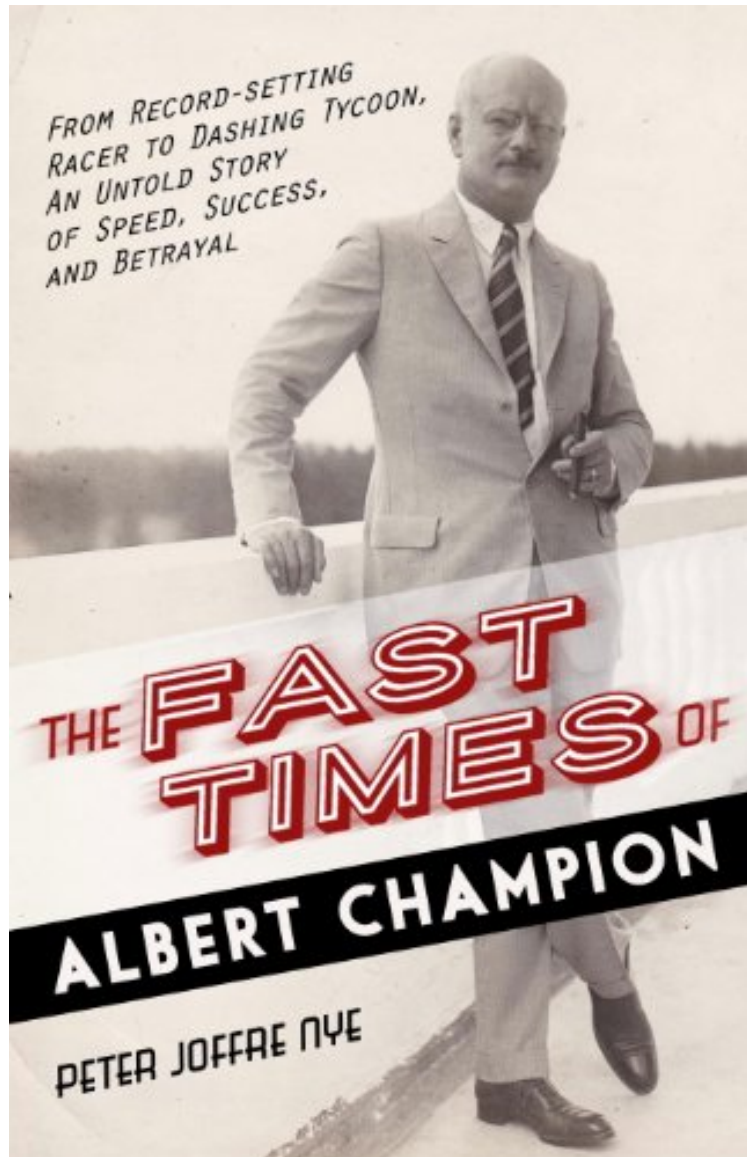


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## The Fast Times of Albert Champion: From Record-Setting Racer to Dashing Tycoon, An Untold Story of Speed, Success, and Betrayal

*Peter Joffre Nye*

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**Peter Joffre Nye : The Fast Times of Albert Champion: From Record-Setting Racer to Dashing Tycoon, An Untold Story of Speed, Success, and Betrayal** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fast Times of Albert Champion: From Record-Setting Racer to Dashing Tycoon, An Untold Story of Speed, Success, and Betrayal:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fast Times, Indeed!By Swift 37Within a few chapters of this riveting biography, the reader realizes that Albert Champion's last name is an eponym for his remarkable career in the racing world. Demonstrating the author's contention that bicycle racing is "a confluence of fitness and technical skills," Champion bursts on the racing scene with a unique combination of stamina, endurance, daring, and extraordinary native skills. He gains visibility—and some called it notoriety—and as a fierce competitor. As his career in racing begins to soar, Champion is characterized in the press as "a beautiful devil"; a diabolical breakneck; and "the King of Cycling." Author Nye's descriptions of the numerous races where Champion participates, along with notable cyclists, are written in prose that soars along the pages like a 22-gear racing bike on the Tour de France. Additionally, a cast of associates, competitors, and other colorful characters of the late 19th and early 20th centuries fill this book with memorable profiles. Among these are: Tom Cooper, who earns \$15,000 a year—and three times what famed Pittsburgh Pirate player Honus Wagner earns at the same time; Pierre Jul-Laval, "a greyhound of a man"; and a daring cyclist; Gustave-Adolphe Clement-Bayard, a brilliant entrepreneur who brings exceptional manufacturing skills, a marketing flair, and expert financial management abilities to the world of bicycle manufacturing; and "Choppy"; Warburton, a trainer and mentor extraordinaire. Nye also seamlessly connects the worlds of bicycle, motorcycle, and auto racing together in a stream of exciting contests, notable and quirky personalities, and the globalization of sports where the brands of Peugeot, Dunlop, Michelin, Ford, and Champion pop from the past to the present day. Later, as a businessman, Champion enters the nascent aircraft industry. Contrary to his public life, Champion's personal life is less than auspicious. The end of his life is a Greek tragedy of events. Mount your literary bicycle, tighten your helmet strap, and join author Peter Nye and Albert Champion on a spirited ride that you will long remember. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Spark of GeniusBy Edward RuesingAn important book and a fascinating story relating how the personalities and technology of motorpaced bicycle racing influenced the development of the early automobile industry. After retiring from racing in 1904, Albert Champion founded the company that developed spark plugs and other components used by more than 200 auto manufacturers in the United States and Europe—including General Motors. A workaholic—with 30 patents to his credit—and a womanizer, Champion got his comeuppance when he died unexpectedly at age 49 following a fight with his wife's lover. Strongly recommended for those interested in cycling history, automotive history or business history. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Drive to Succeed and the consequences of Power and SuccessBy CustomerGreat historic background of early automotive pioneers ,what they did as aspiring athletes that molded their drive to succeed when others said they would fail. Amazing how inter-related Champion,Sloan,Durant,and others were in the infancy of General Motors before the Corporation was formed.Very enjoyable read and tragic in Albert Champion's life.

RACER. INNOVATOR. CELEBRITY. MOGUL. CHAMPION.This is the first biography of the short but exciting life of Albert Champion—record-setting bicyclist and motorcyclist, daredevil racecar driver, early automobile innovator, charismatic ladies' man, and celebrity of the Jazz Age. Though most Americans have heard of the companies Albert Champion founded—ACDelco and Champion Spark Plug—few know much about the charismatic man behind them. Like a Richard Branson of the early 20th century, or an Evel Knievel with a business degree, Champion was a powerhouse whose life was defined by both speed and success. Champion rose from poverty in Paris to great wealth and fame in both his native France and the United States. As a bicycle racer, Champion set more than a hundred world records. When the urban speed limit was 8 mph, he was the first ever to drive a motorcycle a mile under a minute. A car-racing crash snapped a leg bone that kept him in traction for eleven weeks. Undeterred, he hobbled out of the hospital on crutches and recovered to win the French national cycling championship. Champion invested his prize money to become a tycoon in the new and revolutionary American auto industry, working closely with the leading players and amassing thirty US. His contemporaries included Charles Lindbergh, who endorsed Champion's product by saying, "AC Spark Plugs kept my engine running perfectly."; Louis Chevrolet, whom Champion backed financially until it came out that he was trying to seduce Chevrolet's wife, which led to a fight and the end of their friendship; and William Durant, founder of a "new holding company" called General Motors. A notorious ladies' man, Champion's many dalliances were fodder for the papers and finally ended in a love triangle that resulted in his death under mysterious circumstances.From the Hardcover edition.

"This first biography of the AC Delco and Champion Spark Plug founder gives a glimpse into the advent of modern transportation in the Jazz Age through the story of a man who lived in the fast lane."—MICHIGAN HISTORY MAGAZINE[The] story you can't believe you've never heard before involves Albert Champion; a record-setting bicyclist and motorcyclist in his native France, then a daredevil race-car driver, and eventually a pioneering tycoon in the American automotive industry. [His] tale is worth being told. A diamond-in-the-rough compelling read.—LIBRARY JOURNAL; "The narrative peers inside the early, kicking days of the car business, punctuated with the likes of Louis Chevrolet and Champion's short-time boss, Bill Durant. This is an overdue work."—HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR; "In The Fast Times of Albert Champion, the first

biography of the legendary founder of AC Delco and Champion Spark Plug, Peter Joffre Nye uncovers the remarkable and important story of the Jazz Age celebrity/daredevil and devilish genius from Paris who made his fortune in America and cavorted with Lindbergh, Durant, Chevrolet (and Chevrolet's wife) and died mysteriously like he lived, in the fast lane. — MICHAEL CAPUZZO, author of the New York Times bestsellers *Close to Shore* and *The Murder Room*; Albert Champion may be largely forgotten, but he seems to have been everywhere at a time when the world found new ways of fast transport — racing bicycles and motorcycles and cars — and then, after somehow outriding death, he became one of the most successful entrepreneurs of the wild new automobile industry. Bon vivant, a charmer, even a bit of a scoundrel, Champion is brought wonderfully to life by Peter Nye in an engaging biography of the man who lived up to his name, speeding through life on and off the track. — FRANK DEFORD, author and sports commentator on NPR's *Morning Edition*; Albert Champion's life gives us a view of our history that is full of surprises and highly entertaining to boot. Nye knows how to transform treasure troves of historical detail into a gripping story set in a brilliantly illuminated period of American life — when the bicycle was the icon of glamour and speed. — SUZANNAH LESSARD, author of *The Architect of Desire* "Fistfights, championship bicycle races, and car parts: Albert Champion was more than namesake of Flint's AC Spark Plugs." — FLINT JOURNAL "Nye details how this poor Parisian, born in 1878, became a cycling hero, industrial titan and Jazz Age icon of fast-lane glamour." — INDY STAR "A FANTASTIC book. Not only does it capture the essence and soul of this individual but it is also an admirable piece of cultural history that crisscrosses — like the man himself — over two different, yet inextricably linked cultures. Most biographies of sportsmen end up as invariably boring catalogs of events but this is a real biography, with a subtle portrait and a historical contextualization that gives it great energy. Since my Dad and his father came from the same area as Albert Champion (the 17th arrondissement), I had a very personal attachment to this story.... As an avid cycling fan, I thoroughly enjoyed the vivid descriptions of these early heroic races." — Arnaud Blin, French Historian, author of *Les Batailles Qui Ont Change l'histoire*; About the Author Peter Joffre Nye has written for the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Sports Illustrated*, the *Denver Post*, and many other publications. Among his many books is *Peak Business Performance under Pressure*, which he coauthored with Bill Driscoll. He also wrote the script for the documentary *The Six-Day Bicycle Races: America's Jazz-Age Sport* and converted it to a coffee-table book with the same title. He studied at Ball State University and the London School of Economics, and he earned an MFA in Creative Nonfiction from Goucher College.