



YESTERDAY

Frank Duryea

The winner of America's first car race would change history.

BY ALEXIS BURLING

On a snowy Thanksgiving morning in 1895, a small group of Chicagoans huddled in the cold to watch six cars set off on a 54-mile race. Nobody in the crowd had ever seen a car race before. In fact, none of them had even seen a car. Americans actually traveled by horse and carriage in those days, though excitement over cars—"horseless vehicles" as they were called—had been building for years.

This contest, sponsored by *The Chicago Herald-Tribune*, called on inventors from around the world to show off their vehicles. It wasn't so much a race as it was a test. Which vehicle worked the best? Which car would serve as the model for a new kind of transportation?

Eighty-six men took up the challenge and entered the race. But many of their vehicles conked out before even getting to Chicago. Only six of the drivers actually made it to the starting line. One of them, Frank Duryea, had been dreaming of this moment for years.

Frank and his brother, Charles, had always dreamed of becoming famous inventors—like Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb a few years earlier, or Alexander Graham Bell, whose telephone connected people who lived miles apart. Every year there was something

Compare/Contrast

Directions:

1. Read both articles.
2. Write down five facts about Frank Duryea and his race and five facts about Kasey Kahne and his.

miraculous—the radio, the telegraph, the bicycle—that transformed the way people lived.

Charles had seen a gasoline engine demonstrated at the Ohio State Fair in 1883, and became convinced that such an engine could propel a vehicle. Ten years later, he and Frank created and test-drove their first gasoline-powered motor wagon. It worked. But how would their car compare with other motorized vehicles?

At the start of the Chicago race, Frank set off with the other five cars along Lake Michigan. Within a few miles, two electric cars went dead. Another car ran into a ditch. But Frank's kept going, at nearly 10 miles an hour. A grueling nine hours later, he had made it over the finish line, the winner of America's first car race.

Frank and Charles used the \$2,000 cash prize to start a car company—the first in America to make and sell gas-powered vehicles. It didn't make a profit. But the Duryea brothers made something else: history. ■

TODAY

NASCAR's

Kasey Kahne

A young driver races to become a NASCAR legend.



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3. On a separate piece of paper, write a paragraph that explains how they are similar and how they are different.

It was a warm spring day in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2006, and 26-year old Kasey Kahne—a NASCAR rising star—was gearing up for the biggest race of his life. More than 210,000 fans had come to watch Jeff Burton, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and other NASCAR superstars zoom 334 times around a track at speeds of more than 180 miles per hour.

Racing is a dangerous sport. One false turn could send a car hurtling into a sidewall, or worse, into another driver. But to NASCAR drivers like Kahne, the thrill of driving fast—and the possibility of millions of dollars and national fame—was well worth the risks.

Over the past six decades, NASCAR (the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) has grown to become the second most watched professional sport in the United States, next to the National Football League. Its races have been broadcast in more than 150 countries around the world.

Kasey Kahne dreamed of becoming a NASCAR superstar since the first time he drove his tricycle around his driveway. By the age of 14, he had already won four “Micro Midget” competitions in his home state of Washington.

In 2004, just a few years into his career, he got his first big break. He was asked to drive for one of the best NASCAR teams, Evernham Motorsports. He would replace the legendary Bill Elliott, who was retiring. It would be a big—and fast—act to follow. But Kasey was ready.

And now, on this warm April day two years later, with a Rookie-of-the-Year title under his belt, Kahne was ready to prove that he had the makings to become a NASCAR legend.

With a wave of the green flag, Kasey's and 42 other cars took off around the 1.5 mile oval track. For more than three hours, the cars raced as fans screamed over the roaring engines. Kasey struggled to stay in front, and to make his two pit stops as smooth and quick as possible.

Sure enough, when the checkered flag was waved, it was Kasey's Dodge in first place. He pocketed more prize money than he had in any other race—a whopping \$530,164. Best of all, he secured his place at the top—a surefire legend in the making. ■