

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

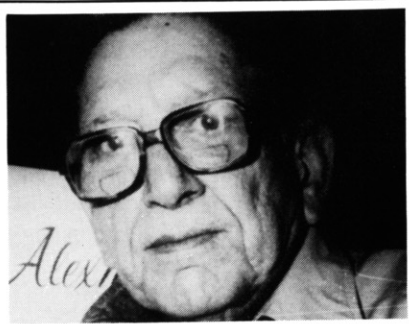
ALEX MORALES

"The Tamale Wagon". Simply seeing or hearing those three words conjures up a picture of one car and one man: Alex Morales. Not unlike the words "the Black Deuce" brings to mind the Bardahl Special and Hector Honore.

Alex Morales got involved in racing hot rods as a youth in southern California in the 1920's. The first Tamale Wagon, named after the specialty of the family's mexican food business, ran at the old Silver Lake Speedway, circa 1928.

In the Thirties and Forties, Alex raced mainly at the American Legion-promoted dirt tracks at Ascot and Huntington Beach. After World War II, in which Alex and seven of his brothers served, he competed in California Roadster Association (CRA) competition without much success. However, in 1959, Chuck Hulse piloted the Roger McCluskey-built Tamale Wagon to Morales' first CRA point title, beating such noteworthy competition as Parnelli Jones, Jim Hurtubise and McCluskey himself. Hulse, who went on to compete with the United States Auto Club (USAC), claimed his professional association with Morales was "the greatest relationship I had in my life."

In the early Sixties, Bob Mathouser, Rosie Roussell, Billy Cantrell and Bob Hogle all wheeled the wagon with varying degrees of success. In 1963, second-year Tamale Wagon driver Hogle and Morales teamed for Alex's second owners point title. CRA wins continued through 1964, 1965 and 1966, although it wasn't until Billy Vukovich and Hogle shared the ride in 1967 that a third title belonged to Alex. Morales captured an incredible fourth CRA title the next year, again with Hogle aboard the McCluskey sprinter and a newer Don Edmunds chassis. According to Alex, "Hogle was the most colorful of all my drivers, the one I had the most fun with."



Alex Morales
Bruce Craig Collection

During his dominance of CRA at Ascot Park, Alex also ventured out to race with USAC in the 1960's. He employed such drivers as Parnelli Jones, A.J. Foyt, Mike Mosley and Billy Vukovich. Entering the Seventies, Alex began getting involved with Indy cars and the "500". Unlike others in sprint car racing, Alex liked pavement, claiming "that's where horsepower counts."

Alex won two more CRA point titles in 1975 and 1978, with drivers Bobby Olivero and Rick Goudy, respectively. In 1979, Alex began his association with Duane "Pancho" Carter, Jr. Their long-term relationship netted a win in the prestigious 1981 Michi-

gan 500 Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) Indy car race, with Johnny Capels as chief mechanic. The next year they finished third at Indy.

Besides Alex, his brothers Gil and Chuck had always been involved with the Tamale Wagon race team. In the mid-Eighties, it was just Alex and Gil, although Alex's son Andy crewed the family's CRA sprinter. They continued having top-flight chauffeurs, including Rip Williams, Duane Feduska, Jimmie Oskie, Tony Simon, Bob East, Jeff Heywood and the late Rich Vogler.

Six-time California Racing Association champion Alex Morales passed away in 1988. However, his son Andy continues to carry on the family tradition by capturing the 1989 and 1991 CRA point titles with Ron Shuman aboard the famous "Tamale Wagon".

