

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

ART PILLSBURY

Art Pillsbury's name is synonymous with the American Automobile Association (AAA). Art was the supervising AAA official on the West Coast, which was "headquartered" at Legion Ascot in the 1920's and 30s. Mr. Pillsbury, as he was known, was a man who always commanded respect, and sometimes fear. He was nattily attired, spoke his mind, and



Art Pillsbury
Bruce Craig Collection

ruled with an iron hand. He was not adverse to suspending 'big car' drivers and owners for behavior that was

'detrimental to the sport'.

Arthur C. Pillsbury was born in New England and studied engineering in school. Upon graduation, he headed west to Alaska seeking his fortune in the gold fields. A compulsive gambler there, he soon moved to California to break his habit. Indeed, he wound up developing Beverly Hills, building many of Los Angeles' public buildings and becoming a millionaire. It is then that his interest in motorsports developed.

Pillsbury was a perfectionist and when he saw flaws in the scoring system utilized at the Santa Monica road races in the mid-1910's, he took over the responsibilities himself. During those years, Santa Monica hosted the famed Vanderbilt Cup race. Art started as AAA scorer, moving on to zone supervisor, contest board member and, finally, board chairman.

During his four decades of involvement as a race official, Pillsbury became the top official at all the Salt Bed record runs from Campbell to Eyston, the confidant of top management in Detroit automotive circles, the executive management of FIA in Paris, headed the ultra-successful Mobilgas Economy Run, engineered/

built the majority of board tracks (including the Beverly Hills Speedway which utilized his "Searles Spiral Easement Curve" theory), ram-rod-ded the Auto Racing Hall of Fame into being, and then, with Colonel Art Herrington, set up the organization for AAA's successor United States Auto Club (USAC).

Art Pillsbury is survived by his son William T. Pillsbury and his daughter Faith Schroeder, both of whom reside today in California.