

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

HECTOR HONORE

At the end of 1967, Hector "Pappy" Honore, the renowned owner-mechanic of the famed "Black Deuce" sprint car, decided that he was getting too old to take the rigors of the long highway hauls. The shingle that he used to put up at his Pana (Ill.) garage which read "closed - gone racing" was taken down and stored with the numerous mementos that the French-American Honore had collected during his 32 years as a driver, mechanic and owner. Hector's wife, Olga "Ma" Honore, claimed that they had logged 1,100,000 miles over the years, using up ten cars and trucks while they campaigned the tough 'big car' circuit. Indeed, Hector didn't just run the circuit as an owner/mechanic, he dominated it for decades!



Hector Honore (and Pete Folse)
Bruce Craig Collection

Honore's "City of Roses" No. 2 cars are credited with 434 feature victories, 704 heat races and 216 new track records over that 32-year span. Hector had schooled over twenty drivers, including Charlie Sczkendy, Harold Shaw, Cliff Griffith, Travis "Spider" Webb, Walter "Curley" Boyd, Bobby Grim, Don Branson, Pete Folse (Sr.), Gordon Woolley, Jerry "Scratch" Daniels, Jim Moughan, Donald "Itch" Daniels, Bill Puterbaugh and others.

His cars were responsible for an amazing ten sprint car championships: one with Harold Shaw (1941) and two with Cliff Griffith (1946-47) in Midwest Dirt Track Racing Association (MDTRA) action, and four with Bobby Grim (1955-56-57-58) and three more with Pete Folse (1959-60-61) in International Motor Contest As-

sociation (IMCA) competition.

The quiet and mild-mannered Honore started an auto repair business in Pana, known as the "City of Roses", after the depression. At about the same time (1935), the thirty-year



"Black Deuce" (and Bobby Grim)
Bobby Grim Collection

old began competing with a Hal-powered 'big car' on the MDTRA trail, also called the "Kerosene Circuit". He achieved success before the war with Harold Shaw and after with Cliff Griffith. However, Griffith's departure after 1947 found Honore calling on talented Coal City (Ind.) competitor Bobby Grim to run his Hiram Hill-gass-chassis, Offy-powered No. 2.

This pairing found the winner's circle fairly quickly in both Central States Racing Association (CSRA) and IMCA competition in 1948-49-50. They finished consistently in both CSRA (3rd, 7th, 3rd) and IMCA (10th, 6th, 14th) point standings all three years. Indeed, they picked up Bardahl Oil sponsorship that final year. Starting in 1951, the Grim/Honore team concentrated on the Al Sweeney-promoted IMCA fair circuit, beginning a march towards the overall point title. In 1951, they finished fifth in points, followed by a fourth in 1952, a third place in points the next year in a new Hiram Hillegass Bardahl-sponsored "Black Deuce", a second in 1954 despite Grim being hurt at Belleville (Kan.) in mid-year, and finally first place in IMCA points in 1955. Not content to earn just one title, Hector Honore kept turning the

wrenches on the same "Black Deuce" to win consecutive IMCA championships with Grim in 1955-56-57-58. Between 1948 and the end of 1958, Honore had achieved 156 IMCA wins, all with Bobby Grim except for

three with Don Branson (Grim hurt in 1954) and two with Pete Folse (Grim replaced in October 1958).

When Grim decided to move over to United States Auto Club (USAC) competition at the end of 1958, Hector called upon fellow Frenchman Pete Folse (Sr.) to wheel the "Black Deuce". Folse drove the famed Offy to three straight championships in 1959-60-61 and two straight runner-up finishes in 1962-63. Folse produced an additional 87 wins for Honore in those five years. Following a reluctant switch to Chevrolet power in 1964, Hector continued to rack up the wins and three straight third place point finishes in 1964-65-66 with Jerry Daniels, Gordon Woolley and Bill Puterbaugh. During the final year of IMCA racing in 1967, Honore's "Black Deuce" was piloted by a number of drivers including Don Daniels and Jim Moughan. The car was sold to Springfield (Ill.) resident Chuck Weyant and was raced through the mid-Seventies. It was eventually sold to ex-Terre Haute promoter Don Smith and expertly restored. Hector Honore, who was born on September 9, 1905 and passed away on March 3, 1983, is survived by his wife Olga, and daughters Jenny Pitner and Betty Nickelson.