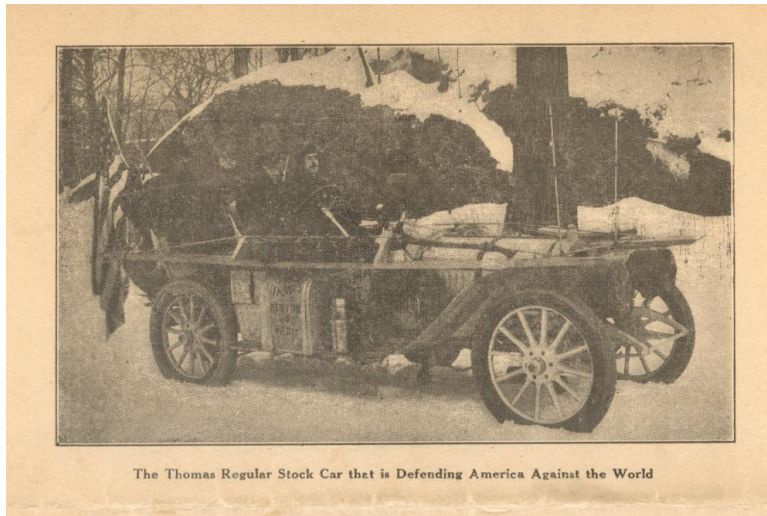


# THE NEW YORK-PARIS RACE OF 1908: SELECTED SOURCES IN THE GROSVENOR ROOM



From *A map of the world depicting the route of the 1908 automobile race between New York and Paris.*  
Buffalo, NY: E.R. Thomas Motor Company, 1908.  
Grosvenor Rare Book Room Collection

## KEY

*	= Oversized book
Folio	= Very oversized book
Buffalo	= In Buffalo Collection in Grosvenor Room
GRO	= In Grosvenor Room
MEDIA	= In Media Room
RBR	= In Rare Book Room, available by appointment
Ref.	= Reference book, cannot be borrowed
Stacks	= Closed Stacks, ask librarian for retrieval

Grosvenor Room  
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library  
1 Lafayette Square  
Buffalo, NY 14203-1887  
(716) 858-8900  
[www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org)  
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## ABOUT THE NEW YORK-PARIS RACE OF 1908

At the dawn of the 20th century, automobiles were an infant technology with none of the infrastructure we take for granted today: road maps, traffic signals, pavement, gas stations, fast food, parking lots, expressways, or motels. Most people in the world had never seen a car in person.

What, then, could be more fun than the first 'round-the-world automobile race under such punishing conditions? In the summer of 1907, Paris newspaper *Le Matin* and the *New York Times* announced "The Great Race: New York to Paris by Automobile".

Four nations entered six cars: Italy, with the Brixia Zust; Germany, with the Protos; France, with the De Dion, the Moto-Bloc, and the Sizaire-Naudin; and the United States, with the Thomas Flyer.

Legend has it that the Thomas Flyer entered the race at the insistence of President Theodore Roosevelt, who hated the prospect of European automobiles crossing the country unchallenged by Americans.

Better-established companies, such as Buffalo's Pierce-Arrow, declined to enter. But the Thomas Automobile Company, also from Buffalo, pulled one of its production models out of its factory at the last minute and entered the race. Buffalo's own George Schuster was driver and chief mechanic.

The starting line, on February 12, 1908, was in Times Square. Two hundred and fifty thousand people turned out to watch. The route crossed the country to San Francisco. There, drivers shipped out to Alaska and drove to the Bering Strait, where they ferried across and pushed through Russia to Europe, finishing at the Eiffel Tower. Organizers estimated the trip to take six months and the route to be 20,000 miles long.

Newspapers around the world followed the progress of the race. The Sizaire-Naudin didn't get past the snowdrifts of the Hudson Valley before dropping out. The Moto-Bloc got lost in the farm fields of Iowa and withdrew. The Protos was caught cheating when the driver boarded it on a train and received a 30-day penalty. Fearing bandits and the brutal weather of Siberia, the De Dion backed out in Russia.

The Protos crossed the finish line first, but factoring in its penalty, did not win the race. The Thomas Flyer arrived in Paris on Friday, July 31, 1908, 170 days after leaving Times Square, the true winner. Buffalo was ecstatic and threw George Schuster a hero's welcome party in Cazenovia Park that drew 10,000 people.

The victory of the Thomas Flyer briefly boosted sales for the Thomas Automobile Company, but mechanical flaws in subsequent models doomed the company and all production ceased in 1913. Its factory at 1200 Niagara Street is now owned by Rich Products and bears a plaque honoring its achievements. In addition to winning the world's only around-the-world automobile race, E.R. Thomas was also one of the world's first commercial manufacturers of motorcycles and taxicabs.

The winning Thomas Flyer was restored to finish-line condition under the supervision of George Schuster, who died in Springville in 1972 at age 99. It is on exhibit at the National Automobile Museum on Nevada.

<b>BOOKS</b>
Buffalo G440 .N63 Nicholson, T. R. (Timothy Robin) <b>Adventurer's Road: The Story of Pekin-Paris, 1907, and New York-Paris, 1908</b> New York: Rinehart [1958, ©1957]
Buffalo GV1029 .B4 Bentley, John <b>Great American Automobiles: A Dramatic Account of Their Achievements in Competition</b> Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, ©1957
Buffalo GV1029 .S3 Schuster, George N. <b>The Longest Auto Race</b> New York: J. Day Co. [©1966]
Buffalo GV1029.2 .C65 1991 Cole, Dermot <b>Hard Driving: The 1908 Auto Race from New York to Paris</b> New York: Paragon House, 1991
Buffalo GV1029.2 .F46 2005 Fenster, J. M. (Julie M.) <b>Race of the Century: The Heroic True Story of the 1908 New York to Paris Auto Race</b> New York: Crown Publishers, ©2005
Buffalo GV1029.2 .G74 1992 <b>The Great Automobile Race: New York to Paris, 1908</b> West Seneca, NY: Intrepid Pub. Co., ©1992
Buffalo GV1033 .M39 2000 McConnell, Curt <b>Coast-to-Coast Auto Races of the Early 1900s: Three Contests that Changed the World</b> Warrendale, PA: Society of Automotive Engineers, ©2000

ARTICLES & ESSAYS	NOTES
To find more articles like these, use the Local History File (see next page).	
*GRO F119 .C7 v.3, pp. 14-15 Conant, Charles A., ed. <b>Progress of the Empire State</b> New York: Progress of the Empire State Co., 1913	A brief E.R. Thomas company history
Stacks*HD9710 .A2 W6686 1997, pp. 485-486 Baldwin, Nick et al <b>World Guide to Automobile Manufacturers</b> New York: Facts on File, ©1987	A E.R. Thomas brief company history
Stacks*HD9710 .U52 A815 1990, pp. 441-442 May, George S., ed. <b>Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography: The Automobile Industry, 1896-1920</b> New York: Facts on File, ©1990	A E.R. Thomas brief company history
Stacks *TL23 .K56 1985 pp. 1382-1385 Kimes, Beverly Rae <b>Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805-1942</b> Iola, WI: Krause Publications, ©1985	E.R. Thomas company history and all known models
Stacks TL160 .H37 1969, pp. 76-77, 192-196, 337-340 <b>Handbook of Gasoline Automobiles</b> New York: Dover, ©1969	Technical specifications for selected E.R. Thomas models, 1904-1906
Stacks Mag. R25 v. 82, no. 489, pp. 188-198 <b>Readers Digest</b> , January 1963 Schuster, George "Around the World"	The driver of the winning car tells the story in his own words

LOCAL HISTORY FILE
This is a card index of newspaper and periodical articles about people, places, and things in the Buffalo area. Use these headings to find articles about individuals and events associated with the race.
<i>Eaton, Clarence</i> <i>Miller, George J.</i> <i>Roberts, Montague</i> <i>Thomas Automobile Company</i> <i>Thomas, Edwin Ross</i> <i>Safford, Clarence</i> <i>Schuster, George</i>

MEDIA	NOTES
MEDIA DVD 6033 <b>Blake Edwards' The Great Race</b> Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, [2002] Shelved in Central Library Media Room	Comedy based on the race, originally produced in 1965. This video may be borrowed.
<a href="http://youtu.be/mADMfKU5-Gw">http://youtu.be/mADMfKU5-Gw</a> <b>New York to Paris Great Race 1908</b>	A free, online 5-minute documentary video about the race

<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>		
The following newspapers were published on a daily basis in 1908 and have varying amounts of coverage of the race. All are on microfilm.		
Call Number/Location	Title	Dates We Have
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>Buffalo Enquirer</i>	1891-1925
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>Buffalo (Evening) News</i>	1881-present
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>(Buffalo)Commercial Advertiser</i>	1842-1924
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>(Buffalo)Daily Courier</i>	1842-1926
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>(Buffalo)Morning Express</i>	1846-1926
GRO Microfilm Collection	<i>New York Times</i>	1851 to present

<b>PERIODICALS</b>		
The following journals were published in 1908 and have varying levels of coverage of the race.		
Call Number/Location	Title	Notes
Stacks *TL1 .A8 v.15	<i>Automobile Topics</i>	Published weekly with regular reports and photos from along the race.
Stacks *TL1 .H81 v.21-v. 22	<i>Horseless Age</i>	Published weekly with some reports and no photos from along the race
Stacks *TL1 .M95 v.17-v.19	<i>Motor World</i>	Published weekly with some reports and no photos from along the race

<b>RARE BOOK ROOM</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Material in the Rare Book Room may be seen by appointment (716-858-8900).	
RBR TL215.T4 T4 <b>The Thomas Model XXXI</b> [New York, Pittsburgh: Chasmar-Winchell Press, 1907?]	Manufacturers' catalog
RBR WNYO 1905.T4 <b>The Thomas "Flyer" 1905</b> Buffalo, NY: E.R. Thomas Motor Co., [1905]	Manufacturers' catalog of the 1905 models. It is digitized at <a href="http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/new-york-paris-race">http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/new-york-paris-race</a>
RBR WNYO 1907.T66 <b>Thomas-Flyer: More Than a Thousand Level Headed American Business Men Testify to the Absolute Reliability and Unquestioned Leadership of the Thomas</b> [New York]: The Company, [1907]	A full color magazine advertisement from <i>Colliers</i> , 1907
RBR WNYO 1907.T66A <b>New York to Paris Race</b> Buffalo, NY: E.R. Thomas Motor Company, [1907]	A map of the route. It is digitized at <a href="http://www.newyorkheritage.org">www.newyorkheritage.org</a>
RBR WNYO 1908 .S7 <b>The Story of the New York to Paris Race</b> Buffalo, NY: E.R. Thomas Motor Co., [1908]	A 75-page brochure with a map.

<b>SCRAPBOOKS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
GRO *F129 .B8 B6927 v.1, pp. 103-108, 126-137 <b>Industry in Buffalo and the Niagara Frontier</b>	Newspaper photographs from the race
GRO *F129 .B8 B6928 v. 8, pp. 172-174 <b>Local History</b>	<i>Buffalo Evening News</i> article from Jan. 22, 1949

<b>SELECTED WEBSITES</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<a href="http://wnyheritagepress.org/photos_week_2006/thomas_automobile/thomas_automobile.htm">http://wnyheritagepress.org/photos_week_2006/thomas_automobile/thomas_automobile.htm</a> <b>E. R. Thomas Motor Company 1903 - 1911</b>	Pictures of the factory then and now
<a href="http://www.thegreatautorace.com/index.htm">http://www.thegreatautorace.com/index.htm</a> <b>The Great Automobile Race</b>	A general history of the race
<a href="http://www.greatrace.com/">http://www.greatrace.com/</a> <b>Great Race</b>	This organization stages similar races.
<a href="http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/new-york-paris-race">http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/new-york-paris-race</a> Buffalo & Erie County Public Library <b>New York to Paris Race Digital Exhibit</b>	A map of the race, an E.R. Thomas catalog, and more.
<a href="http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgtitle_tree.cfm?level=1&amp;title_id=454055">http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgtitle_tree.cfm?level=1&amp;title_id=454055</a> New York Public Library <b>NYPL Digital Gallery: Automobiles: Manufacturers Catalogues</b>	Includes 5 digitized E.R. Thomas catalogs

<b>VERTICAL FILE</b>
The Grosvenor Room collects articles, pamphlets, and clippings about local history. Ask for this folder:
<i>Businesses – Thomas Automobile</i>

<b>THE ONLINE CATALOG OF THE B&amp;ECPL</b>
<a href="http://www.buffalolib.org/vufind/">http://www.buffalolib.org/vufind/</a>
Search the online catalog to find books, magazines, CDs, videos, maps, and manuscripts owned by the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. It includes the Grosvenor Room, all departments in the Central Library, and every town and branch library. Access it at the internet address above.
To find additional New York-Paris items in our collection beyond those listed in this guide, try these Subject searches.
AUTOMOBILE RACING HISTORY E R THOMAS MOTOR COMPANY NEW YORK TO PARIS RACE 1908

WHERE ELSE CAN I RESEARCH THE RACE?	NOTES
<p><b>Buffalo History Museum</b>            Research Library            1 Museum Court            Buffalo, NY 14216            (716) 873-9644, ext. 306  <a href="http://www.buffalohistory.org/">http://www.buffalohistory.org/</a></p>	<p>Owns multiple items, including #A65-15, <i>Arthur H. Driver Letters Concerning Thomas Flyer</i>. Author was employed by E.R. Thomas when the car was built. They also own a piece of sheet music, <i>The Thomas Flyer: Intermezzo-Two-Step</i> from 1908.</p>
<p><b>Buffalo Pierce-Arrow Transportation Museum</b>            263 Michigan St. (at Seneca)            Buffalo, NY 14203            (716) 853-0084            piercemuseum@adelphia.net  <a href="http://www.pierce-arrow.com/">http://www.pierce-arrow.com/</a></p>	<p>Owns a 1909 Thomas Flyer and Thomas memorabilia</p>
<p><b>National Automobile Museum</b>            The Harrah Collection            10 South Lake Street            Reno, NV 89501-1558            (775) 333-9300            FAX (775) 333-9309            info@automuseum.org  <a href="http://www.automuseum.org/">http://www.automuseum.org/</a></p>	<p>Owns the actual 1907 Thomas Flyer which won the race. It is considered the most valuable vehicle in the collection.</p>