

## Gavuzzi and the Pyle Races

C. C. PYLE was an American promoter of the nineteen twenties. He first made his name in sport with the French tennis star Suzanne Lenglen, and was a pioneer of the professional tennis circuit. The American football player Red Grange was also under his promotion.

Pyle decided to promote a footrace of 3422 miles from Los Angeles to New York. He had no knowledge of running or walking; the enterprise was simply a money-making operation as far as he was concerned, although it turned out to be a financial failure.

This is now nearly half a century ago, and in recent years others have crossed the American continent on foot, as will be known to our readers, Don Shepard, Bruce Tulloh, John Lees and others.

The conditions of Pyle's races did not permit the competitors the freedom of choice as to how far was run each day, the time of starting and stopping, etc., which the recent travellers have had.

Pyle was tied down by his contracts with towns across the continent to appear on certain dates with his cortege, including the travelling fun fair, which followed close behind the race. The participants had therefore to run from one place to another every day, often covering murderous distances. Neither was the shortest route taken.

Peter Gavuzzi, a young man at that time, heard of the race in 1927. His family home was near Turin but he had been born and brought up in England. He had worked for a number of years on the liner "Majestic," sailing between Southampton and New York.

Although his competitive athletics had not extended beyond One Mile, he was undaunted by the three thousand-plus miles of the proposed race.

Peter Gavuzzi will be remembered, together with Arthur Newton, from his attendance's at the first R.R.C. promotions. He is now seventy and living in retirement in the Wiltshire village of Steeple Ashton. He is still an active man, enjoying his country walks, not forgetting his love of horses. He has not altered much from the era of the Pyle races, when he was described by Newton as, "always supremely good tempered and happy, rather short but wonderfully symmetrical, he became the prettiest runner of them all, and certainly one of the best."

During a recent visit to his country cottage, Peter Gavuzzi related his experiences of the Transcontinental races of 1928 and 1929, and of the 24 hour track race at Hamilton, Ontario in 1931, and of other ventures in professional athletics, which he undertook together with the late Arthur Newton.

Gavuzzi arrived in Los Angeles early in 1928 to join the training camp at Ascot Speedway, where the competitors from over a dozen countries were gathering for the International Transcontinental Footrace, which would cross fourteen States.

Arthur Newton also arrived from England, having made a 100-mile record on the Bath road. He doubted his chance of completing the American race as he had injured Achilles tendons.

He observed that the majority of the one hundred and ninety-nine starters were completely unaware of the task before them. Those who had run as much as 50 miles in a single day on one single occasion could be counted on the fingers of one hand!

Arthur Newton was asked to address the competitors, being the record holder for 50 and 100 miles on the road. He said that the race would be a desperately serious affair, and that only those who used their heads and who also enjoyed remarkably good luck, could hope to come in prominently at the other end. The task of organising the army, which was to cross the continent, was terrific; in addition to nearly two hundred competitors, there were one hundred trainers, fifty officials and two busloads of press. There was a fleet of coaches, lorries and vans. Accommodation had to be found every evening in hotels, and where these were not available, as in the desert, a camp had to be erected, dismantled, and packed for moving on next morning. A large Marquee was then used for the canteen; think of the cooking and the luggage alone!

There were problems of supply, food, water and petrol. There were no petrol stations in the desert.

All competitors started together each morning, and were clocked in at the end of the day's run, as in a factory. Their times were totalled at the end of each day and posted, so that their positions in the race were known every day from their cumulative times. The weather forecast and details of the following day's run were also posted.

The race was started in Los Angeles by pistol after a few words from C. C. Pyle on 4th March at 2 p.m. After a lap and a half of the track the field sped towards Puente some 18 miles away. Owing to the excitement with the whole distance packed on both sides of the road by an ocean of humanity, many competitors just tore away. Newton arrived about fortieth and Gavuzzi about one hundredth.

Gavuzzi had been briefed by his sponsor to go for the "sprints." Prizes were to be given for the various stages, although in fact these never materialised. The same sponsor had also backed Charlie Hart, his task being to go for the whole distance. Hart subsequently retired, and Gavuzzi took on his objective of winning over the whole distance of some 3400 miles.

Thirty-eight miles on the second day ended at Bloomington, then 44 miles to Victoriaville and 36 miles to Barstow. The climbing began, some men bled from the nose and ears at 6,000-7,000ft, above sea level.

Mohave Camp was another 31 miles and Bagdad 41 miles. On the eighth day the race arrived at Needles after covering 56 miles. Next day the competitors were ferried over the Colorado river on rafts by Indians. These became stuck on sandbanks so that everyone had to push them off. However eventually all the competitors had been ferried to the further bank. The vehicles had to make a wide diversion meeting the runners later. This became known as the "Jungle run." Hitherto road junctions had been marked with red arrows; here there was nothing but some kind of goat trail. Each runner was given two oranges to last him until he picked up the trucks ahead.

Peter set off, after seeing what some of the others would do, and became separated from them. Eventually Arthur Newton came up, and said, "Where are we, Peter?" There was a tree nearby, so Gavuzzi climbed up to spy out the land, but could see only jungle and trees.

However they did in the end meet up with the vehicles and the camp.

A few days later they reached "Two Gun Camp." Here Newton was in serious trouble. Known as the "Rhodesian Rambler," he was leading the second man in the race by nine and quarter hours, having covered 550 miles.

He was forced to retire owing to the condition of his Achilles tendons. The lead was taken by a 21-year old American Indian, Andy Payne, of Claremont, Oklahoma. Although he was not an outstanding athlete, he was a good stayer. Gavuzzi was seventh at this point. A vital function was performed during this arduous event by the Maxwell House Coffee Van, which remained forever in the memories of the contestants. Stationed at half way on each day's route, it dispensed coffee and sandwiches to the competitors. Gavuzzi did not think that the peanut butter used was very suitable under desert conditions.

Peter Gavuzzi took the lead in the entire race after the first month, and retained it until three thousand miles. Before starting, a dentist had wanted to take out all his teeth, but Peter asked what he would eat with, and he decided to take a chance with them. The runners took a lot of sugar, and after Chicago he developed abscesses, was unable to eat solid food, and became weaker and weaker. There was a condition in the competitor's contract that if the Medical Officer considered it advisable he could pull the competitors out of the race. He said, "Look Peter, you'll have to give it up, man. You're getting weaker and weaker. I'm giving you until tomorrow to pull up, otherwise you are out." So Peter Gavuzzi, who was 6 hours in the lead with only 422 miles to go, had to retire at Freemont, Ohio.

Since Newton had retired from the race, he had acted as "adviser," moving up and down the field every day, encouraging the struggling competitors. They suffered from every kind of trouble, shin splints, knees, and blisters. He tried to cheer them up.

The weekly mileage's from the beginning had been 257, 321, 320, 306, 343, 347, 295, 261, 331, 305, and 398 miles for the eleventh week. The promoter had hoped that by increasing the mileage he would get rid of a lot of the competitors.

As the race approached New York the daily mileage's became murderous. It was pitiful to see the remaining competitors reduced to shuffling shambling wrecks after covering over three thousand miles, and within a week of their goal. They had nearly 300 miles to cover in five days.

They reached Saffron, and were then taken to the Hudson River Ferry by coach and to Madison Square Garden for a final 26½ miles on the indoor track.

There was a fair crowd present, and some cheering. There were twenty-two finishers. Next day there was trouble. Pyle was unable to pay the prize money. There should have been \$25,000 for the winner (£45,000, 1976 sterling), \$10,000 for the second man, and fourteen prizes in all.

However, a Californian millionaire, named Gunn came to the rescue, and paid out the cash prizes. He had a son in the race, who had walked the whole way!

The winner was Andrew Payne in 568 hours 36 minutes 33 seconds, second was Johnnie Salo in 584-54-8, and third was Phillip Granville in 597-28-36. The medical officer, who had followed the entire race, as well as other doctors, examined the competitors, and reported no ill effects from such a demanding race.

Gavuzzi came back to England, working his way on his old ship, "The Majestic," and Arthur Newton stayed in the States, as he had been offered contracts to appear in a number of indoor marathon races at Madison Square Gardens, in Philadelphia, and Boston.

## NEW YORK TO LOS ANGELES

Pyle had announced that he would, for certain, organise another race the following year, and as the runners had been paid off for his first race, Gavuzzi had real incentive to take this very seriously after his bad luck in 1928. He trained very hard, and his training included a run from John O'Groats to Lands End in 31 days over a thousand miles (1089J miles in a running time of 167h. 37m. 34secs, a professional record) standing today. This was not a record attempt, but a means of simulating to some extent the conditions of the Trans Continental race, which running out from home and returning everyday did not do. Arthur Newton returned from America, the two met, and decided to team up, sharing all expenses, and dividing any prize money.

The entry fee for the first race had been \$25 only; all expenses, hotels, lodging had been found, so that the competitors had nothing to worry about on this account. However, there was to be an entry fee of \$300 per person in 1929, and competitors would have to meet all their own expenses for nearly the three months, which the race would last.

The pair decided to use a truck, which would be fitted out with bunks, thus saving hotel bills. They met a young man, George Barrett, who had a relative in Los Angeles, and who was quite a good cook, and first class driver and mechanic. The partners left their training quarters at Shirley, near Southampton and sailed for New York with Barrett.

They signed their contracts and paid \$600 entry fees at the race headquarters in New York, before joining the training camp at Rockaway Beach, near the city. There they met all their old friends. Half the contestants had run the previous year. They were told to report at Columbus Circle in New York City for the start on 31st March. Here they were started on their long journey by a famous stage artist Will Rodgers. The first three miles through the City to the Hudson River Ferry was not part of the race, which began on the west side of the river with the stretch to Elizabeth of 19 miles. All the new men to the race tore away, but the others were all well trained men this time. They had learnt their lessons the previous year, when they had all been a bunch of "amateurs" with the exception of Arthur Newton, the only properly trained man in the race.

The veterans of 1928 soon came into their own, and most of the new fry were out of contention after one week. Many of the best runners Newton, Salo, Granville, were affected by a bug, either from the food or from the water.

Gavuzzi was not so handicapped, and in view of the competition he had to face, he decided to make hay while the sun shone. He won six daily laps in succession to establish a lead of six hours, which stood him in good stead later.

On a Sunday, the 31st day of the race, near Brazil, Indianapolis, the traffic was very heavy. Both lanes of the road were crowded and the competitors had to run in the centre of the road, led by a police motorcyclist. Newton was knocked down by a car, and again was out of the race. The burden again fell upon Gavuzzi. After a thousand miles Gavuzzi was well in the lead. The race had crossed New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and was now in Illinois. Salo, Umek, Granville were all running well.

The route was different from the previous years; further south, and also longer, the distance being given as 3635 miles. As this was to be covered in 78 days, a week less than the previous race, it was evident there would be some pretty long laps.

They entered Missouri, which became known as "Misery." There were thirty days of continuous rain. It was quite impossible to keep dry. The trainers took off their charges clothes, wrung them out, and replaced them.

Peter said the roads were covered by millions of small turtles, which they threw into the cars, but the trainers threw them back.

The Maxwell House Coffee van was again in evidence.

Asked how cheating, by taking lifts was prevented, Gavuzzi said the first fourteen men all had trainers. These watched continuously the man in front so as to ensure that their men maintained their positions.

Cheating here, amongst those going for the first fourteen places with prizes, was virtually impossible. This did not apply to others behind. He explained that many of the Americans were sponsored by their States, who paid the high entry fee and all expenses as long as they remained in the race.

All those with any chance wanted to win as much depended upon this. Apart from the cash prizes, most had put in a year's training. The pressure increased, and Gavuzzi had at times to run at 9—10 m.p.h. to keep his lead. Added interest developed from the fact that different men established their superiority over different distances. Thus no one could touch a coloured American, Eddie Gardiner, from 1 to 26 miles. Peter Gavuzzi was the best on stages of 26 miles to 40 miles; Salo the Finnish American from 45 to 65 miles. No one could touch the Italian Walker, turned runner, Umek from Trieste, from 50 miles to 75 miles.

Gavuzzi and Salo came to a gentleman's agreement to run together on a short day's lap of 40 miles. Neither would have gained much on each other in any case, and this enabled the drivers to have a day off. One of these would drive straight to the next night's resting-place. The drivers were very hard-worked, looking after their men, going to and fro to find supplies, etc.

Gavuzzi had a six-hour lead half way through the race. He could afford to run 1 m.p.h. slower than the others to conserve energy and lessen the risk of injury. In spite of his lead, Gavuzzi knew he was only 23 years old, and that an older man had an advantage in endurance events of this character. Salo was gaining all the time, five, ten minutes a day.

On 18th May they entered Texas, a scene of pumping oil wells, the "Big Stink," where Salo took over the lead.

Gavuzzi, who had not won a lap for a week, was chided by one of the trainers. He took on a \$50 bet he would do so, and he covered one day's distance of 44 miles in 5 hours 51 minutes, winning the next two days as well. Whereas the Rockies had been tackled early in the 1928 race, on this occasion the men would have to cross them after running something like 3000 miles. This had caused some worry. The Arizona desert was another trial, with shade temperatures of 105F, and no shade, no trees, only cactus, which was little help. After running

the men would crawl under the vehicles, the only place there was any shade. Food was another difficulty. What was available had to be picked up when it could be, and was not always the best for running. However they were tough.

The Rockies were a big test, and Gavuzzi, who was running well, regained the lead, and came in sight of the Pacific Ocean. The incentive to himself and Salo was great in virtue of the large money prizes, and with a fortnight to go Gavuzzi led by 1 hour 40 minutes. Arthur Newton advised that he should not race Salo at this critical stage of the race. The race was to finish with a 26 ¼ mile Marathon on Wrigley's Field in Los Angeles. Gavuzzi knew he had sufficient speed to beat Salo over this distance.

What was in Pyle's mind was difficult to fathom, but again a succession of terrific laps was demanded of the contestants, 53 miles, 56, 77, 69 and 58 on successive days.

On 18th June they completed the last day's run to Huntingdon Park about 4 miles from Wrigley Field. They were all tired men. Gavuzzi had a lead of 10 minutes over Salo. It is clear a close finish would benefit the promoter, who was dependent on the gate the following day.

Next morning the Referee called the field together in the presence of the Press, and said that owing to the tremendous traffic congestion on the road no times would be taken until the race started on the field. The competitors would make their way to Wrigley Field in their own time.

Our hero set off, flanked on either side by three competitors, who had retired from the race, to protect him from the seething crowd through which he had to force his way.

As is the situation in some American towns, the railway tracks cross the roads. Gavuzzi was stopped by a very long train of tanker trucks; three engines in front and one behind, and was delayed some 5 or 6 minutes. However he did not worry since he had been told that the race would not start until all the competitors had reached Wrigley Field.

Imagine his surprise when he reached the track and found that Salo was already tearing round. Gavuzzi had lost his head, and although he managed to lap Salo, he was unable to make up the whole deficit, and he lost the race by 2 minutes 42 seconds.

Salo won in 525 hours 57 minutes 20 seconds, Umek was third about 12 hours behind, and Richmond fourth some 35 hours in arrears. Some nineteen competitors finished.

When asked why he did not protest to the Referee, Gavuzzi said that the American press said, "Peter if you protest, you will be branded a very poor sportsman." Mr. Newton, an English gentleman and sportsman of the old school who believed in being a good loser advised likewise, and said, "Well Peter, we have won the second prize of \$10,000."

Next day the prizewinners were taken by coach to a lawyer's office in Los Angeles. Whereas the amounts to be received by the first few were substantial, the others were not so generously treated. The fifteenth to finish, the last prizewinner was to be paid \$700 only. He had paid \$300 to enter the race, and had met all his expenses for nearly three months, and would be out of pocket.

Everyone was happy, and chatting as they waited to be called into the office to receive their cheques, but 'disaster'!

Salo went in first, and came out with as long a face as could be imagined. Peter, you know there is no money in the kitty."

"What is this yarn"? I was called into the office and the lawyer said, "Mr. Gavuzzi, Mr. Pyle is broke. He did not get a cent from the big crowd at Wrigley Field. The Income Tax people got there first, and they collected everything at the turnstiles, to pay back taxes, which were owed them. Mr. Pyle is broke. There are two things you can do. You can take Mr. Pyle to court, and in view of your contracts you will win your case, and Mr. Pyle will be sent to gaol. Alternatively, you can accept a Promissory Note for the amount owed less sufficient cash to see you back to England, plus interest at 7%, in the hope that he will pay you at sometime in the future! I joined the others outside the office, and all decided to accept the second alternative."

Peter Gavuzzi has today, forty-seven years later, the Promissory Note. This piece of paper was all he got out of the 1929 International Transcontinental Race.

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### I SHOULD HAVE ASKED HARRY

by Malcolm Campbell

Editors Note: This article appears by kind permission of the author. It appeared in the March edition of the IAU Newsletter. An obituary to Harry Abrams also appeared in the same issue in which Malcolm wrote, "I am sorry to report the death of Harry Abrams who died in New York of brain cancer on November 27th 1994. He was 87 years old. Harry completed both of the Trans America races during the early part of this century." Malcolm is the President of the IAU and Editor of the IAU Newsletter. He is a frequent contributor of excellent articles to

our Newsletter and was elected onto the RRC Council at the last AGM.

My filing system is the perfect answer to industrial espionage and if, at times, I have difficulty in retrieving information I console myself with the fact that it is in there somewhere-I rarely throw anything away.

In order to locate a photograph of Harry Abrams I had to search through the 1985 box. Whilst doing so I came across a scrap of paper on which I had scribbled a few questions for Harry. Some had been asked and were ticked. One without a tick related to Peter Gavuzzi and the 1929 Trans America Race.

The 1928 Trans America Race was run from Los Angeles to New York and the winner was Andy Payne. Johnny Salo was 2nd, Harry Abrams was 11th. Peter Gavuzzi and Arthur Newton retired. The race was organised by C.C. (Cash & Carry) Pyle.

Following the success of the event Pyle organised another Trans America Race in 1929 with the start in New York and the finish in Los Angeles. Andy Payne did not take part. All of the others mentioned above were at the starting line and involved in some way with the dramatic events of the last day.

Newton was again obliged to retire after a motor accident but remained with the race and assisted Gavuzzi. The race developed into a thrilling duel between Johnny Salo who was a naturalised American of Finnish ancestry and Peter Gavuzzi who was English with an Italian father.

From the outset Pyle was in financial difficulties and the wonder was that any of the 19 finishers were able to start the last stage on June 16th 1929. Pyle's entrepreneurial skills were legendary and in this race he turned skulduggery into an art form. It's been said that it would be better to be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than to be the man who sold it. At the same time one has to give a measure of respect to someone who is a supreme artist - Pyle was the master of his chosen profession.

The race started from New York and after 15 daily stages Gavuzzi held the lead with Salo over 5 hours behind him in third position. Gavuzzi held the lead until the 49th stage and was finally caught by the American. Salo's leading margin was now some 4minutes. Salo extended his lead over the following days and he was the race leader ahead of Gavuzzi until the 72nd stage when he experienced some problems. With only four days to go Gavuzzi was now the leader by 55minutes. Salo refused to admit defeat and worked hard to close the gap and with three days to go after stage 74 the lead was reduced to 20minutes. They received the same time for the next stage.

Stage 76 belonged to Harry Abrams. He did more than win the stage. He dominated proceedings. Completing the 70miles from San Diego to San Juan Capistrano in 10hrs 18mins 20secs he was more than 3hours ahead of Johnny Salo in second place. Less dramatic but of more impact on the overall results was the fact that Peter Gavuzzi lost a further 10minutes to his great rival.

On the penultimate day Salo and Gavuzzi matched strides over the 62mile stage and the scene was now set for the final day. Gavuzzi was the overall leader and was 9mins 56seconds ahead of Salo. The third runner was 12hours adrift.

The instructions given to the 19 survivors were that at 19.30hours they would run to Wrigley Field, which was four miles away. There they would assemble and start a race over the marathon distance around a track measuring five laps to the mile. The race clock would be started when the track marathon began. The run to the track would form no part of the race and one assumes the purpose was promotional. They started late at 19.45 and the instructions were repeated so there could be no misunderstanding.

As the starting pistol was fired Harry Abrams set off like a "bat out of hell" quickly followed by Johnny Salo and Sam Richman. Motor cycles led the way for these three as the crowds closed behind them.

Peter Gavuzzi after consultation with Arthur Newton had elected to make a more leisurely journey to Wrigley Field and in the interests of safety had asked five of the competitors to run with him acting as "minders". Reports state he was in a box of runners insulated from any physical damage from well wishers and others.

Gavuzzi's progress was impeded when they were delayed at a railway crossing for about 3minutes and eventually they reached the track at Wrigley Field. Imagine Gavuzzi's surprise when he arrived to see Salo circling the track at almost sprinting speed. Imagine further his surprise when he was waved onto the track and told to continue. For a few laps he ran unaware of the situation until Newton, after making enquiries, advised him that the race clock had been started at 19.45 contrary to all the official instructions given.

After seventy-seven days and three and a half thousand miles of intense competition Gavuzzi had seen his lead taken from him in circumstances that can only be described as having "the faint aroma of performing seals". His first recourse was to try to catch Salo and this he attempted to do. There were probably 10,000 spectators at the track and whilst there were other runners involved all eyes were on the American and the Englishman. Support for both was very evident as Gavuzzi attempted to make up the distance.

Salo's sprints at the start of the marathon distance had tired him although he had built a lead, which he now needed to defend. Slowly Gavuzzi made up some of the distance separating them and when he first lapped Salo a great cheer rang out. Once more the Englishman set off to pull another lap back -the atmosphere was electric. Salo was putting everything into his efforts to stay ahead and finally the point was reached when both were running at the same rate. Salo completed his marathon and a little later Gavuzzi finished.

Some runners were still on the track and incredibly half an hour passed before the result was announced. Salo had won the 1929 Trans America Race by 2minutes 47seconds.

Gavuzzi was angry and called for the Race Referee but officials seemed to be in short supply. He was told by reporters that an official protest might be considered unsporting and his reaction to that is better imagined than written about. Nevertheless Newton would give him the same advice adding that by protesting he would be letting down his country and the Empire. Gavuzzi accepted the older man's advice and it was all over.

In many ways it was all-academic because C.C. Pyle was unable to pay anyone prize-money but this made the loss of the winner's title, without the courtesy of an official enquiry, even more tragic.

Following the race there was little reference in the media to the curious rules or change of rules on the last day. One explanation for this was the fact that after the newsworthy subject of an American Victory the follow up story was the non-payment of prize money. There were a lot of questions asked and the great mystery of the 1929 Trans America Race was why the media did not try to establish the reasons behind the curious incidents of the last stage.

Why did Harry Abrams sprint off on the run to Wrigley Field? His own position (9th) was secure. He was about 3hours behind the 8th placed runner and over 50 hours ahead of the 10th placed runner. A possibility could be that he was pacing Salo to Wrigley Field. Later reports indicate that Salo expressed a wish to get to Wrigley Field as soon as possible in order to secure prime position on the track for the start of the marathon. Salo was an honest man and there is a ring of truth about this explanation. Having said that the fact remains that something went wrong on that last stage and the circumstances have never been satisfactorily explained.

The winner of the race was to receive \$25,000 and although hindsight is a great aid to vision one has to express surprise that Gavuzzi did not stick to Salo like glue on the last day. When Salo sprinted away at 19.45 Gavuzzi should have done the same. The young Englishman was being assisted by Arthur Newton. He enjoyed the distinction of being one of the world's greatest ultra distance runners. In the kingdom of the blind the one eyed man is king and the sad fact is that an outstanding runner is not necessarily a good manager.

Some of the great six day runners, forty earlier, in Gavuzzi's situation, would have known how to run on that last day. They would also have had no compunction about lodging an official objection. Gavuzzi, of course must accept responsibility for his own actions but it seems clear that he was very badly advised. Certainly he had no other option other than to object. At the very least some clarification of the situation should have been provided by the race referee.

Theories abound and the most popular is that C.C. Pyle wanted to generate maximum publicity on the final day. This is probable but circumstances on that last day lacked his flamboyance technique and style.

A betting coup? Pyle could have recouped some of his losses by organising a betting coup but he owed so

much money that any wagers of significant sums would almost certainly have been noted - therefore it's unlikely he would have been involved. At a lower level some of the runners and perhaps some of the officials could have worked something out with the bookmakers. Knowledge that the rule change would give advantage to Salo added to the knowledge that Gavuzzi would be running slowly to Wrigley Field would greatly assist those fixing the odds. The "box" around Gavuzzi, although protecting him, was also ensuring his pace was reduced.

The 1929 Trans America Race was over and no further race took place until Marvin Skegerberg and I raced each other across America in 1985. We researched those earlier races and I am sure I can speak for Marvin when I say those runners deserved enormous respect.

Johnny Salo died in tragic circumstances a few years after the race. He was hit by a ball at a baseball match in 1931 and died from brain injuries. C.C. Pyle prospered and was involved in many enterprises before his death in Hollywood in 1938. Newton continued his illustrious running career and in 1931 set an Indoor 24Hours Record in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada - he ran 245.113km/152.3 miles at the age of 47. He died in 1959. Gavuzzi also continued his running career and became an outstanding coach. He died in 1980 and during the last few years of his life lived a short training run from the home of RRC statistician, Andy Milroy. Andy writes that this most modest of men was delighted to see that in the Guinness Book of Records the item referring to the longest footrace of all time stated that the 1929 Trans America Race was won by Johnny Salo from Peter Gavuzzi. It was some consolation to this great runner that he was remembered.

Salo, Pyle, Newton and now Abrams. All are gone. Any of these could have answered some of the questions concerning that last day of the Greatest Long Distance Race of All Time. The tragedy is that I did not ask Harry.

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