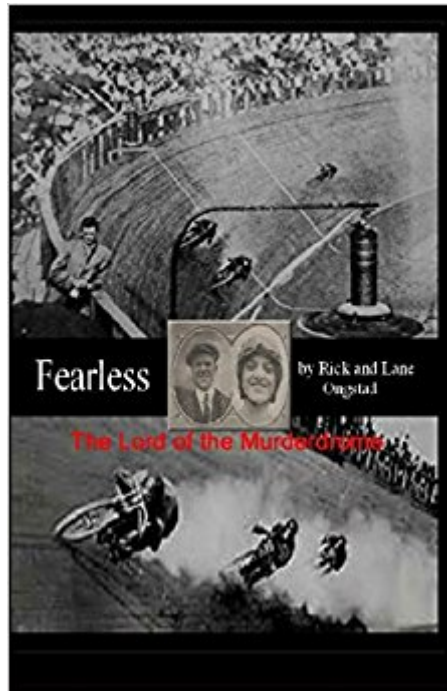


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Fearless: Lords Of The Murderdrome



Synopsis

In the early fall of 2004 Bill and Beth Bradford travel to Bill's childhood home in Bourbon County, Kentucky to inventory and settle the estate of his recently deceased parents. In the attic they discover a large trophy and, most astoundingly, a large scrapbook. Little do they know that the unearthed scrapbook contains hundreds of newspaper clippings detailing the extreme sport of board track racing, an era in motorcycle racing forgotten by time for over 90 years, and the career of one of the sports biggest superstars, Charles "Fearless" Balke, as lovingly assembled by his wife Snooks, Bill Bradford's distant great-aunt. Staged on half mile circular tracks built of wood and banked at 60 degrees, board track was the most dangerous, most exciting, and deadliest competitive sport of its time. Riding inches apart mounted atop primitive bikes the racers battled not only each other but also the unforgiving boards where accidents regularly maimed or killed participants and fans alike. Little wonder that the newspapers christened the tracks "murderdromes". Its young stars - the "lords of the boards" - braved these incredible dangers in pursuit of equally outrageous rewards. But lurking beneath it all every racer knew that the price of admission was a willingness to put your life on the line for a shot at glory. This is the first hand story of Charles "Fearless" Balke, his early years, storybook romance, and his tragic final curtain. Although it reads like fiction, this is a true story with every character, event, and location documented. Enjoy.

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (January 26, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1495295265

ISBN-13: 978-1495295263

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 34 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #791,762 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #106 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Automotive > Motorcycles > History #1805 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > History

Customer Reviews

My interest in board track racing history came about by accident. I am a long time back yard

mechanic, and have customized, restored, and tinkered with cars all my life. I saw an article on Chinese motor kits for bicycles, ordered one, and began a fun project to build a really cool motorized bicycle.. Upon completion I proudly motored about town getting attention from many people. One day a man approached me and asked if it was a restored board track bike. I had no idea what he was talking about but curiosity drove me to research the subject. I found very little on the subject, mostly drips and drabs, limited in context, probably enough for a average person, but the more I read the more I wanted to learn more on the subject. I next searched out books I could buy on the sport, again few existed, and next to none were in print. I lucked out contacting Stephen Wright, his book American Racers 1900-1940, was a treasured find. The more I read the more involved I became with these truly brave early motor cycle racers. They came to life for me, they became more than figures of motor cycle history, and more like friends I had discovered! These were pioneers of the motor cycle, young and caught up in the piston driven explosion that was sweeping the nation at the turn of the 20th century. Bicycles gave people a new form of freedom, and with the addition of an engine attached, a leap into the future, filled with hope and excitement.

What's there is a fast and interesting read, but there's just not much here to digest. There is less than 100 pages of real meat here, and it really leaves you wanting more information on this fascinating subject. Anyone can read this within a couple of hours. And some of the typos and grammar errors were quite irritating. What book doesn't get proofread before being published. I've been pretty critical, don't get me wrong, I liked what there was. There really wasn't enough material here though to warrant publishing a book unfortunately. It was nice perhaps that this story of one board track racer wasn't lost in someone's attic.

Very few Board Track racers have their story told properly; it was the most dangerous kind of motorsport, and 'muderdromes' were as much bloodsport as racing contest, and were eventually shut down after a series of spectacular fatal accidents involving spectators. 'Fearless' Charles Balke is lucky to have his tale spun, with an interesting set of circumstances leading to the discovery of his story. I would have loved to see better-quality photos, as most of these are low-quality screen grabs from the 'net - even the front cover.

This is a piece of forgotten history from the early days of motorcycling. It describes a time when innovations were tested by daredevils in events that still sort of survive in the NASCAR races, but are not too common anymore in today's America. I found it fascinating. Very recommended.

This is a decent book. The story is pretty good, however someone should have proof read it a little closer for the grammatical errors.

I personally loved this book. As a fan of all the early motorsports and the brave souls it took to compete back then, I would recommend this book to anyone even slightly interested in this era of motorcycle racing. It's more storybook than technical but that's part of its charm. Easy to read and while it's a little rough around the edges grammar wise it's still good. I could have been happier with more on where some of the stories came from or more on the scrapbook and how the current family came about having this book done. Didn't see a publisher on the book so I assume with the way it's done that it's a home done deal. Either way it's a great read for the price.

Very weak effort here. The entire book is based off of a scrapbook we are lead to believe and is quite possible the case. Poorly researched, if researched at all out side of the scrapbook. Took about an hour to read the entire book. Amateurish and very light on substance. Only the Motor sport junky will tolerate this thing. Not a very good effort.

Great book! I wish it were longer as the subject was so good.

fantastic read if you are into a part of the history during the dawn of motorcycles.

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