


**Champion,  
Albert**



# A.C. Spark Plug Company

FLINT, Michigan, U.S.A.

March 24th, 1925.

Mr. Carl Fisher,  
Miami Beach, Fla.

My dear Carl:-

Your telegram was forwarded to me in New York and upon my return to the office this morning I wired you as per enclosed confirmation.

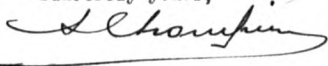
I was detained in New York until Friday on account of matters which came up that required my attention and of which you can realize the importance when I tell you that it concerned a new magnetic electric speedometer which was brought over here from England by Mr. Simms. If it is as good as it looks, I don't believe anybody else will be able to sell speedometers. As it was a serious thing, I stuck on the job and made a deal. Then yesterday Mr. Simms' representatives were in Detroit with our attorneys, so I spent the day there lining up contracts and on that account only came to Flint today.

You probably realize how much I have to do in connection with a great many matters which were awaiting my return and this makes it impossible for me to return as promised, or at least as soon as I hoped to, because I have to see Mr. Sloan in Detroit next week also.

If nothing else happens and things clear up pretty well, it will be possible for me to leave about April 3rd or 4th. This is my reason for writing you, as I would like to know what your plans are in order that I may not disturb anything you have arranged. I would also like to know when you will leave Miami. Upon receipt of a telegram from you, I will wire as to what we will be able to do.


With best wishes and regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,



AC:GR

*Very best to all*



A C SPARK PLUG COMPANY

FLINT, MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF  
THE PRESIDENT

April 2nd, 1925.

Mr. Carl G. Fisher,  
Miami Beach, Fla.

My dear Carl:-

I am sorry that Edna and I could not start in time to join you in the wonderful trip you are making and certainly want to thank you for your invitation.

After I came back here one job led to another and there were things that I absolutely had to do. My boss, Mr. Sloan, and another official of General Motors were in Detroit this week and we had a meeting to discuss matters which had to be taken care of. I do not believe it would have been very good policy for me, after just returning from a month in Miami, to tell him that I could not look after some very important matters because I wanted to return for another week.

That was one thing and when I see you, I will tell you of the things we are lining up which require my attention at this time. The Executive Board is coming to Detroit again week after next at which time they expect to see me, but I am arranging matters so it will not be necessary for me to be present and we are planning, as stated in my wire of this date, to arrive in Miami Saturday evening, April 11th, to be with you for about a week.

Edna joins me in sending our very best regards.

Sincerely yours,

*L. Champion*

AC:GR

Celeb

Champion died  
in Oct '27

*Champion*

A C SPARK PLUG COMPANY

FLINT, MICHIGAN

July 26, 1926

OFFICE OF  
THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Carl Fisher;  
Port Washington, N. Y.

My dear Carl:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th and note you will have the plans of the swimming pool sent. Also want to remind you that you were going to send me photograph of Montauk lighthouse so I could start on the work you and I discussed. You were also going to send me some shells on which we are to do some work in connection with your lamp scheme.

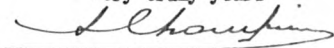
Glad to hear of the nice weather you have been having. We had a little hot spell for a couple of days here, but it is over now and we are having very good weather.

In answer to your statement that you wish I would continue to think of coming out and joining you at Montauk, I certainly do, but I want you to realize that this is something I cannot do over night. I have a lot tied up here and a good many things started that will take time to bring them where I will get the benefit of the work that took years to bring them where they are. Some of them only have a small start, but are going to be very big. The old saying is "Don't start anything unless you can finish it" and that is my position right now.

If Jim was with you I know you had a good time and I am sorry I was not with you to visit with John and Joe.

Very best regards to all,

Very truly yours



A. Champion

AC/A

July 29, 1926

Mr. Albert Champion  
A. C. Spark Plug Co.  
Flint  
Michigan

Dear Albert:

There are two things here which I wish you would see immediately. One of these is a process of making marble that I think is some what new in this country. It certainly beats your tile to the devil and can be made practically without machinery for about 22¢ a square foot.

The other thing I refer to is the Thermoil Motor. This is the greatest motor I have ever seen, can be made cheaply and will deliver a horse power per pound or better. We have one here for you to ride behind anytime and I would like to have you see it and now is the time to get an interest in a small way in the company. For marine work, I think there is no equal. It has some bugs that must be gotten rid of but I am sure a few good engineers could do it.

Hope to see you soon.

Yours,

CGF:JD

 **A.C. Spark Plug Company**  
FLINT, *Michigan, U.S.A.*

December 10, 1926

Mr. Carl Fisher,  
Miami Beach, Florida

My dear Carl:

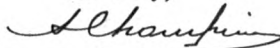
I received a letter from Barney who has just returned from Europe and is on his way home, telling me about how fine he feels, that he is on his good behavior, has been on the water wagon for some time, is going to stay on and wants to work.

I still believe that Barney would make good selling real estate. He is known by everyone in the United States which would give him an entry and give him preference over most everybody else. He has a lovable personality and I think he could do some work both in Miami and Montauk.

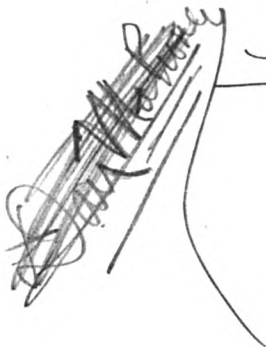
Barney has not asked me in any way to approach you about this matter. I talked to him about it at one time and he said " Well, I would like to go with Carl, but he did not seem anxious to have me". I told him he did not know you because when you say something you say it once and mean it and that is all there is to it. We both like Barney and would like to see him do well.

I would like to know what you think about it.

Sincerely,

  
A. Champion

AC/A



*Chrysler*

December 13, 1926

Dear Albert:

Replying further to yours of the tenth, we have wired Kohlhepp, who is in New York, to set aside one hundred thousand dollars worth of my stock for you. Kohlhepp will forward you a note which we can, and probably will use as collateral later in the season, provided you have no objections to our doing so. We have about six hundred fifty thousand dollars worth of collateral notes on hand January first at Montauk. These notes, as a rule, are not available for collateral until a fifty per cent payment has been made, so I doubt if we can do anything with them for a year.

We are announcing a big Diesel contest for the Speedway for the first week in September. I am sending you copy of the rules. Have you any thoughts on the subject? If so, let me know.

Yours,

CGF:JD

Enclosure 1

P. S. I have asked Krom to see that you get the best rooms we have in the house, and incidentally to make you a rate. If you think you would prefer one of the small cottages, I will let you have one, and make the rate the same as two rooms in the hotel would cost. I wish you would please consider this confidentially. You might enjoy yourself in a cottage, as there is a lot more room. If you cared to, you could have breakfast in the cottage, and have dinner and supper at the hotel. Think the matter over, and wire me so I can keep a cottage out for you.

C. G. F.

## A C SPARK PLUG COMPANY

FLINT, MICHIGAN, U.S.A.

April 7, 1927

*Champion*

Mr. Carl Fisher,  
Miami Beach, Fla.

My dear Carl:

On my arrival home I received your telegram and like yourself we have not felt the weather any more comfortable in Detroit than you did in New York compared to Miami, but it will not be very long before we get good weather and I will be busy enough so I will not have time to worry as to whether the weather is good or bad.

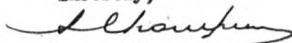
I know that you do not like the statements I make in that line but work is really the greatest thing in the world because when we are not busy we certainly can make trouble for ourselves in many ways. In addition to that we find so much time to be sorry for ourselves and the more money a man has the more chance he has to find himself in that position. Activity also helps so much to keep young and it has been proven many times that we are only going to stay as young as the amount of activity we have.

On reaching here I certainly find any amount of work in every branch of our business that is going to keep me hustling from early morning to late evening. This is my first morning at work and I had people come to the house because this afternoon I must be at Chrysler and Packard, but I do not take it as work - I take it as a game and if I did take it as the people who work for me do I certainly would be very unhappy. I make myself happy by enjoying the things that I have to do and by trying to do a good job I enjoy myself so much more.

I will be interested to have a note from you regarding the result of your trip in New York and am writing this to Miami as I presume you will be back by the time this letter arrives.

You have my very best wishes in all kinds of ways.

Sincerely,



A. Champion

AC/G

MAKERS OF AC SPARK PLUGS - AC SPEEDOMETERS - AC AIR CLEANERS - AC MUFFLERS - AC OIL FILTERS



MONTAUK BEACH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MEMO. TO General Tyndall

DATE July 12, 1927.

FROM Mr. Chase

SUBJECT Bill to Mr. Champion.

Attached you will find a copy of the bills I sent to Mr. Albert Champion on his seven lots in the Business Section.

I believe these bills are made out clearly enough so that he will understand them.

  
C. W. Chase Jr. ✓

CWC/HEL

July 6th, 1927

To:

Mr. Albert Champion  
Flint, Michigan

DR.

-----  
Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, in Block 16  
Subdivision No. 1

23,600.00

By payment in cash  
Credit of 5%

\$5,900.00

1,180.00

\$7,080.

Payable July 6, 1928

5,506.67

Payable July 6, 1929

5,506.67

Payable July 6, 1930

5,506.67

\$23,600.01

Interest at 6%, payable semi-annually.

August 8, 1927.

Mr. Albert Champion,  
A.C. Spark Plug Co.,  
Flint, Michigan.

Dear Albert:

The other day I went over to the boat shop and I found everybody there wearing black caps with the words "Champion Spark Plugs" painted all over. It seems that somebody gave these caps out to the workmen and they, of course, accepted them and used them, in spite of the fact that you are one of our good friends and you are also no doubt furnishing us the services of an expert and a lot of spark plugs. These caps did not cost probably more than five cents apiece and the whole lot to our workmen probably cost a dollar and a half, but it was certainly a very strong ad.

I would like to have your ideas on this matter. We cannot exactly tell these workmen to throw these caps away because they are more or less a sanitary convenience and they don't cost them anything. On the other hand, I would be very glad to pay five or ten times what these hats cost if they were advertising your spark plugs.

Yours,

CGF:T

MONTAUK BEACH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
MONTAUK, LONG ISLAND

August 30, 1927.

*Champion*

Mr. C. G. Fisher,  
Port Washington, L.I.

Dear Mr. Fisher:

I have today written Mr. Charles Hughes, Secretary of the Detroit Athletic Club and publisher of the D.A.C. News, sending him literature and suggestions for stories and asking him to chose the one best adaptable for his readers advising me of his choice at which time I will complete the story for this publication which has so many readers in which we are vitally interested from a sale's angle.

It is a very difficult publication in which to gain admission and we are deeply indebted to Mr. Albert Champion who has championed our cause in this matter.

Very truly yours,

*Steve Hannagan*  
Steve Hannagan

SJH/ELL

Copy to Mr. A. C. Champion,  
Flint, Michigan.

A C SPARK PLUG COMPANY

FLINT, MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF  
THE PRESIDENT

Paris, France  
October 21, 1927

Mr. Carl G. Fisher  
Port Washington, L. I.  
New York

My dear Carl:

Your several letters with clippings and report regarding pier changes effecting New York harbor were forwarded to me in Paris, and I have read everything with a great deal of interest.

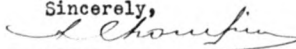
This proposition of .. fast liners between Montauk and Europe certainly sounds good. It is almost like a dream. If this comes through, everything in Montauk will be beyond expectations.

I was also interested in your letter regarding dredging and the deal you made with Mr. Coffin as well as the sales you made to some of the prominent bankers. You ought to have a marvelous 1928, and I want to extent to you not only my warmest congratulations but also my very best wishes.

We have had very wonderful weather ever since we arrived here, and today in Paris is just like summer. We were in England several days and just returned last night. I have been pretty busy in connection with the work involved in our English and French plants, but everything is coming along all right.

We will sail on November 9 so should be in New York on the 15th. We will call you shortly after our arrival and if you have not already left for Miami, hope we will have the pleasure of seeing you and Margaret. Edna joins me in sending our very best to you both.

Sincerely,



A. Champion

## CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its character is indicated by a symbol in the check or in the address.

# WESTERN UNION

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

## SYMBOLS

BLUR	Day Letter
NITE	Night Message
NL	Night Letter
LCO	Deferred
CLT	Cable Letter
WLT	Week End Letter

The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

Received at 153 MAIN ST., PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y.

N17 CABLE CD PARIS 17 1300

CARL FISCHER.

PORT WASHINGTON LONGISLAND NY (VIA FRENCH).

PORT WASHINGTON NY  
OCT 28

ALBERT PASSED AWAY ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON WILL CABLE SAILING  
DATE,

EDNA.

1004A.

Telephone No. *2448*

Telephoned to *Thompson*

Time Delivered *10:45 a.m.*

By *RCG*

Attempts *1*

to

Deliver *file*

*Champion*

Moorestown, N. J., November 1, 1927.

Mr. Carl G. Fisher,  
Port Washington, L. I.

Dear Carl;

I was shocked last night reading the Miami paper to read of poor Albert Champion's death in France. I had become very fond of him and we lose a valuable support on the Beach by his death.

I have been as busy as a bee trying to get my affairs straightened up hoping I could run over to see you a day before you go South. If you have set a positive date I will be glad to hear of it, as I am planning to take the train from here on November 15th for a few days in Florida. I hope you will be there by that time. If I can possibly get over before you leave I am going to do it.

I went over the Furniture for the hotel very carefully with Kohlhepp and I hope our actions are in accord with your views, as I think it is the best way to handle it by getting some woman to take care of the color scheme, etc. and have Howe with his purchasing ability to cooperate with her. I will be glad to hear your slant on this subject.

With kind regards, I am

Yours very truly,

*Living A. Collins*  
A.

IAC/MLA

*Champion*

Port Washington, L.I.,  
November 2, 1927.

Mr. Irving A. Collins,  
Moorstown, New Jersey.

Dear Irv:

I sent you yesterday copy of letter I wrote Kohlhepp. I am just trying to save a thousand dollars that will practically be thrown into the air. Howe can purchase the furniture just as well as any woman decorator and a whole lot better and he won't be bothered with some woman's ideas of color schemes. We don't need color schemes in the Club, as I see it, but we do need some substantial furniture that will last and that we won't need to throw away in a year or two.

Every time I have run into woman decorators I have run to grief. For instance, in our Club house at Montauk. The woman who assisted in the color schemes there put very fine draperies in the kitchen windows, one of them right over the sink where they wash dishes. This is only a few dollars, probably \$45. or \$50, but it is that much money that was thrown into the air and showed that proper economical ideas were not considered.

We know now positively that Montgomery gave us hell in trimming. We also know that Haws and Tyndall are going after the situation like a couple of bull dogs and saved their salary. I have, as you know, tried to wish the Golf Club off on you and as much as I can the Bayshore work, but I certainly cannot agree with Walter in giving this woman a thousand dollars for her services. There are plenty women who would be just as efficient and would be glad to do it for a hundred dollars. In fact, the whole club house can be furnished for \$2,000 or \$3,000. I have been in at least a dozen of the finest clubs in this country, and outside of kitchen equipment, dishes and silver, I have not seen one yet that has \$5,000 worth of furniture.

Yours,

P.S. It was terrible about Albert Champion. No doubt he ate a lot of poisoned food. We have lost a very substantial friend for Miami Beach. Albert expected to build a house there this season, also to build himself a fine boat. I am waiting here for some little time, principally to see Kistler. I am going to make arrangements with him to take some of our horses down there for him to use.

*Card*



November 5, 1927.

Mr. B. de Guichard,  
A.C. Spark Plug Company,  
Flint, Michigan.

Dear Mr. de Guichard:

I have yours of the first. Albert, as you know, had taken \$200,000 worth of stock in Montauk, on which he has paid \$140,000. The second \$100,000 he subscribed for, he gave us a note for, coming due January first, on which he has paid \$40,000, leaving a balance of \$60,000. As a stockholder for this amount, Albert was entitled to stockholder's rights of purchasing property there at half the selling prices. The last time Albert was here, we spent considerable time at Montauk selecting the property for him. As you know, he is a very personal friend of mine and we tried to get him an unusual hill top as a residence site.

Then Albert and Mr. Lou Wasey selected several business lots in the business section which were unusually well located, and we made up the contracts for him. Mr. Wasey was with him at the time these selections were made and Mr. Wasey wanted one or two lots and Mr. Wasey and Albert made some arrangement which I am not familiar with as Albert told us to send him the deeds for the lots and he would make his own arrangements with Mr. Wasey.

This is all I know about the subject. If there is any further information you want, I will try to dig it up for you. If you have not the plat of the property selected by Albert I will get one for you and forward it at once.

Very truly yours,

CGF:T

P.S. We are having the Montauk office send you any information they have on the lots purchased.

*Chapman*

Port Washington, L.I.,  
November 15, 1927.

Mr. B. Deguichard,  
A. C. Spark Plug Company,  
Flint, Michigan.

Dear Mr. Deguichard:

Some couple years ago Albert subscribed \$10,000 for stock in a laundry at Miami Beach which a young man in our organization was promoting. The young promoters name was Mr. Lafayette Page. I think Albert subscribed for this stock primarily because it was on our property and Mr. Lafayette Page was a young man just getting started in a new business.

The building was completed at a time when building costs were high. The laundry had hardly had a good start when the hurricane came along and caused a lot of damage to the machinery and building. On top of this, all the laundries in the county got in a price war and the laundry steadily lost money. Our company put up a lot of the money.

It was found necessary to reduce the capital stock of the laundry and to try to make the laundry pay out on a reasonably assessed valuation and to get rid of the hurricane loss. We did not want Mr. Page and his other stockholders, who were mostly young business men here in New York, to lose the money they had invested, and we did not want Albert to lose his \$10,000, so we decided to give all these stockholders some of our best building lots at Miami Beach for a price which will make them a profit on their investment, exchanging the stock without cost to them.

All of the stockholders have selected their lots at Miami Beach except Albert, and Albert left it up to me to select the lots for his stock. I turned the matter over to Mr. Chase who is on the ground, telling him where we wanted these lots to be selected, but I thought that we could hold some of the lots open and then let Albert go with me this winter and pick out just the ones he wanted. The hurricane blew considerable value out of these lots but the prices at which we are turning them over to these stockholders is the standard market value today and they will sell at these figures and if held a couple or three years will bring a considerable advance which will more than equal ten or twelve percent interest on the investment.

Mr. B. Deguichard,  
November 15, 1927.  
Page 2.

I am going south on Friday and will be in Miami Beach on Monday. If you wish me to select these lots for Albert or one lot in the business district for Albert, I will do so at this time and see that the deed is forwarded to you. If you yourself expect to be in Miami Beach within the next thirty days, we will defer this selection until you come down.

I might say further that if you wish to make any arrangement to change the stock back into the laundry, this can be arranged. In fact, we can make any arrangement you wish to get this matter in shape and closed up so that Albert's estate will be protected.

Now at Montauk, Albert had selected some very valuable property and we made it a point to go all over the property and select choice pieces. I think it would be well if you are in New York soon, before General Tyndall goes south, to run out to Montauk with the General and go over the property and let the General show you just what we are doing and the property which Albert selected. He had some property there which on today's market (or, rather, the market this coming spring) will sell for a very good advance over the price Albert paid, and if held two years from this time will sell at double the value Albert paid this company for the property.

If you wish to dispose of this Montauk property, we will be very glad to undertake to dispose of it for the estate. As you undoubtedly know, there is not a very great sale at this time of year for either residence or business property at Montauk. Our selling season at Montauk is from May until November first. At Miami Beach, the selling season is usually January to May first.

We completed arrangements today for a large corporation to build ten very handsome houses at Montauk, starting before spring. Another organization is being formed in Washington, which is a very substantial organization, and they will also start soon ten houses. This, together with our other activities at Montauk, will, we think, see Montauk a very busy place next season.

Mr. B. Deguichard,  
November 15, 1927,  
Page 2.

If you wish to see a Trial Balance Sheet of Montauk finances, General Tyndall will be glad to show same to you; or if you should call here after General Tyndall has left for the south, our attorney, Mr. John J. Redfield, or our manager, Mr. Parke Haynes, or our auditor, Mr. Conway, will, on presentation of this letter, show you through the books and the financial set up. In the meantime, if you wish, we can make up a statement of the last balance sheet and send it on to you.

Very truly yours,

Carl G. Fisher,  
President.

CGF:T

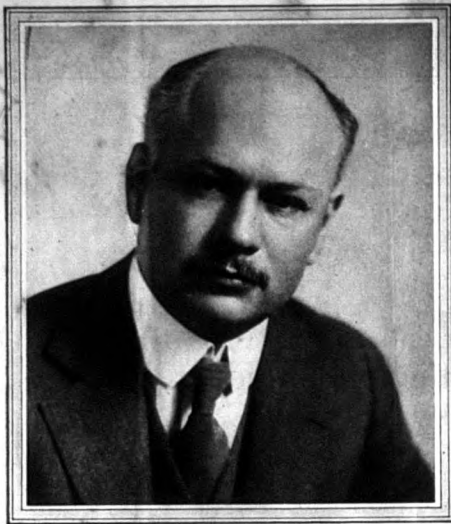


*Biography of*—  
Albert Champion, President,  
A C Spark Plug Company,  
Flint, Michigan.



*Reprinted from*  
MoToR  
September, 1926





ALBERT CHAMPION  
Errand boy, bicycle rider, automobile racer, manufacturer

# ALBERT

The Office Boy Who  
Race Is Won Before  
Is No Such Thing

By Norman

THE motorist fingered a spark plug upon which were the initials "A. C."—and he wondered what those letters meant. If he were a real old-timer he would know, for out of the mists of his memory might come the recollection of early days when the bicycle was a speedy creation and the names of the race winners were household words and emblazoned on front pages.

Such a veteran, if he used to follow the sports of Europe, would recall stories and pictures of a stocky youth who won many laurels, and whose initials were "A. C." The youth was Albert Champion—the maker of the "A. C." plug and the owner of a pair of initials known all over the world.

At 12 years of age, Albert Champion was office boy for Mr. Clement, then a prominent bicycle manufacturer of France and today a likewise prominent motor car manufacturer. As errand boy he had to have a bicycle, and always liked to ride fast. One day when he had performed a particularly quick errand, Mr. Clement asked the lad why he didn't enter the race for the middle-distance championship of France, offering the necessary financial aid for preparation.

From that hour the initials "A. C." began to take on the meaning which they hold today throughout all motordom. For from that moment until the day of the race, young Champion threw his whole being into the hard work—the practice, practice, practice—that he knew would bring perfection.

"A. C." won the race, becoming champion of France at 16 years of age, and for years thereafter he was a professional gypsy of the pedals, winning practically all his races and gaining, before he was even old enough to vote, an international reputation.

In a single day he passed from obscurity into the limelight and prosperity, somewhat dazed by the plaudits of the crowd. Then it was that "Choppie" Warburton, eminent trainer of those days, came into his life, with the since proven theory that a race isn't won during the race, but that it is won before-

hand—by preparedness. It is won in those months when all alone the racer sticks grimly to the job and is never swerved from it. The test itself lasts but a few minutes but the preparation for that test requires months or years.

Then "Choppie" taught him that moments of quiet decision were as much a part of the race as the time between the guns—taught him that those moments were to be fought out with the same determination that the race was fought out. Without a first victory there could be no second one.

That first victory, the middle-distance championship, was important, but while he was still basking in the limelight of publicity, "Choppie" proceeded to make "A. C." work harder than he had ever worked before. After a light breakfast in Paris, he would be given a bottle of tea and a couple of sandwiches and be told to "meet me in Orleans at 1 o'clock." "Choppie" would go to Orleans by train—a distance of 100 miles—and be waiting there at 1 o'clock with another light lunch. Champion had to make the distance within the prescribed time, as failing meant a "bawling out," and he tore "Choppie" more than any other man.

Then would come an hour's rest, a light lunch, and "Choppie" would say: "Meet me back in Paris at 8 o'clock."

Many times the youth was tempted to stop by the roadside and lie down. Many times he felt that he could not go on. But he kept going. That was the battle he had to win, a battle harder to win than any race he was ever in. No spectators. No grandstand. No bands. No cheers. Nothing but hard, grinding, nerve-straining and nerve-building work. If you don't think it was hard, get on a bicycle and ride 200 miles in a day, especially against a prearranged schedule.

Today, Champion is president of the A. C. Spark Plug Co., and when queried as to why and how it all came about, he always goes back to his bicycle days and to the principles that gave him success there—drilled into the boy by hard masters who were almost cruel in their teaching that there is no such thing as "good enough."

To this education in the art of taking punishment he attributes no small part of his success in business. In fact he has a sincere feeling that a man's success is always on a par with his ability to stand up under punishment, because, he reasons, success imposes the penalty of making yourself do things, which is the hardest job in the world.

# CHAMPION

Was Taught That a  
the Race and There  
As "Good Enough"

Beasley



Above, in 1895—An Italian racer, Choppie Warburton and Albert Champion, youthful bicycle champion. At the left, on the bicycle, Champion in 1900 and on the motorcycle in 1903 making a record at Charles River, 55 1/2 seconds



In those days practically all the spark plugs in American engines were imported, and, realizing that this would eventually develop into a great business, in 1906 Champion and a few associates started a small factory in Boston for the manufacture of spark plugs. After three years, he, with W. C. Durant, organized the present A. C. Spark Plug Co. in Flint.

At the start the company had a comparatively small amount of money, a handful of employees, and a contract to supply one of the automobile companies with spark plugs. Today, it has more than 2,500 employees on its pay roll, and supplies A. C. products to 148 different automotive manufacturers. Throughout its growth it has not only had the benefit of Champion's personal guidance but has also felt the constant inspiration of those same principles of self-discipline, self-organization, and self-mastery for achievement that the youth learned at such personal trial in his racing days.

No one, for example, can be even a casual visitor in the A. C. factories without sensing the actual, physical energy with which everyone works there. Champion himself sets the pace. A firm believer that an alert mind seldom is found in the company of a sluggish body, it is his practice to be up before 6 o'clock every morning and put in at least 20 minutes in strenuous physical exercise as a limbering up for the day's work ahead.

"Not only because it is necessary to keep in physical trim," he has often admonished his friends, "but even more because it is hard to do—a man must make himself do it—and the hard thing that a man makes himself do is the thing he needs for success."

One of Champion's constant efforts is, as he puts it, to "organize" himself for more and better work. He doesn't

Racing paid pretty well. "A. C." was soon making from \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year, which in 1899 was a lot more money than it is now. Even today it isn't a sum to be sneezed at. Training and traveling expenses were heavy, however, especially in a circle that spent freely.

Moreover, even at that early date, Champion foresaw the end of the bicycle days and he decided to get into the automobile business, then just in its infancy. His name was well known in the United States as well as in Europe, and he could vision in this country the greatest field for the new industry.

True to his training, however, he first entered on a thorough course of preparedness. He found employment in French motor factories, where for months he devoutly studied carburetors, magnetos, and spark plugs, the generative and motivating parts of the motor itself attracting him most strongly. With this experience as a background he had no difficulty, after tiring of the racing game in this country, in establishing himself as American agent for a number of French accessory manufacturers, a venture in which he was successful from a sales and financial standpoint.



think there is any limit to the amount of work a man can do if he will only line up his personal abilities in a proper organization. Too many people, you will often hear him say, put in a lot of time lining things up so they won't have so much to do. His theory is that what a man really ought to do is to line himself up so he can do more—direct more—control more. That requires continual self-examination to see wherein one has, by force of habit or routine or just lack of initiative, fallen into limits that ought to be broken down. It means a man should be continually learning new things about himself and his work.

"I remember a salesman one time telling me that he knew the game from A to Z," said Champion. "He stated that nobody could tell him anything about selling. That was to me the best proof possible that he knew nothing about selling because those who really understand merchandising, manufacturing or anything else that is important in life are those who are studying and trying to learn and accepting advice—those who realize how little they really know about it and how much there is to learn every day."

The restless energy of Champion has a tonic effect on men who like to work, and by the same token his presence isn't the most restful atmosphere in the world for those who like to take things easy. One thing of which he is always fearful is the all-too-human inclination to rest upon one's laurels. Past experiences and past success are nice to dwell on, he realizes, but he also knows they cannot be lived on. He values them most for the lessons they teach about the present and the future.

To emphasize this point he tells the story of a very distinguished chemist who stated he had to forget and learn chemistry over again four times by the time he was 50 years of age. That man was Albert Champion's kind of man—able to scrap all preconceived convictions and strike out for a new equipment of knowledge, a new goal and a new success.

The amusing way in which people "kid" themselves as to what is good for them and what is bad for them frequently

draws some tart comment from him. When his company manufactured only spark plugs, he had a little more leisure time than he has today and was able to spend an occasional hour or two on the golf course. Then, he confesses, he used to tell everybody that golf not only was good for him but for his business too. He explained that if he wanted to play golf late in the afternoon he worked hard and fast all day so as to be all cleared up and ready for the game.

"You know the old line," he laughs. "Everybody who has a hobby, whether golf, fishing, baseball, tennis or whatnot, always has some good arguments for indulging in it. They find those arguments because they like the game they play. Well, I like the game of work, and I can find good arguments for it, too."

Since the advent of speedometers, air cleaners, oil filters, mufflers and other items in the line, Champion's hobby really has been his work. He has had people criticize him to his face, telling him he is all wrong to work the way he does. It's terrible, they say. They assure him that he won't be able to stand it long. What they do not understand is that work is his play. It's what he likes to do, and he cannot recall any of his friends who enjoy their fishing, golfing or yachting more than he does his work. So far as his health is concerned it is sufficient to suggest that he is in better health than the great majority of people of his age.

On this matter of work and health, Champion feels there is nothing in work that hurts anybody—if they like it. It hurts only when you don't like it and are doing it because you have to. If you have to work, he says, make it a game you enjoy. Then you will be bound to succeed.

There is no worth-while explanation for failure. Why we didn't do a thing is simply the alibi for not winning.

These are some of the things the letters "A. C." mean on a spark plug. They are more than a manufacturer's initials. They are the symbol of the dream of an office boy who was taught that the mysterious secret of success is mostly plain, hard work.

Albert Champion  
James Stewart

Gene Felt  
Mar 11 1962

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