

**MAINE HISTORIC ENGINEERING RECORD
BEECH RIDGE MOTOR SPEEDWAY**

MHER No. 83

Location: 70 Holmes Road, Scarborough, Maine.

Quad: Scarborough, Maine

UTM: N: 4829600 E: 388577. Zone 19

Date of Construction: 1949

Present Owner: Setzer Properties PLD, LLC

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway was built in 1949 by James B. McConnell, a racing enthusiast who sought to popularize a new type of automobile racing in the State of Maine. Built just one year after the creation of the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), and operated under the auspices of the Maine Stock Car Racing Association, McConnell's was the first purpose-built motor speedway in Maine, and its immediate popularity spurred the establishment of other stock car racing associations and tracks throughout the state. Although several of these new associations and tracks did not survive the first few years, stock car racing quickly grew in popularity throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and most of the tracks, like Beech Ridge, operated independently and outside the purview of NASCAR. As a result, each track generated intense loyalty among both drivers and fans, the weekly races at each during the season, lasting typically from May to October, drawing thousands of fans. Although at least one other track, the Oxford Plains Speedway located approximately 45 miles north of Scarborough, grew larger and more prominent with larger purses and nationally significant races, Beech Ridge remained the original automotive racetrack in the state, and largely retained its small-scale, rural approach throughout the 1990s and 2000s while drawing national races, including those sanctioned by NASCAR from the mid-1990s to the 2000s. Although different components of the track have been altered since 1949, particularly the replacement of the original oiled dirt surface with asphalt in 1986, it retains a high degree of integrity overall,

with a one-third mile oval track framed on the north by a grandstand and on the south by the pit area.

Project Information: Beech Ridge Motor Speedway was constructed in 1949 by James B. McConnell as a one-third mile semi-banked oval track. The track changed hands only three times—in 1973 when the track was acquired by former racer Calvin Reynolds, in 1981 when it was acquired by former racer Ralph Cusack, and in 2000 when Cusack’s son, Andy Cusack, took over full ownership from his brother Glenn. This relative continuity in ownership allowed for a great deal of consistency in the operations of the track. During its more than seventy years of operation, the components of the complex were altered only to the degree necessary to maintain its approach to a family-friendly racing facility with deep connections to its surrounding community. With declining gate receipts by the late 2010s exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Andy Cusack announced at a race in September 2021 that he had agreed to sell the track for non-racing uses. Despite occasional informal attempts to encourage its purchase for racing purposes, the property is now slated for demolition. In 2024, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission determined that the property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its role in stimulating the popularity of automobile racing in the state and its high degree of integrity, and that the proposed improvements would constitute an adverse effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). In November 2024, the MHPC informed the Maine Department of Environmental Protection of its determination of adverse effect, and recommended that the facility be documented to the standards of the Maine Historic Engineering Record.

Historian: Bruce G. Harvey
Harvey Research and Consulting
Syracuse, NY
June 2025

I. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway is located in the Town of Scarborough, Maine, approximately seven miles southwest of the City of Portland, at the southeast corner of Holmes Road and 2 Rod Road (Figures 1, 2). It was built in 1949 by James B. McConnell, a mechanic and sawmill operator who was also an automobile and motorcycle racing enthusiast. The State of Maine had a long tradition of automobile racing going back to the earliest years of the twentieth century, with the races at Old Orchard Beach becoming regionally famous during the 1910s. Other localities held informal automobile races in the years before World War II, typically on tracks that were designed for horses. In early 1948, the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) was established and incorporated in Florida. In an attempt to broaden its audience from its southeastern base, NASCAR promoted and oversaw several series of races that lasted through the summer of 1948; the Maine State Fair grounds was one of six locations included in one of these racing series. The several appearances of NASCAR-affiliated racers in Lewiston in 1948 proved popular, and early the next year McConnell led the formation of the Maine State Stock Car Racing Association (MSSCRA). Once the MSSCRA was established in March 1949, McConnell completed work on a 50-acre parcel he had bought the year before, using his own bulldozer and other equipment to construct a one-third mile oval race track and providing the lumber for a grandstand on the north side of the track between the track and Holmes Road. McConnell named his track the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, which opened under the auspices of the MSSCRA in May 1949 as the first purpose-built automobile race track in Maine. Auto racing featuring stock cars was immediately popular, and within two years several other stock car racing associations were established in Maine, constructing their own tracks and developing their own stable of drivers and car owners. McConnell owned the track until 1973, when he sold it to one of the regular Beech Ridge Motor Speedway racers, Calvin Reynolds. Reynolds owned the track until 1981, when he sold it to another successful Beech

Ridge racer, Ralph Cusack, and returned to racing. Cusack's sons, Glenn and Andy, participated with their father and shared ownership in the track from 1997 until May 2000, when Andy Cusack assumed sole ownership with his brother remaining in a management role. Andy Cusack managed the track from then until September 2021, when he announced at the conclusion of a race that he had agreed to sell the track and end racing. Although the Cusacks had secured NASCAR sanction for Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in the 1990s, making it a part of the Busch North Series, the track remained largely independent throughout its seven-decade history, becoming a vital part of the Scarborough community with a dedicated and loyal set of fans and drivers. The track and grounds underwent relatively few significant changes, most notably replacing the original grandstand with the present grandstand in 1965, paving the track in 1986, and adding the paved lane in the inner track in 1995.

Scarborough: Historic Overview

The Town of Scarborough is located along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean immediately southwest of the City of Portland, its coastal area dominated by rivers and salt marshes. Traditionally the land of the Sokokis Indians, the first Europeans arrived in what is now Scarborough in the 1630s, establishing fishing landing sites and trading centers. In the absence of a natural port, however, and with salt marshes surrounding the rivers that extend inland, European settlement was limited throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, despite the establishment of the Town of Scarborough in 1658. By the early eighteenth century, Dunstan was one of the few settlements in Scarborough, located on relative highlands along Phillips Brook that provided limited access to the Atlantic Ocean. Further inland, other small localized settlement areas emerged during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the town saw only limited development until the region's suburban development of the 1960s and 1970s, leaving intact these traditional communities, including Beech Ridge. The community of Beech

Ridge had been identified as early as the mid-eighteenth century, with its own school, but was not identified on maps until the early twentieth century (Figure 3).

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, Scarborough was a section of the coast to be passed through as one traveled by land from Portsmouth, New Hampshire through Saco to Portland, Maine. The harvesting of salt hay from the coastal salt marshes, used primarily for animal fodder, was the town's principal economic activity. In 1802 a group of entrepreneurs began construction on the Cumberland Turnpike, a toll road that was an early precursor to U.S. Route 1 and that provided land access from southern Maine to Stroudwater, near what is now Portland. What is now Payne Road, extending parallel to U.S. Route 1 approximately one mile east of the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, was built on the alignment of the Cumberland Turnpike. Faster and easier transportation along coastal Maine came in 1842 with the completion of the Eastern Railroad, from Boston to Maine, and in 1853 with the completion of the Grand Trunk Railroad connecting Montreal, Canada to the Portland Harbor. With these connections, the Town of Scarborough began the development of a tourism industry, as visitors sought the town's sea breezes and low density of development. The town's proximity to both Portland on the northeast and Saco and Biddeford on the southwest created a degree of traffic through Scarborough, which was bolstered substantially by the construction of an electric streetcar line from Saco to Portland in 1902.¹

The close connection between Portland and Scarborough in the nineteenth century was manifested by Sylvanus Ling, a businessman in Portland whose family moved to Lewiston from Plymouth, Massachusetts when he was young. Ling, born in 1809, was a horse dealer and racing enthusiast, owning several horses which he raced throughout Maine and as far away as New York. Ling stabled his horses on Milk Street in Portland, and in 1853 purchased a tract near the

¹ A useful, succinct overview of Scarborough's history can be found in Mary B. Pickard, "Scarborough: They Called it Owascoag," published online at Maine Memory Network:
<https://scarborough.mainememory.net/page/1608/display.html>.

settlement of Beech Ridge “on the Scarboro plains on the back road to Saco...The land was very level and required but little grading.” Ling then “proceeded to lay out a mile track, the first in Maine.” According to a newspaper article about Ling’s track in 1891, Ling lived across from the track, “and utilized the interior of the course for agricultural purposes.” (Figure 4) The one-mile track, known as Ling’s Trotting Park, was advertised regularly in the Portland newspapers, and in its heyday in the late 1850s and early 1860s the Trotting Park drew as many as 1,000 spectators for major races.² As a 1902 survey of the history of horse racing in Maine reported, Ling’s Trotting Park “immediately became immensely popular and famous all over New England.” Ling built a large house across the road from the track that he used as a hotel for visitors, which remained standing until 1901.³

Ling died young, in November 1864, and his son in law, Al Ricker, continued to operate the track until 1866 when a prominent and accomplished horse was poisoned and died after a race: “Nothing could succeed in attracting any paying attention thereafter and public disfavor relegated this fast [sic] mile track into obscurity.”⁴ Ling’s property in Scarborough, with buildings on the north side of what was then Vinegar Road and the track on the south side and totaling approximately 100 acres, passed to his children including Elsie Ricker, Sarah Jane Libby, and Edward Ling. Sarah Libby was the sole owner by 1887, and in 1888 sold the entire 100-acre tract to Ann O’Connor; the property was defined as being 50 acres on the north side of Vinegar Road that included the homestead of Sylvanus Ling, and 50 acres on the south side, “formerly used as a Race Course and Trotting Park.”⁵ (Figure 5) This description of the property, with Ling’s homestead on the north side of the road and the race course on the south, continued through subsequent property transactions in 1905, 1912, and 1913, when George W. Woodman conveyed the property to Willis E. Safford. Safford retained the property for more than 30 years,

² “The Ling Track,” *Portland Daily Press* (Portland, ME), December 12, 1891, 5.

³ “Old Time Horses and Horsemen of Portland,” *Portland Sunday Telegram* (Portland, ME), June 22, 1902, 9.

⁴ “The Ling Track.”

⁵ Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, Deed Book (DB) 547, page 291, July 30, 1888.

selling it to James B. McConnell on July 23, 1948; this latter deed still referred to the southern 50 acres as “Ling’s Old Trotting Park.”⁶ At that time, the property was located on the north and south sides of Vinegar Road. In 1951, the residents of the Town of Scarborough voted to change the name of the road to Holmes Road.⁷

Stock Car Racing in Maine and Beech Ridge Motor Speedway

People have raced automobiles almost since the time that they were first invented, with the first organized race in America in 1895 in Chicago. Although most of the earliest races were linear and intended to set speed records, by the early twentieth century men of means, including the newspaper publisher James Gordon Bennett and William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., heir of a portion of the immense Vanderbilt fortune, began turning to long road races by inaugurating racing series. At the same time, other racing enthusiasts sought out self-contained venues, speedways where spectators could witness the entire race. Most of these enthusiasts began gathering at tracks that were designed for horse races, modifying them by coating the track in a thin layer of oil to contain the dust and elevating the narrow curves to keep the automobiles from skidding away at high speeds. Others began building new tracks designed for automobiles, most notably the Indianapolis Speedway in 1909, with contemporaries in Atlanta and Los Angeles. By the advent of World War I, many cities throughout the United States had built automobile race tracks, most often covered in wood planks, although few of them survived the war. Although local groups raced automobiles informally, the tendency to organization soon appeared, and the Automobile Club of America, soon renamed the American Automobile Association (AAA), began establishing rules for automobile races and sanctioning races that agreed to their rules as early as 1904.

⁶ DB 1923, page 209.

⁷ “Turnpike Authority To Place Signs At 29 Overpasses,” *Evening Express* (Portland, ME), July 2, 1953, 2.

Automobile racing in Maine began at the dawn of the twentieth century. In June 1900, the *Bangor Daily Commercial* announced that “One of the novel features at the Eastern Maine State fair this year will be the races between automobiles...There will be six horseless carriages entered for the contests by manufacturing concerns, and it is expected that some exciting events will take place.” Several automobiles were already operating in Bangor, “but it never has seen a race, which is quite different.” The expected speeds shown by the automobiles was electrifying: “Since the time made for a mile made in these races is a trifle over two minutes, the interest during the contests will be great.”⁸ The total purse for the series of four races was \$1,000, “and an extra \$100 to the automobile which goes the mile in less than two minutes.”⁹ That prize was quickly doubled, in an attempt to draw even more people to this novelty, which the *Bangor Daily News* asserted was “the first race of this kind ever held in Maine.”¹⁰ The automobile races ran on the same track as the horse racing, with the heats alternated between horses and horseless carriages and the results reported together in the newspapers. Two weeks later, as part of a Labor Day celebration, the City of Augusta hosted another automobile race.¹¹

As automobile racing quickly gained in popularity throughout the nation, the smooth and level sands of Old Orchard Beach, within an easy driving distance of Portland and Boston, soon became an early regional center for racing. Tens of thousands of spectators flocked there to watch early cars reaching speeds far exceeding 60 miles per hour. During the 1910s racing ended at Old Orchard Beach as tourists became a more profitable use for the beach than automobiles, and in 1911 the earliest formal automobile race in Maine took place in Poland, Androscoggin County, known as the Thurlow Hill race. More races were held throughout the state during the 1910s, typically at oval tracks that were built for horse racing, including Maplewood (now Bass) Park in Bangor, and often sanctioned by the AAA.

⁸ “Automobile Race At The Fair,” *Bangor Daily Commercial*, July 23, 1900, 10.

⁹ “Many Attractions for Bangor’s Fair,” *Bangor Daily News*, August 2, 1900, 3.

¹⁰ “Horseless Carriages To Race At The Big Fair,” *Bangor Daily News*, August 7, 1900, 8.

¹¹ “A Double Track,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, August 29, 1900, 2.

In the wake of World War I, automobile racing was revived nationally in the early 1920s and quickly emerged as an important commercial enterprise, a departure from its earliest years when it was largely a hobby carried out by wealthy amateurs. By this time, most auto racing was being conducted in heavily-modified production cars or, more prominently, purpose-built race cars. By the 1920s, local, non-sanctioned races were held throughout the nation that featured late-model production, or stock, cars among those who could not afford purpose-built race cars, typically known as open-wheel cars whose wheels were outside the body of the automobile and had open cockpits. These unofficial stock car races quickly gained popularity, particularly throughout the southeast, in the late 1920s and 1930s. Entrepreneurs soon saw the potential in these races, and gave rise to the role of race promoters. This new group of promoters created regional series that were tightly organized and sanctioned according to particular sets of rules that included, among other things, the degree of modifications to stock cars that would be allowed.¹²

The popularity of stock car racing surged throughout the southeast in the 1930s, and a center of activity soon formed on the beaches of Daytona, Florida in the years leading up to World War II. The leader of this group of stock car racers and owners was Bill Frank, a native of Washington, D.C. who gained his passion for racing there before moving south to Florida in the early 1930s where he worked as a mechanic. He traveled throughout the southeast as a racer, and by 1940 France was active also in the business of promoting races in Daytona, which further ensconced him within regional and national racing circles. Like most racers and promoters, France put his racing in the background during World War II, working as a mechanic in a war plant, but was among the leaders in the rapid resurgence of interest in auto racing immediately after the war's end. He began promoting stock car races in Daytona in the spring of 1946, and

¹² The role of promoters in the development of stock car racing circuits is a focus of Randall A. Hall, "Carnival of Speed: the Auto Racing Business in the Emerging South, 1930-1950," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (July 2007), 245-275. See also a useful summary of the emergence of stock car racing in Carter A. Finch, "Heritage in the Fast Lane: Preservation Potential for NASCAR Racetracks in North Carolina," MA. Thesis, University of Georgia, 2019.

that summer he created the “Championship Car Circuit” series with races in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and in Thompson, Connecticut. In 1947 France created the National Championship Stock Car Circuit with races along the east coast. As Randall Hall summarized, “Bill France emerged from the 1947 season with even more ambition to gain national control over stock car racing.”¹³ France was part of a group that met in Daytona in December 1947 with the intent of reorganizing stock car racing nationally under a single entity. The result of this meeting was the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), which was incorporated in February 1948 with Bill France as president. Bill Tuthill, who was an active race promoter in Connecticut and New York before World War II, served as the organization’s first secretary and helped to bring the newly-organized sport to the northeast.¹⁴

The new organization sanctioned several series during its first season, designed to introduce stock car racing under NASCAR rules throughout the east coast. One of these, organized by automobile and motorcycle racer Frank Mundy, a friend of Bill France’s who was in Daytona for the creation of NASCAR, helped to organize and promote a series during the summer of 1948 that included tracks in Kingston, Rhode Island, Honesdale and Allentown, Pennsylvania, Palmyra and Fonda, New York, and Lewiston, Maine. Local newspapers eagerly picked up the stories that Mundy’s promotional team generated to promote the series, including the Lewiston *Sun-Journal* newspaper that announced the new series in May 1948, with races to take place on the State Fair ground’s horse racing track. In order to help readers understand this type of racing, the newspaper article included a list of NASCAR’s rules regarding allowable modifications, safety requirements, and procedures for challenges. Although weather and scheduling issues with the horse races limited the number of races in Lewiston that summer, the new sport proved popular, with individual races drawing upwards of 3,000 spectators.¹⁵

¹³ Hall, 265.

¹⁴ Hall, 265-268.

¹⁵ “Fog Halted Auto Racing Here But Fans Had Thrills,” *Sun-Journal*, May 28, 1948, 18, which reported that approximately 3,000 fans attended a race with bad weather conditions. See also “Thursday’s Auto Racing Real Stuff Not Exhibition,”

The popularity of the NASCAR-sponsored races at the State Fair grounds in the summer of 1948 demonstrated that there was strong support for stock car races in Maine. The first person to test that market for locally-sponsored races was James B. McConnell. McConnell clearly was aware of the history of the property on Vinegar Road that he bought in the summer of 1948, given the reference to Ling's race course in the deed, and the horse racing track remained visible on the land despite being overgrown. McConnell was born in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1912, and moved to Maine in his youth. He became involved with auto racing as a young man in Boston, and in the 1930s worked as a mechanic at the new Scarborough Airport. McConnell went back to Massachusetts during World War II, but he returned to Scarborough after the war and started a sawmill and timber business while also becoming involved in real estate investment. Acquiring the former Ling's race track property in 1948 allowed him to combine his passion for racing and his business acumen to create the state's first purpose-built automobile racing track.

Prior to constructing his track, McConnell first sought to establish a governing body to oversee and promote the races at his track. In late January 1949, McConnell began placing advertisements in local newspapers, soliciting participation in a stock car racing association in Maine: "If your intention is to make money while racing stock cars get in touch with me."¹⁶ The response to his advertisement was speedy, and by early March 1949 the Maine State Stock Car Racing Association (MSSCRA) had 27 members, most of whom planned to race their own cars at the track that McConnell was then building (Figure 6). McConnell's initial plan was to build a one-half mile unpaved track near Beech Ridge in the Town of Scarborough using his own construction equipment, with a grandstand for 5,000 fans. The MSSCRA also worked out the rules for its track, including an allowance for up to 15% modification from a car's stock condition.¹⁷

Sun-Journal, May 115, 1948, 8; "Fair Grounds Track OK For Thursday Night Auto Races," *Sun-Journal*, May 6, 1948, 10.

¹⁶ Advertisement, *Portland Press-Herald*, January 30, 1949, 25.

¹⁷ "Debut Of Stock Car Racing Planned At Scarborough

McConnell began construction later in March 1949, at which time he reduced the size of the track to one-third mile “to afford grandstand spectators a closer view of the action.”¹⁸ He constructed the track with a sand fill overlain by 12 inches of clay to serve as the driving surface, with 65-foot-wide turns that were inclined to a height of six feet. McConnell built the grandstand on the north side of the track facing south toward the home stretch using wood from his sawmill (Figure 7, 8). The seating capacity of the main grandstand was reduced from the intended 5,000 to 3,000; in late May, however, just prior to the track’s opening, he built a second set of stands at the first turn, which allowed visitors to see the cars speeding toward them along the front stretch. McConnell’s intent with the track was to emphasize its Maine roots, in recognition of the quickly spreading influence of NASCAR throughout the nation. According to a feature story about the track in advance of its opening, “McConnell hopes to keep the fields this year entirely to Maine drivers to eliminate contention with higher-powered stock cars from regular tracks... The track is Maine owned entirely, Maine controlled, and will use Maine competition.”¹⁹

McConnell completed the track and grandstands in late May, in time for a proposed soft opening on Saturday, May 28, 1949. Unfortunately, heavy rains forced a cancellation, but the main races took place as planned on Monday, May 30, intended to coincide with that year’s Indianapolis 500 automobile race. The night’s main event was a 20-lap race won by George Hartley of Sanford, Maine, defeating 19 other racers in his Ford automobile in front of 4,000 spectators.²⁰ A week later, after McConnell had scraped and re-packed the track’s surface, the main race was won by Amos Turner from Scarborough; the previous week’s winner, George Hartley, lost control on one of the turns and “plunged over a six-foot embankment in the qualifying round,” though he recovered to qualify for the final.²¹ The following Wednesday, McConnell hosted the first midget car race at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, a popular type of

¹⁸ “First Turn Completed On Stock Car Track,” *Portland Press-Herald*, March 29, 1949.

¹⁹ “Auto Racing Track Sprouts Overnight At Scarborough,” *Portland Press-Herald*, May 1, 1949, 32.

²⁰ “Sanford Man Pilots Stock Car To Win,”

²¹ “Turner Captures Stock Car Race,” *Portland Press-Herald*, June 6, 1949, 9. See also “Stock Cars Vie Today At Scarborough,” *Portland Press-Herald*, June 5, 1949, 28.

racing dating back to the 1930s that featured small cars measuring up to six feet long and less than four feet wide, with drivers from throughout New England and as far away as New York and Miami.

Beech Ridge Motor Speedway hosted stock car races every weekend throughout the summer of 1949, and continued to draw large crowds that created a great deal of attention among racing fans throughout the state (Figure 9). McConnell had a keen eye to involving the track's fans, building loyalty and making sure that they enjoyed themselves. *Portland Evening Express* columnist Bud Cornish in June 1949 reported one such attempt:

The management announced that there would be an open race for stock cars belonging to anyone in the audience if they cared to compete, and before the management could close its mouth, several of the daredevils who didn't care what happened to their family cars, were holding up their hands and indicating they'd parked just around the corner and would be right back. So, eventually the field was rounded up and the boys began to spin around the track. Unlike the stripped down stock cars, these were cars with all the modern features. So, one of the racers, finding himself trapped behind another, utilized equipment he felt would shock the leader and might confuse. HE BLEW HIS HORN!. . . And the guy in front veered over as though he were on a picnic tour to Farmington, before he caught himself!²²

With memories of the NASCAR-sponsored races the previous summer, McConnell and the MSSCRA negotiated with the Maine State Fair in early August to sponsor stock car races that year.²³ According to the agreement, MSSCRA leased the track from the State Fair with the intent of holding stock car races every Friday night in August. The races would include 38

²² "On The Maïen Stem With Bud Cornish," *Evening Express* (Portland, ME), June 10, 1949, 16.

²³ No evidence was found to indicate that NASCAR made any attempts to sponsor races at the Maine State Fair in 1949.

drivers and their cars, split up into several races and events. As the Lewiston newspaper observed, "They have been packing them in at Scarborough, the Maine center of the sport and feel they offer all the thrills and even more, than do the midgets [cars]." ²⁴ By late August, the wide appeal of stock car racing that Beech Ridge had seen throughout the summer was repeated at the State Fair grounds in Lewiston, which spurred an interest in racing throughout the state. Early in the month the Town of Saco granted a permit to the newly-formed York County Stock Car Racing Association to hold stock car races on a 90-acre strip of land on the Portland Road (U.S. 1). At the conclusion of the State Fair grounds races in August, MSSCRA announced that it was working with authorities in Skowhegan about sponsoring races there, and in early September the MSSCRA announced plans to hold races in Norway at the Oxford County Fair grounds later in the month. ²⁵ As the *Lewiston Daily Sun* observed after the MSSCRA made a return to the State Fair grounds later in September, "The stock car races have built up a tremendous following in these parts, running off and on as they have here and at the Oxford County Fair grounds." ²⁶

Despite the successes of the track's inaugural year, the racing season at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway closed on a somber note. In early November, William A. Morley, Jr., a native of Charleston, South Carolina who lived in South Portland, a driver at the track, was killed in the pit area; George Hartley suffered a concussion while on the track's second turn, which forced Richard Garrett and Raymond Normandeau to swerve and skid into the pit area where one of them crushed Morley against a car; the driver of the car that struck Morley was not identified in the newspapers. ²⁷

²⁴ "Lewiston Man Has Entered the Local Stock Car Races," *Sun-Journal* (Lewiston, ME), August 4, 1949, 18.

²⁵ "Saco Aldermen Grant Permit For New Race Track," *Biddeford-Saco Journal* (Biddeford, ME), August 2, 1949, 8; "Farewell Appearance Of Stock Car Racers At Fair Grounds," *Lewiston Daily Sun* (Lewiston, ME), August 25, 1949, 10; "Stock Cars To Race On Norway Course," *Lewiston Daily Sun*, September 5, 1949, 14.

²⁶ "Stock Cars Race At Fair Grounds," *Lewiston Daily Sun*, September 30, 1949, 25.

²⁷ "So. Portland Man Killed At Speedway," *Portland Press Herald*, November 7, 1949, 1; "South Portland Man Killed when Crushed By An Auto At Scarborough Speedway," *Lewiston Daily Sun*, November 7, 1949, 1.

Though mourning one of their own, the stock car drivers in Maine accepted these risks as a part of the sport that they loved, and they and the fans supported new racing venues. Several communities sought to take part in this rising tide of popularity by creating stock car racing associations and either building or locating tracks where they could race. Many failed to gain traction, but two groups quickly built up a following in the immediate wake of Beech Ridge's inaugural season. Of these associations and their tracks, the first was constructed in Unity, in Waldo County. Seeing the success of the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, Elwood Knowles, a Portland resident formerly from Unity who owned several entertainment venues throughout the state, purchased the long-unused Unity Fairground and began reconstructing the original horse racing track for use as a stock car track. Knowles held his first race there in October 1949 in an agreement with McConnell, with regular races planned for Saturday afternoons.²⁸ At the start of the 1950 season, McConnell had made arrangements to race at Unity and Lewiston, with Knowles operating the grounds as a mixed entertainment area while inviting racers from throughout the state to race at the track.

The second organization that began racing in 1950 was the Pine State Stock Car Racing Association (PSSCRA) in Norway, Oxford County. George Damon, a lumber dealer in Norway, organized the new organization and served as its first president. Unlike McConnell, Damon was not a longtime racing enthusiast, but came to the sport in 1948 with the NASCAR-sponsored races at the State Fair grounds and the first season of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway. Damon began construction on the new Oxford Plains Speedway in late March 1950, providing the lumber for the 5000-seat grandstand from his own lumber yard in Norway. The half-mile oval track was, like Beech Ridge, a dirt track with a coating of oil to keep the dust down, with 70-foot-wide curves. In this first year, Damon and the PSSCRA coordinated with McConnell and the MSSCRA; the Oxford Plains track held its first races on Memorial Day weekend of 1950,

²⁸ "'Souped-Up' Cars To Race At Unity This Weekend," *Morning Sentinel* (Waterville, ME), October 19, 1949, 10. See also advertisement for stock car racing, at Beech Ridge on Wednesdays through Sundays and at Unity Fair Grounds on Saturdays at 2 p.m., *Evening Express*, October 28, 1949, 15.

with the MSSCRA staging the races at Oxford Plains on Memorial Day.²⁹ By the late summer of 1950, the sport's popularity had grown statewide beyond Beech Ridge, Oxford Plains, and Unity. "With the sport booming at its merriest heights," *Commercial* newspaper in Bangor reported, "present plans also call for stock racers to perform in Bangor and Brewer on Labor Day," with a new racing association in Brewer having recently completed a race track on State Street.³⁰ In 1951, new stock car racing associations were formed in Bangor (with racing at Bass Park), Central Maine (with racing in Skowhegan), Belfast (with racing at the Belfast Fair Grounds), and Waterville. An advertisement promoting the opening of the Waterville-Oakland Raceway promised "Thrills!! Spills!! Crack-Ups!!", while announcing that "most drivers are from Waterville and vicinity."³¹ (Figure 10)

Beech Ridge Motor Speedway: Operations and Management

From the beginning, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway featured avocational drivers only, primarily men, who drove for the love of the sport and for the relatively limited prize money. All of the track's drivers had other jobs and formed a close-knit community forged through weekly races throughout the season from spring to fall. In a 1969 interview, long-time Beech Ridge racing champion Dick Garrett asked rhetorically "In what other sport can you borrow equipment such as a tire from a fellow driver so you can try to beat him in the next race?"³² J.B. McConnell, and the subsequent owners of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, rarely received the kind of sponsorship that allowed for large purses, instead using a series of formulas based on the gate

²⁹ "Stock Car Time Trials Lure 1,500 To Oxford Speedway," *Portland Press Herald*, May 22, 1950, 2; "George Damon Stock Car Head," *Portland Press Herald*, February 20, 1950, 5; "George Damon," Maine Vintage Race Car Association website: <https://mainevintagerace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GEORGE-DAMON.pdf>.

³⁰ "Stocks Continue to Bring Big Crowds," *Commercial* (Bangor, ME), September 3, 1950, 15.

³¹ Advertisement, *Waterville Sentinel* (Waterville, ME), May 12, 1951, 9.

³² "20 Years After First Beech Ridge Run, Dick Garrett Remains Standout Driver," *Portland Press Herald*, July 2, 1969, 27.

receipts to establish prizes for the drivers. Bud Cornish, a columnist for the Portland *Evening Express* explained the original prize structure in 1951:

To give the fans an idea of how the payoffs go, let's start with a good crowd that peddles \$2600 through the box-office. The first breakdown comes when the Maine State Stock Car Racing Association takes fifty per cent, or \$1300, and from that pays the bills of the track, for attendants, lights and other costs. Sixteen per cent also for officials, or \$208, which brings the prize money down to \$1092. Now the boys start spinning around the track seeking the bigger chunks. There are four trial heats, and each one pays the first four cars to finish, and figuring on the basis of \$900 or so, winning a trial is worth about \$150; winning a semi-final pays the same; winning the final about \$150. Adding the \$5 guarantee for being among the first 30 cars arriving, such a winner walks off with about \$185 for the evening. A \$1300 gate, of course, would cut all figures in two.³³

Three years later, in the spring of 1954 before racing started, the MSSCRA negotiated new terms with McConnell as the owner of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway. This new deal would increase the percentage awarded to drivers later in the year, from 40% of gate receipts to 50%, as well as institute a points system for the season that would enable drivers to earn a larger portion of the gate intake. In addition, McConnell announced a special purse for out-of-state drivers and those who were not MSSCRA members.³⁴ This prize money structure, in which the purse for each night's race was dependent in part on the size of the gate receipts, was distinct from other tracks in the state that did not have a relationship with a race management organization such as the MSSCRA. In these cases, the drivers received fixed amounts for winning individual heats and final races.³⁵

³³ "On The Maine Stem," *Evening Express*, June 14, 1951, 34.

³⁴ "Special Purses Arranged By Beech Ridge and the MSSCRA," *Sun-Journal*, April 5, 1954, 8. The division of gate receipts was first agreed to in July 1953, "Double Program Bill For Week End At Beech Ridge," *Biddeford-Saco Journal*, July 2, 1953, 6.

³⁵ Steve Pellerin, personal communication, July 1, 2025.

The races at Beech Ridge were organized into divisions based on the type of cars, the degree of modifications, and the experience of the drivers; these divisions, or classes, changed frequently throughout the history of the track. When the MSSCRA began sanctioning and promoting races at the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in 1949, there was only one division: stock cars, with an allowance for up to 15% modification from original stock parts. Each day of racing featured a series of heats for stock cars leading to a 20-lap final race, with points and prizes awarded for wins in the different heats. One of the roles played by the MSSCRA was to monitor the cars for the degree to which they were “souped-up,” and to respond to allegations of violations with the authority to disqualify a driver after the event and strip him of his win. Investigations into excessive modifications were conducted by means of carefully tearing down the cars and inspecting the parts. On one night in June 1950, for example, Jerry Hussey of Portsmouth, New Hampshire won the final 20-lap event ahead of Butch Boucher, the “Flying Frenchman” from Saco, Maine. Upon investigation by the MSSCRA’s technical committee which tore down his car, Hussey was disqualified on the grounds that his car was six percent overstocked, and Boucher declared the victor.³⁶ A “teardown garage” was a standard feature at the track in these early years, the last of them located near turn number 4 at the northeast corner of the track; after the rules on modifications were lifted in the 1970s, this building was converted for use in 1987 as the “Turn Five Tavern.”³⁷

Throughout the inaugural 1949 season and into early 1950, different types of cars were raced on separate days, with events given over to midget cars and “big cars,” the open cockpit racing cars that were driven at Indianapolis and other race tracks. “Big Car” racing was first featured at Beech Ridge on July 4, 1949; a year later, in July 1950, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway announced “You asked for them—here they are again: Indianapolis Dimension Big

³⁶ “Boucher Declared Winner At Beech Ridge As First Finisher Is Disqualified,” *Biddeford-Saco Journal*, June 12, 1950, 6.

³⁷ Steve Pellerin, personal communication, 7 May 2025.

Car Races.”³⁸ In July 1950, however, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway for the first time began allowing more heavily modified stock cars as well as regular stock cars during its weekly races. The first divided program, one race each for modified and stock cars, was held on July 4, 1950.³⁹ Two weeks later, the track introduced a “two races in one” feature, with both types of cars racing at the same time:

The “modified” auto-buggies and the regular stock chariots all sweep into battle, and three from each win position prizes. But, unless a guy has the field down pat in his mind, he’s never sure which is which, and who’s to beat, so he has to keep tromping on the accelerator to stay in front.⁴⁰

Reports of the 1951 racing season did not refer to the separate modified and regular stock car divisions, and in 1952 the membership of the MSSCRA voted to allow modifications to the stock cars “as long as the changes did not show,” bringing the races back to a single division.⁴¹ In 1953, the respective boards of the MSSCRA and the Oxford Plains Speedway agreed to operate under the same rules which would “govern just how much a mechanic may ‘hop up’ his stock racer.”⁴² Beech Ridge continued to operate under a single racing division through 1955, but opened up some races in 1956 to “Bombers,” strictly un-modified stock cars (with the exception of safety features); in 1957, the track operated with separate stock car (Class A) and bomber (Class B) divisions, and in 1958 the MSSCRA banned the use of V-8 engines in bombers.⁴³ (Figure 11) Beech Ridge Motor Speedway continued to operate with these two classes for another six years, then in 1965 introduced a third level of racing, Class C, which was

³⁸ Advertisement, *Evening Express*, July 1, 1950, 11.

³⁹ “Boutet Victor At Beech Ridge,” *Portland Press Herald*, July 5, 1950, 12.

⁴⁰ “Moulton Shines At Beech Ridge,” July 17, 1950, 25.

⁴¹ “Racing Starts At Beech Ridge Oval On Sunday,” *Biddeford-Saco Journal*, May 3, 1952, 2.

⁴² “Western Maine’s Leading Auto Tracks Bury Hatchet,” *Sun-Journal*, February 19, 1953, 18.

⁴³ “Libby, Cote Get Beech Ridge Wins,” *Evening Express*, May 6, 1957, 19, provides separate results for Stock Cars and Bombers; “Cusack Winner At Beech Ridge,” *Evening Express*, May 20, 1957, 18, provides separate results for Class A and Class B. The definitions are provided in “Whine Of Engines Heard As Stock Cars Are Readied,” *Portland Press Herald*, April 12, 1959, 18

for novices.⁴⁴ A major rules change in 1968 introduced three divisions within Class A (small models, full coupes, and cars of 1955 or later, based on motor specifications), while Class B bombers allowed any modifications that did not show, and Class C novice cars required stronger reinforcing structures; the MSSCRA also identified these classes as Super Modified, Modified, and Novice.⁴⁵ Following the lead of NASCAR, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway continued to identify new classes of cars as new models emerged from the automakers and with allowances for varying levels of modifications and specifications, creating divisions for such types as Sportsman, Late Model Sportsman, and others.

J.B. McConnell, who purchased the property in 1948 and built the track in 1949, continued to own and operate Beech Ridge Motor Speedway until 1973. Calvin Reynolds had been racing successfully at Beech Ridge since 1960 starting in the Bombers category in his early 20s before moving into the modified category. A co-owner with his father of Reynolds Sports Center, Reynolds was also a snowmobile and motorcycle racer who competed at the national level. He purchased the track from McConnell on August 23, 1973, at that point consisting of four parcels including the 44-acre tract on the south side of Holmes Road and the land on the north side of Holmes Road across from the track containing a house and the parking lot for the track.⁴⁶ Reynolds managed the track in continuity to the standards that McConnell had set, but made one important development. In 1974, his first full year of ownership, Reynolds coordinated with the MSSCRA to secure sponsorship from Autowize, an auto parts store in Westbrook, for a 100-lap open competition race for Late Model Sportsman cars. This was the first long-distance race at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, and was the premier event there into the 1980s when other 100-lap races were added to the track's line-up.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "Annual Time Trials At Ridge Sunday Early Racing Line," *Portland Press Herald*, April 24, 1965, 14.

⁴⁵ "Rule Changes To Benefit Maine Stock Car Racing," *Portland Press Herald*, January 31, 1968, 13.

⁴⁶ DB 3448:21, August 23, 1973.

⁴⁷ "Leach And Prescott Sweep Ridge Features," *Journal Tribune*, July 18, 1974, 9; "Beech Ridge 100: A Big Little Race," *Sun-Journal*, August 5, 1984, 27.

Reynolds owned the track for more than seven years, and in early 1981 sold it to Ralph Cusack and his wife Jane Cusack.⁴⁸ An Army veteran, Cusack had raced as a teenager before entering the service and resumed racing in 1951. In early July 1951, Cusack won on his first outing at Beech Ridge, and won again the next week at a race sponsored by the MSSCRA at the State Fair grounds.⁴⁹ Cusack went on to become one of Beech Ridge's most successful Class A drivers throughout the 1960s and 1970s while also owning a heavy equipment sales company in Scarborough.⁵⁰ In 1980, his last year of racing, Cusack won his 15th career points championship title at Beech Ridge, and announced his retirement from racing the day after purchasing the track in March 1981.⁵¹ Cusack's family was deeply involved with the management and operation of the track, including his wife Jane and his two young sons, Glenn and Andrew.

The owners of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway maintained a consistent dual purpose: support and promote a local cadre of drivers who were highly competitive, and provide thrilling and exciting experiences for a steady base of local and regional fans throughout the six-month racing season. These combined goals, to support and provide opportunities for both local and competitive drivers and to entertain their local and loyal fans, continued across the track's four owners from 1949 to 2021 and led them first to create different classes or divisions of races, a process that began as early as 1950 and continued into the 1990s and the 2000s. While owned by private individuals, the races at Beech Ridge remained under the auspices of the MSSCRA until late 1989, when Cusack decided to operate the track independently, setting his own rules and regulations for racing.⁵² This action gave the Cusacks more flexibility, and in the 1990s, Ralph Cusack, succeeded by his son Andy Cusack, sought to find new ways to appeal to the track's fans in addition to the regular drivers. Their flexibility was augmented by an earlier decision that

⁴⁸ DB 4757:13, March 27, 1981.

⁴⁹ "Cusack Wins Stock Car Feature Event," *Lewiston Daily Sun*, July 14, 1951, 8.

⁵⁰ "Ralph Cusacks Are Honored," *Evening Express*, November 1, 1977, 18.

⁵¹ "Cusack has a big day at Beech Ridge," *Journal Tribune* (Biddeford, ME), September 22, 1980, 16; "In Control," with photograph of Cusack, *Evening Express*, March 31, 1981, 16.

⁵² "Georgia driver heads north to try GNN circuit," *Sun-Journal*, April 22, 1990, 19.

changed the track forever. In late 1985, the Cusacks announced plans to pave the track, ending its 36-year run as a dirt track. As Ralph Cusack observed when announcing the decision, the track, consisting of dirt and clay with an oil coating, was badly worn and in need of extensive repairs; although paving in asphalt too was expensive, Cusack determined that it would be less expensive in the long run. Construction took place over the winter and early spring, and was ready in time for the 1986 season.⁵³ At the same time, the Cusacks expanded the pit area located immediately south of the track with access from Two Rod Road, constructing a new larger parking area extending south from the original pit.

Although the decision to pave the track was based in part on considerations of costs and long-term management, it also opened new possibilities. In the late 1970s, NASCAR had expanded on its northern circuit tour by creating the North Tour under several successive sponsorships until 1985, when NASCAR dropped its affiliation. In response, another group of promoters created the American-Canadian Tour (ACT) in 1986 which conducted and promoted professional stock car races across Quebec and New England.⁵⁴ In June 1986, after extensive negotiations between the Cusacks and ACT officials, the ACT and the Cusacks jointly announced that the ACT would race at Beech Ridge later that summer. According to a newspaper report of the announcement, “Beech Ridge paved its historic clay surface last winter, expanded the pit area and installed a new press box, all factors that led to the decision” to schedule an ACT race there.⁵⁵ Many of the drivers on the ACT circuit already had extensive experience at Beech Ridge, including Dick McCabe, Keven Lepage, and Robbie Crouch, while others would be new to the one-third mile track; regular Beech Ridge drivers would also have the opportunity to qualify for the final race through a series of heats.⁵⁶

⁵³ “Ridge resurfacing was leading story of 1985 in racing,” *Sun-Journal* December 29, 1985, 27.

⁵⁴ “Great growth marked decade in auto racing,” *Sun-Journal*, December 31, 1989, 29.

⁵⁵ “Beech Ridge Speedway to host Coors Tour race,” *Morning Sentinel* (Waterville, ME), June 19, 1986, 20.

⁵⁶ “Drivers move on to Beech Ridge,” *Kennebec Journal*, July 18, 1986, 17; “Beech Ridge to host ATC race,” *Kennebec Journal*, August 21, 1986, 21.

In early 1988, the ACT announced that it would add a 300-lap race at Beech Ridge that summer, far longer than any races yet held there; the longest to date had been a 150-lap race. Because of the length, Beech Ridge agreed to construct a new, secondary pit area in the track's infield to allow for what would likely be at least one required pit stop for gas, tires, or both.⁵⁷ Although the longer race remained at Beech Ridge for only three seasons, in 1993 the ACT expanded its coverage in Maine by adding the Oxford Plains track, which operated a series under ACT sanction in a joint program with Beech Ridge. Securing the Oxford Plains track effectively keeping NASCAR, ACT's principal competitor for racing, out of Maine. In 1994, however, ACT sponsorships began dropping leading to the elimination of almost all of the Canadian races and the removal of several American tracks as well. In early 1995, Cusack announced that Beech Ridge Motor Speedway had established a relationship with NASCAR, which agreed to sponsor three races at the track that year, two NASCAR Busch North series races and one Featherlight Modified Tour race. These races constituted NASCAR's only two New England series, giving a great deal of prominence to Beech Ridge (Figure 12). A year later, in early 1996, the owner of the ACT announced that he was disbanding the tour. Beech Ridge continued its association with NASCAR through 2006, when it switched to another New England tour, the Pro All Start Series North.

While participation in these major tours drew a great deal of attention to Beech Ridge Motor Speedway from the late 1980s through the early 2000s, the core of the track's activities remained the weekly races that continually drew fans from throughout southern Maine. Ralph Cusack, the former standout driver who purchased the track in 1981, had guided Beech Ridge through the major upgrades including paving the track and constructing the inner track pit area, and into the affiliation with national stock car circuits, decided to sell the track in 1996. After entertaining several offers, he worked out a deal with his two sons, Andy and Glenn, who purchased the track in September. Glenn Cusack, the older of the two sons, had participated at

⁵⁷ "New England 300 added to Beech Ridge schedule," *Rumford Falls Times* (Rumford, ME), January 6, 1988, 9.

Beech Ridge as a driver since 1981 and continued to race into the 2000s. His younger brother, Andy, began working at the track after his father purchased it while still in high school, assisting the track's announcer and working as promotional director before becoming the full-time announcer in 1985. After the brothers purchased Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in 1996, Andy Cusack served as the track's chief executive officer, and in early 2000 acquired his brother's interest to become the sole owner. In an interview announcing his acquisition of the track, Andy Cusack reaffirmed the track's local orientation: "Cusack said racing is family oriented these days, and at Beech Ridge most of the drivers are from the area. They are people one might see at the bank or at a restaurant during the week. They are accessible to shake hands or sign autographs."⁵⁸

In keeping with his commitment to supporting a community of local racers, one of Andy Cusack's first new programs was Thursday Night Thunder. Cusack inaugurated the program in 1997 as a series that was oriented to those with little or no racing experience. Even what had been designed as entry-level racing classes in previous decades had developed into races that required more expensive race cars, and Cusack, along with other track owners in Maine, recognized that this posed a barrier to many who were interested in racing. The ten-week series featured racing in a variety of relatively inexpensive vehicles, all of which were to be strictly stock with the exception of additional safety features. In its inaugural season, according to Cusack, "'The program did everything we hoped for...It gave new opportunities for drivers at an affordable cost and gave families an inexpensive program to enjoy.'"⁵⁹ By 1999, the series that included "Beetle Bugs, Mad Bombers, Ladies League and Truck Series augmented by Go-Karts and Legend Cars were packing the grandstands;" as Cusack observed, "'We had crowds last year that would make some of our NASCAR Busch North events look small.'"⁶⁰ Although Beech Ridge Motor Speedway phased out the entry level classes by the mid-2000s due to a lack of

⁵⁸ "Family Tradition Fuels Beech Ridge," *Portland Press Herald*, May 8, 2000, 21.

⁵⁹ Andy Cusack quoted in "Heaps of Fun," *Morning Sentinel*, August 1, 1998, 5.

⁶⁰ "Midweek racing series brings in the fans," *Morning Sentinel*, June 17, 1999, 18.

driver participation, the track continued to focus its operations on a local base of drivers and fans while providing access to national drivers and cars. In 2018, Cusack removed nearly all touring races from the schedule and restored the track's focus on its regular Saturday night races.⁶¹

The goal of the track's owners through its history was to provide fast and exciting races while providing racing and entertainment opportunities to its local fans and drivers. Their success was shown in the consistently high attendance figures at the track. No figures have been found for the inaugural season, but the track's second year in 1950 drew approximately 68,000 fans over the course of 54 race dates, averaging more than 1,200 spectators per race.⁶² The track's popularity grew quickly; in October 1966, for example, a crowd of approximately 5,000 fans watched the final race of the season, capping off a season with a total attendance of more than 112,000.⁶³ Because of the limitations of seating space, the attendance for a season with only weekly races throughout the year remained consistent throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s, however, as Beech Ridge began adding more touring races and other events, and particularly when the track hosted national touring series, attendance expanded greatly. More than 130,000 fans attended races in 2001, and a decade later the NASCAR races alone drew approximately 104,000 fans with another 47,000 attending the special Thursday Night Thunder races and approximately 4,500 fans attending each of the regular Saturday night races.⁶⁴

By the 2010s, however, changing tastes in entertainment throughout the nation began to have an effect on Beech Ridge, and attendance began dropping significantly. By the end of the decade attendance at the track was barely making ends meet, which contributed to the decision to cease the participation in national tour events which required significant costs regardless of how

⁶¹ "Maine's Beech Ridge Announces Pending Sale, Likely Closure," *Short Track Scene*, September 12, 2021, available online: <https://www.shorttrackscene.com/commentary/maines-beech-ridge-announces-pending-sale-likely-closure/>.

⁶² "Stock Car Racing," *Portland Press Herald*, December 31 1950, 20.

⁶³ "Cusack, Riley, Reynolds Win Ridge Features," *Evening Express*, October 24, 1966, 15; "Warmup Today At Beech Ridge," *Portland Press Herald*, April 30, 1967, 16.

⁶⁴ "Mixing it up at Beech Ridge," *Portland Press Herald*, April 14, 2002, 40; "Tradition roars on at speedway," *Maine Sunday Telegram* (Portland, ME), August 5, 2012, B1.

many people attended. The dramatic fall-off of attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the track's lack of profitability, leading toward Cusack's agreement to sell the track in the fall of 2021.

Buildings and Grounds

Two vital components of the racetrack experience for spectators are adequate seating and concessions. For the drivers, the pit area was the primary concern. All three of these aspects of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway were present from the track's earliest years but have changed in varying ways.

When McConnell built the track in early 1949, his lumber mill provided the materials for the first grandstand. Located on the home stretch, this wooden grandstand featured eight rows designed to seat 3,000.⁶⁵ Later in May of that year, McConnell had added a grandstand of unknown size at the first turn, located at the northwest corner of the track where fans had a chance to see the race cars heading toward them on the front stretch going into the first turn. For the track's second season in 1950, McConnell added a new section to the grandstand while adding a new safety fence to protect the fans in the grandstand from flying debris.⁶⁶ It is unclear where this new section was added, but undated photographs from the early 1960s shows a taller section of the grandstand to the south of the announcer's booth, which was an addition to the original grandstand (Figure 13). A 1953 aerial photograph shows the main grandstand facing the home stretch with the smaller grandstand at the first turn, with the main concession building in its current location (Figure 14).

⁶⁵ "Auto Racing Track Sprouts Overnight At Scarborough," *Portland Press Herald*, May 1, 1949, 32, showing photographs of the grandstand and its construction.

⁶⁶ "McConnell's 'Stock' Dream Comes True!" *Evening Express*, April 25, 1950, 17.

The original grandstands remained in place until the early 1960s. In 1963, the track held a pre-season warm-up race, when more than 2,000 fans “fled into the new steel stands to watch an impromptu 25-car racing card that had a full course of thrills.”⁶⁷ A year later, in early 1964, McConnell built a “100-foot section of new steel grandstands;” although the location was not specified, it likely was located at the first turn, where fans had a chance to see the race cars heading toward them on the front stretch.⁶⁸ Figure 15 shows a view in 1974 looking east from the first turn grandstand to the home stretch grandstand. A steel grandstand remained at the first turn until the track closed in September 2021 (Figure 16). The foundations for this grandstand remain in place.

Beginning in the track’s early years, fans and crews often also viewed the races from the area between the back stretch and the pit area. McConnell had built a large clay berm along the backstretch to protect the pit from debris and cars that veered off the track, but in 1970 he replaced the berm with a concrete wall and a tall chain link fence (Figure 17). A secondary wall was later built approximately five feet back from the original wall to provide additional protection, and in subsequent years an additional grandstand was built above the back stretch. By 1987, this included seating for 2,300 people in addition to the main grandstand that could accommodate 5,500 fans.⁶⁹ Figure 18 is a still from a video of a 1991 race showing the back stretch grandstand.

The main grandstand provided additional functions beyond spectator seating. From the track’s early years, a portion of the top of the grandstand also housed the announcer’s booth as seen in Figure 8. The new steel grandstand built in 1964 provided additional space for the announcer’s booth, along with a scorer’s booth below (Figure 19). The current announcers’ both and press building at the top of the grandstand was built during a period of extensive renovation

⁶⁷ “Ridge Tuneups Pull Top ‘Gate,’” *Portland Press Herald*, April 29, 1963, 13.

⁶⁸ “Ridge Race Stores Looted While Owner Sings Himself,” *Evening Express*, April 23, 1964.

⁶⁹ “Beech Ridge: New pavement means faster times,” *Journal Tribune*, June 27, 1987, 59.

and rebuilding in 1987.⁷⁰ At the ground level, the grandstand also houses the main entrance and ticket gate in the center beneath the announcer's booth, as well as an additional concession stand near the east end. At the far west end of the grandstand, facing the main concession stand, an enclosed section beneath the seating once housed a stand-up bar for men only that remained for approximately ten years, and in the 1970s was converted for use as storage space.⁷¹

The pit area was from the beginning located immediately south of the track, where McConnell cleared trees and stumps, and graded and leveled the ground. This area was historically used primarily as a parking and staging area for the race cars and their support vehicles before, during, and after the races. Given the relatively short length of most of the races—even a 100-lap event, the longest feature event until the 1990s national circuit races, totaled only 33 miles on the one-third mile track—drivers rarely if ever needed pit stops. The pit area contained one primary building, as seen in the 1953 aerial photograph (Figure 14). This building remains as an observation tower, which originally contained a first aid station on the first floor beneath the tower. A new concessions building was added to the east side of the tower in 1974, and the tower was rebuilt in the mid-1980s (Figure 20).⁷² Also during the early 1980s, early during the track's ownership by Ralph Cusack, approximately 3.5 acres of land at the southeast end of the original pit area were cleared for parking, with new lights.

When J.B. McConnell built and opened Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in 1949, it was a place to watch cars racing, the visitor services consisting only of a grandstand and space for parking. With so many people coming to watch the races, however, McConnell soon recognized the opportunities for concessions, and in 1951 he first acquired a liquor license for the track and built a concessions stand. As seen in Figure 14, this first concessions building was located immediately west of the grandstand at the northern edge of the lot. A separate restroom is not

⁷⁰ "New concessions, pit road set at Beech Ridge," *Sun-Journal*, November 29, 1987, 34.

⁷¹ Pellerin, personal communication, May 7, 2025.

⁷² "New concessions, pit road set at Beech Ridge"

visible, but was built soon; in 1976, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway owner Calvin Reynolds received a permit to replace the original restroom building “with a modern 16-by-30 foot building with a front yard setback of 30 feet.”⁷³ This building remains in place, at the northwestern corner of the fenced property (Figure 21). The main concession building was then replaced in late 1987; as Andy Cusack described it, “The new building will be twice as big and allow for plenty of working room and storage area. We felt that the old concession building wasn’t as productive as it could have been. The new concessions will be able to serve the race fans more quickly, and at the same time be big enough so the workers aren’t tripping over one another because of the tight quarters.”⁷⁴

A third, smaller concessions building is located between the main concessions and the restroom building, and another concessions building is located beneath the grandstand near the east end; no date of construction or other references were found for either of these buildings. Finally, the list of improvements in 1987 also included a new tavern. Now located immediately east of the grandstand near turn four, this frame building once served as the teardown garage, where race officials could inspect a race car that was charged with having too many modifications. The building was renovated in 1987 and became the Turn Five tavern, a bar that also served small snacks.⁷⁵

The core of the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway is the track. Reports vary as to whether J.B. McConnell began work on constructing the track in 1948 or 1949, but he was certainly working on its construction in the spring of 1949 in preparation for the track’s opening in May of that year. McConnell constructed the track largely by himself, using his own heavy equipment, grading the soil before building a deep base of sand topped by 12 inches of clay. Although the clay layer was densely compacted and coated with oil, the impact of racing cars necessitated a

⁷³ “Zoning Board Oks 5 Requests,” *Evening Express*, April 16, 1976, 8.

⁷⁴ Andy Cusack quoted in “New concessions, pit road set at Beech Ridge.”

⁷⁵ Ibid.; Steve Pellerin, personal communication, May 7, 2025.

regrading of the track after each day's races. This required driving a grader over the entire track, then applying a coat of oil to the surface, a lengthy job that had to be repeated weekly in the track's early years, and several times per week as the number of races and events increased during the 1970s and 1980s (Figure 22). In 1985, Andy Cusack described the work that his father did to maintain the track:

On a typical race week, he would go to the track the first thing Sunday morning following a Saturday-night race and "roll" the clay on the surface all day and water the surface. Then, on Friday and Saturday, he would roll it some more and water it once again at 10 minutes to six, and while the water was being put on the track, the race cars would work up the water into the clay right up to race time at 7:30. It took a lot of work, and my father was the only one who really had the science of it down pat.⁷⁶

By 1985, the existing clay surface of the track had been worn beyond the point of repair, and Cusack made the decision to pave the track for the start of the 1986 racing season. Cusack contracted with Maietta Construction to excavate and remove the existing clay track and lay a deep base of gravel for the new track in November 1985. Dayton Sand & Gravel of Dayton, Maine then laid the first binding level of asphalt, with the final level laid in the spring of 1986. The dimensions of the track remained the same—one-third mile, with 65-foot-wide turns and the front and back stretches varying between 50 and 55 feet wide—but the banks were lowered considerably from the original six-foot height of the dirt track.⁷⁷

The interior of the track was originally left largely untouched. As seen in the 1951 aerial (Figure 14), the interior was untended with uneven vegetation, and with evidence that cars had

⁷⁶ "Asphalt surface sends Beech Ridge into new era," *Sun-Journal*, November 24, 1985, 25, contains a useful discussion of the decision-making process regarding paving the track, and the generally positive responses from drivers and the MSSCRA.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

driven across it but without any paving. The track interior remained in this condition into the early 1980s, serving as informal and temporary parking during races but otherwise unused (Figure 23). One of Cusack's early improvements after acquiring Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in 1981 was to plant grass in the infield. Observing that in the early days a race track was only a place to race cars, he pointed out that fans now want a better experience: "The days of the rusty cars and dusty infields with no grass are over."⁷⁸ After the track was paved with asphalt in 1986, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway attracted races sanctioned by the ACT, including the New England 300 in 1988. This race was twice as long as the longest race up to that time, and the cars likely would require at least one pit stop. In order to accommodate this and future long races, Cusack paved a portion of the infield to serve as a pit area, together with access roads to and from the pit.⁷⁹ As seen in aerial photographs taken since the early 1990s, the paved area is approximately 45 feet wide and extends east-west across the long dimension of the oval track, curved at the ends to facilitate entrance to the inner pit area from the east (between turns three and four) and exit back to the track on the west (between turns one and two). Another paved section extended from the inner pit area north to the center of the track on the front stretch, while another paved road gave access from the back stretch (Figure 24). The paved inner track area also provided parking for emergency vehicles, giving them faster access to the track than before.⁸⁰

II. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway encompasses approximately 40 acres, located at the southeast corner of Holmes Road (formerly Vinegar Road) and Two Rod Road in Scarborough. The property was the site of a one-mile horse racing track in the mid-nineteenth century and was

⁷⁸ Cusack quoted in "Beech Ridge: New pavement means faster times," *Journal Tribune*, June 27, 1987, 59.

⁷⁹ "New England 300 added to Beech Ridge schedule."

⁸⁰ Pellerin, personal communication, May 7, 2025.

redeveloped as a one-third mile dirt automobile racing track in 1949. The facility currently consists of the track, now paved with asphalt; a steel deck grandstand, a pit area to the south of the race track, and six buildings scattered throughout the property. In addition, the facility features additional landscape modifications designed to ensure safety, in the form of earthen berms: one along the back stretch on the south side of the track separating it from the pit area, and another lining the western edge of the property between the track and Two Rod Road. Figure 25 shows a plan of the facility identifying the key components.

Track

The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway track is a one-third mile semi-banked oval race track. The track is oriented on an east-west axis, with the front stretch on the north facing Holmes Road and the back stretch on the south. The direction of racing is counter-clockwise when facing north. The track measures approximately 735 feet on the long axis and approximately 550 feet from north to south. The paved area is approximately 45 feet wide on the front stretch and 55 feet wide on the back stretch, and approximately 65 feet wide on the east and west turns which are banked outward to a height of approximately four feet (Figure 26). A concrete apron separates the northern edge of the front stretch from a low, four-foot-tall concrete wall, the apron varying in width from approximately 15 feet in front of the grandstand to approximately 45 feet at the east and west ends of the front stretch. This apron provides additional protection to spectators in the grandstand and in the concessions areas (Figure 27).

The track was paved in late 1985 and early 1986 with a deep gravel bed above the graded soil, which was then overlain with multiple layers of compacted asphalt; it has not been rebuilt since then, but has had only regular maintenance. The interior of the track is largely covered with short grasses, but has a paved course in the center of the east-west axis that is approximately 45 feet wide (Figure 28). The east and west ends of this paved course are curved to the south where

they meet the track, to allow for easy and safe access from the east side and back to the race track on the west side. The outside edge of the back stretch is protected by an earthen berm bounded by a concrete wall approximately four feet tall; the berm extends approximately 25 feet back from the concrete wall before sloping gently down to the pit area (Figure 29). The off-ramp from the track to the south pit area is located at turn two, the southwest corner of the track, by way of a paved road that continues to the southeast around the earthen berm. The cars then re-enter from the pit area onto the track at turn three, the southeast corner of the track, on a paved road that cuts through the earthen berm and the extension of the concrete wall that forms the northern edge of the berm; a secondary tall earthen berm forms the eastern edge of this road and continues past the outside edge of turn three.

Pit Area

The pit area is located immediately south of the track, behind the back stretch and earthen berm. This served primarily as a parking and staging area for race cars and their supporting equipment, and was accessed through a gate at Two Rod Road at the western edge of the speedway property. This area was steadily enlarged throughout the history of the track as the number of racers increased, but originally extended approximately 500 feet east from the entrance at Two Rod Road and approximately 150 feet south from the track. At the time of the track's closing in 2021, the pit area formed an L-shape that extended approximately 800 feet east from Two Rod Road, approximately 200 feet from the south edge of the track closest to Two Rod Road, with a large lighted parking area extending approximately 600 feet south from the southeastern edge of the track and approximately 500 feet wide. The entire pit area is unpaved except for separate concrete pads for individual cars.

The pit area contains one principal building that serves as an observation tower, storage space, and concessions (Figure 30). The building has a rectangular footprint on an east-west axis,

measuring approximately 60 feet long by approximately 18 feet wide. The western end of the building features a two-story wood frame observation tower, nearly square in plan, that provides a view over the earthen berm to the track and grandstand, with a single entrance on the west side of the first story and an exterior open staircase along the south side that gives access to the tower, which has large windows on all four sides beneath a gable roof. A one-story gabled section extends to the east from the tower, constructed of concrete block and containing a concessions building. The tower portion of the building was in place by 1953, but was substantially rebuilt when the concessions section was built in 1974.

Grandstand

The principal grandstand for Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, and the only one that remains, is located along the front stretch between the track to the south and Holmes Road to the north. The grandstand measures approximately 425 from east to west and approximately 45 feet wide (Figure 31). The open frame of the grandstand is constructed of slender steel members that are connected by rivets, and supports twenty rows of seating; each row consists of 1x12 boards for seating (Figure 32). The track side of the grandstand is divided into four equal sections, divided by three openings: one in the center where the main ticket booths are located beneath the observation and media building, a concessions booth on the east and an access opening on the west (Figures 33, 34). The western end of the grandstand features an enclosed frame storage area beneath the seating, with two smaller enclosed areas immediately west of the ticket booths. The rear (north) side and the east and west sides are all clad in wood frame siding.

Buildings

The principal concessions buildings for the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway are located at the northwestern corner of the track, immediately west of the grandstand. This area consists of three buildings, all of them one-story buildings constructed of concrete block with shallow gable roofs. The principal concessions building is immediately adjacent to the western edge of the grandstand; this is a rectangular building on an east-west axis measuring approximately 40 feet long by 20 feet wide, with walk-up service windows along the long south façade (Figure 35). A secondary concessions building is located immediately adjacent to the principal building, a rectangular building on a north-south axis measuring approximately 20 feet long by 11 feet wide, with walk-up service windows on the east façade beneath a wide overhanging eave (Figure 36). At least one of the two concessions building was built in 1987 to replace an earlier building, though it is not known of both were built at that time. Finally, a restroom building is located slightly to the west, also a rectangular building measuring 27 feet wide by 18 feet. This restroom building was built in 1976 to replace an earlier building (Figure 37).

In addition to these visitor services buildings at the northwestern corner of the track, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway also had a small tavern. This is a frame building located immediately east of the grandstand. Originally built as a teardown garage where challenges to the degree of modifications to the stock cars could be determined, the building was converted for use as a tavern in 1987. The principal building facing south has one story beneath a front gable, with an asymmetrical five-bay façade featuring two single doors and three single window and clad in shingles (Figure 38). A small one-story gabled restroom building is attached to the rear of the west façade.

A combination garage and office building was built in the 1980s and is located at the northeastern edge of the property, approximately 500 feet east of the grandstand and surrounded by trees. This is a sprawling, multi-component one-story frame building with a central gabled section flanked on the north, south, and east sides by one-story flat or shed roof additions (Figure

39). It is oriented on a generally north-south axis, measuring approximately 110 feet long by 56 feet wide.

Finally, the original flag stand is located where it had been during the 1950s and 1960s, on the infield side of the front stretch directly across from the observation and media building in the center of the grandstand (Figure 40 G). This is a low, small, circular structure, approximately four feet in diameter and six feet tall. The base is concrete with wooden steps leading to the platform and surrounded by a slender wooden railing (Figure 41). An improved flag stand on the infield side of the front stretch replaced the original during the 1970s, and during the 1980s a taller flag stand was built on the grandstand side of the front stretch; neither the 1970s nor the 1980s replacements are extant.

III. SOURCES

Local newspapers provided extensive coverage of the origins and ongoing operations of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, and provided the foundation for this narrative. The most useful articles are cited in the footnotes.

As discussed in the text, Beech Ridge Motor Speedway developed an extraordinarily loyal base of fans throughout its seven-decade history, and many of these fans remain devoted to its history. In addition, racing fans throughout the state are active in promoting and documenting the history of the sport through both traditional media and social media. In 2017, Sumner McKane produced the documentary film “Speedway Maine,” which was helpful in understanding the broader statewide historic context of automobile racing in Maine.

In addition, two Facebook groups provide immensely valuable collections of modern and historic videos and photographs. “Maine’s Lost Speedways” provides information about the history of automobile racing throughout the state, and in 2024 produced a video that is available on YouTube.com, “2024 Beech Ridge,” featuring an interview at the track with Steve Pellerin (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uT0BcWfool0&t=6s>). Pellerin is the unofficial historian of Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, having amassed a remarkable personal collection of historic photographs and other memorabilia. Mr. Pellerin graciously allowed access to his collection of photographs, several of which are included in this report, and provided additional information in a telephone interview. In addition, Mr. Pellerin organized and manages the “Old Beech Ridge Motor Speedway Photos and Memories” Facebook group, which has photographs and videos from his collection and from other members of the group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/113514885349527>).

Finally, the Scarborough Historical Society Museum in Scarborough contains a collection of photographs and other information about the track, and the Maine Historical Society’s Brown Research Library contains a single brochure.

For more general background, see:

Finch, Carter A. “Heritage in the Fast Lane: Preservation Potential for NASCAR Racetracks in North Carolina.” M.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 2019.

Hall, Randall A. “Carnival of Speed: The Auto Racing Business in the Emerging South, 1930-1950.” *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (July 2007), 245-275.

Pickard, Mary B. Scarborough: They Called it Owascoag.” Online article published online at
Maine Memory Network: <https://scarborough.mainememory.net/page/1608/display.html>.

IV. FIGURES CITED IN THE TEXT

BEECH RIDGE MOTOR SPEEDWAY
MHER No. 83
Page 40

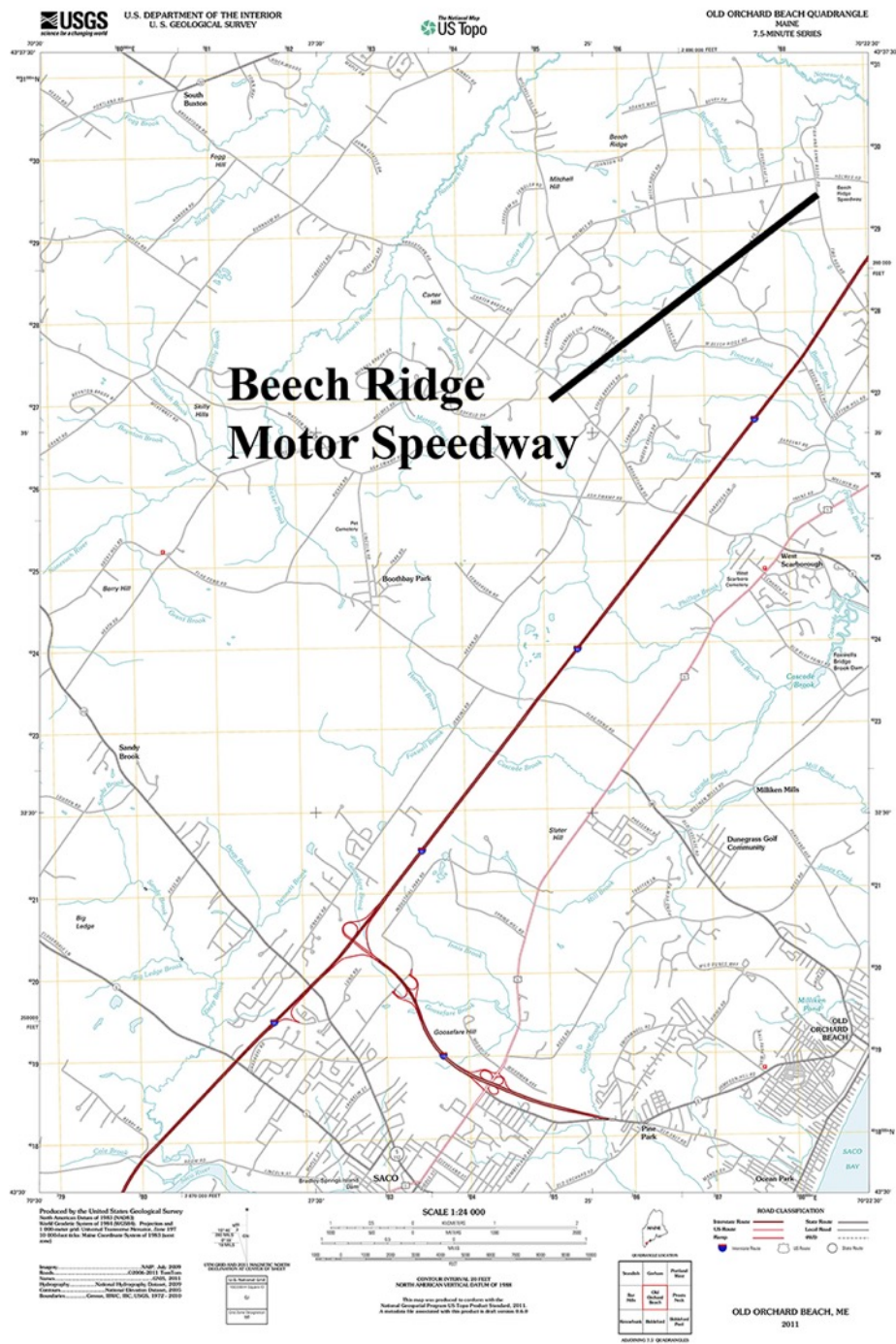


Figure 1. USGS topo map, Old Orchard Beach, ME, 2024

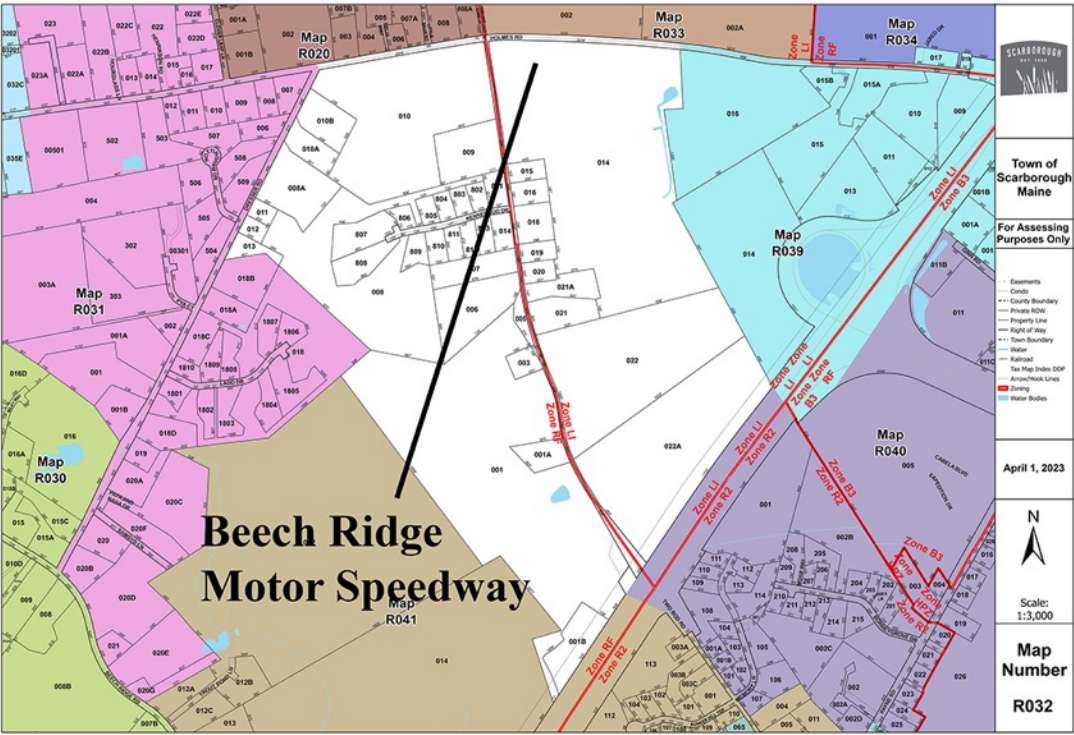


Figure 2. Town of Scarborough tax parcel map showing the location of the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway.

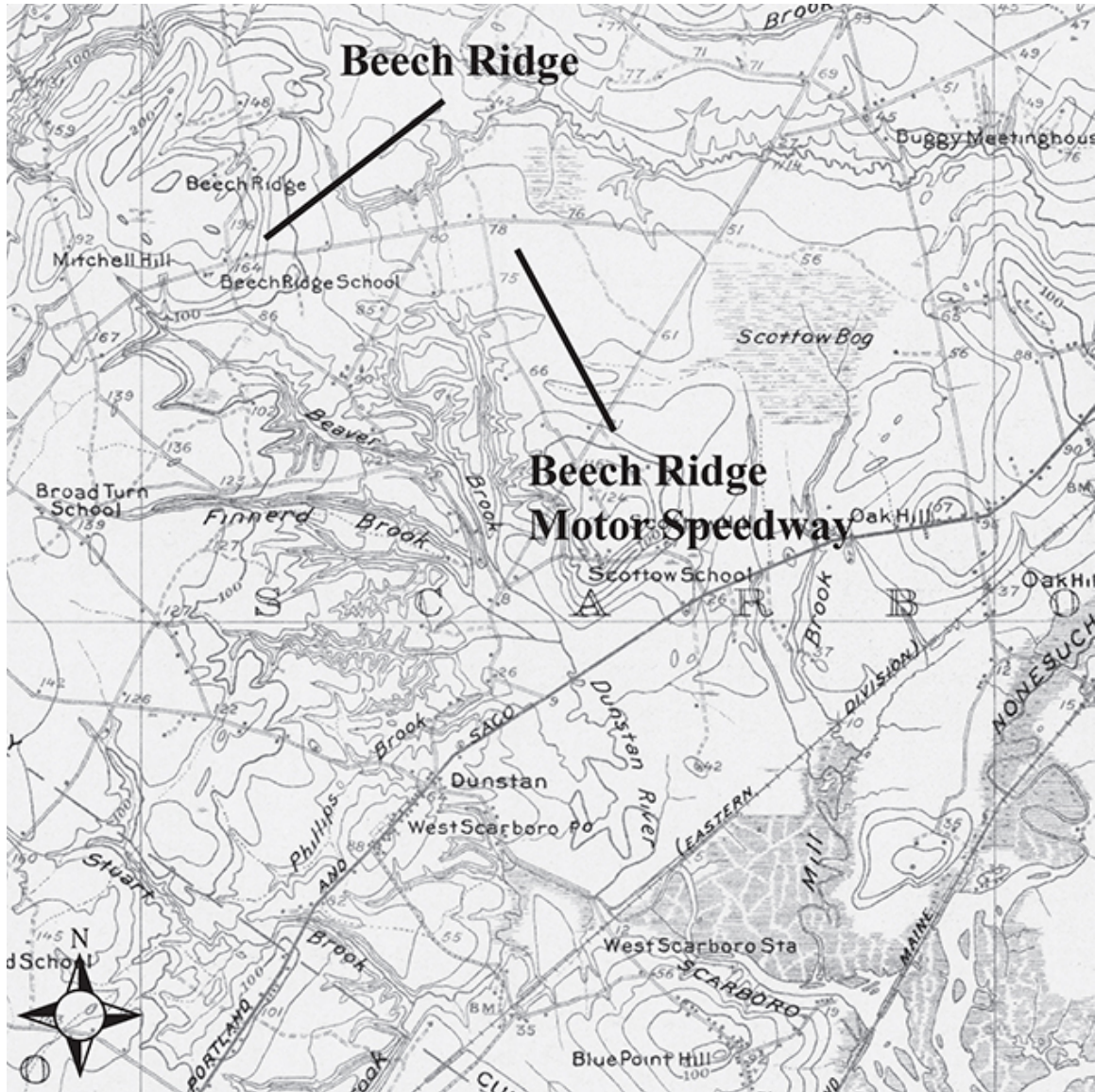


Figure 3. USGS topo map, Portland, ME, 1914.



Figure 5. Detail of Map of Scarborough in F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Cumberland County, Maine*, New York, 1971, showing the former Ling Trotting Course where the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway is now located. Source: Digital Maine Repository.



Figure 6. Members of Maine State Stock Car Racing Association in 1949, J.B. McConnell in back row, first on the left. McConnell photo in collection of Steve Pellerin.

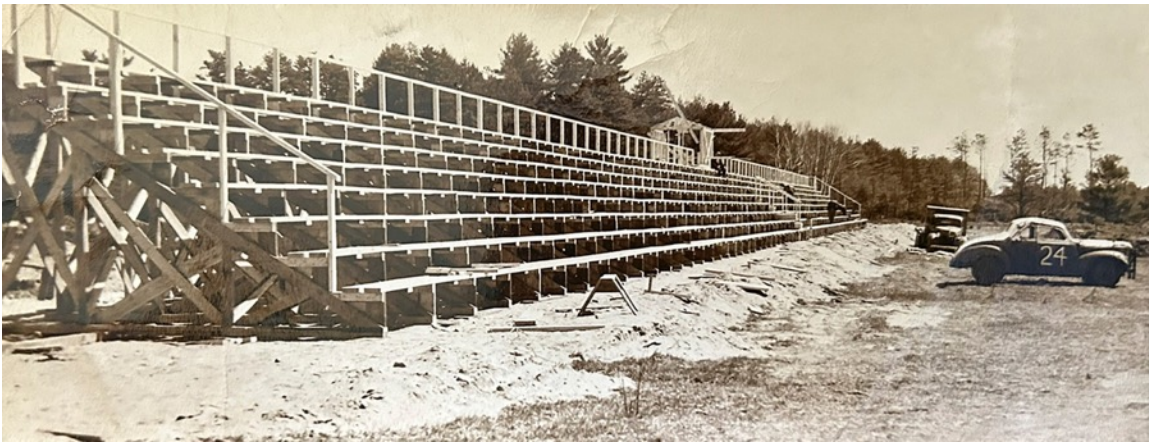


Figure 7. The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway track during construction in 1949, showing the original wooden bleachers. McConnell photo in collection of Steve Pellerin.

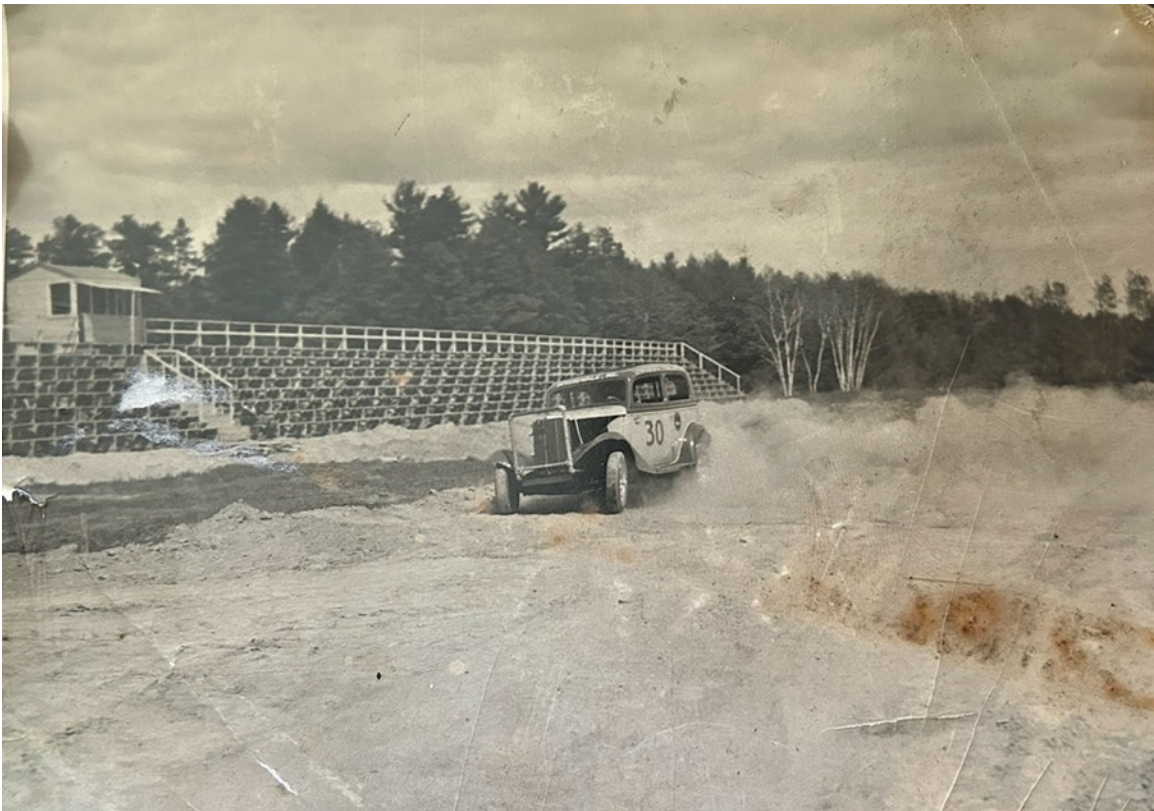


Figure 8. The Beech Ridge Motor Speedway track during construction, showing the grandstand and original announcer's booth. McConnell photo in collection of Steve Pellerin.



Figure 9. Front stretch looking east during construction, 1949. Photo courtesy Scarborough Historical Society, Scarborough, Maine.



Figure 9. 1949 advertisement for Beech Ridge Speedway. Source: *Portland Press Herald*, July 23, 1949.

<p>BEST OF LUCK ON YOUR OPENING WATERVILLE OAKLAND RACEWAY</p> <p>FOSTER BEEF CO., Inc. EAST VASSALBORO</p>	<p>OPENING! SUNDAY, MAY 13th, 2 P.M. STOCK CAR RACING</p>	<p>RUMMEL'S ICE CREAM OF COURSE</p>
<p>COMPLIMENTS of MAYFLOWER BEVERAGE CO. BOTTLED of "VIRGINIA DARE" BEVERAGES Best for Children</p>	<p>COME ONE COME ALL</p> 	<p>GOOD LUCK! WATERVILLE OAKLAND RACEWAY</p> <p>HUMPTY DUMPTY POTATO CHIP CO.</p>
<p>GOOD LUCK! THE WATERVILLE OAKLAND RACEWAY NISSAN BAKING CO. BAKERS of OLD HOME BREAD</p>	<p>Waterville - Oakland RACEWAY</p> <p>THRILLS!! SPILLS!! CRACK - UPS!!</p> <p>1st RACE STARTS SUNDAY AT 2:00 P. M.</p> <p><small>DRIVERS AND CARS FROM THE EASTERN STATE STOCK-CAR RACING ASSOCIATION MOST DRIVERS ARE FROM WATERVILLE AND VICINITY</small></p>	<p>COMPLIMENTS of CHRISTOPHER Conf. & Tob. Co. MADISON, MAINE Est. 1899</p> <p>OUR CONTINUOUS GROWTH IS "YOUR" PROTECTION</p>
<p>30 REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE ON GROUNDS 30 RACING CARS — Join The Crowd — RACING CARS</p> <p>Across From Waterville Country Club Road . . . On Oakland Road — Bus Leaves Waterville 1:30 FUN FOR ALL — FILL THE CAR — BRING YOUR NEIGHBOR</p>		
<p>DONALD R. MICHAUD FUEL COMPANY</p> <p>Range & Fuel Oil</p> <p>18 WATER STREET TELEPHONE 462-W</p> <p>IT'S METERED FOR YOUR PROTECTION HAPPY COOKING METERED GAS</p>		

Figure 10. Advertisement for the opening day of the Waterville-Oakland Raceway. Source:
Morning Sentinel (Waterville, ME), May 12, 1950.

Beech Ridge Speedway

WEST SCARBOROUGH

Stock Car & Bomber Car Racing

Big Memorial Day Race

Thursday 8 P. M.

30 LAP FEATURE EACH CLASS

Figure 11. Advertisement for Beech Ridge Speedway identifying separate Stock and Bomber classes. Source: *Biddeford-Saco Journal*, May 29, 1957.



The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a NASCAR race car at the top, flanked by checkered flags. Below the photo, the text reads: **SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1:35 P.M.** and **OPENING DAY!** followed by *Pre-Race Parade & Full Race Card*. Ticket prices are listed as: Adults \$9.00, Children (6-13) \$5.00, and Children under 6 FREE. The NASCAR logo is prominently displayed, along with the text **NASCAR Winston Racing Series**. The venue name **BEECH RIDGE MOTOR SPEEDWAY** is written in large, bold letters. Below this, the address **HOLMES ROAD, SCARBOROUGH, MAINE** is provided, along with a directional note: *Just 1 mile beyond Wal-Mart on Payne Rd. in Scarborough to Holmes Rd.* A checkered flag graphic is on the right side, and the phone number **885-5800** is at the bottom right. A small vertical number **50794** is visible on the far right edge.

Figure 12. Advertisement for the first NASCAR-sanctioned race at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway. Source: *Portland Press Herald*, April 19, 1997



Figure 13. An undated, c. 1955, photograph at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway showing the grandstand with the original announcers' booth and the addition to the grandstand on the left.

Courtesy of Old Beech Ridge Motor Speedway Photos and Memories, Facebook Group (OBRMSPM).

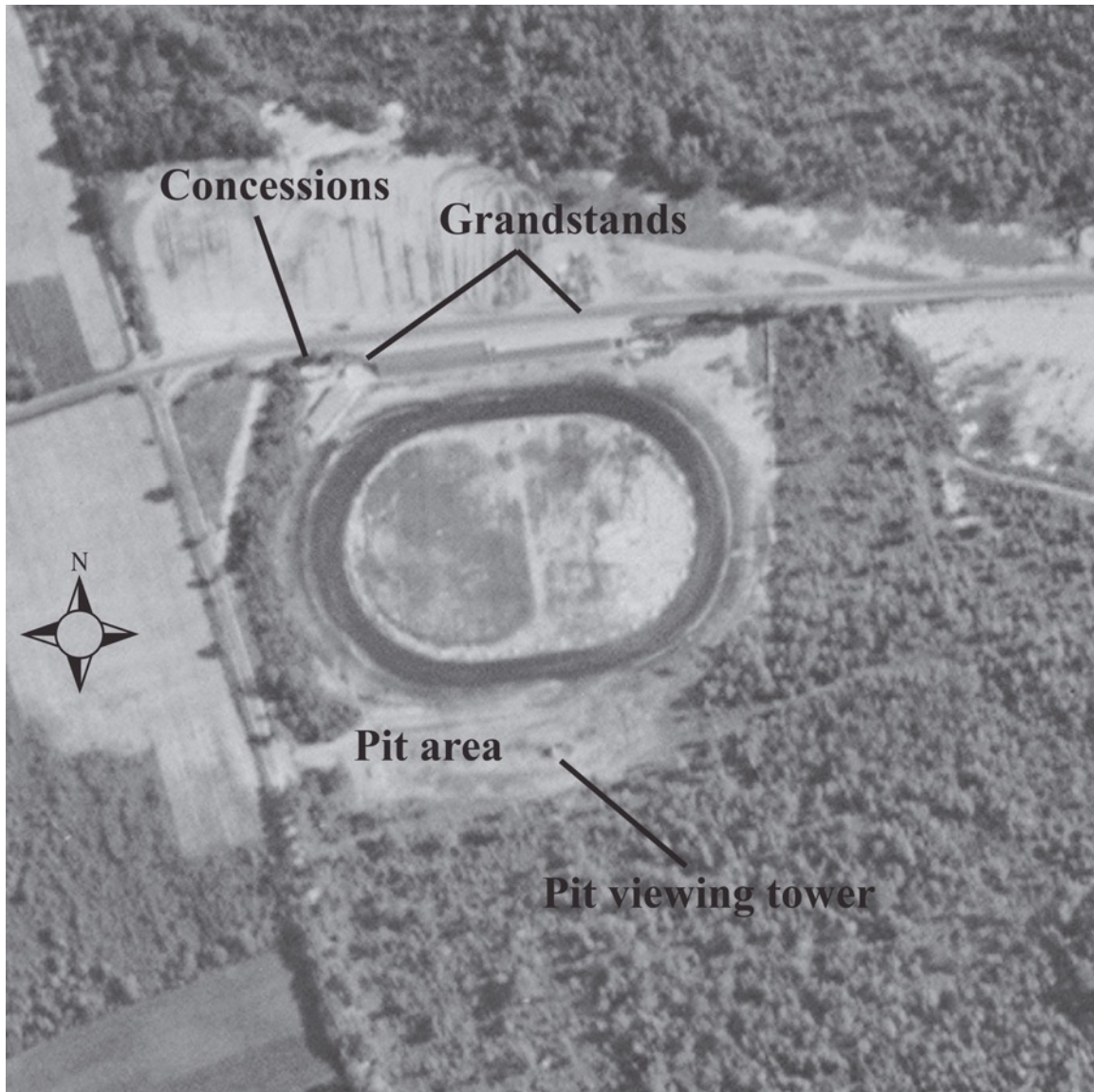


Figure 14. Detail of aerial photograph taken June 2, 1953, showing the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway track, grandstand, pit area, and concessions both. Source: Fogler Library, Special Collections.



Figure 15. Looking east from the first turn grandstand to the main grandstand, 1974. Robert Tetrault photograph in collection of Steve Pellerin.



Figure 16. First turn grandstand looking northwest, with concession building on right. Source: still from video of undated 2021 race at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDU8vVYTnY&t=801s>.



Figure 17. Spectators above the back stretch at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, undated photograph. Courtesy of OBRMSPM.



Figure 18. Grandstand above the back stretch, still from video of race, May 18, 1991. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qJ2i3R0xQo>.



Figure 19. 1970 photograph showing the announcer's and scoring booth. Courtesy of OBRMSPM.



Figure 20. Concessions building in pit area under construction, 1974. Courtesy of OBRMSPM.



Figure 21. 1976 photograph of new bathroom building. Robert Tetrault photograph in collection of Steve Pellerin.

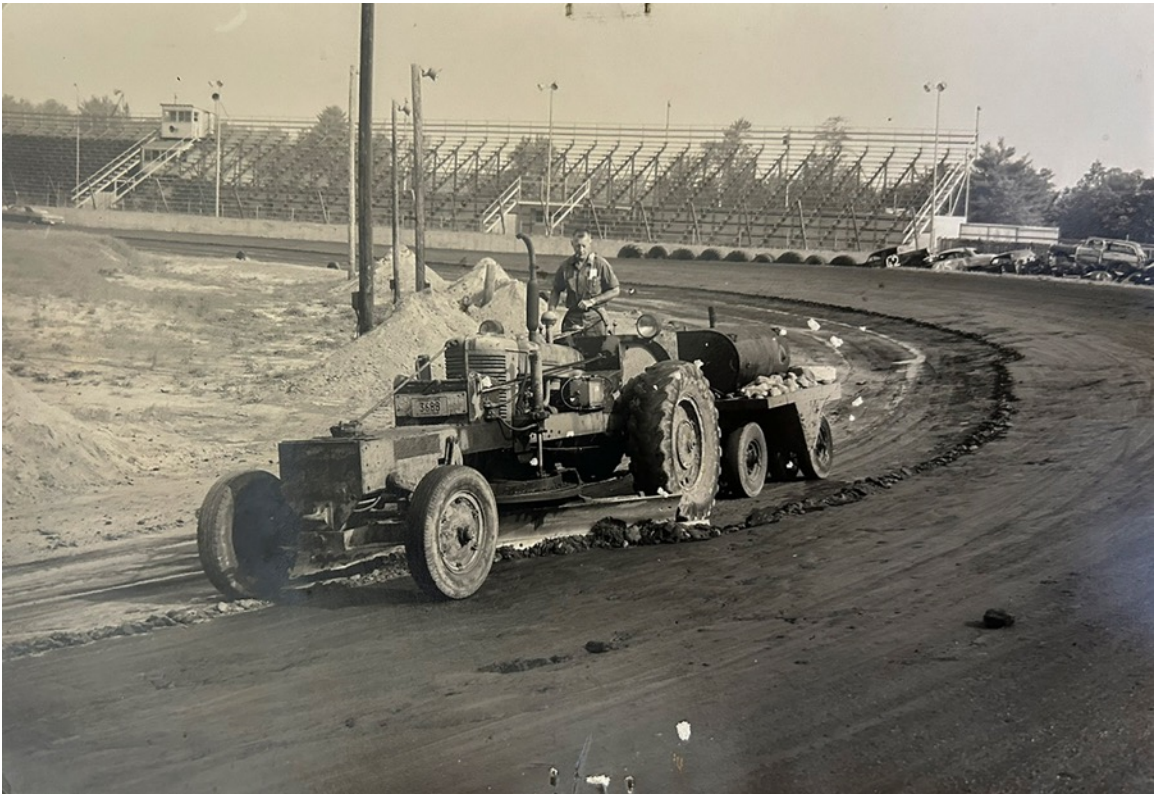


Figure 22. Undated photograph (after 1963) showing J.B. McConnell conducting track maintenance at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, with current steel grandstand in background. McConnell photo in collection of Steve Pellerin.



Figure 23. 1968 photo showing track and unpaved infield looking southeast from grandstand.
Collection of Steve Pellerin.

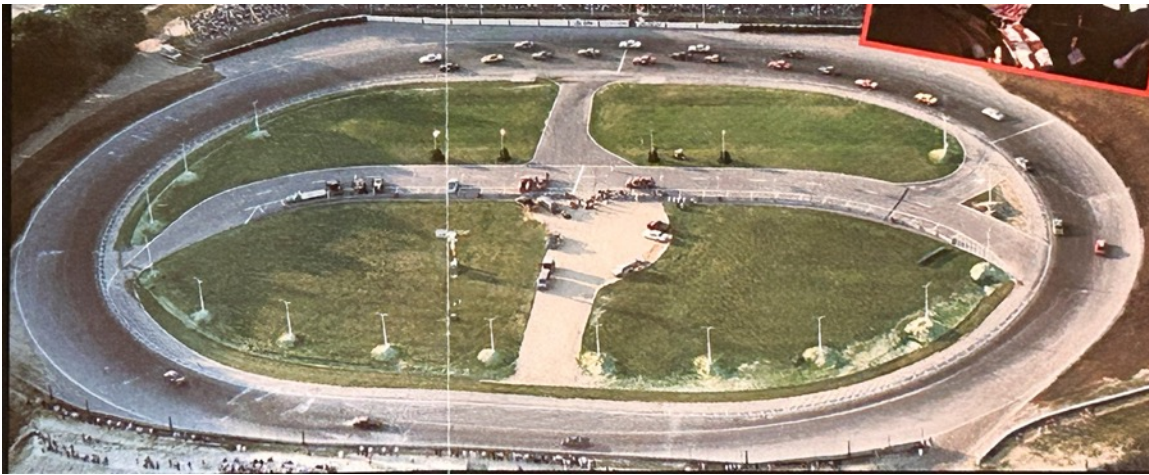


Figure 24. Aerial photo of the Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, c. 2000. Beech Ridge Motor Speedway brochure in collection of Scarborough Historical Society.

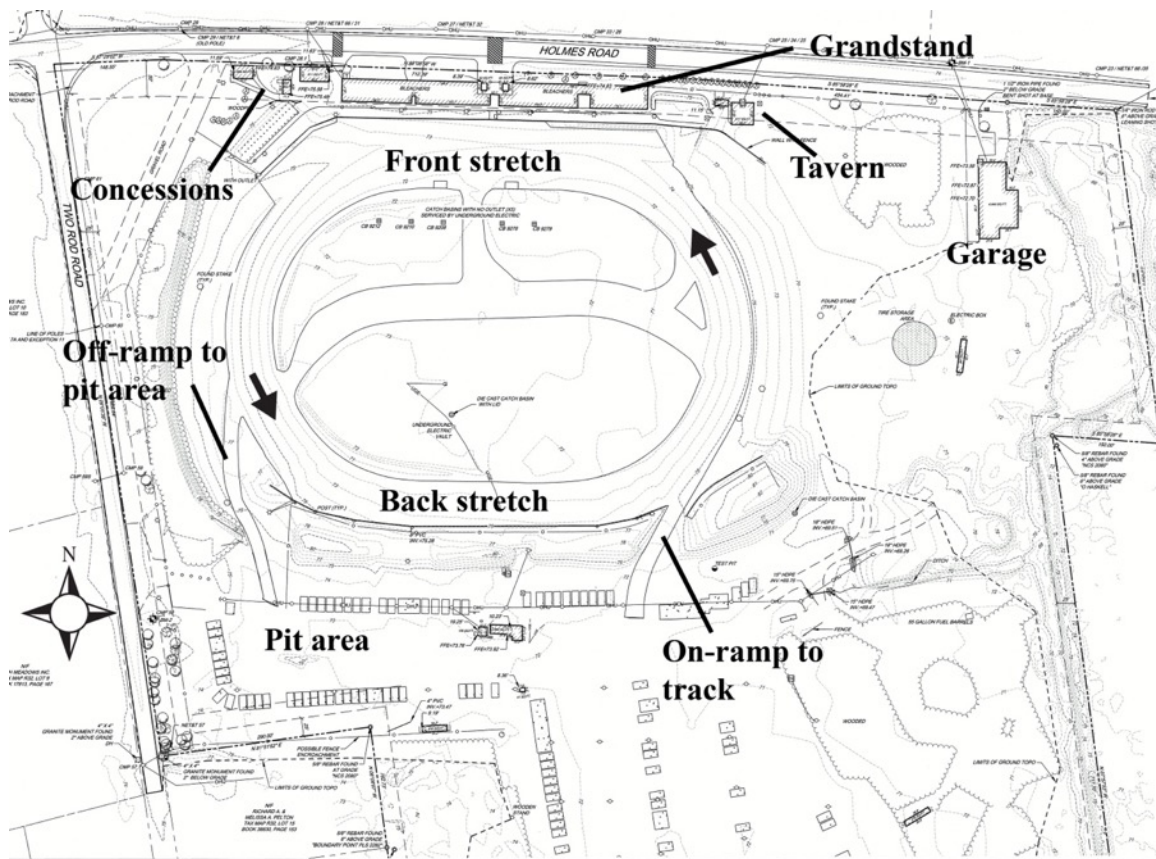


Figure 25. Site plan for Beech Ridge Motor Speedway showing key features.



Figure 26. Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, turn four looking south showing banking. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 27. Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, front stretch looking east. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 28. Inner track paved course, looking east. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 29. Concrete wall and earthen berm behind the back stretch looking west. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 30. Observation tower and concessions building in pit area looking southeast. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 31. Grandstand looking east. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 32. Underside of grandstand looking west, showing metal framing. Photo by the author, 2025.

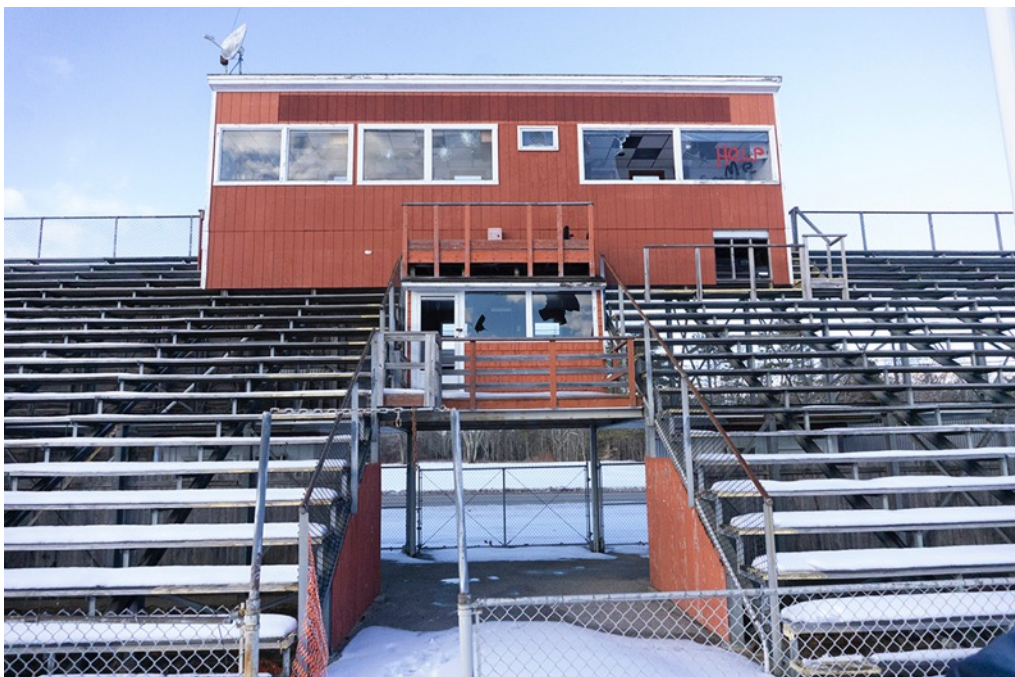


Figure 33. Announcers and scoring booth looking north. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 34. Secondary concession booth beneath grandstand near east end. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 35. Main concession booth looking northeast. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 36. Concessions booths looking northwest. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 37. Concessions buildings looking northeast, restroom on left. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 38. Tavern at turn four, looking northwest. Photo by the author, 2025.



Figure 39. Garage and office building, looking northeast. Photo by the author, 2025.

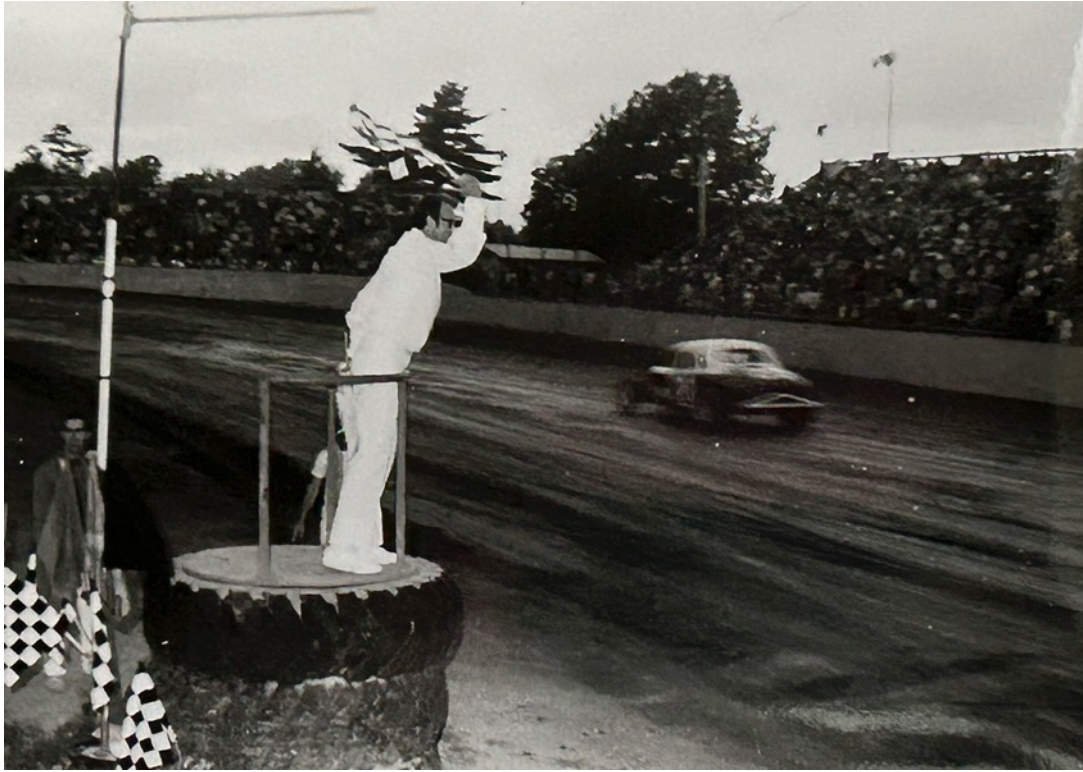


Figure 40. Undated photograph of flagman on flag stand at Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, looking northwest. Collection of Steve Pellerin.



Figure 34. Original flag stand looking north. Photo by the author, 2025.