



Regular readers of this Inglenook segment (be you publishers, authors, literature collectors, historians or enthusiasts with libraries you treasure) may recall mention in this space in the last issue that two books were “left at the starting block” when the “it’s time to go to press” flag waved. One of those – *Miracle, Bobby Allison and the Saga of the Alabama Gang* – is commented on above. The other is *Ralph De Palma, Gentleman Champion*.

Ralph De Palma was movie star handsome, had courtly, genteel manners and was considerate of others – off the track. (You know where this is going.) On the track, he was a fierce competitor. The significance of this book however is larger than a fine biography of the man – interesting though his life was. It is the broader topic of the times in which he

lived – formative ones historically for the country, for business, and for the automobile, 1882-1956. The De Palma family typified so many others as they emigrated to the U.S. before the turn of the century – although not every emigrant, then or now, achieves to such a degree to later warrant an entire book.

One other factor sets this particular book apart from many others. The author and publisher are one in the same and Gary Doyle is dedicated to careful

research and equally careful presentation. The result is a book with true shelf life. It reads well, is interesting and entertaining. It is rich in illustration, with both period photos and original art – some is specially created by Peter Harsey, others are period pieces painted by Peter Helck. Concluding with a thorough index, bibliography and appendices, *De Palma, Gentleman Champion* is a valued and useful research source itself for the social historian as well as the automotive aficionado.

So when the heat outdoors forces you to seek shade and more leisurely activities, pick up a book. There are many fine ones from which to choose that will simultaneously entertain and enrich you.

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