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## Ontario Motor Speedway Collection

1963-1980

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Ontario Motor Speedway Collection

**Dates:** 1963-1980

**Collection Number:** Consult library

**Creator/Collector:** Ontario Motor Speedway, Inc.

**Extent:** 20 linear feet (19 boxes)

**Repository:** Ontario City Library, Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room

**Abstract:** The Ontario Motor Speedway (the Big "O") was designed as a replica of the 2.5 mile racetrack at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It also had an infield road course and a drag strip to maximize racing events. Designed by Walter Ted Tyler at a cost of \$25.5 million, it opened on Sept. 3, 1970 with the inaugural California 500 on Sept. 6. This Labor Day event was to complement the Indy 500 traditionally held on Memorial Day. A second race, the Questor Grand Prix, was held in March 1971 and won by Mario Andretti. 86 separate days of racing, qualifying and practice for championship, sport, stock and drag races was anticipated with over one million persons in attendance per year. Although races were held each year, the actual monies coming in were below expectations. The management tried to improve attendance with three rock concerts - the California Jams I, II and III. Talks took place with promoters of the Expo '81, a world's fair-type extravaganza with pavilions on the racetrack grounds. By 1980, the track management company was bankrupt and the City of Ontario sold the property for \$10 million to the Chevron Land Management Company. The track was demolished in 1981 at a cost of \$3 million. Subsequent development, most recently the Piemonte mixed-use development of condominiums, offices and retail stores and the Citizens Business Bank Arena has largely covered the old racetrack grounds. Echoes still remain in the area's street signs however: Concours Drive, Mercedes, Ferrari and Triumph Lanes, Porsche Way, Dusenberg and Corvette Drives, Lotus Ave, Shelby Street, Jaguar Way.

**Language of Material:** English

**Access**

Collection is open for research during the operating hours of the Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room, or by appointment.

**Preferred Citation**

Ontario Motor Speedway Collection. Ontario City Library, Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room

**Scope and Content of Collection**

This collection includes photos, building plans, correspondence and minutes of meetings of the Ontario City Council and the OMS Lease Company, financial information, 16mm films and audio tapes of races, news clippings and press releases and small ephemera (stickers, badges, tickets, programs) covering the construction and use of the racetrack from 1963-1980.

[Ontario Motor Speedway Collection Container List](#)

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