CHARLES E. WEHR BICYCLING COLLECTION
1897–1950, CA. 1960S

Collection Information
Biographical Sketch
Scope and Content Note
Series Contents
Cataloging Information

Processed by
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 Box of photographs, 2 pamphlets
COLLECTION DATES: 1897–1950, ca. 1960s
PROVENANCE: Purchased from Raymond M. Featherstone, Jr., in February 2002
RESTRICTIONS: None
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BIÓGRAFICA

El ciclista entusiasta Charles Edward Wehr nació el 2 de junio de 1879 en Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Era el hijo de un barmen alemán, August Wehr, y su esposa, Elizabeth Barbara Kuhn Wehr. Charles parece haber sido el mayor de siete hijos.

A la hora del censo de 1900, Wehr estaba trabajando como contable de una escuela comercial en Milwaukee. Había estado entrando en carreras de bicicletas desde al menos 1897.

Wehr se mudó a Indianapolis, Indiana, alrededor de 1907, donde trabajó en la Johns–Manville Sales Corporation durante aproximadamente veinte años. Más tarde se puso en negocio por su cuenta como Charles E. Wehr Company. Debido a su conocimiento de medidas de protección de incendios, estaba a cargo del cuerpo de bomberos durante las carreras de 500 millas del Indianapolis Motor Speedway durante muchos años. Era miembro de la Iglesia Católica Romana.

Wehr también sirvió en el Park Board Racing Association, la división de ciclismo del Indianapolis Athletic and Canoe Club, y era director de los parques de Indianapolis. Servía en el consejo de administración de la Amateur Bicycle League of America desde su creación en 1920 hasta su muerte, y actuaba como juez de carreras de bicicletas. Oficiaba en todas las campeonatas nacionales de carretera de 1921 a 1940. Siguió siendo un ciclista activo hasta su muerte, recorriendo entre veinticinco y cincuenta millas dos o tres días cada semana.

Wehr murió el domingo por la mañana, 26 de julio de 1942, de un ataque al corazón en los escalones de la Indiana World War Memorial en Indianapolis. Fue sobrevivido por su madre, cuatro hermanas y un hermano, todos de Milwaukee.

Fuentes:
Items en la colección, incluyendo un obituario de la Indianapolis Star el 29 de julio de 1942, y un artículo de American Bicyclist Magazine el octubre de 1942.


This collection includes items from the estate of Charles E. Wehr pertaining to his interest in bicycling. Materials include photographs, photocopies of newspaper and magazine clippings, official racing programs, a race entry blank, tickets, and a business card. The majority of photographs show bicycle racers and officials (including Wehr), but there are also photographs of excursion cyclists, high-wheel cyclists, and of a poster announcing a bike race. Many of the newspaper clippings mention Wehr. The collection is arranged into five series, as detailed below.

**Series 1, Charles E. Wehr:** This series consists of a photograph of Wehr walking down an Indianapolis street in 1941, a few photocopies of newspaper and magazine articles that mention Wehr, and his obituary.

**Series 2, Bicycle Races:** This series includes two photographs of races in which Wehr rode in Wisconsin in the 1890s. The majority of this series consists of photographs and photocopies of newspaper clippings of races, mostly from 1919–1930s, in Indianapolis (including the first two international six-day races at Butler University’s fieldhouse); Shelbyville, Indiana; St. Louis, Missouri; and a European race. Also included are two official race programs – one from Buffalo, New York (1924), and one from the first six-day race at Butler (1937). Four printed half-tone photo cards of individual racers with advertising for race sponsor Marott’s Shoe Store on the back, two tickets, and a race entry blank are also contained in this series.

**Series 3, Bicycle Racers:** This series includes photographs of other individual racers not shown in an actual race, as well as some photocopies of newspaper clippings about them. Racers include William Pascoe (Sr.), John White, Jr., and cross-country cyclist Clarence Wagner.

**Series 4, Bicycling Excursions:** This series consists of three photographs and photocopies of two newspaper clippings of large groups riding in Monticello, Indiana, in 1949 and 1950. Most of the riders came from Chicago on a special Monon excursion train.

**Series 5, High-Wheel Bicycles:** This series is comprised of one photograph of five people riding high-wheel bicycles around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and one business card advertising high-wheel bicycles and other items for use in parades and festivals.

**SERIES CONTENTS**

**Series 1: Charles E. Wehr**

**CONTENTS**

Mounted photo of Charles E. Wehr, in suit and hat, walking down a city sidewalk. On back is written: “Chas E Wehr Indpls 1941 Director Indy Parks” (Indianapolis, 1941).

Photocopies of two articles that mention Charles Wehr from the *Indianapolis News:* “State Title Bicycle Races Set August 4” (6 July 1923, page 25); “Ten-Mile Bike Race at Fairground Saturday” (27 July 1923, page 14).

Photocopy of obituary from *The Indianapolis Star:* “Charles E. Wehr Rites Tomorrow” (29 July 1942).

Photocopies of two articles that mention Charles Wehr, written by Otto Eisele (president of the Amateur Bicycle League of America), on the
Series 2: Bicycle Races

CONTENTS

**Racine, Wisconsin (1890s):** Mounted photo of racers and their “holders” at starting line of 1897 race (names written on back are Virum, Wehr, Barnickel, Weber, Kelley, Muss, Bingenheimer, and Arndt). Mounted photo of racers and their “holders” at starting line of 1898 Labor Day race (names written on back are O. Weber [1st], A. Krueger [of Chicago] [3rd], A. Mueller, E. Kelly, and C.E. Wehr [2nd]).

**Indianapolis (1919):** Photograph of unidentified racers with their bicycles and a few young boys lined up by the Indianapolis Athletic and Canoe Club building before a race on 17 May 1919. Photocopy of article that mentions Wehr, “Bicycle Race Won by Gibson” (*Indianapolis Star*, 18 May 1919, page 26).

**Buffalo, New York (1924):** Official program for the National Road Bicycle Championship of the United States held by the Amateur Bicycle League of America on 5–6 September. Eight pages (including front and back covers) list the officials as well as the racers and events in different categories.

**St. Louis, Missouri (1925):** Mounted photo of eight officials, including Charles Wehr, for the Amateur Bicycle League of America championship race on 6 September.

**Butler University, Indianapolis (1937):** Overhead photo of racers during the first six-day bike race at Butler Field House on 15 February. Photo of Gustave Kilian and Heinz Vopel, winners of the six-day race, beside their bicycles. Photocopies of newspaper clippings: “Work Progresses on Building Bicycle Track at Butler Fieldhouse” (*Indianapolis Star*, 12 February); “Two More Riders Arrive for Races” and “Bicycle Champions at Marott’s Today” (*Indianapolis Star*, 12 February); “Bike Riders Tune Up at Motor Speedway” (*Indianapolis Star*, 13 February); “Bike Riders Ready for Starting Gun” (*Indianapolis Star*, 14 February); “Fieldhouse Track Ready for Start of Bike Races: Entrants Complete Training” (source...
unknown, 14 February); “Six-Day Bike Riders Hit Trail at Butler Fieldhouse” (Indianapolis Star, 15 February); advertisement for the event (source unknown); “German Team Wins Six-Day Bike Race” (Indianapolis Star, 21 February).

**Butler University, Indianapolis (1937):** Official program for the Indianapolis First International 6-Day Bike Race held on 15–20 February at Butler University Field House. Sixteen pages (plus front and back covers) include a list of the officials, rules, profiles and photos of the racers, definitions of racing expressions, and advertisements.

**Shelbyville, Indiana (1937):** Photo of boys on bikes at the starting line of the state amateur bike race at the Shelby County Fairgrounds. Photocopy of newspaper articles: “Make Ready for Opening of Fair” (Shelbyville Democrat, 7 August 1937, page 1); “Crowd Witnesses Bicycle Racing” (Shelbyville Democrat, 9 August 1937, page 1).

**Butler University, Indianapolis (1938):** Four printed half-tone photo cards of individual racers, with advertising for Marott’s Shoe Store on the back of each one: Jules Audy, Geary May, Henri Le Page, and Jackie Sheehan. Two tickets: “Indianapolis’ Second International 6 Day Bike Race at Butler Fieldhouse Apr. 3rd to Apr. 9th, incl. Continuous Day and Night” and “This Ticket Will Admit Bearer and Members of His Party to the 6 Day Bike Race 6 at 25¢ Each for a Regular 40¢ Seat / Good Only Wednesday, April 6 / Thursday, April 7 / Butler Fieldhouse.” Photocopies of newspaper clippings: photos of racers Freddie Spencer and Piet VanKempen (Indianapolis Star, 2 April); “20 Riders Ready for Start of Six-Day Race Tonight” (Indianapolis Sunday Star, 3 April).

**Shelbyville, Indiana (1938):** Unused official entry blank for the Indiana–Kentucky Association Amateur Athletic Union bicycle championships to be held at Shelbyville County Fair Track, 28 August 1938. (The form mentions C.E. Wehr as chairman of the Cycling Committee.)

**Indianapolis (n.d.):** Photo of a poster advertising “Bicycle Races / Riverside Park / July 4th / 10:30 A.M. / 3:30 P.M. / Free.”

**Europe (early 20th century):** Photo of European racers at the start of the Prix Henri Contenet, including Victor Linart of Belgium and his “handler” Woody Hedspeth, a former champion.
black racer from Indianapolis. Accompanying note states that Hedspath was better known in Europe at the time than Major Taylor, but has remained a mystery, and that he is little known in the United States racing circles.

Series 3: Bicycle Racers

CONTENTS

Photo of William Pascoe (Sr.) and John White, Jr., on their bicycles in University Park in Indianapolis in 1925. Photocopy of newspaper clipping that includes a photo of Pascoe and mentions Charles E. Wehr: "To Compete for Championship" (Indianapolis News, 5 September 1923, page 20).


Series 4: Bicycling Excursions

CONTENTS

Three photographs of bike riders from Chicago cycle train shows the group excursion biking around Monticello, Indiana, and gathered outside of a building (photos by Harry Knipp, Jr., 1949 and 1950). Photocopies of newspaper articles: "246 Bike Riders Invade Monticello Sunday For Tour of Lake Shafer" (unidentified Monticello newspaper, 10 October 1949, pages 1 and 4); "Chicago Cyclists Enjoy Day Here: 195 Chicagoans Pedal Around Lake" (Monticello Herald-Journal, 9 October 1950, pages 1 and 4).

Series 5: High–Wheel Bicycles

CONTENTS

Photo of five people riding high-wheel bicycles around the track at the Indianapolis Motor
Speedway (ca. 1960s?).

Business card of Sarah K. Melvin E. Roler advertising “high wheel autos, bicycles, grind organs, Irish mails, etc.” “for parades, festivals & centennials” (Greenfield, Indiana, n.d.). Written on the card is the name of Dean Roler of New Palestine, Ind.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0454).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.