

Collection #
M 0959

HARRY SHARP FORD DEALERSHIP COLLECTION, 1914–2007

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

Indiana Historical Society

450 West Ohio Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript box; 2 boxes of photographs; 1 OVB color photograph
COLLECTION DATES:	1914–2007

PROVENANCE: Polly Sharp Henn, Indianapolis, November 2007; Mike Shore, Indianapolis, December 2007

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2007.0181; 2007.0381

NOTES:

HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry Sharp Ford began operations in 1917 as the Wangelin-Sharp Company located at 443 Virginia Avenue in Indianapolis and was operated by Harry Sharp and Harry J. Wangelin. In 1922 Sharp-Wangelin sold over 1,500 new Fords which made them the highest sales Ford dealership in the country based upon market. By the 1930s, Wangelin had been dropped from the name and the dealership became Harry Sharp Ford which it remained despite the operation being acquired by a stock holder based company named Universal Finance in 1937 with Tom Archer assuming the role of chief operating officer and eventual primary owner. Archer's son in law, Harry Myers, took over and added Bill Shore from the Ford Motor Company corporate office in Detroit and Tom Rauch as partners in the 1960s. Rauch and Shore later assumed ownership of the company which also included Lincoln-Mercury and Mazda dealerships. Rauch and Shore split the company with Rauch taking over the Lincoln-Mercury and Mazda dealerships and Shore assuming control of the Ford dealership. Bill Shore remained in control until his death in 1978. Shore's son, Mike took over the operation after his father's death and remained the owner until it ceased operations in June, 2007.

At one time Sharp Ford maintained three locations. In addition to the original store at 443 Virginia Avenue, the other locations were at 2810 East Washington and 2009 West Washington. In 1964 Sharp Ford moved to a location on Hanna Avenue on the south side of Indianapolis which became advertised as "6 O'clock sharp on the 465 dial (I-465). At its peak, the dealership sold 2,400 cars a year and received awards for sales in 1950 and 1952.

Harry Sharp (1891–1977) was born in Kansas but moved to Brook, Jasper County, Indiana with his family where he attended schools and graduated from DePauw Academy in Greencastle in 1910. He began working for the Ford Motor Company in Indianapolis in 1913 working in the shipping room but soon progressed to positions in the bookkeeping and service departments. In 1917 he was offered a dealership from the service department and chose fellow Ford employee Harry J. Wangelin as his partner. After Sharp left the dealership in 1937 he held several positions in Indianapolis before joining the Naval Ordnance Plant in 1945 where he remained until he retired in 1969.

Sources:

Information in collection.

Phone Interview with Mike Shore, 29 April 2008.

Indianapolis Men of Affairs, 1923. Indianapolis: American Biographical Society, c1923. [F 534.I55I5321923].

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the collection consists of photographs from the Sharp Ford dealership, 1920s–1970s. Images include showrooms, automobiles, exterior building shots, advertising, and publicity. There are specific areas of the dealership that contain significant photographs: these include new car showings from 1949, 1952, and 1958; courtesy vehicles loaned or donated by the dealership, 1930s–50s; awards banquet recognizing Sharp Ford as an outstanding dealership, 1950–52; and delivery trucks and other Ford equipment, 1920s–50s. The collection also contains some correspondence and newspaper advertising primarily from the 1980s and 1990s.

Harry Sharp materials include letters regarding the Ford Motor Company, 1914–15, military draft items from World War I, 1917–18, and two sheets listing Sharp's residences and workplaces. There also are some photographs and newspaper clippings from the 1920s.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Sharp Ford Materials, 1920s–2007

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Photographs, ca. 1920s (1 of 2)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
Photographs, ca. 1920s (2 of 2)	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Showrooms and Buildings, 1920s–50s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Showrooms and Buildings, 1940s–60s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4
Delivery Trucks and Equipment, 1920s–50s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5
Courtesy Vehicles, 1930s–50s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6
New Car Showings, 1949	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 7
New Car Showings, 1952; 1958	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 8
Publicity, 1920s–70s	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 1

Awards Banquet, Outstanding Dealership, 1950–52	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 2
Individual Portraits, 1920s–60s	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 3
Groups Photos, 1930s–50s	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 4
General Photos, 1920s–70s	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 5
Color Aerial View of Dealership, ca.1960s	OVB Color Photographs: Folder 1
Correspondence and Newspaper Clippings, 1920s–40s; 1970s; 2007	Box 1, Folder 1
Newspaper Clippings, Escort, 1988–91	Box 1, Folder 2
Newspaper Clippings, Taurus, Probe, Crown Victoria, 1990s	Box 1, Folder 3
Newspaper Clippings, Trucks, Vans, SUVs	Box 1, Folder 4
Newspaper Clippings, General Ford Automobiles, 1980s–90s	Box 1, Folder 5
Newspaper Clippings, General Sales Ads, 1990s	Box 1, Folder 6

Series 2: Harry Sharp Materials, 1914–1923

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Harry Sharp Personal Papers, 1914–41	Box 1, Folder 7
Harry Sharp Personal Photographs, ca. 1920s	Photographs: Box 2, Folder 6

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, M 0959).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

