

Collection #
SC 3453

**INDIANAPOLIS RACING
COLLECTION, CA. 1940s–1964**

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Processed by

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: Four photographs folders, two manuscripts folders

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1940s–1964

PROVENANCE: Indiana Transportation Museum; Noblesville, IN; 1985
Shirley Jones; Arkansas City, KS; N.D.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: GV1033 .U83 [USAC yearbook]; TL236 .I56 1997 [Indy 500 Pace Cars]; GV1033.5.I55 H5 1972 [The Indy 500 : thirty days in May by Hal Higdon]; M 1201 [Thomas W. Binford collection, 1894–2003]

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1985.0331, 1996.0951X

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis 500 has been held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway since 1911. The 500-mile open-wheel car race takes place in May each year. The wartime spans when the race was not held were from 1917–1918 and 1942–1945. From 1913 on, the race has had significant international involvement. The race motivated many teams and manufacturers to relocate to Indianapolis. From 1911 to 1964, thirteen drivers died from racing at the event. At this time, cars reached 150 mph at different points on the track.

De Soto was an American car manufacturer, operating from 1928 until 1961 as a part of the Chrysler Corporation. They were based in Highland Park, Michigan. They rebranded their car lines in 1955–1956 with a "Forward Look." To showcase the new model, they ran as the official pace car for the 1956 Indianapolis 500.

The **Bear Manufacturing Company** was started by former Ford employees Will and Henry Damman after they invented the electric starter for the Model T. They set up shop in Rock Island, Illinois, and began manufacturing electric starters until Henry Ford mass produced them, forcing the Dammans to manufacture other auto parts. They continued to do so until the 1980s. The company specialized in wheel alignment. Bear also had a technical training program for installation and operation of the equipment they were creating and selling. This program lasted until the 1970s.

Sources:

Barrows, Robert G., and David J. Bodenhamer, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Flory, J. Kelly. *American Cars, 1960–1972: Every Model, Year by Year*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004.

"Bear History." <<http://teambearusa.com/upload/15084/documents/BearHistory2.pdf>> via <<http://genealogytrails.com/ill/>>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains four photograph folders and two manuscript folders.

The photos are of Indy cars at IMS in the 1940s, a 1954 White River Speed Boat Race [off-shore powerboat racing], the De Soto pace car from the 1956 Indianapolis 500, and Wheel Alignment from the Bear Manufacturing Company at the 1956 Indianapolis 500.

The manuscripts include papers from the De Soto press kit for the 1956 Indianapolis 500 and the Bear Manufacturing Company press kit for the 1964 Indianapolis 500.

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Indy Cars at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, ca. 1940s

1954 White River Speed Boat Race [off-shore
powerboat racing]

De Soto Pace Car, 1956 Indy 500

De Soto Pace Car press kit, 1956 Indy 500

Bear Manufacturing Company, 1964 Indy 500

Bear Manufacturing Company at Indy 500, 1963–
1964 press kit

CONTAINER

Photographs Folder 1 of 4

Photographs Folder 2 of 4

Photographs Folder 3 of 4

Manuscripts Folder 1 of 2

Photographs Folder 4 of 4

Manuscripts Folder 2 of 2