

Collection #  
P 0769

**WILBERT UPDIKE  
PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, CA. 1924-1968**

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Processed by

Julia Deros  
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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 photograph folders, 1 color photograph folder, 1 upright graphics folder, 1 artifact

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1924-1968

PROVENANCE: Donated by Karen U. Vaughn

RESTRICTIONS: Materials in cold storage need at least 4 hours to acclimate, so patrons should call ahead if they wish to view materials that are in cold storage.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: George Philip Hanley and Stacey Pankiw Hanley, *The Marmon heritage : more than 125 years of American production of world renowned products : Marmon, Marmon-Herrington, Marmon-Herrington all-wheel-drive Ford*, TL215.M33 H36 1985

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2017.0225

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL SKETCH

James Wilbert Updike was born on December 22nd, 1894 in Greensburg, Indiana. He worked as a mechanic and technician for the Nordyke and Marmon Company in Indianapolis before moving to Connersville, Indiana to work at the Auburn Automobile Company. He later moved back to Indianapolis to work for Schwitzer Corporation. He died in 1970 and is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis.

David Abbott “Ab” Jenkins was born on January 25th, 1883 in Spanish Fork, Utah. He was a professional race car driver from 1925 until he retired in 1951. Jenkins popularized racing at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah and was known for setting and breaking multiple land speed records. In 1935, he drove the “Mormon Meteor,” a car produced by the Duesenberg Motors Company, with which he set new one-hour and twenty-four-hour records at the Bonneville Salt Flats. He died on August 9th, 1956 and is buried in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Nordyke and Marmon Company was originally founded in Indianapolis in 1851 as a flour mill equipment manufacturer. In 1902, Howard C. Marmon began the experimental production of cars and expanded commercial operations in 1906. In 1909, the company alongside other automobile industry investors built the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to test new cars and host races. In 1911, the first Indianapolis 500 was held at the Speedway and was won by Ray Harroun who drove the Marmon Wasp model, promoting the Marmon Company as a major, publicly-known car manufacturer. The company grew through the 1920s, but the economic crash of the 1930s forced the luxury car manufacturer to cease car production. Marmon was then formed into the Marmon-Herrington Company which focused on producing parts for all-wheel drive vehicles.

The AAA Contest Board was the motorsports branch of the American Automobile Association. The board held automobile races from 1904 until 1955 and is considered the root of modern day IndyCar racing. Some of the major competitions sanctioned by the board include the 1905 National Motor Car Championship, the Vanderbilt Cup, and the Indianapolis 500. The contest board dissolved in 1955 after the Le Mans disaster.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

“AAA Contest Board.” Wikipedia. Accessed February 15, 2019.  
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Bodenhamer, David J., Robert G. Barrows, and David Gordon Vanderstel. The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

“Cord.” Wikipedia. Accessed February 15, 2019.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AAA\\_Contest\\_Board](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AAA_Contest_Board)

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon\\_Meteor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_Meteor)

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Shea, Terry. “Engineered to Be the Best-Marmon.” Last modified October 2014.  
<https://www.hemmings.com/magazine/hcc/2014/10/Engineered-to-Be-The-Best---Marmon/3742401.html>

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains 34 photographs, graphics, and 1 artifact relating to Wilbert Updike and his work as a mechanic/technician for the Marmon Motor Car Company and the Auburn Automobile Company. The photographs feature Updike and different models of Marmon cars during their road test drives, racer Ab Jenkins, and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The graphics include an undated photographic postcard of Updike at a motor car factory and one advertisement for the Auburn Automobile Company’s new Cord 810 model ca. 1936. The artifact is a AAA armband labeled “Tech Com. 500 Contest Board 1940.”

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Marmon Car Road Test Drives, ca. 1924-1930s

Ab Jenkins, ca. 1934-1935

Indianapolis Motor Speedway, n.d.

Wilbert Updike, 1968

Wilbert Updike postcard and Cord advertisement, ca.  
1936

AAA Contest Board Armband

### CONTAINER

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Folder 1 of 3

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Photographs,  
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Cold Storage  
Color Photographs,  
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Upright Graphics,  
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Artifact:  
2017.0225