

P-115
Ralph Hamlin Photograph Collection

Repository:

Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Span Dates:

1894-1976, undated

Extent:

(Boxes: 6 letter, ½ letter, 1 flat, 3 ov; ov folders)

Language:

English

Conditions Governing Use:

Permission to publish, quote or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder

Conditions Governing Access:

Research is by appointment only

Preferred Citation:

Ralph Hamlin Photograph Collection, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

Abstract:

Photographs relating to Ralph Cunningham Hamlin (1880 – 1974): his personal and family life; bicycling; motorcycling; and automobile racing activities; auto road and endurance trips; business matters and associates (including early auto shows); and the Franklin automobile dealerships.

Related Holdings:

GC1264 Stutz Automobile Scrapbook, ca.1913-1919

GC1337 Automotive Literature Collection

GC1342 Ralph Hamlin (1880 - 1974) Collection

GC1344 Nash Motors Company Records, 1890-1938
GC1361 Darling Motor Company Records, 1916-1917
GC1362 Charles E. Duryea and J. Frank Duryea Papers, 1894-1944
GC1375 Los Angeles Motor Car Company Business Records, 1908-1912
GC1377 Greater Los Angeles New Car Dealers Association Historical Records, 1905-1980s
GC1382 Don Lee Scrapbooks, 1916-1925
P-62 Eddie O'Donnell Collection, ca. 1913-1920
P-194 Photograph Album of Automobile Camping Trip, ca. 1914
P-246 Automobile in Southern California Project
P-278 Automotive Photograph Collection
NHMLAC History Department's Material Culture Collection

Scope and Content:

Photographs relating to Ralph Cunningham Hamlin (1880 – 1974): his personal and family life; bicycling; motorcycling; and automobile racing activities; auto road and endurance trips; business matters and associates (including early auto shows); and the Franklin automobile dealerships. Includes a color sketch tribute to Hamlin from artist Charles Owens, with seven photos mounted and a map sketch of the route from Los Angeles to Indio.

Biographical Note:

Ralph Cunningham Hamlin was a pioneer Los Angeles automobile dealer, born October 17, 1880 in San Francisco, California. In 1887 his family settled in Los Angeles during the land boom. Hamlin opened up a bicycle business in 1896. In 1901 he purchased an Orient, an early model motorcycle. He competed in races throughout Southern California for the sport as well as to promote sales in his business. He sold motorcycles, Orient Buckboards, Lozier, and Scripps-Booth automobiles.

Hamlin operated an automobile dealership by 1901 at 1806 So. Main Street, Los Angeles. In 1905 Hamlin became the Southern California distributor for Franklin air-cooled cars, manufactured by the H.H. Franklin Mfg. Co. of Syracuse, New York. His original Franklin dealership was located at 1040 So. Flower Street in Los Angeles. He also acquired a dealership in Hollywood at 5766 Hollywood Boulevard; he also had a Glendale branch selling Franklins under the "Ralph Hamlin" company name. By about 1926 he was also selling in San Diego. When the Franklin was discontinued in 1932, he went on to sell Graham automobiles. He was instrumental in the creation of the Los Angeles Motor Car Dealers Association about 1909.

A close friend to Hamlin was Henry Workman Keller (who served on the board and as President of the Automobile Club of Southern California.) Keller is pictured in some of the photographs. Hamlin credited Keller with helping him to bring auto racing to the city of Santa Monica called the Santa Monica Road Race. Hamlin competed in the first 1909 race driving a Franklin.

Hamlin's association with the Los Angeles County Museum included the loan of his 1908 Franklin automobile in the new Hall of Transportation which opened on April 16, 1944. (The Hall closed in 1974.) Hamlin died in Los Angeles on July 5, 1974 at the age of 93.

Container List:

Box 1:

Photographs: personal, family, bicycling, motorcycling

Box 2:

Photographs: auto racing, auto road trips, endurance trips

Box 3:

Photographs, continued: auto racing, auto road trips, endurance trips

Box 4:

Photographs: business, dealerships

Box 5:

Photographs, continued: business, dealerships

Box 6:

Photographs, continued: business, dealerships.

Photographs: unidentified

Box 7:

Photographs, panoramic: 1) Los Angeles Motor Car Dealers Association outing, Catalina, 1920; 2) Los Angeles Motor Car Dealers outing, Big Bear, 1921; 3) Al Malaikah Legion of Honor celebration, 1912

Box 8 (flat box):

Photograph, oversize: business, dealerships

Box 9 (oversize):

Photographs, oversize: business, dealerships

Box 10 (oversize):

Photographs, oversize: auto racing, auto road trips, endurance trips

Box 11 (oversize):

Photographs, oversize: personal, family, bicycling, motorcycling