

Alfred Lucking and Henry Ford

Dad once commented that we once were very nearly very wealthy. "How?" Well, it seems that Ford and Alfred Lucking were friends in Detroit, and that Ford came to great-grandfather searching for money, and the latter invested \$5000, a considerable sum at the time - to start some sort of automobile company. In the fullness of time the company, like several of Ford's early endeavors, went bust. I suppose that Alfred was philosophical about the loss, and some time later Ford came to him again asking him to invest. Well! Alfred was a bright man, and successful, and wasn't going to lose another big chunk of money. So Ford went to other investors, and this time the business was a great success, as all know. Ford bought out all of his investors later (about 1917) and the fact of the buy-out was made public, and it was revealed that each investor made a huge amount of money.

Alfred (Dad's grandfather) was a wealthy but very frugal man. He drove a "Tin Lizzie" (a Model T) which Dad remembers well. His grandmother, Vie Lucking, had a Baker Electric which looked like a Concord coach without the horse. It had a tiller rather than a steering wheel, and Dad recalls the tremendous banks of batteries in the garage at 1086 Burns Ave. She could drive this car, and she did so at least every Sunday, when she went to church (she was very devout.)

When Henry Ford bought the Lincoln factory, Alfred scoffed at the notion of having such an expensive car. Ford, however, insisted that his general counsel have a more appropriate vehicle, and it was thus a command, as Ford was an autocrat. Well, Alfred might have to BUY the car but he sure wasn't going to drive it. So he gave it to his wife, who had been perfectly happy with her electric car. She couldn't drive the new



Illustration 1: Alfred Lucking about 1920



car, so they had to hire a full-time chauffeur, a black man named Albert Perry. (this man may

have been a family retainer before that.) But Dad says that Alfred was "revolted" at the expense.

Dad was pretty sure that the car was only driven in Detroit; certainly it

was not out here (in Ojai at the Big House) until after his grandfather's death in 1929.