

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Michigan
COUNTY:	Wayne
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON:	Fair Lane
AND/OR HISTORIC:	The Henry Ford Estate

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:				4901 Evergreen Road	
CITY OR TOWN:		Dearborn			
STATE		CODE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:		16th
Michigan		26	COUNTY:		Wayne
					CODE 163

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Site ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
☐ Agricultural ☐ Commercial ☐ Educational ☐ Entertainment	☐ Government ☐ Industrial ☐ Military ☐ Museum	☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific	☐ Transportation ☒ Other (Specify) Conference Center

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY (continued)

OWNER'S NAME:	University of Michigan-Dearborn; Dr. Leonard E. Goodall, Chancellor		
STREET AND NUMBER:	4901 Evergreen Road		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	
Dearborn	Michigan	26	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:	Registry of Deeds (Copies Division)		
STREET AND NUMBER:	B-3, City County Building		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	
Detroit	Michigan	26	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:	Historic American Building Survey (One Data Sheet)		
DATE OF SURVEY:	1955	☒ Federal	☐ State
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:	Library of Congress/Annex		
STREET AND NUMBER:	Division of Prints and Photographs		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	
Washington	D. C.	11	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☒ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fair Lane ground originally was a typical section of Middle West farmland consisting of small cleared tracts and virgin forest through which meandered the Rouge River.

Henry Ford started buying property in the general area just after the turn of the century and by 1909 owned more than 2,000 acres. The secluded acres provided, from the beginning, a natural bird and game sanctuary which the Fords took great care to preserve.

The area comprising the Fair Lane home and gardens during the Fords' time consisted of about 1,260 acres; of which 1,180 were in woodlands, farms and orchards, 60 in gardens and landscaping, and 17 in lawns.

The Ford Mansion and Power Plant

Construction was initiated in February, 1914 and completed in 1915. The home was first occupied in 1916. The architect was William Van Tine of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Actually, preliminary work was started in 1913 under the supervision of the architectural firm of Van Holst and Fyfe of Chicago, but the Fords became dissatisfied with their plans, relations were severed, and Van Tine was engaged.

Total cost of the house and landscaping through 1916 was \$1,032,000. This figure excludes cost of power plant, Rose Garden and surrounding orchards. It is not unrealistic to suggest that if these items were included, the total cost of Fair Lane would approach \$2,000,000.

The house is constructed of Indiana limestone and concrete. The exterior is designed in early English, modified (Scottish Baronial). The outer walls measure between 18 and 24 inches in thickness. The interior walls average 14 inches in thickness. The house is 200 feet in length and has 31,770 square feet of floor space.

On the first level (See accompanying Floor Plan) were a number of rooms. Some of the more interesting include:

The Entrance Hall which opens from the porte cochere entrance (Plate 7). Here is located the main staircase of richly carved oak in an Elizabethan treatment. This staircase circles to the second floor.

The Library is located on the right of the main entrance. Originally this room, which can hold over 4,000 books, housed a magnificent collection of rare and expensive books. The room has an ornamental plaster ceiling taken from an old English manor house. Hazel brown oak is used as paneling.

The Music Room contains the magnificent Italian marble and walnut fireplace. On its four walnut pillars are carved the first lines of a poem by Robert Herrick which begins, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may....".

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☒ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1909-1950

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☒ Industry

losophy

☐ Agriculture☒ Invention☒ Science☐ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☒ Commerce☐ Literature

itarian

☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Henry Ford revolutionized transportation in America by mass producing an inexpensive and reliable automobile. That car, the Model T, ushered in the age of the automobile and is considered to have transformed the United States from a rural based to an urban centered country.

Ford was born in his father's two story farm house in Greenfield Township (now Dearborn), Michigan on July 30, 1863, and at an early age developed an aversion to farming. On December 1, 1879, he moved to Detroit, where he held several jobs until late 1886. In 1887, he moved back to Dearborn, married Clara Bryant on April 11, 1888, and returned to Detroit in 1891.

In Detroit, Ford sought to make a cheap and dependable automobile. He completed his first gasoline motor in 1892. He produced his first car in 1896, and by 1899 had devised a second. Ford then turned his talents to the production of race cars which brought him instant recognition. He organized the Ford Motor Company in 1903 and by 1906 was manufacturing the Model N, the immediate predecessor to the Model T.

The Model T appeared in 1908. It possessed mechanical reliability, incorporated several innovations, and sold for a moderate price. The public reaction to the Model T was instantaneous. By the fall of 1908, orders deluged Ford's main office. And the Nation's acceptance of the "Tin Lizzie" continued for years. In 1914, about 250,000 were sold, and Ford's company earned a profit of \$30,338,000.

Built in 1914-15, Fair Lane, 4901 Evergreen Road, Dearborn, Michigan, was the home of the Fords from 1916 until their respective deaths; Mr. Ford dying in 1947 and Mrs. Ford in 1950. Six years after the death of Mrs. Ford, the Ford Motor Company presented the house and 210 acres of the estate to the University of Michigan to develop its Dearborn campus. The University of Michigan-Dearborn uses the house as a conference center. The house is essentially the same as when constructed and occupied by the Fords, though the family furnishings no longer grace the interior. The mansion is two stories high, 200 feet long, contains 56 rooms, many of enormous proportions, 15 baths, 8 fireplaces, and is constructed of Indiana limestone. Fair Lane remains a gracious symbol of the non-pre-tentious businessman and financial giant, whose innovative ideas transformed the thinking of American industry.

(Continued)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bradford, Gemaliel, Quick and the Dead, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company). 1931.
 Cochran, Thomas C. and Miller, William, The Age of Enterprise, (New York) 1960.
 Chamberlain, John, The Enterprising Americans: A Business History of the United States, (New York) 1963.
 Garrett, Garet, Wild Wheel, (New: Pantheon Books) 1952.
 Henderson, Archibald, Contemporary Immortals, (Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press) 1968.

(Continued)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	UTMP 17.315000.4687720	' "				
NE	° 17.316500.4687720	' "				
SE	° 17.316500.4686400	' "				
SW	° 17.315000.4686470	' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: c. 350 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Joseph S. Mendinghall, survey historian

ORGANIZATION
 Historic Sites Survey, NPS

DATE

STREET AND NUMBER:
 1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN:
 Washington

STATE
 D.C.

CODE
 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Designated: 11/13/66 date

Boundary Certified: 10/24/98 date

Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Boundary Reaffirmed: 10/24/98 date

Director, OAHMP

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of the National Register

Date OCT 20 REC'D

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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4. Owner of the Property: (1)

Fair Lane

That portion of the property located on the west and south of the University of Michigan property is owned by:

The Wayne County Highway Commission
Clifford Street
Detroit, Michigan

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7. Description: (1)

Fair Lane

The Living Room opens off the Main Entrance Hall. Originally paneled in French walnut, Mrs. Ford had this room painted to achieve a brighter and more cheerful effect.

The Dining Room, located to the south of the Living Room, which has a view of the Blue Garden Area, English Garden and the Rouge River is one of the loveliest in the house. Its walls are paneled in roseleaf mahogany woodwork.

The Sun Porch adjoining the Living Room on the south side was the favorite room of the Fords. They often dined and received guests in its informal surroundings. Here, too, were located the telescope and bird manuals for the two devotees of bird watching. The sun porch is presently used as a luncheon area by the employees of the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Other rooms on the first floor include the Billiards Room, The Main Auditorium, The First Floor Work Area, and the Kitchen.

The Second Level of the Ford Mansion was composed totally of the living quarters, excusing the Private Office of Mr. Ford located at the top of the staircase. This room presently houses the offices of the Conference Center. The major rooms on the second floor include:

The Henry Ford Suite located on the northwest, river, side of the house in the tower section over the Billiards Room. There is a master bedroom, a small sun room or sleeping room having the seven windows as in the bay downstairs, and two sets of private dressing rooms and baths. Despite the luxurious furnishings of the main room, the Fords preferred to sleep on the sun porch marked only by its complete simplicity. It is in this latter room that Mr. Ford died in 1947.

Two Guest Rooms were located on the northeast (front) side of the house. These rooms are presently used as the offices of the director of developmental planning.

On the south side of the house was located the rooms of Thomas A. Edison, a very close friend of the Fords, and the Edsel Ford Suite, located on the south side overlooking the river, and the House Couple's Room. This southern section of the house is presently used by the Ford Marketing Institute.

The Lower Level contains the Sun Room, which can be reached by several stairways or from the outside through the sun room door which faces the river. Located also on this level is the Rustic Room or Mr. Ford's "Field Room." Here is located the massive field stone fireplace of stone and brick taken

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7. Description: (2)

Fair Lane

from the historic Ten Eyck Tavern which was located on the property. Carved into the cypress wood mantle are the words of Thoreau, "Chop your own wood and it will warm you twice". The oak floor is pegged with black walnut. There are a number of other rooms in the lower level which includes the "water piano," in which all plumbing in the house came to one central control point. The passageway to the power plant is also located on this level. (See accompanying floor plan)

The Powerhouse, which is located just south of the English Garden, was constructed in 1915 at an approximate cost of \$244,000. It has four levels and is also constructed of Indiana limestone. The cornerstone for this building was laid in August, 1914, by Thomas A. Edison, a personal friend of Henry Ford. (Plate 17)

On the first two levels are located the wheel and generator rooms. Two 55 kilowatt water powered generators, and one emergency steam generator provided all the power for the estate during the early days. The third level contains a garage and on the forth is Mr. Ford's laboratory.

Structures at Fair Lane

The first structure, "the Bungalow," was built in 1909 by Mr. Ford and was used as a summer residence. The structure no longer stands and no record of its dimensions are available.

There have been a number of structures at Fair Lane during the residence of the Fords. Those remaining include:

1. The Mansion and Powerhouse

2. Four Servants Quarters, of which three are located north of the mansion on the east side of Fair Lane Drive. The University of Michigan-Dearborn has constructed a dormitory just south of these buildings (Plate 13). The fourth building is the Gate House, located at the old entrance to the estate.

3. The Pony Barn, located just north of the three servants cottages, remains in good condition though the windows have been vandalized.

4. Two Underground Cellars, one located just north of the house and believed to be a boat house, and another located just southeast of the green house, thought to be an ice house. (Plates 11 and 12 respectively)

5. The Potting Shed and Green House (Plates 15 and 16 respectively) is located just south of the Power Plant. The building is structurally solid, though all that remains of the green house is the foundation.

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7. Description: (3)

Fair Lane

6. The Dam (Plate 14) across the Rouge River was an essential part of the Fair Lane landscape as well as a functional part of the Power Plant. It is an attractive composition of flagstone rustically terraced with boat tie-ups, patios and a foundation for a gazebo in mid-river.

The Grounds and Gardens

The gardens originally began at the approach to the grounds. The mile-long driveway to the house, which will shortly be severed by the extension of Evergreen Road and which was once part of the historic old Ann Arbor Trail, was bordered the entire distance with trees and shrubs; sumac, flowering hawthorne, and wild crabapple, predominating.

There were six major gardens: Peony, Iris, English, Blue, Trail and Rose. In addition, there was a hillside grotto dedicated to John Burroughs; there is also a Rock Garden as well as an artificial lake.

Among the earliest plantings at Fair Lane were the peony beds. The beds covered approximately an acre and contained nearly 1,200 plants of some 40 best known varieties. Located to the north of the parking lot, the area is now used by the University for its campus.

What remains of the Iris Garden, built in the early 30's, is located on the left side of Fair Lane Drive, entering from Michigan Avenue, just before the drive makes a circle in the front of the house. This garden was almost entirely encompassed by a wall of tall lilac bushes.

During the early 1950's while under the supervision of the Ford Archives, the composition of the garden was expanded to include a variety of broadleaf flowers, especially rhododendron. The University has been unable to keep up this garden site. A small lawn does remain as evidence of the existence of the Iris Garden.

The English Garden (Plate 5), located just west of the Iris Garden, is separated from it by an iron gate of rare workmanship. In the original landscape plans, this area was envisaged not as a formal garden, but as a rose garden. When it was completed in 1917 it contained several hundred rose bushes and a small pool. It remained this way until 1927 when the large Rose Garden was completed. The more formal English Garden was then developed with surrounding lilac hedges, grass grown flagstone walls, Japanese flowering cherry trees, and a tea pavilion at the south end.

The Trail Gardens, landscaped in 1917, reached from the north terrace of the residence (Plate 10), across a broad expanse of lawn, stretched over a quarter of a mile through wooded areas and ended in a large open glade bordered by yellow roses. After the Rose Garden was built, the Trail Gardens assumed a more important role in that they then provided an unusually

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7. Description: (4)

Fair Lane

delightful approach to the rose area. The Trail Garden, however, has been completely lost.

The Rose Garden is, perhaps, one of the best known and unique aspects of the estate. It covers an area of 2 1/2 acres. At the time of its inception in the fall of 1925 and spring of 1926, some 12,000 plants in 350 varieties of roses were set out. Varieties were added and changed over the years until, by the early 1950's the garden held approximately 10,000 hybrid tea roses, 1,000 climbing roses, and 500 pillar roses - in 300 different varieties.

The Rose Garden no longer displays the many variations on the central rose theme. However, the general layout of the garden is clearly visible (See sketch, labeled The Rose Garden). Where once rose beds were abundant, weeds have now taken over (Plate 3).

At each end of the Rose Garden is an observation structure. At the north end is a pergola (Plate 4). At the southern end of the gardens is a gazebo with limestone columns and topped with a cedar wood roof (Plate 2). Each of these structures provides a delightful vantage point from which to view the entire garden. Other interesting features of the Rose Garden include a small rill just below the pergola and a lovely pond just above the gazebo.

Immediately adjacent to the Rose Garden, to the west, in the area between the garden and the river is the artificial pond. The pond is fed by springs and surface water run-off from the surrounding area. An outlet from the pond connects with the Rouge River.

The Rock Garden was laid out in 1918 and completely refurbished in 1922. It is located on a hill side several hundred feet northwest of the mansion and some fifty feet from the east bank of the Rouge. Stepping stones wind down the hillside to river level. On the valley floor is a pool once filled with blue lilies and stocked with goldfish.

Located just below the south wing of the Ford mansion is the site of the Blue Garden. Mrs. Ford's favorite color was blue and it is around this motif that the Blue Garden was developed. No signs remain of this part of the Ford Estate.

Boundary Information and Justification

The entire campus of the University of Michigan-Dearborn sits upon the 1957 gift of 210 acres. Located on this property are all structures included in this report except the gate house, at the Michigan Avenue entrance.

Fair Lane property was located on the west side of the Rouge River. The exact extent of the acreage is not known. However, it is certain that the

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7. Description: (5) Fair Lane

land located to the west and south of the University of Michigan property line, between the Rouge River, was an immediate part of Ford's Fair Lane and used as woodlands and flood plains. This property is owned by the Wayne County Highway Commission.

The original entrance to the Fair Lane Estate was located one mile south of the Ford mansion at the intersection of Fair Lane Drive and Michigan Avenue. However, the construction of the Ford Land Development Corporation has severely impacted this property (Plates 18 and 19). Moreover, proposed construction of an extension to Evergreen Road will sever this access road almost perfectly into two equal parts. The access road would stretch .5 of a mile to the Conference Center from Evergreen Road. Foliage borders both sides of this road and with considerations given to landscaping, the severity of these intrusions might substantially be diminished.

The present campus uses the northeast section of the estate between Fair Lane Drive and Evergreen Road, north of the Fair Lane Conference Center. Long range, but indefinite, plans call for the construction of a new gymnasium, community civic center and parking lots in this section of the campus.

As indicated on U.S.G.S. map, Dearborn, Quadrangle, 7.5' series 1968, beginning at a point on the southern boundary of River Rouge Park approximately 1,000 feet west from the intersection of the park boundary and the River Rouge, follow a line west along the park boundary to its intersection with the 600-foot contour line along the bank of the Lower River Rouge; then north along the 600-foot contour line to its intersection with the park boundary; then following the park boundary south, then east, then north to the section line, then northwest, following the ridge line to its intersection with the highway, then north, and east following the park boundary and then generally north again along the park boundary to the south right-of-way of the turn off to Route 153, then east around that right-of-way, thence along the south edge of the right-of-way of Route 153 returning to the east boundary of the River Rouge Park; then generally south along the park boundary to its intersection with Fair Lane Road extended; then southeast along the east treeline (incorporating the trees) of Fair Lane Road to its intersection with the north entrance to the Pony Barn and Guest Cottages; then northeast along the entrance road to its intersection with the service road behind these buildings, then southeast to the service road separating the buildings from Fair Lane Apartments and returning southwest to the east treeline of Fair Lane Drive, thence southeast to the right-of-way of Evergreen Road, thence south to the point of beginning.

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7. Description: (6)

Fair Lane

There are unsubstantiated indications that the Wayne County Highway Commission has had plans for highway development in the bottomlands of the Rouge River through the landmark. However, such plans seem indefinite and uncertain.

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8. Statement of Significance: (1)

Fair Lane

Biography

Henry Ford was the son of William and Mary (Litogot) Ford. The Fords had immigrated from Brandon County Cork Ireland in 1847 and had settled in the vicinity of the present city of Dearborn, Michigan. Henry was born on July 30, 1863 in his father's two story farmhouse in Greenfield Township, Michigan. From a very early age Henry showed little interest in farming. School was not one of young Henry's favorite pastimes, but he studied diligently while his mind wandered to the mechanics of watches and other gadgets. Early contact with the Eclectic Readers of William Holmes McGuffey later led him to republish the work, as well as maintain a collection of the books second only to the Library at the University of Miami (Miami University) where McGuffey taught.

At the age of thirteen Ford saw an old steam engine propelling itself along the county road. Bradford relates, "The sight of a clumsy, steam-driven engine moving on the roads was an inspiration for his life-long work."¹ Three years later, Ford left his father's farm on December 1, 1879 to venture to Detroit in search of an occupation. Little is known of these years in the life of Ford, however, it is known that he obtained a job with the James Fowler Brothers and Company, for whom he worked about six days earning a salary of \$1.10 per day. Ford then went to work for the Detroit Dry Dock Company. Ford stayed in Detroit until 1882. After that time, very little can be accounted for.

In 1887, Ford returned to Dearborn where he accepted a forty-acre tract of land as a gift from his father. In the subsequent year, 1888, Henry Ford married Clara Bryant on April 11, the bride's birthday. Ford would remain with this wife all his life.

Discontent with life on his farm, Ford, with his wife, moved to Detroit a second time in 1891. Ford had evidently spent many months thinking about internal combustion engines, and by the time he was back in the future motor city, he was convinced that he could build a car. Ford went to work for the Edison Illuminating Company in 1891. He worked in his spare time on his automobile. Ford experimented, and in 1892 had made his first internal combustion engine.

Ford's ambition then moved to the thought of compelling a four wheel vehicle. This idea was not original with Ford. There had been several vehicles, particularly European ones, which had achieved some degree of success.

¹ Gemaliel Bradford, Quick and the Dead, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931) pp. 31.

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8. Statement of Significance: (2)

Fair Lane

Ford constructed his first real automobile in 1896. The original car had a bicycle seat, which was removed a few weeks after the first successful run, and replaced with a buggy seat. In this car Ford made the nine mile trip, with Mrs. Ford and their son Edsel, to the old home in Dearborn.

Ford, in little more than five years had advanced to the position of chief engineer and commanded a salary of \$1,800 per year, a high figure for the late 90's. The first car Ford sold for \$200. He was then able to start construction of a second vehicle. By 1898, Ford had been offered \$10,000 by several businessmen to construct ten cars. In August, 1899, he resigned his position at Detroit Edison to become chief engineer at the newly developed Detroit Automobile Company.² This organization only lasted a short time and by 1902 Ford had found another set of backers and had organized the Henry Ford Company. Once again confusion between Ford and the stockholders forced the company to close. Ford then turned again to experimentation. It was during this interim that the famous "999" was produced.

With the success of the "999" and the publicity it received, Ford was able to receive new backing. James Couzens, Alexander Malcolmson, along with eight other stockholders and Ford organized the Ford Motor Company in June, 1903, only \$28,000 of the \$100,000 capitalization was in cash. The Fordmobile, Model A, was soon a product of the company. This first model sold for \$850. Because the Model A was built for efficiency, rather than good looks, the car soon gained the confidence of the American people and sales grew rapidly. The Model B, a touring car, appeared in 1905 at a cost of \$2,000 and soon a Model C, a cheaper version, was produced.

Finally in 1908, after several intervening models, including the Model N, the Model T was produced. The Model T was without question the most popular version of the Fordmobile. A car of practicality, the "Tin Lizzie" was a car of innovation and sold for a moderate price. About this car Ford later stated, "It contained all that I was then able to put into a motorcar."³ The success of the Model T established the Ford Motor Company as a major American industry. In 1914, for example, about 250,000 cars were sold, and Ford's company earned a profit of \$30,388,000.

Much of the success of Henry Ford stemmed from his own genius, but much more was due to his tenacity and hard work. But there is much more to the man than an industrial innovator. When war broke out in 1914, Ford was outspoken in opposition to it. When confronted by pacifists in 1915 with a plan to end the war Ford was responsive. On December 4, 1915, "The Peace Ship" sailed. Participation was limited and the mission was failure. Ford likewise objected to making armaments for belligerent nations. However, when

² The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, (Vol. XXXVIII, New York: James T. White and Company, 1953), p. 2.

³ Current Biography, (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1944), p. 218.

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8. Statement of Significance: (3)

Fair Lane

relations were severed with Germany by the United States and American involvement became apparent, Ford did not hesitate to put all of the resources of the Ford Motor Company at the disposal of the United States Government.

Little is known about Henry Ford the individual. His two autobiographical works, My Life and Work and To-day and To-morrow, both written in collaboration with Samuel Crowther, have been termed "opaque, unrelative, dry-as-dust."⁴ One can find numerous sources on the conflicts of the industrial giant and the efforts of organized labor in the late 30's and early 40's, but very little, if anything, can be found "of the man himself--his emotions, disposition, idiosyncrasies, qualities, temperament, character--they (the autobiographies) reveal less than nothing."⁵ To shed some light on this subject one can look at several incidents in the public career of Henry Ford.

In 1916, Ford filed a suit of \$1,000,000 against the Chicago Tribune. The Tribune had called Ford an anarchist for his denunciation of the government's pursuit of Villa into Mexico. Though Ford won the suit he was only awarded six cents. Then in 1918, Ford resigned his position as president of the Ford Motor Company; Edsel assumed this position. Ford, in that same year, accepted the nomination of Democratic Party for Senator from Michigan. His bid for the seat was unsuccessful. The most controversial incidents came in 1926. Ford in 1919 accepted the editorship of the Dearborn Independent. Upon the publication of anti-semitic articles in which it was stated that the Jews were planning to dominate the world, as well as certain sections of The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion, Ford apologized and stated that he had not had time to be informed of all the articles in the publication. When World War II came Ford followed his policies of pacifism. However, when the nation became involved, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Ford placed all the resources of his company at the Nation's disposal.

It is very difficult to understand the actions of Henry Ford. Though at one point the richest man in the United States, he was opposed to organized professional charity. Unlike Carnegie or Rockefeller, Ford did not donate enormous amounts of money to philanthropic causes. He did, however, support Ford Schools in which the McGuffey Reader was a required text.

Ford showed the fiber of his character in 1943, upon the death of his son Edsel, and once again assumed the presidency of the Ford Motor Company at age 81. He died April 5, 1947.

⁴ Archibald Henderson, Contemporary Immortals, (Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1968) p. 179.

⁵ Ibid, p. 180.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Michigan	
COUNTY	
Wayne	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

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