

## Henry Ford Freemason (1863 – 1947)

Henry Ford was a positive thinker, he joined the Freemasons Fraternity as an Entered Apprentice and later became a Famous Freemason. Henry Ford was born in 1863 to a farming family who lived in the United States of America; the U.S.A.

Henry never wanted to be a farmer like his father. One day on a school trip he came close up to a Steam Engine powered Locomotive. Henry was inspired by the engineering that he saw in it. Henry had a very creative mind and as a boy he spent time taking pocket watches to pieces and reassembling them. This gave Henry's inquisitive mind a good understanding of how they worked. Henry was never interested in farming his interest was in Mechanics. When he was 15 Henry built his first Static Steam Engine learning much from another man's design who had also become a Freemason, Scottish Inventor James Watt.



At the age of 16 against his father's wishes Henry left the family farm bound for Detroit.

In 1879 the only means of transportation was: Steam Trains, or Horses and Horse Drawn Carriages.

Having worked and experiencing unemployment in Detroit in 1882 Henry returned home to his parent's farm in Michigan where he was surprised to learn his father had bought a Steam Traction Engine.

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Later Henry got a job at the Westinghouse Engine Company, his job was to service Westinghouse Steam Tractor Engines.

In 1886 Henry got engaged to marry and when he was married Henry's father gave Henry and his wife 40 acres of land as a wedding present. Henry transformed the land creating his own race track.

Around this time Henry read about a new invention in a magazine "The Gas Engine". The Gas Engine was designed by a German Nicholas Otto. The engine had an electric spark plug system and operated in what was to be called an "Otto cycle". The Gas Engine was very different and a lot more efficient than a Steam Engine.

Henry wanted to learn more about Electricity so he moved to a new job at the Edison Illuminating Company. At this time the company was using a Steam Engine to generate Electricity.

In 1893 Henry's wife gave birth to a baby boy who they named Edsel Bryant Ford. Around this time Henry was successful in building his own Gas Engine. A first step in realising his Dream; his dream of building a Horseless Carriage.

On 4<sup>th</sup> June 1896 Henry Ford completed work on his experimental car using a Gas Engine. There were a number of problems with this experimental vehicle the greatest of these was it being prone to overheating. This was because it did not have a cooling system. Henry added a cooling system and later sold the experimental vehicle for US\$200, this was a lot of money in those days.

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With the support of the Detroit Mayor Henry completed his 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental car in 1899. This new experimental car was larger, heavier, and sturdier than the previous one.

Impressed with Henry's 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental car William Murphy a wealthy lumber merchant helped Henry to set up The Detroit Automobile Company. The company failed one year later for a number of reasons. The Stakeholders had wanted Henry to make passenger cars Henry had gone ahead against their wishes and made racing cars. The factory also failed because it had a high reliance on many different companies who made many of the parts for his cars. It only needed one delivery to be delayed to stop production in Henry's automobile factory and this had happened too frequently resulting in a lot of production disruptions.

Remaining positively optimistic Henry wrote the following words:

**“Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again,  
This time more intelligently”.**

Henry and a former racing cyclist called Tom Cooper continued to build racing cars. In 1902 working together they produced the Ford 999 an 80 horse power car with a top speed recorded at 91.4 mph (miles per hour). Henry soon established himself as the best racing car designer in the United States of America.

Henry Ford again backed by Investors was ready to start-up his 3<sup>rd</sup> automobile company...

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Henry's 3<sup>rd</sup> company was initially called "Ford and Malcomson Ltd". The company name was later changed to: **The Ford Motor Company.**

The experience gained from his failed companies helped Henry to learn the importance of having one manufacturer responsible for the components that were needed to build cars. Henry visited a slaughter house in Detroit and there he witnessed the assembly line production concept. Soon after this Henry built the concept into his automobile manufacturing plant. Henry soon found that using this assembly line technique the plant could produce more cars per day. So in 1904 Henry raised more money in order to build his own factory employing 300 workers. In 1906 the production of the Ford Model N made use of an assembly line but even then the assembly line was still in development and could be described as a work-in-progress. In 1905 Henry had set up a further factory to make his own engines, transmissions and everything he needed for the production of his cars. His use of Vanadium Steel which was around 3 times stronger than the previous steel and a lot lighter, helped a lot. He used the new metal on his new car the Model T Ford which later became one of the most successful cars in human history.

Henry Ford wrote:

**“A business absolutely devoted to service  
will only have one worry about profits.  
They will be embarrassingly large”.**

The Model T Ford initially sold for US\$850

A new larger factory was built in 1910 in Michigan. By 1913 the factory with its new assembly line was in full production.

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By 1916 the number of Model T Fords being produced and sold had increased from 20,000 vehicles per year to almost 1 Million. This high production volume allowed Henry Ford to reduce the price of his cars from US\$850 to less than US\$400.

Many of Henry's skilled workers found that the repetitive nature of their work on the assembly lines became boring. To combat workers who were leaving to take up jobs at other more batch production oriented manufacturing plants Henry doubled his workers daily wage raising it to US\$5 per day. The Ford Motor Company's competitors made fun and laughed at this expecting that this would completely bankrupt Ford. It didn't happen in fact the opposite happened the higher wages caused mechanics to come to Detroit in search of higher wages.

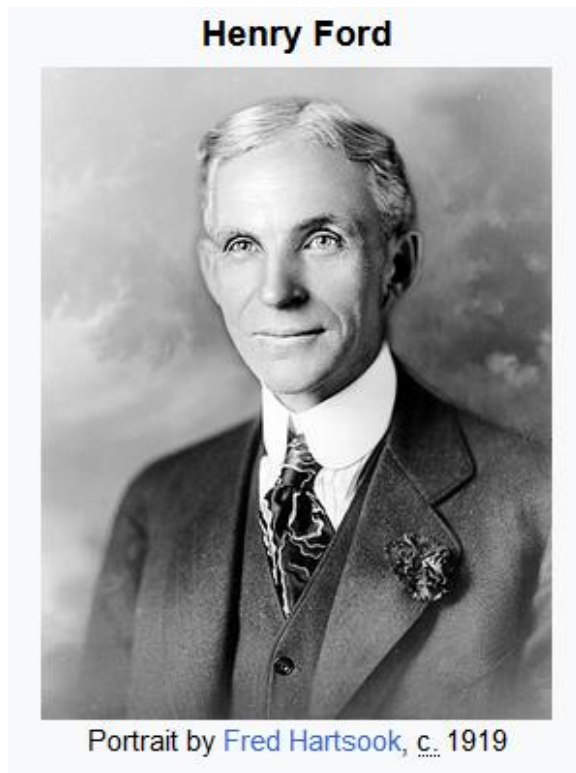
Henry Ford wrote:

**“We believe in making 25,000 men prosperous and contented” rather than following the plan of making a few slave drivers in our multi-millionaire establishments”.**

Henry not only paid good wages he gave his workers an extra hour off from the hours they were required to work. This allowed Henry Ford to create a third shift and in 1919 he bought out his investors and he became the sole owner of the Ford Motor Company. The owner of the largest automobile company in the world.

Later Henry made his son Edsel Ford the president of his company.

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By the late 1920's due to declining sales and a failure to listen to earlier warnings from his executives and his son Edsel Ford

It was time to shut down the Model T assembly line.

By this time the Ford Motor Company's sales had been overtaken by the Chrysler Corporation and General Motors in the U.S.A. automobile market.

Ford developed a new car with a V8 Engine however due to the Great Depression Ford was forced to lay off workers and lower their labour rate. In 1943 Edsel Ford Henry Ford's son died of stomach cancer. Henry kept the company going for a further two years until it was time to turn over control of the Ford Motor Company to his Grandson Henry II.

In retirement Henry Ford died of a cerebral haemorrhage on April 7<sup>th</sup> 1947

<https://www.thehenryford.org/explore/stories-of-innovation/visionaries/henry-ford/>