

Model-T

Do you all see what I see?
Henry Ford's assembled us a Model-T (1)
Let's take a drive down American history
Learn more about this Tin Lizzie (2)

Ford's dream was to mass produce
An affordable car for everyday use (3)
And after many tries and a few false starts
He organized a way to assemble the parts

To build this vehicle in less than no time
Henry Ford built the assembly line (4)
An inexpensive way to have the cars made
And even paved the way for machines today

Ford paid his workers five bucks a day (5)
So each could own a car that they had made
And at this time it was the highest wage
Their dreams began to roll as people rolled away

With the Model T we began to change
More Americans gonna' make their way
And go into the suburbs in every state
Building bridges, railroads and major highways (6)

Radius rod is above the brake
Front axle by the transmission case
You got your hand lever and foot control (7)
Four rubber tires just watch 'em roll

Radiator power plant in front of the dash
Frame side member all the way in the back
Gasoline tank underneath the seat (8)
You better look both ways when crossin' the street

This is my story and this it goes
Henry Ford's the man and now you know
And for all you teenagers that'll wanna' drive (9)
Know the Model-T still remains alive

Notes

1) Assembled a Model-T: Henry Ford did not invent the car, but he figured out how to mass produce automobiles inexpensively using a moving assembly line. Model-T's moved from skeletons to finished products on top of a slow conveyor belt, as workers stationed along the assembly line added parts and put the cars together one step at a time.

2) Tin Lizzie: This was a popular nickname for the Model-T Ford. Lizzie, short for Elizabeth, was a common name for horses at the time. To people who had never seen anything like it, the Model-T was a "metal horse."

3) An Affordable Car: Ford's dream was to make cars affordable to the masses. In 1909 Ford said: "I am going to democratize the automobile. When I'm through everyone will be able to afford one, and about everyone will have one." By 1930, Americans owned an astonishing 30 million cars. As mass production was improved, the price of a Model-T dropped every year. The Model-T cost \$600 in 1912; by 1924, the price had dropped to \$290. As the price declined, more people could afford to own an automobile.

4) Assembly Line: Each auto worker had a specific job along the moving assembly line. Unfinished cars moved from one end to the other. At each step along the way, a worker would add a part, tighten a bolt, spray some paint. When the car reached the end of the assembly line, it was finished.

In 1917 when autos were fairly new, it took 93 hours of labor to produce one car. When the assembly line was introduced, the production time dropped to 14 hours. With the refinement of the assembly line, it took a remarkable hour and a half of labor to produce one car.

5) 5 Bucks a Day: Ford paid his workers a high wage: \$5 per day, which was twice the national average for factory work at that time. He understood that high wages was good for business because it enabled his workers to buy Ford cars. This was a large base of potential customers. The Ford River Rouge plant alone employed 75,000 workers. Henry Ford also introduced installment buying for cars, or buying on credit. This made it possible for people to purchase cars with only a small down payment, greatly expanding the potential market.

6) Building: There was a tremendous ripple effect from the auto industry. Car production catapulted the steel, rubber and glass industries, as well as other sectors of the economy. Highway construction created thousands of new jobs and generated immense spending power. The auto made it easier to work in a

city without living in the city. As suburbs grew, the housing and construction industries boomed.

7) Hand Lever and Foot Control: Ford believed the design of the Model-T should be simple and reliable. Initially the car was only available in black. When people requested a greater variety of colors, Ford's response was, "You can have any color you want, as long as it's black." Later he offered the Model-T in several colors.

8) Gas Tank Underneath the Seat: The placement of the gas tank directly underneath the passenger seat would not meet modern safety standards.

9) Teenagers Wanna' Drive: Today, cars represent freedom for many young people. They had much the same meaning for teenagers in the 1920's. For the first time, young people could interact away from the watchful eyes of parents and elders. In ways both economic and social, the automobile transformed American society.

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