

# DETROIT-THE CITY WHICH STARTS THINGS

Three Cities in One --- A Conglomeration of the Beautiful and the Ugly, Its History Has Been, and Is, Dynamic, Colorful --- And Explosive.

(By Robert Mountsier)  
The crucial periods of our American history have always been distinguished by certain cities starting things off with a bang and seeing to it that something or some one added to developments affecting all other places. We all know the parts played by Boston, Philadelphia, Charleston, New York and Washington in disastrous periods of our past, and in these recent years of economic and political disaster all eyes have turned again and again to Detroit as the centre where it all started, where things kept happening.

Early in the depression the great automobile industry's collapse, with widespread unemployment, turned the spotlight on this capital of motordom. Then the countrywide bank holiday which shocked the whole United States back in March, 1932, got its start there in the closing of Detroit's principal banking institutions. Later, in 1934-35, a depression-weary country took hope from growing automobile sales figures issued from Detroit, that that corner it took so long to turn was really being left behind. But strikes and threats of strikes from 1933 onward caused wise men to fear for the future peace and welfare of this city. While Detroiters behind the scenes talked of the volcano their city was sitting on, ready to blow up at any time, executives of its automobile corporations increased wages, paid bonuses, shortened the week's working hours, with the hope of preventing any labor catastrophe.

But at last that catastrophe arrived in the form of sit-down strikes, with the outside aid of labor racketeers and communist agitators and in defiance of laws, the courts and all constituted authority.

The great majority of New Yorkers have never seen this city which keeps on making the front pages of their newspapers, and they wonder what kind of a place Detroit is, that it can lead the rest of the country with its banking troubles and lawless strike methods, and build up the world's greatest automobile output and then threaten to destroy it, can produce such men as Homer Martin, Gov. Murphy, Father Coughlin, as Henry

Ford, Walter P. Chrysler and the late Senator Couzens.

It may be said that there are three Detroit's. One is the Detroit that serves as a symbol of the country's automobile industry, for which it acts as the mouthpiece. Another is the municipality of Detroit, with a population of 1,568,000 in the 1930 census and a background of much political rottenness. The third Detroit, which most people think of when they see or use the name, is that greater Detroit which includes Dearborn, Highland Park and River Rouge, all associated with the name of Henry Ford; the separate municipality of Hamtramck, largely Polish and entirely surrounded by Detroit proper, known as the 'city within a city,' which has a number of ex-convicts among its officials, and various residential suburbs, including Grosse Pointe, on Lake St. Clair, and Bloomfield Hills, which boast more beautiful homes than any other sections in or near the city.

Now to get Detroit's historical background in brief. Founded in 1701 by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, this Michigan metropolis of today ranks as the oldest city of any size in the United States west of the original seaboard colonies. As such it got a century's start on Buffalo and was 137 years old when Chicago received its charter. During the course of its first century of existence as a small but strategically located frontier settlement, France, England, Spain and the new United States fought for its possession.

Even the Indians had a go at it on various occasions—the last massacre by Indians occurred in 1814—but warfare and various conflagrations among the wooden structures only retarded the little town's growth. Steam boats, the construction of the Erie Canal and railroads opened up new eras for Detroit, so that by 1854, when the first rail connection with the East had been established, it was a city of more than 40,000 inhabitants. In 1880 the population was 116,340; in 1890 200,000, and in 1900, 285,000.

It was at the turn of the century that automobile manufacture got a

start in Detroit, destined to determine the city's tremendous development in the period up to 1930. Starting with trade with the Indians for beaver skins, Detroit had seen a number of industries rise and fall—among them lumbering, iron making, copper smelting, car building, parlor organs—but the making of stoves, refining of salt, distribution of seeds, manufacture of adding machines and production of pharmaceutical preparations have continued as distinctive industries. Today the city claims over 3,000 different classes of manufacturing concerns.

That the automobile industry happened to hit upon Detroit, and with the impetus of its amazing mushroom growth carry the city on to become the centre of the world's automobile manufacture was partly a matter of luck. But there were more important factors. Among them were men of vision, ability and determination—Henry Ford, R. E. Olds, Henry M. Leland, Henry B. Joy, to name only a few. Also, Detroit had machine shops and machinists with experience in the manufacture of gas engines, bicycles and various vehicles of transportation.

And not least important, as manufacturers, inventors, bankers and promoters looked around for advantageous spots to establish new plants for the making of automobiles and their parts, such as bodies, tires, axles, bearings, gears, was the fact that it was practically free from labor troubles during a period when unionism was gaining in other manufacturing centres.

Indeed so recently as 1929 it was authoritatively written that 'Detroit is the most nearly an open-shop town of any industrial centre in the country and is noted for its high wages and comparative freedom from strikes.'

During the first decade of Detroit's automobile era the workers in the plants which turned out automobiles and parts were chiefly Americans and the better class of foreign artisans who maintained individual place and independence through ability and reliability. But as demand and output grew, to be met by multiple assembly line methods, with an increasing amount of work done by automatic machines and men who worked almost as automatically on the detailed operations assigned to them, a hodge-podge of skilled and unskilled workers poured into Detroit in the 'teens and twenties of this century from all parts of the United States and Europe, also from many another section of the world.

To this El Dorado of high wages

ame farmers and smalltown handy men, Negroes and hillbillies, Canadians, Mexicans, Poles, Germans, Hungarians, Slavs, Scandinavians. And with the automobiles they made for the rest of the world and with those they drove they changed the character of the country town which had grown up during the nineteenth century, the big majority of its homes frame the more pretentious of brick and stone.

To accommodate both the workers who swarmed in and the old residents who wanted to get away from noise, dirt and the newcomers who might be all right as workers out not as neighbors, Detroit grew out miles beyond most of its automobile plants, which, built here and there on the irregular edge of the older town, had been growing, too, swallowing up vacant lots, stores and private homes. As in other cities the poor live in the least desirable homes and sections, but few tenements as New York knows them exist. Poverty is mainly packed into cheap frame structures housing from one to several families.

To satisfy the varied needs of this new population—there were about 2,000,000 people in the Detroit area in 1929—old department stores and shops were enlarged and new ones built, and banks, office buildings, hotels and moving picture theatres blossomed out as skyscrapers in the concentrated business section of the city, known as 'down town.' A smaller but highly important business district was created about two and a half miles distant, with the huge General Motors office building skyscraping as its nucleus in a residential district. There the Fischer Building was built, and once private homes have become shops and restaurants, even business offices and bars that were speakeasies during prohibition.

Locally Detroit is described as 'dynamic and beautiful.' Yes, it's dynamic at times, especially when it has a pennant-winning baseball team but not during a depression or in getting sit-down strikers out of the plants. Beautiful, no, for beauty cannot be achieved on a flat surface—on which almost every variety of architecture known to the United States during the last seventy-five years for business and residential purposes has been mixed up together, the beautiful with the ugly, the costly with the cheap, the factories, large and small, without zoning regulations. The city's famous island park, Belle Isle, is its most beautiful feature. Like many another American city, an important part of Detroit's waterfront has been ruined by docks and warehouses.

Spread out as Detroit is over an extensive area, the city has to depend for transportation on street cars, buses and automobiles. The person or family without a car has a hard time of it, when it comes to getting anywhere. The pedestrian is at a decided disadvantage, especially in view of the instantaneous changes in traffic lights from green to red and the fact that Detroit lives up to its reputation for wild driving. So numerous automobile dealers and parking lots seem to prosper: used car lots are everywhere, and many of the plants maintain extensive parking space for the employees' cars.

To accommodate its tremendous automotive traffic the city has a network of avenues, boulevards, streets and roads leading north, south and west from its heart at Grand Circus. Yet there is much congestion morning and evening, and over the weekends when a lot of the population moves to and from houses and homes in the country and on the lakes. To get to Canadian soil, living eastward of the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair, motorists use chiefly an under-river tunnel, sometimes the old ferries and an international bridge which has become a white elephant. The tracks of seven railroads cut through or into the city, and during the navigation season numerous iron-ore boats and freight and passenger vessels use the deep and wide Detroit River as a thoroughfare to and from Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Chicago and Lake Superior ports.

But Detroit isn't all transportation, business and manufacturing. The city has a cultural side expressed in five colleges and a university, also in its library and Institute of Fine Arts. These two buildings many consider the most beautiful in the city, at least from the outside. As to Diego Rivera's murals in the inner court of the institute there is decided disagreement of opinion. One school of thought insists that such Mexican art may be all right south of the Rio Grande, but it doesn't belong in Detroit, least of all in a structure of Italian Renaissance style. On the other side, Rivera's supporters insist that these murals are justified as a masterly presentation of Detroit's industry.

Of such and much more is Detroit, pioneer city of the Middle West, which a premier American industry and a boom built up to a great bust, and which an extended depression made a happy hunting ground for communist agitators and labor organizers for there's lots of money and power in the mass of those workers when they stand up and work and vote.

A published photograph of the future Italian Queen and her son calls attention to the fact that there is a King of Italy who lately became Emperor of Ethiopia.

## TREATMENT OF SEED REDUCES HEAVY LOSS

Farmers are now busy making preparations for spring seeding. Good crops and heavy yields are directly associated with the use of clean healthy seed of the best quality. The annual losses, due to the ravages of seed-borne bacterial and fungous parasites, are much greater than the average farmer realizes. For this reason, all seed should be treated before it is sown, regardless of its quality.

Seed treatment of wheat, oats and barley has been greatly simplified in recent years with the appearance on the market of organic mercury dusts. These dusts, when properly applied, effectively control the smuts of oats, covered smut of barley, bunt or stink smut of wheat and the other seed borne fungi and bacteria that are responsible for the blights and root rots commonly found in our cereal crops. Due to their easy application, effectiveness, and stimulation to germination, they are rapidly replacing for malin and copper carbonate. They are not, however, recommended as a control for the loose smuts of wheat and barley. These smuts are not affected by the use of the ordinary seed treatments, but can be controlled by the hot water treatment.

In applying organic mercury dusts to the seed, care should be exercised to follow instructions as outlined on the container. The amount of dust recommended should be evenly distributed over the seed coat. Insufficient dust will be ineffective in control, and an excess will injure germination. Grain, after being treated with mercury dust, should not be fed to livestock or poultry, or used for human consumption. It can, however, be kept over, under suitable storage conditions, and used as seed the following year.

Further information concerning seed treatments may be obtained by writing the Dominion Botanist, Division of Botany, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Canada.

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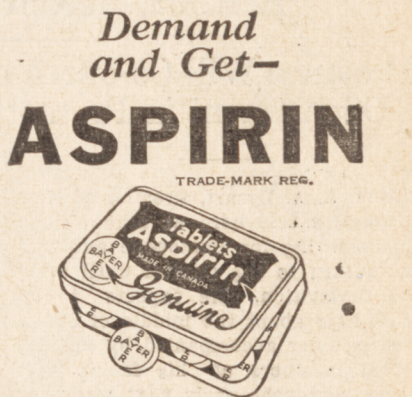
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