

# Auto Industry Leaves Many State Landmarks

Michigan has numerous landmarks which are reminders of its early automobile years, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

The landmarks are former homes of automotive pioneers, or old factory buildings where almost - forgotten cars were once made. Some of the latter have been merged into the huge complexes of today's automobile companies.

Some landmarks can be visited, but others remain private homes or are still used in manufacture. A few are memorials, set aside for the part they once played in automotive history.

AMONG THE best - known is Fair Lane, built by Henry Ford in 1915 and where he died in April, 1947. The big yet unpretentious stone mansion is just off Michigan Avenue near Southfield in Dearborn. For years the 56 - room home beside the Rouge River with its gardens, trees, or- chards and farm fields was the center from which Ford directed his vast interests and where he and wife, Clara, entertained family, friends

and distinguished guests from America and abroad. After Ford's death, Fair Lane housed the Ford Motor Co. Archives for several years. In 1956 the company gave the estate, including 210 acres of adjacent land, to the University of Michigan.

It is now a conference center and headquarters for the University's Dearborn campus. Tours of Fair Lane may be arranged.

Nearby is the huge Ford Rouge Plant, begun in 1917, which became the world's largest single - company industrial complex during the mid - 1920s and today remains the only factory which can turn raw material into finished autos within a matter of hours.

There are nearly 100 structures, sprawled over some 1,115 acres. The Ford Rouge visitor tours are popular.

THE ROUGE plant superseded another famous Ford factory, the Highland Park plant, which gained fame as the birthplace of mass production and the Ford Model T. When it went into production in 1910, it was not only the biggest building under one roof in Michigan but also the world's largest automobile factory. Today the plant is still owned by Ford. Ford conceived a plan during the early 1920s to dot the countryside with small waterdriven factories to offer employment to farmers during the winter.

Of the 22 hydro - powered village industries he eventually built, only Northville remains in operation. It employs about 250 persons and makes valves. Another country factory, Nankin Mills, is now a nature center.

Greenfield Village, part of the Americana complex started by Ford which contains more than 100 historic buildings, preserves the white frame house where he was born in 1863. Restored in 1916 on its original site at Ford and

Greenfield Roads, it was moved to the Village in 1944.

Another Ford - related plant and a milestone is the Willow Run facility. It was the largest single - building factory in the world when completed in 1942 and the first plant to mass produce airplanes. In 1953 the factory was taken over by General Motors' Hydra - Matic Division.

THE DETROIT area has several other automotive landmarks.

The Gray Motor Car Co.'s original factory is now a part of Chrysler Corp.'s Highland Park plant. Gray, manufactured between 1916-26, came into Chrysler ownership, via Maxwell, in 1926. The building is located at the foot of McLean near Oakland, behind an engineering office structure.

Buildings at Chrysler's Jefferson Ave. plant go back more than 80 years, when Chalmers Motor Co. owned the plant. Today Chryslers and Imperials are built there. Much of Chrysler's Hamtramck assembly plant, once known as Dodge Main, dates back to the Dodge Motor Co. in 1914.

The old Packard plant at 1580 East Grand Boulevard was the first large automobile plant in Detroit. Packards were manufactured there until production was discontinued in 1938. The factory, including most of the nine structures built between 1903-05, are occupied today by varied enterprises.

A DETROIT HOME of a prominent auto pioneer is that of John Dodge, at 121 E. Boston Blvd. It is now occupied by the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit.

Kearsley Street in Flint, which extends from downtown to the present Cultural Center which includes Flint Community College, once contained rows of homes of automotive leaders. Several still are standing.

Albert Champion, who organized the A. C. Spark Plug

Co. in Flint with W. C. Durant, lived at 422 E. Kearsley in 1919-20.

C. S. Mott, a pioneer who became one of the GM's largest stockholders, lived in the same home between 1912-16. Mott then built Applewood, where he still lives, at 1400 E. Kearsley.

James Whiting was another who lived on the street. He was president of the Flint Wagon Works at the time Buick was brought to Flint for \$10,000 in 1903. It is now a home for the aged.

Charles W. Nash, former president of Buick and General Motors, lived at 804 Garland Street from about 1903 until he left to found Nash Motor Co. in Kenosha, Wis., in 1915. Although remodelled, the house still stands.

LOUIS CHEVROLET, a French - Swiss mechanic who designed the first automobiles for Durant which bore the Chevrolet name, lived in a house which still stands at 917 Root Street.

The homes of several other Flint automotive greats, including J. Dallas Dort, Durant and Walter P. Chrysler, have been lost through the years, some through urban renewal.

The Durant - Dort factory on Lewis Street was built in 1902, after an earlier building was destroyed by fire. After 1912 it was headquarters for the Imperial Wheel Co., another division of Durant - Dort. Although now used by a wholesale firm, the original automobile lettering can still be seen on the side of the building.

Early Buick and Chevrolet plants have been enveloped into the present - day giant complexes.

THE ORIGINAL factory of Buick in Jackson, before manufacturing was moved to Flint, is now a part of Kelsey - Hayes operation.

In Kalamazoo, the old three - story factory of the Roamer Motor Car Co. is used by a paper company. Before the Roamer car, built between

## MICHIGAN'S AUTOMOTIVE LANDMARKS...



FAIR LANE, HOME OF HENRY FORD

...WHICH REMIND OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE AUTOMOBILE INCLUDE:

FAIR LANE, HOME OF HENRY FORD, DEARBORN • FORD HIGHLAND PARK PLANT, BIRTHPLACE OF AUTOMOBILE MASS PRODUCTION • FORD ROUGE PLANT, DEARBORN • FORD WILLOW RUN PLANT, FIRST TO MASS PRODUCE AIRPLANES • HENRY FORD BIRTHPLACE, GREENFIELD VILLAGE, DEARBORN • OLDSMOBILE BUILDING 16, LANSING • CHRYSLER JEFFERSON AVENUE PLANT, DETROIT • GRAY MOTOR CO. FACTORY (INCLUDED IN CHRYSLER HIGHLAND PARK COMPLEX) • CHRYSLER HAMTRAMCK ASSEMBLY PLANT • JOHN DODGE HOME, DETROIT • PACKARD PLANT, DETROIT'S FIRST LARGE AUTOMOBILE FACTORY • DURANT - DORT FACTORY, FLINT • LOUIS CHEVROLET HOME, FLINT • ALBERT CHAMPION - C.S. MOTT HOME, FLINT • APPLEWOOD, PRESENT HOME OF C.S. MOTT, FLINT • CHARLES W. NASH HOME, FLINT • JAMES H. WHITING HOME, FLINT • DURANT - STAR FACTORY (NOW INCLUDED IN FISH REEBOY COMPLEX), LANSING • HANDLEY AND HANDLEY - KNIGHT FACTORY (NOW INCLUDED IN CHECKER MOTORS CORP. PLANT), KALAMAZOO • ROAMER MOTOR CAR CO. PLANT, KALAMAZOO • RED MOTOR CAR CO. FACTORY (NOW WHITE MOTORS CO.), LANSING • ORIGINAL BUICK PLANT (NOW KELSEY - HAYES), JACKSON • RANIER FACTORY (NOW INCLUDED IN CHEVROLET - SAGINAW PARTS PLANT), SAGINAW • ARGO ELECTRIC CO., AND YALE FACTORY, SAGINAW

1916-25, the structure housed the Michigan Buggy Co., manufacturers of a car called the Michigan which was on the automotive scene between 1903-13.

The former Handley and Handley - Knight (1921-23) plant in Kalamazoo is now in the Checker Motors Corp. complex.

Lansing still has several automotive landmarks, despite losing the landmark R. E. Olds home to freeway construction several years ago. One is Oldsmobile's building 16. Erected in 1912, it is used today for the sub - assembly and assembly of Torosades, as well as for storage space.

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