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***Driving America* Exhibition: A Vast Collection of Automobile Firsts**

The Henry Ford's newest exhibition, *Driving America*, focuses on the enormous influence the automobile has had on American culture — from the automotive innovations that have changed our lives to the everyday choices we make. Each vehicle in the exhibition holds a significant role in automotive history, with some being “firsts” — the first car built by Henry Ford, America's first production car, the first all-steel utility station wagon and many more. Here are the automobiles, in chronological order, that are “firsts.”

1865 Roper Steam Carriage

This is one of the first lightweight, personal, self-propelled carriages ever built in America. It is probably the oldest surviving American automobile in existence.

1896 Ford Quadricycle Runabout

This is the first car built by Henry Ford. The success of this little vehicle fueled Ford's automobile ambitions, leading ultimately to the founding of Ford Motor Company in 1903.

1896 Duryea Runabout

This motor wagon, America's first production car, is the third unit built and the only one surviving of the original production run of 13 units.

1901 Ford “Sweepstakes” Oval Track Race Car

“Sweepstakes” is the first race car built by Henry Ford. He entered “Sweepstakes” in a race in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and won against the country's best-known driver, Alexander Winton. This victory won over investors, who then backed Ford's next venture, the Henry Ford Company. Leaving that company in 1902, he formed his lasting enterprise, Ford Motor Company, in 1903.

1903 Ford Model A Runabout

This is an example of the first product Ford Motor Company produced after being incorporated in June 1903.

1906 Locomobile “Old 16” Road Racer

In 1908, George Robertson drove this car to victory in the Vanderbilt Cup, America's first great automobile race, and marked the first time an American car had won a major international race.

1927 Blue Bird School Bus

This is the first school bus made with an all steel frame making structurally sound, a key to its durability. The first in a long line of buses made by Blue Bird, one of the country's major school bus builders and also the oldest-surviving school bus in America.

1927 LaSalle Roadster

In 1926, Alfred P. Sloan, president of General Motors, sought a lower-priced companion to the Cadillac and lured custom designer Harley Earl to Detroit for the project. The result was the 1927 LaSalle, the first mass-production car to be consciously styled.

1932 Ford V-8 Engine

Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company revolutionized the automobile market with the production of the V-8 in 1932, the first low-priced, mass produced V8 engine. This is the first Ford V8 engine to come off the assembly line. A brass plate on the engine reads, "This is V-8 No. 1 Motor Hold for Mr. H. Ford."

1950 Plymouth Deluxe Suburban Station Wagon

The Plymouth Suburban first appeared in 1949 and was the first all-steel, utility station wagon.

1951 Crosley Hot Shot Roadster

Rich from building radios and refrigerators, Powel Crosley thought a small, affordable vehicle might appeal to Americans. After World War II, Crosley came out with America's first post-war sports car, the Hot Shot.

1965 Lotus-Ford Oval Track Race Car

This was the first Lotus-Ford to win the Indy 500 with a monocoque chassis, four-wheel independent suspension and rear-mounted engine. The result of this win effectively killed the traditional Indy roadster and established a new paradigm for American race cars.

1984 Plymouth Voyager minivan

The Chrysler Corporation created an entirely new market niche with the first year of production of the Plymouth Voyager and its cousins, the Dodge Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country.

1983 Honda Accord sedan

This 1989 Honda Accord was the first American-built Honda to roll off the line.

1989 Honda Accord sedan

Honda Accord was the first Japanese nameplate to become the best-selling car in the United States.

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About The Henry Ford:

The Henry Ford, in Dearborn, Michigan, is the world's premier history destination and a National Historic Landmark that celebrates American history and innovation. Its mission is to provide unique educational experiences based on authentic objects, stories and lives from America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness and innovation. Its purpose is to inspire people to learn from these traditions to help shape a better future. Five distinct attractions at The Henry Ford captivate more than 1.5 million visitors annually: Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, the Ford Rouge Factory Tour, the Benson Ford Research Center and The Henry Ford IMAX Theatre. The Henry Ford is also home to Henry Ford Academy, a public charter high school that educates 485 students a year on the institution's campus and was founded in partnership with The Henry Ford, Ford Motor Company and Wayne County public schools. For more information, please visit our website: thehenryford.org.