

**Record Group 48:
Ford Village Industries**

1926-2002

1 manuscript box, 1 half manuscript box, 3 binders

Plymouth Historical Museum, Plymouth, MI

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Abstract

Henry Ford created 19 different "Village Industries" of small industrial centers in rural areas of Michigan; over 30 villages total in the country. These centers were intended to prevent disruption of rural living, but unite the lifestyle with factory working. Henry Ford developed the Village Industries program in an attempt to provide a stable the income flow of farm workers during the winter. All of the villages were on the banks of rivers, often on the sites of abandoned gristmills with waterwheels.

The Plymouth village industry is located at 230 Wilcox in Plymouth, Michigan. It was originally a flour mill built in 1845 by Henry Holbrook that later became Wilcox Mills. Wilcox Mills operated as a gristmill until Henry Ford purchased it. The village industry opened in 1923 and employed up to 23 people making taps and other tools used in manufacturing. The village closed in 1948, but designated a state of Michigan historic site in 1989.

Scope and Content

The Ford Village Industries record group contains information about the Village Industry in Plymouth MI as well as some additional information of the ford motor company and Henry Ford, as related to the Village Industries. The collection includes articles, books, photographs and some scrapbooks.

Entries

[Entry 1:](#) Ford Village Industries

[Entry 2:](#) Mills (pre-Ford)

[Entry 3:](#) Scrapbooks

[Entry 4:](#) Ford Motor Company

[Entry 5:](#) Articles

[Entry 6:](#) Books

Important Subjects

Ford Motor Company
Ford Village Industries

See also Record Group 21, Phoenix Mill Women's Museum

Box 1, Shelf 100

Entry 1—Ford Village Industries

Folder 1—Wilcox Ford Plant

“Pathways to Auto History,” by Renee Skoglund, *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 24 June 1998

“Employees of the Plymouth Plant of the Ford Motor Co.,” *The Community Crier*, 23 February 1977

“Plymouth Plant: Ford Motor Company,” *Plymouth Pilgrim*, 28 October 1926

“Mill on Historic Register,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 16 October 1989

“Group seeks to turn old mill into art center,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 11 June 1990

“PCAC on hold over grant,” *The Community Crier*, 11 July 1990

Letter to the Editor of the *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 19 June 1990, by Bruce Richard

Michigan Historical Commission letter of 15 September 1989 announcing that the Plymouth Mill is on the State Register of Historic Sites

Story about the Wilcox Ford Plant by unknown author

Images:

Wilcox Ford Plant postcard (Acc #2002.221.04)

Wilcox Plant front view, taken 25 May 1999

Wilcox Plant rear view, taken 25 May 1999

Ford Motor Co. dynamited islands in Wilcox Lake. Wilcox (Ford Plant) in background, 1934 (Acc #L768b)

Ford Motor Co. dynamited islands in Wilcox Lake. Wilcox (Ford Plant) in background, 1934 (Acc #L768c)

Wilcox Ford Plant, Plymouth, MI (Acc #L741)

Wilcox Plant, 7 views

Wilcox Plant (Acc #L741)

Dynamiting the old Ford dam at Plymouth Plant (L768a)

Folder 2—Articles

“Northville Historic Site Picks up Tower Benefits,” by Sheri Hall, *The Detroit News*

“Exploring the Village Industries of Old Henry Ford,” *Detroit Free Press, Detroit Magazine*, 24 September 1972

“Zaytis’ Rare Personal Glimpse of Henry Ford & His Plant,” *Mill Race Quarterly* 17

“Cherry Hill Ford Factory A Village Industry for Disabled Veterans,” *Canton Historical Society News* 26 (March-April 2003)

“Ford ‘Village Industry’ was in Plymouth,” by Sam Hudson, *The Observer & Eccentric*, 17 October 1974

“Our Car: The Road Behind,” *The Detroit News*, 7 January 1996

- “Village Industry,” *The Milford Historian* 24 (May 1996)
- “Henry Ford’s mills, history preserved,” *The Observer & Eccentric*, 4 September 1989
- “New Ford Factory at Northville Has Been Completed,” *Plymouth Mail*, 13 November 1936
- “Old Henry Ford’s Village Industries: Tour of Practically Perfect Places to Work,” *Detroit Free Press*, 24 September 1972
- “Ford in Plymouth—Wild about Water Power,” *The Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 15 September 1986
- “Economist Looks at Ford’s ‘Village Plants’ as Precursors of Lean Wave,” *US Auto Scene*, 17 July 1995
- “The Last of Ford’s Renowned Village Industries Closes,” *Mill Race Quarterly* 17 (Summer 1989)
- Grist Grinder* 3, 9 October 1988
- “Little Plants in the Country”: Henry Ford’s Village Industries and the Beginning of Decentralized Technology in Modern America,” by Howard P. Segal, *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 3 (1988)
- “Down by Old Millstream,” in *Ford Country*, by David L. Lewis (Sidney, Ohio: Amos Press, Inc., 1987)
- “Resident Helped Ford Build Village,” by Sam Hudson, *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 25 March 1976
- “Little Industries in the Country,” *Ford News*, August 1932 Supplement
- “Little Plants in the Country,” *Ford News*, July 1936
- “Henry Ford and Field and Factory,” *APA Journal*, Autumn 1982
- “Village Industries by Little Rivers,” *Ford News* 16 (April 1936)
- “Ford Motor Company Hydro-Electric Power Plants,” *Beyond the Model T*
- “Henry’s Heritage Hereabouts: Legacy of Henry Ford’s Mills and Factories,” *The Ann Arbor News*, 7 October 1990
- “Parks officials seek memories of Ford Village workers,” *The Observer & Eccentric*, 26 August 1999
- “Local Ford Plants Keep Going on Full Schedule for Present, at Least,” *Plymouth Mail*, no date
- Remarks made by Beth Stewart, director of the Plymouth Historical Museum, on the opening of the Ford Village Industries Exhibit at the Museum, 23 April 1989

Folder 3—Phoenix Mill Ford Plant

- “Making History: With cameras rolling, five former plant workers from Henry Ford’s Phoenix Mill plant tell their stories,” *Your Community Crier*, 24 January 2003
- List of Phoenix Mill Employees ca. 1930s
- “On the line in girdles and full skirts,” *Community Free Press*, 24 July 2003 (Acc #2003.114.01)
- “Another ‘Village Industry’ Opens,” *Plymouth Mail*, 18 April 1941
- “They’ll Be Summer Brides,” *Plymouth Mail*, 20 June 1941
- “Seizure of Ford Plant Forces Idleness Here,” *Plymouth Mail*, 4 April 1941
- “Ford Company Starts Construction of New Addition at Phoenix Plant,” *Plymouth Mail*, 2 May 1941
- “Ford welcomed women workers,” *The Crier*, no date
- “Another Ford Ideal to Help Mankind Crumbles to Earth with Closing of the Phoenix Plant,” *Plymouth Mail*, 2 April 1948
- “Phoenix Grandmothers Honored on 25th Work Anniversary”

“Factory Employs Women Who Can’t Afford to Work at Home”
Phoenix Plant paper by Wilcox Scholarship student
“Ford factory recall,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 2006

Images

Digital Photo of Catherine Soja
Digital Photo of Dorothy Cook
Digital Photo of Mollie Rodman Tracy
Digital Photo of Theresa Meiden Finlan Cameron
Digital Photo of Phoenix Mill Plant
Phoenix Mill Plant, 25 May 1999
Side entrance to Phoenix Mill Plant, 25 May 1999
Side entrance to Phoenix Mill Plant, 25 May 1999
Phoenix Lake Dam in front of Phoenix Mill Plant, 25 May 1999
See Also Record Group 12, Charles Draper Collection

Folder 4—Phoenix Mill Women’s Museum

“Museum to honor women in industry,” *Detroit News*, 7 August 2002
“Honor the ‘Rosie the Riveters’ of Wayne County,” *Community Crier*, 1 November 2002
Reception to Create the Phoenix Mill Women’s Museum, folder with various documents, 5 June 2002
“Plymouth plans museum at site of all-female mill,” *Detroit News*, 24 April 2002
“One for the Rosies, Fundraising event for the first of its kind museum to honor women who worked during WWII,” *Your Community Crier*, 22 November 2002
“5K run will benefit Phoenix Mill Museum,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 14 September 2003
“Phoenix Yard tapped for women’s museum,” *Detroit News*, 7 August 2001
“Phoenix Mill Feasibility Study” May, 2007

Folder 5—Ford Heritage Trails

“Ford Heritage Trails,” *Art Beats*, March 1990
“Township donates to Heritage Trail”
“Project will celebrate county’s auto heritage,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 24 September 2000
“Ford Heritage Trails,” Wayne County Park System
“Walking the trail: History lives in area’s backyard”
Wayne County Park System brochure
Ford Heritage Trails brochure (3)
Visit Henry Ford Estate brochure
Welcome to Historical Mill Race Village, Northville, Michigan, brochure (2)
Ford Heritage Trails Tour flyer (4-green)
Ford Heritage Trails Tour flyer (4-yellow)
Correspondence concerning the creation of the Ford Heritage Trail Tour
Directions for Heritage Trail
“The Ford Heritage Trail”

Map Case 4, Drawer 1

Ford Heritage Trails

Folder 6—Miscellaneous

“Household Industries of the Ford Motor Company” (2)

“Village Industries 1941-45” (2)

List of Village Industry plants

“Case Study on Ford’s Village Industry Communities,” by Dale Yagiela

Ford taps

“Grand Opening and Dedication of the Ford Village Industries Exhibit,” Plymouth Historical Society, 23 April 1989

“An Historic Connection: Village Industries and Plymouth”

A Visit to the Ford Rouge Plant pamphlet (Acc. #2007.34.01)

Entry 2—Mills (pre-Ford)

Folder 1—Wilcox and/or Plymouth Mill

Unknown paper, “Ford Bought and Built Here”

D. B. Wilcox & Son, from Souvenir book of Plymouth, 1898

Images:

Wilcox Brothers Mill, 3 copies (one colorized) (Acc #L929)

Plymouth Mills postcard by Davis B. Hillmer (Acc #1112)

Wilcox Mill postcard, 4 copies (Acc #93.104.5, 84.2.101)

Plymouth Mills (Acc #2001.087.035)

Plymouth Mills in winter

Plymouth Mills, S Hardenbergh Pro., from 1860 Wayne County Map, 3 copies (Acc #96.43.7)

Plymouth Mills drawing

See Also Record Group 12, Charles Draper Collection

Folder 2—Phoenix Mill

Phoenix Mill receipts (Acc #95.20.7a– 95.20.7f)

“Phoenix Mill Burns Down,” *Plymouth Mail*, 14 July ?

Entry 3—Scrapbooks

1. Ford Village Industries scrapbook. Contents: Recreation, Cherry Hill Story, Girls Home Arts Course, Heritage Trail, Rouge Rescue
2. Ford Village Industries scrapbook.
3. Former Village Industries Plants, compiled by Stephen A. Vanderpoorten in 1988

Entry 4—Ford Motor Company

Folder 1—100th Anniversary literature

“The Road is Ours—100th Anniversary Celebration” Event Passport, 12-16 June 2003

2002 Annual Report—“Starting Our Second Century”

2003 Proxy Statement

My Ford, Special Centennial Edition, 100 Years of Ford
100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin

Map Case 4, Drawer 5

“100 Years of Ford Motor Company,” *The Detroit News*, 9 June 2003

“Fabulous Fords,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 16 June 2003

“A Century of Audacious Tinkering,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 12 June 2003

“Food of the Fords,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 10 June 2003

Folder 2—Ford Times

September 1947 (Acc #90.58.3L(a))

October 1949 (Acc #90.58.3L(b))

November 1949 (Acc #90.58.3L(c))

January-February 1950 (Acc #90.58.4L)

February 1950 (Acc #90.58.3L(d))

July 1950 (Acc #90.58.3L(e))

December 1950 (Acc #90.58.3L(f))

March 1951 (Acc. #2007.124.15)

April 1968

October 1968

December 1970

February 1971

April 1971

June 1971

September 1971

October 1971

October 1972

December 1972

June 1976

Box 2, Shelf 99

Entry 4 (continued)

Folder 3—Product Brochures, Manuals and Images

Fordson, the Universal Tractor

A World of Better Ideas From Ford, 1981: Escort, Granada, Fairmont, Thunderbird, Ford Ltd.,

Mustang

The Ford Mechanic November 1957

“The Making of the Model T,” a new exhibit celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Birthplace
of the Model T

1928 Ford Model A Touring

1928 Lincoln Model L

1930 Ford Model 82-B Closed Cab Pickup

1931 Ford

1936 Ford Dump Truck

1949 Mercury Six-Passenger Coupe postcard (Acc. #99.149.37)

1955 Mercury

1958 Ford Owner’s Manual

1967 Ford
1968 Mercury Station Wagons
1968 Mercury (2 different brochures)
1968 Ford Cars & Trucks for Recreation
1982 Thunderbird

Map Case 4, Drawer 6

1954 Lincoln
1955 Lincoln
1968 Ford...Better Ideas
1968 Fairlane
1968 Fairlane Torino
Model T advertisement (Acc. #2005.017.01)

Box 2, Shelf 99

Folder 4—Company Publications

Speech by William C. Ford, Jr., "Ford and the Plymouth Community, 15 April 1994
"Ford at 90," June 1993
Ford World, September 1998
Ford Motor Company 1961 Annual Report
Sheldon Road Plant Our World Special Edition, 25th Anniversary, 19 September 1992
Shop Talk . . . from your Ford Dealer, 1960
Network: Ford Motor Company Community Relations Newsletter 9 (1995)
Ford: An American Legend (Acc #2001.061.02)
An Anniversary Celebration, 1903-1993

Folder 5—Images

Ford Motor Company postcard of 12,000 employees (Acc #93.104.19)
Model of Quadricycle (several views)
Christmas Card of Quadricycle
Henry Ford (Acc #81.42.11L)

Folders 6 and 7--Publications for Ford Motor Company Employees and Ford English School Students

Official 100 Facts Taught by the Teachers of the Ford English School to the Graduating Class
1916-1917 (Acc # 2011.01.01)
"America" and "Help the Other Fellow" Lyrics (Acc # 2011.01.02)
Numbers to Know: A Handy Guide to Weights and Measures (Acc # 2011.01.03)
The King and You (Acc # 2011.01.04)
Happiness Doesn't Come in Pills - two copies (Acc # 2011.01.05 and #2011.01.06)
How to Drown-proof Your Family (Acc # 2011.01.07)
Photo Hints (Acc # 2011.01.08)
Before You Buy Wood (Acc # 2011.01.09)
Hay Fever and What You Can Do About It - two copies (Acc # 2011.01.10 and
2011.01.13)
What Price Living (Acc # 2011.01.11)

Help Your Child Plan His Career (Acc # 2011.01.12)
Spending Time with Your Family (Acc # 2011.01.14)
What You Should Know About Credit (Acc # 2011.01.15)
What You Can Do to Stop Inflation (Acc # 2011.01.16)
Mr. Big Meets Mr. Small (Acc #2011.01.17)
Think Tall to Be Tall (Acc # 2011.01.18)
Spring Tips for Home Owners (Acc # 2011.01.19)
"You Don't Play Freedom Safe!" (Acc # 2011.01.20)
Weekday: The Magazine of Everyday Living Vol. 3 No. 3 (Acc #2011.01.21)
Weekday: The Magazine of Everyday Living Vol. 3 No. 8 (Acc # 2011.01.22)
Deft Driving (Acc # 2011.01.23)
The 1962 American Voter: Congressional and State Election Edition (Acc # 2011.01.24)
Landlubbers Awake! two copies (Acc # 2011.01.25 and # 2011.01.26)

Entry 5—Articles

Folder 1—Articles about Ford

“Secrets of the Model T,” by Albert B. Stephenson, *American Heritage*, July/August 1989
“Ford’s ‘999’ and Cooper’s ‘Arrow’,” by George DeAngelis, *Antique Automobile*,
November-December 1993
“Some Ford Contributions to World War II,” by Ford R. Bryan, *The Dearborn Historian* 43
(Summer 2003)
“Ford Jr.’s rise to the top sign of stability, profits,” by Daniel Howes, *The Detroit News*
“To Ford’s Most Global Division,” *1989 Crier Salute to Industry & Commerce*
“Cutler Sketched the Ford Museum,” by Sam Hudson, *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 1 April
1976
“Where Fondest Memories of Motor King Will Ever Cling”
Article on Ford Village Industries, *Detroit Free Press*, 24 September 1972
“Ford: Bill Ford emerges as front man for the Lions stadium deal and heir apparent to the family
firm,” *Detroit Free Press*, 6 October 1996
“Death Returns to Ford Plant,” *Detroit Free Press*, 19 August 1996
“Ford Almost Started Empire in Plymouth,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*, 14 October 1974
“Plymouth Could Have Had the Ford Motor Co.,” *Plymouth Observer & Eccentric*
“The Estimable Power of Women,” *Detroit Free Press*, 28 September 1977
“Ford Sheldon Road Plant Certified as Corporate Wildlife Habitat”
“Henry and Edsel Ford and Detroit Designer Raymond H. Dietrich,” *The Dearborn Historian* 43
(Autumn 2003)
“The Road is Ours: 100th Anniversary Celebration, June 12-16, 2003,” *The Dearborn Historian*
43 (Autumn 2003)
“The Ford Model T 1912 Torpedo Runabout,” *The Motor*, 19 December 1951
“Shooting at Ford Plant,” 2nd Press Release, Plymouth Township Police Department, 18 August
1996
“Shooting at Ford Plant,” 3rd Press Release, Plymouth Township Police Department, 19 August
1996
A News Release from Saline Area Historical Society, Saline, Michigan about speaker Leo
Landis, “Henry Ford’s Transformation of Agriculture in Saline and Michigan.”

- “Henry Ford’s First Car, the Quadricycle: One Hundred Years Old,” by Joan M. Klimchalk, *The Dearborn Historian* 36 (Summer 1996)
- “The Quadricycle, 1896,” brochure compiled by Kelly Camfield, 1996.
- “Ford,” with information about Henry Ford, the Quadricycle and the Runabout.
- “US designates Model T birthplace a historic site,” *Detroit News*, February 22, 2006
- “Engineer Builds Replica of Rouge Plant Tugboat” *Ford History*, March 2009
- “What’s the Story Behing The Henry Ford Penny” *Ford History*, March 2009

Map Case 4, Drawer 5—Articles about Henry Ford I and II

- “Ford Dies in Cold, Oil-Lighted House,” *Detroit Times*, 8 April 1947 (Acc #2001.083.04)
- “Every U.S. Auto Plant to Halt for Ford Rites,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 9 April 1937 (Acc #2005.101.08)
- “Ford Will Be Buried Today,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 10 April 1937 (Acc #2005.101.01)
- “The Last Tycoon, Henry Ford II,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 30 September 1987 (Acc #2001.107.06)

Map Case 4, Drawer 8

- “The Ford Legacy: The cars, the companies, the community,” *Crain’s Detroit Business* (Summer 2003 (Acc. #2004.237.001)

Entry 6—Books

- Burlingame, Roger. *Henry Ford: The Greatest Success Story in the History of Industry*. New York: The New American Library, 1954.
- Cameron, W.J., *A Series of Talks Given on the Ford Sunday Evening Hour*, 1936 (Acc. #98.76.9)
- Dahlinger, John Côté. *The Secret Life of Henry Ford*. Indianapolis. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1978. (Acc #95.98.6)
- DeAngelis, George, Edward P. Francis and Leslie R. Henry. *The Ford Model "A": "As Henry Built It" Second Edition*. Allen Park: Motor Cities Publishing Company, 1975. (Acc # 2011.01.27)
- Ervin, Spencer. *Henry Ford vs. Truman H. Newberry*. New York: Richard R. Smith, 1935. (Acc #95.98.9)
- Ford, Henry. *My Life and Work*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, Inc., 1924. (Acc #L2107)
- _____. *The Case Against the Little White Slaver*. Reprint. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Historical Society of Michigan, 1992. (Acc #95.8.1)
- Ford Motor Company. *Ford at Fifty 1903-1953*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1953. (Acc #88.35.2L)
- Garrett, Garet. *The Wild Wheel*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1952. (Acc #95.98.12)
- Graves, Ralph H. *The Triumph of an Idea: The Story of Henry Ford*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1934. (Acc #1968C and L2112)
- Herndon, Booton. *Ford: An unconventional biography of the men and their times*. New York: Weybright and Talley, 1969. (Acc #95.98.4)
- Hershey, Burnet. *The Odyssey of Henry Ford and the Great Peace Ship*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1967. (Acc #95.98.8)

- Lasky, Victor. *Never Complain, Never Explain: The Story of Henry Ford II*. New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1981. (Acc #95.98.7)
- May, George S. *A Most Unique Machine: The Michigan Origins of the American Automobile Industry*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975. (Acc #79.5.7L)
- Miller, James Martin. *The Amazing Story of Henry Ford*. 1922. (Acc #L2108 and 95.98.10)
- Nevins, Allan. *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954. (Acc #95.98.2)
- Nevins, Allan and Frank Ernest Hill. *Ford Decline and Rebirth, 1933-1962*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963. (Acc #95.98.5)
- Norwood, Edwin P. *Ford Men and Methods*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1931. (Acc #76.245.2)
- Pagé, Victor W. *The Model T Ford Car*. New York: The Norman W. Henley Publishing Company, 1919. (Acc #2000.127.01)
- Petersen's Complete Ford Book*. Los Angeles: Petersen Publishing Company, 1973. (Acc #95.98.11)
- Simonds, William Adams. *Henry Ford and Greenfield Village*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1938. (Acc #1968B)
- Sorensen, Charles E. *My Forty Years with Ford*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1956. (Acc #1968A)
- Sorensen, Lorin. *The Ford Road: 75th Anniversary, Ford Motor Company 1903-1978*. Silverado Publishing Company, 1978. (Acc #89.58.1L)
- Sorensen, Lorin. *The Ford Road: 75th Anniversary, Ford Motor Company 1903-1978*. Silverado Publishing Company, 1978. (Acc #2008.263.05)
- Sward, Keith. *The Legend of Henry Ford*. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1948. (Acc #95.98.3)
- Upward, Geoffrey C. *A Home for Our Heritage: The Building and Growth of Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, 1929-1979*. Dearborn, Mich.: The Henry Ford Museum Press, 1979. (Acc #80.15.3L)