



FORD PIQUETTE AVENUE PLANT MUSEUM





FORD MOTOR CO.

Independence Hall

The Old North Church

The Empire State Building

SOME BUILDINGS ARE SO ICONIC TO AMERICAN HISTORY AND THE CITIES THEY REPRESENT, THEY COMMUNICATE LAYERS OF CULTURAL MEANING THROUGH THEIR NAMES ALONE.

THERE IS ONLY ONE MOTOR CITY, THE HISTORIC HEART OF THE AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY, AND MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, THE LEGEND — AND THE FOUNDATION FOR DETROIT'S EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD — BEGAN AT 461 PIQUETTE AVENUE.

The Ford Piquette Avenue Plant

BIRTHPLACE OF THE MODEL T, THE CAR THAT PUT THE WORLD ON WHEELS COMPRISING 50% OF ALL CARS ON THE PLANET BY THE EARLY 1920'S
A MACHINE THAT TRANSFORMED THE WAY WE LIVE AND DRIVE TODAY

THIS REVOLUTION IN HUMAN INDUSTRY STARTED IN A 714-SQUARE-FOOT ROOM AT 461 PIQUETTE IN DETROIT

STILL STANDING AND STILL ORIGINAL AFTER 118 YEARS...

If walls could talk... and these do.





The Origin Point: 461 Piquette

The Ford Piquette Avenue Plant Museum tells one of Detroit’s greatest origin stories – how natural resources, a talented workforce and flourishing new industries combined to create the perfect incubator for innovation.

Leading the pack of influencers was a radically different thinker, natural mechanic and genius entrepreneur — Henry Ford. Ford’s factory on Piquette Avenue was the first purpose-built home of the Ford Motor Company from 1904 to 1910.



Hundreds of innovations characterize Ford’s early successes with the eight car models made at the Piquette Plant prior to the T (models B, C, F, K, N, R, S and SR), followed by the combination of those many advancements represented in

the Model T. The story of early Detroit also includes dozens of other carmakers, all within a two-mile radius of Piquette: Cadillac, Brush, Regal, Studebaker, Dodge, Hupp, and Detroit Electric, to name a few.

But 1908’s engineering marvel, the Model T, stands alone as one of the most impactful machines in history. Unprecedented, the Model T made Detroit the Silicon Valley of its era and influenced automotive trends into the current century.

- The first affordable, mass-produced car for everyday people
- Sparked a worldwide transformation in manufacturing, transportation and urban planning
- Simultaneously, launched social and cultural trends such as The Great Migration, the population shift from farms to cities, and the rise of the middle class

This revolution in human industry started in a 714-square-foot “secret room” on the third floor of 461 Piquette. This is where Ford and his talented team, joined by a 14-year-old Edsel, envisioned and engineered the first Model T — in just one year. By 1910, the explosion in orders for the new vehicle took Ford to his mammoth Highland Park manufacturing plant.

1904

Piquette begins production of the B

1908

the Model T is birthed at Piquette

1910

Ford leaves for Highland Park

1911

Studebaker purchases Piquette

1926

Studebaker elevator is installed



Piquette Began a New Chapter

As with many national treasures, Piquette began an era of reuse and was subsequently forgotten as time marched on. The New England “mill-style” structure of wood and brick narrowly avoided destruction in 1999. A chance intervention by the Henry Ford Heritage Association (HFHA) and community volunteers saved this important building for the benefit of future generations.

The work of a legion of passionate volunteers painstakingly carried Piquette over the next few decades. They accomplished much:

- Structural stabilization, re-tuckpointing and a new roof for the building
- Over 350 wood windows, lovingly rebuilt by dedicated volunteer craftsmen
- Henry Ford’s office and Secret Experimental Room were rebuilt to original specifications
- New vehicles and new exhibits debuted
- A wealth of scholarship and research demonstrating the importance of the site and Milwaukee Junction in the evolution of the auto industry

Today, visitors to the Piquette Avenue Plant Museum can explore one of the oldest surviving automotive manufacturing factories in the world and walk the very same floors as Henry and Edsel Ford. Over 30,000 visitors from all corners of the world flock annually to 461 Piquette to get up close to more than 65 rare vehicles, including one of the world’s only complete collections of Henry Ford’s “Letter Cars” on display. Through film, photographs, artifacts and other historical interpretation, the museum brings to life the industrial, cultural, and social history of the City of Detroit just after the turn of the century.



1999

HFHA visits and rallies the purchase of Piquette

2006

Piquette named a National Historic Landmark

2021

Preserving the Legend Campaign launches

2021

Covid-19 global pandemic: \$1.4M in lost event and admissions revenue at Piquette

Piquette's Unique Location — in 1908 and Today



Piquette employed some of the first women in the automotive industry. The “magneto girls” wound copper coils for the flywheel magneto.

Over 15 million Model T's produced in 19 years of continuous production.

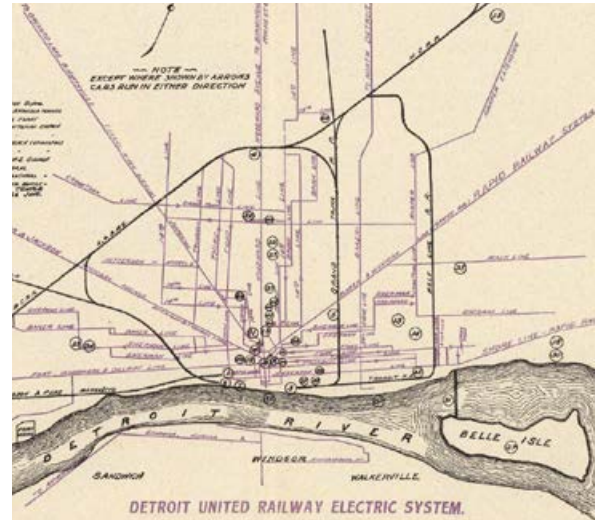


In 1908, the first Model T's sold for \$850. By 1925, the vehicles sold for only \$260.

The Model T created factory jobs for immigrants, women and minorities.

In 1908, Milwaukee Junction was ideally situated to birth the auto industry — located at the intersection of major east-west rail routes and supplied by Great Lakes shipping and the new Erie Canal.

Now a National Historic Landmark, Piquette serves as a cultural anchor for this strategic Detroit neighborhood — a focus of the City of Detroit's ongoing revitalization.



There is currently more than \$170 million in new real estate development underway, immediately surrounding Piquette. This tipping point for Milwaukee Junction includes the \$37 million Piquette Flats project, as well as the repurposing of the long-derelict Fisher 21 plant, an Albert Kahn-designed auto body factory that opened in 1919. Developers for these projects point to Piquette as a case study for successful renovation of historic auto factories and their inherent architectural value.

The most desirable urban settings have a respectful mix of old and new architecture because they give people a shared sense of identity through landmarks, memories and history. A museum is a place where people go to look and learn, but also to meet and gather, and that is essential for thriving communities. Massive change in Milwaukee Junction represents both opportunities and challenges for the museum.





The Model T, also known as “Tin Lizzie,” became a pop-culture icon memorialized in music and movies.

A Vision for Piquette

Piquette tells a profound story about Detroit’s history of innovation and a revolution in transportation that bettered the lives of people all over the world. Lessons of the early automotive industry in Detroit inform current and future generations of inventors, entrepreneurs and technology disruptors.

Piquette is a point of historical pride for Detroiters and an international pilgrimage site for automotive tourism. However, its potential is yet untapped. An online industry blogger recently wrote, “Piquette is the coolest car museum you’ve never heard of.”

The new vision for Piquette is:

- A museum with all its historic spaces open to the public
- A powerful placemaker in Milwaukee Junction
- A presenter of innovative and impactful community programming
- A center for automotive and STEAM learning
- An inspirational and interactive experience that carefully preserves what makes Piquette so authentic and special

Piquette leadership is collaborating with the architectural firm Albert Kahn & Associates on the design of a fully revitalized Piquette, to include classrooms, community and educational spaces, new exhibits, and restoration of the plant’s historic first-floor offices where legendary figures like James Couzens got their start. These enhancements also address critical issues for preservation of the historic structure — its fragile infrastructure. This \$8+ million vision will enable new and future generations to experience and engage at Piquette.

As a place of global importance to automotive history, revitalizing Piquette supports the ongoing renewal of Detroit. Great cities have world-class tourist destinations, and Piquette is consistently rated among Detroit’s top historic sites. Most visitors are from beyond Southeast Michigan, and 18% are international, representing over 75 countries. This tourism has a ripple effect on the Detroit and Michigan economy as people eat, shop and stay locally.

At this important crossroad in Piquette’s history, the community is invited to help power the Preserving the Legend vision, to ensure the future of this remarkable emblem of American history.

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The T sparked the aftermarket supplier industry, a \$40 billion industry today.

A decision made at 461 Piquette, the Model T standardized the left-hand steering wheel.



The Model T established the concept of multiple vehicle designs using the same platform. Customers could choose from many different body styles such as the Touring, Roadster, Fordor, Coupe, Sedan, Runabout, Town Car, Landulet, Tourabout and more.



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