Automobiles

By: Faizan Ashraf

The most important age in automotive history was arguably the 1920's. This was when the automobile industry experienced great development and prosperity. At this time, the world was booming and experiencing extreme and rapid economic growth. Vehicle demand became extremely high. Before automobiles were introduced and mass-produced, land transportation was very slow and difficult. Automobiles dominated what was once the world of bicycles and horse carriages. Cars were used to go between work and home, to run errands, and to go on vacations. The appeal of saving time significantly increased car sales. As the world became more advanced, automobiles became more popular.

Henry Ford

Henry Ford was the most successful automobile maker of all time. He served as an inventor, entrepreneur and an advocate for automobiles of his time. He contributed to the growth of the North American economy at a time when it was still suffering from post-war effects. Henry Ford shaped parts of our society to what it is today.

In 1903, Ford established the Ford motor company and took his place as the vice president and chief engineer. The company had poor success as it was very slow at producing cars, making only 3 to 4 vehicles a day.

However, this soon changed. Ford invented the Assembly Line and implemented it to the faster production of cars. He also utilized the Internal Combustion Engine in his automobile models. These technologies made his cars affordable, reliable, and efficient. This led to the conception of the Model T in 1908.

Internal Combustion Engines

The most crucial part for an automobile is its engine. Before the invention of fuel and steam engines, the only sources of power for vehicles were man power and horses. The gasoline internal combustion was the most widely used engines for automobiles back in the 1920s. This engine was popular because it could reach a wide range of speed and its design allowed it to be mass powered. As the years passed engines have been modified to increase speed power and efficiency.

Assembly Line

The auto assembly line was one of the biggest improvements in automobile production. It cut down the duration of assembling a vehicle by almost half. This technology was perfected by auto-maker Henry Ford. The assembly line consisted of a large conveyor belt which moved the chassis of a car to different stations in the factory. As the belt moves, sections of the automobile were placed in place. The distinct advantage was that the work was divided amongst numerous of people. The average auto factory went from making only 4 or 5 vehicles a day to over 100. This assembly line also decreased the price because of the not as many workers were necessary. For example, the $1000 price tag of the Ford T Model (90,000 in current CND) became $500 after the introduction of the assembly line. In conclusion, the assembly line allowed the average Canadian to buy an automobile because of the substantial decrease of price.

The Model T

The Model T was produced mainly in Detroit, Michigan, which is the center of automobile production today. By the fourth year of production, almost 12,000 Model T's were sold. The introduction of the assembly line ensured that the Model T maintained its competitive price. One car only required 93 minutes to manufacture. Later on, the variations were developed such as the Model T Roadster, Coupe, Fordor and Tudor. Ford had sold over fifteen million Model T's worldwide by the end of 1927. The Model T had brought the automobile to the average person, as a result of its low cost.

How the Automobiles Influenced Society

The world was significantly changed in the 1920's and the 30's due to the widespread use of automobiles. By the end of the 1920s, automobiles became so inexpensive that almost every family owned an automobile. As a result, the way of life was considerably changed. Workers did not have to seek employment near their household, and could live farther away and still get to their jobs with ease. People would be able to run their errands with greater convenience. Finally, families could go on vacation on their own schedule and visit their relatives in distant places. Overall, automobiles increased the society in both productivity and efficiency, which spared more time for entertainment and recreation.

The automobile also brought substantial economic prosperity. More and more money was invested into the automobile industry. New roads and highways were being built to accommodate the growing number of cars.

Unfortunately automobiles also negatively influenced society. Firstly, roads were not being paved at the rate of the multiplying amount of cars. This resulted in a huge problem of traffic congestion. Secondly, the amount of pollution created by automobiles were appalling. Thirdly, there was a problem in attempting to cross the country since there were no transcontinental highway at that time, only dirt and unreliable roads. The automobile served the people of this world in a very influential manner.