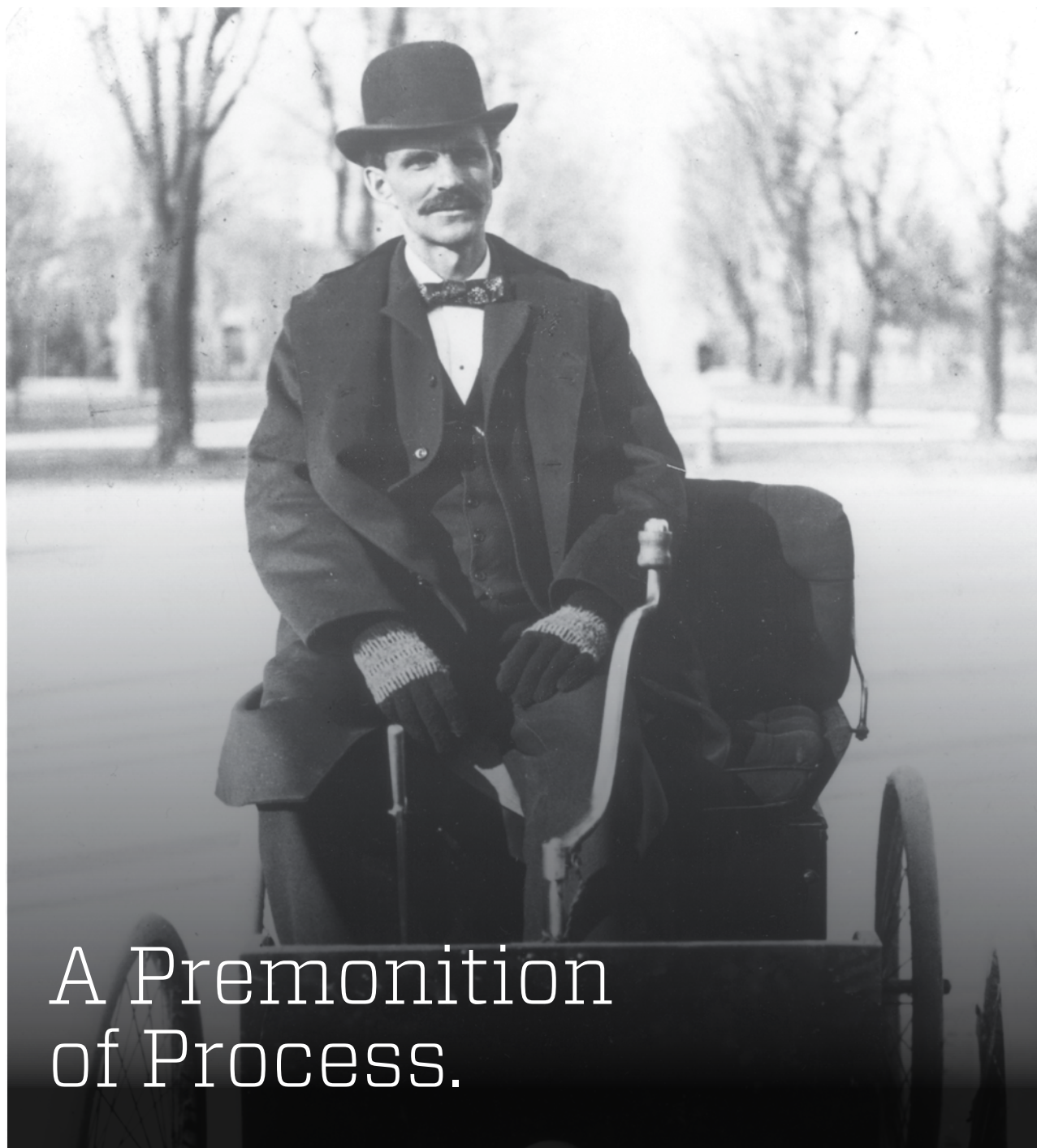




Building Stories

A creative writing contest
for students (grades 3-12)



A Premonition
of Process.

By Samuel Hardey, Wylie E. Groves High School (Beverly Hills, Michigan)

Co-Grand Prize Winner of The Henry Ford's
2013 Building Stories Creative Writing Contest



Henry and Clara Ford's Former Home on Bagley Avenue, 1898



Henry Ford circa 1876, Repairing Watches; Painted by Irving R. Bacon, 1935

A Premonition of Process.

Story by Samuel Hardey

It was a frustrating July day in 1891 for a fatigued 28-year-old man desperately searching for the next big invention. His mind was swirling with vast information about machines, electricity, efficiencies, illumination and power. How could he use this diverse knowledge and his work experiences to build something to make life easier? His name was Henry Ford. His location was his workshop, which sat behind his house on Bagley Avenue. It was here that Henry would realize his vision and begin his journey to change the worlds of transportation and manufacturing.

Yesterday had been a long, late day of hard work at the Edison Illuminating Company, and it had taken its toll on Henry. He was learning so much about electricity at the plant, but sometimes his curiosity took his eyes away from the clock. He now wanted to take this new knowledge and flavor it with his own creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and develop a new concept that would change the world. Henry had been contemplating the building of a new form of transportation but just didn't know where to start. Ever since he was a young boy, Henry was entertained with disassembling things and exploring how they worked. He was intrigued, too, by how machines were constructed and designed and quite savvy with the reassembly of them. He was what some would call a "tinkerer." In fact, he most enjoyed tinkering with watches, a favorite pastime that began when he received a treasured pocket watch from his dad. His fascination with watches led to a reputation for fixing timepieces. Friends and neighbors would request



Bagley Avenue Workshop in Greenfield Village

his services. As Henry grew older, pocket watches were replaced by steam engines, lights and other machines that allowed him to experiment with his own ever-creative mind.

The boy was now a man, but the dreams and aspirations to innovate and design still plagued his being. How could Henry use his machine-obsessed brain to channel a new idea? Did a three-wheel mode of transportation make sense? No, too unbalanced. What about a bike with thicker wheels? No, there needs to be power involved. Maybe an eight-wheel buggy was the answer. The limo buggy. No, it would be too big and require too much fuel. Henry was at a definite roadblock.

Feeling the tiredness envelope his body on that July day (1891), Henry's head fell to his desk surface in the Bagley Avenue workshop. The dream always began the same. Henry was watching his young, energetic self run around the farm with his five siblings. Life was good on the family farm in Dearborn, Michigan. His days were



Henry and Clara Ford in 1896 With Quadricycle; Painted by Norman Rockwell, 1951-1952



1906 Ford Model N and 1925 Ford Model T



Henry Ford Driving His Quadricycle, 1896



Workers Installing Engines on Ford Model T Assembly Line at Highland Park Plant, 1913



Henry Ford With Ford Model T Car, 1921

filled with studies in the one-room schoolhouse and doing chores. Then he was 12 and facing the death of his mother. He would not let this set him back in his life, only propel him forward. After his schooling, he moves to Detroit to become a machine apprentice. This leads to work at Westinghouse as a machinist and to Henry meeting his wife, Clara. Looking into the house in Detroit, Henry sees Clara, the sawmill and his workshop. Now comes the job at Edison's Illuminating Company and the hours of free time spent tweaking a gasoline engine concept. As he focuses closer, Henry sees himself in the dream working tediously on a new invention. Straining to see the detail of the project, he notices that there are more hands in his workshop and they are helping him in some way. Were they all working on his new invention? He was a bit puzzled. Then he suddenly awoke from his deep sleep.

With his brain on overload, he begins diligently producing this design that came to him in his dream. Four bicycle tires, an ethanol-powered engine, a steering mechanism, a three-gallon fuel tank - it was ingenious! He would call it the "quadricycle" - "quad" because it had four wheels and "ricycle" because they were bicycle wheels. He would eventually sell this unique vehicle for \$200. Another two would be produced before refining his design. He still wondered about his dream, though, and the part of it where there were many hands. What part was this in the invention?

Henry would then spend the next several years tweaking his machine and modifying its style, functionality, construction, power and overall mechanics. Each prototype that Henry created received a letter

designation as its name. There was Model K, N, R and S. Finally, the Model T was born in 1908 and marketed for \$825. (This was quite the deal, when competitors were selling their automobiles for \$2,000 - 3,000.)

Henry was determined to reduce the price of his automobile and make it more affordable for more people. He wrestled with how he could produce the Model T's more quickly to meet the ever-growing orders. He couldn't do it alone; he would need a whole team and a factory. It was then that he remembered the dream. All his life experiences, from his days as a child repairing pocket watches to his teen years when he tinkered with machinery to exploring the gasoline engine concept at the illuminating company to building the quadricycle at the Bagley Avenue workshop, contributed to his final Model T creation. Every life event had purpose and had "added to" to process. Just as life is a series of steps, he saw the manufacturing of a car in steps too. The many hands that were helping him in the dream were his team of assemblers. He would build a car in an assembly line where parts are added to the car in a progressive order.

By 1925, he was selling the Model T for \$260. Henry had used his dream to drive his manufacturing process invention.

Building Stories

A creative writing contest

Building Stories is a creative writing contest that is designed to inspire students in grades 3-12 to write original stories utilizing primary sources from The Henry Ford's collections. The contest provides a unique opportunity for students to apply and meet Common Core State Standards and other interdisciplinary curricular goals. See official rules, contest details and prize information at www.thehenryford.org/BuildingStories.



2013 Building Stories awards reception, The Henry Ford, June 20, 2013. Pictured (from left): Paula Gangopadhyay, chief learning officer, The Henry Ford; Samuel Hardey, co-grand prize winner; Karen Hardey, mother of the winner; Lynn Gilmour, teacher, Shrine Catholic Grade School, Royal Oak, Michigan (fifth-grade teacher of the winner); and Norman Hurns, Teacher, Wylie E. Groves High School, Beverly Hills, Michigan (ninth-grade teacher of the winner).