



Finding Aid for

**SIDNEY OLSON PAPERS, 1952-1963**

**PP 004**

**(Accessions 512, 716, 812, and 979)**

Finding Aid Republished: September 2013



Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford  
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## OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center  
The Henry Ford  
20900 Oakwood Blvd  
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029  
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ACCESSION NUMBER: PP 004 (Accessions 512, 716, 812, and 979)

CREATOR: Olson, Sidney

TITLE: Sidney Olson papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1952-1963

QUANTITY: 7 cubic ft., 1 oversize box, 1 folder

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: Sidney Olson conducted independent research in the Ford Archives, with the intention to write a series of books on Henry Ford. After his death, his manuscript was published under the title *Young Henry Ford*. His papers contain his manuscript, research notes, and plans for other projects.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The papers are open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Donated by the Ford Motor Company Archives in 1964.
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 512, 716, 812 **or** 979, Sidney Olson papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** The papers include original documents from Ford Motor Company Archives collections that were utilized for research and not returned to source collections.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory lists prepared by staff of the Ford Motor Company Archives, circa 1964.
- Finding aid prepared by Benson Ford Research Center staff, November 2011. Revised April 2013 to include abstract and other administrative information. Republished September 2013.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sidney Olson was a journalist, a war correspondent, and a senior editor at *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines before joining Kenyon & Eckhardt, an advertising agency, in 1951. The firm was hired by Ford executives to market Ford Motor Company's fiftieth anniversary. While working on the project, Olson spent many hours with material in the Ford Motor Company Archives.

After retirement, Olson conducted independent research in the Archives, focusing for five years on a project he called *The American Road, A Picture History of the Life and Times of Henry Ford, 1863-1947*. Olson's original intent was to write several volumes telling the story of Henry Ford "plainly" and utilizing primary source documents as much as possible. His manuscript was published (with some revision) after his death by Wayne State University Press under the title *Young Henry Ford*.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers are comprised of three series. The first, **American Road Manuscript**, circa 1953-1963 (1 cubic ft.), Accession 979, consists of a typewritten draft manuscript of *The American Road, A Picture History of the Life and Times of Henry Ford, 1863-1947*. The book was published posthumously in 1963 as *Young Henry Ford*. The manuscript includes 8 x 10 inch black and white photographic prints of all the images Olson wanted to include in the book. The final publication was modified from this version.

The second series, **Research Notes on Henry Ford**, circa 1952-1953 (4.4 cubic ft. and 1 oversize box), Accession 512, is comprised of handwritten and typewritten notes, quotations culled from reminiscences of Ford Motor Company employees, topical files (primarily photocopies), a draft manuscript, and photographs. The series begins with year by year Henry Ford chronologies from 1896 to 1902. Subject matter, broadly covering the life of Henry Ford and his interests, varies year to year. Of particular note are photocopies of Ford Motor Company director meeting minutes from 1903 to 1919 and a large run of photographs. While most of the photographs are copies of images from various Ford Motor Company Archives collections, researchers should note there are original vintage photographic prints interspersed throughout the folders.

A third series, **Public Relations Projects**, 1956-1961 (1.6 cubic ft. and 1 folder), Accession 716 and Accession 812, relate to two Olson marketing projects. The first, Project Flora, pertains to a study conducted in Flora, Illinois of 1961 Ford automobiles before they were released nationwide. Each family in Flora was given a 1961 Ford or Falcon model vehicle to test drive for a week and evaluate before the models were released to the general public. The papers include a questionnaire that was sent to all Flora residents, a draft of a study conducted by Olson entitled "The Secret Life of a Small Town," a detailed outline of the project, press documents, newspaper clippings, and a few photographs. The series also includes draft manuscripts Olson prepared for a second project, for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the V-8 engine, entitled "The Peaceful Revolution ... The Silver Anniversary Story of the V-8 Engine."

## **SUBJECT TERMS**

### Names, Personal and Corporate

Olson, Sidney

Ford, Henry, 1863-1947.

Ford, Edsel, 1893-1943.

Ford family

Ford Motor Company--History.

Ford Motor Company--Public relations.

Ford Motor Company--Employees.

Ford Motor Company--Executives.

### Subjects

Automobile industry and trade

Ford automobile

Ford Falcon automobile

### Geographic

Flora (Ill.)

### Genre and Form

Chronologies

Photographs

Maps

Minutes

## CONTAINER LIST

**Box no.**                      **Description**

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### **AMERICAN ROAD MANUSCRIPT (YOUNG HENRY FORD), Accession 979**

**Box 1**

Manuscript

### **RESEARCH NOTES, Accession 512**

**Box 1**

**Miscellaneous Research Notes and Lists, 1861-1955 (2 folders)**

**General Notes, Chronology**

1896-1922 (26 folders)

1924

1928-1930 (3 folders)

1932-1933 (2 folders)

1935-1936 (2 folders)

1930-1939

**Boxes 2 and 3**

**Notes from Ford Motor Company Reminiscences (64 folders)**

**Box 4**

**Topical Files**

Airplanes, 1927

Alex Dow, 1927

Alexander Malcomson, 1953

Bartolomeo Vanzetti, 1927

Cartoons, 1913-1914

Chicago Tribune Libel Suit, publications, 1924

Clara Ford, 1947

Dance Music, 1924

Edsel Ford, 1943

Henry Ford, Edison and Burroughs, 1911-1931

Ford Motor Company

General, 1901-1919 (2 folders)

Archives, 1951-1953

Director Meetings

Memorandums, 1903-1912

1903-1911 Minutes, scattered, photocopies (9 folders)

**Box 5**

Facts, 1928-1952

First Time Book, 1903

Five Dollar Day, 1914

History, 1903-1927  
Mack Plant History, 1942  
Model T Notes, 1913  
Profits, 1903-1922, 1933  
Tractors, Ford Ferguson, 1939  
Henry Ford  
General Clippings and Notes, 1894-1952  
Banks, 1916-1944  
Brooks, Harry, 1928 (includes photographs, some original)  
Death and Obituaries, 1947  
Educator, 1938 and Berry Schools, 1903  
Fair Lane, 1914-1953  
Favorite Hymn, 1939-1940  
George Washington Carver, 1941-1942  
Henry Ford Hospital, 1914-1928  
Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, 1929-1938  
Jewish Issue, 1921, 1937 and undated  
Labor, 1940-1941, 1926  
Manufacturing, undated  
Muscle Shoals, 1921-1922  
Parade, July 4, 1924  
Peace Ship, 1915-1940  
Political Races, 1916-1923  
Trips and Events, 1891-1950  
Wayside Inn, 1925-1929  
World War I, 1917-1918, 1923  
John Dillinger, 1934

**Box 6**

Kanzler, 1926-  
Liebold, undated  
Lincoln Automobile (interview with John H. Eagal), 1922-1952  
Race, New York to Seattle, 1909  
Radio Broadcast, "Behind the Wheel," 1946  
Selden and Dodge Law Suits, 1903-1926  
Tax Case, James Couzens, 1928 (2 folders)  
Vagabonds Camping Trips, 1916-1921 (includes photographs)

**Box 7**

**American Road (Young Henry Ford) Files and Photographs**

Critiques, undated  
First Draft, undated (2 folders)  
Corrections and Revisions, undated (4 folders)

**Box 8**

Corrections and Revisions, undated (4 folders)  
Photographs  
List of Photographs by Chapter (draft)  
Copies of Photographs (photoprint duplicates) (3 folders)

**Box 9**

Copies of Photos (photoprint duplicates) (3 folders)  
Photographs arranged by Chapter (20 folders)

**Boxes 10 and 11**

Photographs arranged by Year (28 folders) (includes many original photographs)

**Box 12 (oversize)**

Oversize Photographs (2)  
Hand-drawn Map of Dearborn Area, undated

**PUBLIC RELATIONS PROJECTS**

**Project Flora, 1960, Accession 716**

**Box 1**

“The Secret Life of a Small Town” by Sidney Olson drafts and copies (3 folders)

**Box 2**

Anticipated Acceptance  
Falcon Questions and Answers (7 folders and 3 binders)  
Local Information  
Miscellaneous Correspondence  
Press Releases  
Publicity, Suggested  
Press Conferences (includes 1961 National Teen Age Press Conference) (4 folders)

**Box 3**

Everyday Magazine, October 2, 1960  
Daily News Record, 1960 (5 copies)

**Box 4**

Flora, Illinois brochure  
Flora Community (7 folders)  
Mayor’s Letter and Questionnaire  
Photographs  
Reports  
Flora Church Committee  
Flora Education Committee



Flora Trades and Service Committee

**“The Peaceful Revolution”, 1957, Accession 812**  
**Folder 812 (Small Accessions)**

Two copies of Sidney Olson manuscript for “The Peaceful Revolution...The  
Silver Anniversary Story of the V-8 Engine”