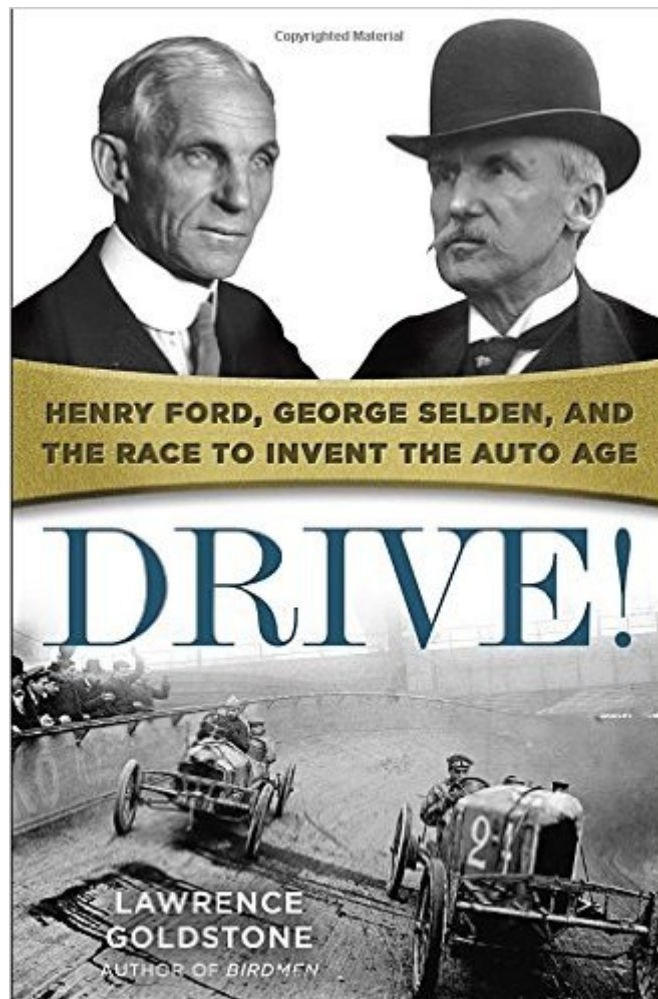


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# Drive!: Henry Ford, George Selden, And The Race To Invent The Auto Age



## Synopsis

From the acclaimed author of *Birdmen* comes a revelatory new history of the birth of the automobile, an illuminating and entertaining true tale of invention, competition, and the visionaries, hustlers, and swindlers who came together to transform the world. In 1900, the Automobile Club of America sponsored the nation's first car show in New York's Madison Square Garden. The event was a spectacular success, attracting seventy exhibitors and nearly fifty thousand visitors. Among the spectators was an obscure would-be automaker named Henry Ford, who walked the floor speaking with designers and engineers, trying to gauge public enthusiasm for what was then a revolutionary invention. His conclusion: the automobile was going to be a fixture in American society, both in the city and on the farm—and would make some people very rich. None, he decided, more than he. *Drive!* is the most complete account to date of the wild early days of the auto age. Lawrence Goldstone tells the fascinating story of how the internal combustion engine, a theory looking for an application, evolved into an innovation that would change history. Debunking many long-held myths along the way, *Drive!* shows that the creation of the automobile was not the work of one man, but very much a global effort. Long before anyone had heard of Henry Ford, men with names like Benz, Peugeot, Renault, and Daimler were building and marketing the world's first cars. Goldstone breathes life into an extraordinary cast of characters: the inventors and engineers who crafted engines small enough to use on a horseless carriage; the financiers who risked everything for their visions; the first racers—daredevils who pushed rickety, untested vehicles to their limits; and such visionary lawyers as George Selden, who fought for and won the first patent for the gasoline-powered automobile. Lurking around every corner is Henry Ford, a brilliant innovator and an even better marketer, a tireless promoter of his products—and of himself. With a narrative as propulsive as its subject, *Drive!* plunges us headlong into a time unlike any in history, when near-manic innovation, competition, and consumerist zeal coalesced to change the way the world moved. Praise for *Drive!* [A] marvelously told story . . . The author provides a terrific backdrop to the "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" era in which his story takes place. On display are lucky scoundrels and unlucky geniuses, hustlers, hacks, and daredevils galore. . . . Goldstone has written a book that beautifully captures the intertwined fates of these two ingenious pioneers. "The Wall Street Journal" A wonderful, story-filled saga of the early days of the auto age . . . Readers will be swept up in his vivid re-creation of a bygone era. "Horse Is Doomed," read one headline in 1895. This highly readable popular history tells why. "Kirkus Reviews (starred reviews)" A splendid dissection of the Selden/Ford patent face-off and its place in automotive historiography, this work will be enjoyed by business, legal, transportation, social, and

intellectual historians; general readers; and all libraries. • "Library Journal (starred review) "This book contains the great names in automotive history" the Dodge brothers, Barney Oldfield, all the French (they seemed, until Ford, to lead the Americans in development of the vehicle)" and it is fascinating. . . . An engaging new take on the history of technological innovation. • "Booklist

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a good telling of the early days of the auto industry. Goldstone covers a lot of ground quickly and in an entertaining manner. As you can tell from the other reviews, most are in agreement that it is a good read. This book fills a need for a summary of those beginnings. The tale of the patent is almost a consequence of the bigger story, how the auto industry in the U.S. grew to world dominance, from roots established elsewhere; until the 1980's, anyway. I know a little about the ongoing development of the modern auto, Goldstone helped me to learn more about the development of early auto technology in this well made book.

the early history of the automobile is not well known among the public. This book reveals some of this history. And some of subsequent history as well. Did you know that Nuclear Submarines are made by a successor company to an outfit that built electric and gas horseless carriages in the 1890s? No? Electric Boat is a successor company to Pope Bicycle Co which came to run electric cabs in most eastern cities, collected royalties from most automotive manufacturers at the time, and

eventually gave birth to the Society of Automotive Engineers.

There are a number of details I didn't know before reading this book. It could have spent a bit more time on the patent case. That said, it did teach me quite a bit about the early history of the motorcar. I am still uncertain about why Selden got a patent out of the USPTO, in view of the stuff that Benz had already developed. Or is my understanding of history skewed? Still a good read and very informative.

The story was not painted like this on the History Channel: Men Who Built America. Ford seemed to really have a lot of luck that mixed well with his hard work. However, he seemed to be the ultimate credit rogue. Also, I didn't know that Europe was so far ahead of the U.S. in ICE technology so early. Also, this corrected my assumption that Ford was the oldest corporation in America. Too many ah ha moments to list.

"Drive" by Lawrence Goldstone is about the early history of the Automotive Industry . . . the technological and manufacturing developments and the legal battles over patents. . . . Having grown-up in Michigan and worked in the Auto Industry, I was surprised at how little I really knew about it. . . . The book isn't particularly complimentary of Henry Ford, one of my youthful heroes. I wonder if Goldstone, with apparent Jewish roots, may have tilted his history against Henry because of his anti-Semitism. Has anyone else wondered about this?

Drive! is about the birth of the automobile and auto industry. It is the story of the wild early days of the auto age. The book shows that the creation of the automobile was not due to one man but was a worldwide effort. Benz, Peugeot, Renault, and Daimler were building the world's first cars before anyone even heard the name Ford. The problem was that those cars were custom built at a high cost and were not affordable by "regular" consumers. One man changed all of that. Henry Ford once said "Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs." which is exactly what he did to drive down the cost of his Model T. His assembly line revolutionized how automobiles were produced and his Model T was a car for the masses. The Model T made its debut in 1908 with a purchase price of \$825.00. Over ten thousand were sold in its first year, establishing a new record. Four years later the price dropped to \$575.00 and sales soared. By 1914, Ford could claim a 48% share of the automobile market. Drive! is fascinating, well researched and compelling. It tells the story of the early pioneers of the auto industry including the inventors and engineers who made

engines small enough to use on a horseless carriage; the financiers who risked everything and the first racers who were daredevils driving rickety vehicles and even a lawyer, George Selden, who fought for and won the first patent for the gasoline-powered automobile. I really enjoyed this book since my dad was a mechanic (he worked on cars, trucks, fire trucks, emergency vehicles and really anything with an engine) and I loved to help him fix the family car. I found the book enjoyable to read and learned a great deal that I did not know. The author has not written a dry history book but includes many amazing anecdotes that kept me interested especially the incredible stories of early racers. Those guys were nuts!

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