Brand Journalism:
A Cultural History of Consumers, Citizens, and Community in *Ford Times*

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In the words of Henry Ford, "The object of living is work, experience, and happiness. There is joy in work…There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something."

Dedication

The years of my life are marked in photos in which I stand in front of a different Ford truck. As a toddler in the late ‘70s, I pose for the camera while perched on a tricycle and proudly showing off knee socks and sneakers; my dad’s rusty red Ford truck sits in the background. As a child in the 80s, I sit on my dad’s shoulders, holding out a fish, while the same truck is parked in the driveway. Many photos exist of family vacations in the early 90s, usually to a national park, where my brother and I lean against our gray-blue Ford. With rolling eyes, cut-off jean shorts, a book, and a really bad perm, I very much look the part of a typical teen forced to endure, and finally to enjoy, a long period of family togetherness on the road. Finally, we have recent photos of my parents holding my daughters, as they walk down a driveway before a navy-colored Ford truck.

My dad, my favorite Ford man, embodies many FMC brand values:
hard-working, tough, dependable, and loyal.

This dissertation is dedicated to him.

Abstract

"Chronic insularity, with its attending evils, was torn to shreds by the teeth of the printing press."

- Albert Fredrick Wilson, Department of Journalism, NYU
from Introduction to Lectures in Industrial Journalism at New York University, 1915

Advertising and public relations professionals have recently applied the term 'brand journalism' to their work and praised it as a new model for strategic communication. This dissertation develops the concept by illustrating that brand journalism is not brand new; journalism has long served as a model for corporate communicators, especially for editors of the company press.

To illustrate historical and theoretical tension inherent in brand journalism, this research tells the story of Ford Times, a company magazine created by the Ford Motor Company from 1908 to 1917 and from 1943 to 1993 for consumers and dealers. Ford Times mission was to present a "view of America through the windshield." As the chapters ahead illustrate, the magazine detailed more than new models for sale; it combined narratives about automobile use, travel, nationhood, history, land conservation, regionalism, food and family with the Ford brand in order to build a reader community that inspired interest and loyalty for most of the twentieth century.

By analyzing historical archival material, including Ford Times content, editorial memos, and letters from readers, this study examines the role of a particular company magazine in constructing social space and building brand tenets, and in turn, examines the Ford Times contribution to conversations about community, patriotism, consumption, and the history of public relations. In doing so, this dissertation offers a unique, focused look at the corporate press, a longstanding public relations tactic often overlooked by strategic communication historians.

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Chapter One: 'Long May You Wave' - Introduction to Research and Methods

For most of the 20th century, a corporate magazine called the *Ford Times* was a linchpin in Ford Motor Company's advertising and public relations efforts. With each new model of car, Ford consumers received an owner's manual that described the mechanics of their new vehicles; they also received a subscription to the *Ford Times*, which described how cars operate in the larger social world.

The *Ford Times* mission was to present a "view of America through the windshield" to dealers, consumers and employees. Editors combined commercial and cultural information by directly showcasing new models of cars and connecting topics like sightseeing, sports, cooking, and relationships to automobile use. Famous contributors include William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Ogden Nash, E.B. White, Charley Harper and Erle Stanley Gardner. [1] The magazine was a success by corporate measures: circulation figures topped 2 million during the magazine's heyday. It also generated many letters to the company describing readers' positive response to the magazine and emotions for the Ford brand.[2] In 1987, the Ford Motor Company began outsourcing magazine production to public relations agency Hill & Knowlton to cut costs. In 1993, the Ford company stopped publishing *Ford Times.* A farewell message in

[1]Alan Rosenthal, "The Little Magazine with a Big Mission," *Advertising Age* 31 March 2003.
[2] S.G. Riley, *Corporate Magazines of the United States* (Greenwood Pub Group, 1992), 85-86.

the final issue states, "*Ford Times* has been our continuing bridge of communications – for us, the Ford Motor Co. and your dealer –and you, our very important customer."[3]

With this final issue, the Ford Motor Company said farewell to more than a magazine. As this research illustrates, *Ford Times* provided a narrative of connection, met the informational needs of audience members, gave readers a deeper sense of Ford brand tenets, and offered a moral base for car consumption. Today, social media, website content, media relations, and advertising campaigns have largely replaced the company press – at Ford and elsewhere.[4] As practitioners embrace new digital platforms, "brand journalism" is heralded as a new way to connect with consumers by offering content that blends journalistic principles with organizational communication strategies.[5] Yet, contemporary practitioners largely ignore the history of the company press; corporations have long been successful at becoming trusted sources of engaging, interesting, informative, compelling and useful content and telling stories that navigate tension between public relations and journalism. This research, a historical study of *Ford Times* efforts to construct a particular "view of America through windshield*,"* helps contemporary public relations professionals better understand if "brand journalism" is a useful frame for strategic communication content, and if so, if efforts to build a "continuing bridge of communication" really does remain the same.

Purpose and Importance of Research

[3] *Ford Times,* January 1993, 1.
[4] Rich Thomaselli, "Marketer of the Year: Ford Motor Company," *Advertising Age*, October 18, 2010.
[5] See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of brand journalism.

Ford Times was no ordinary public relations tactic. Its circulation numbers rival top magazines and newspapers, its longevity is remarkable, and the publication secured national awards and recognition.[6] Most interesting for this research, *Ford Times* also inspired letters of gratitude from many readers, marking it as more than a sales tool in their lives. On January 15, 1951, Helen S. Hagge wrote to the Ford Motor Company to thank them for publishing the *Ford Times*: "Ever since receiving my first copy of '*Ford Times*' I have meant to tell you how much we all enjoy it in our home. Time has proven it a very valuable guest in the house for when all the stories are read and the recipes tried…I send the magazine to a friend in England who enjoys it as much as we do and no doubt passes it on to others there. We are grateful to the Ford company for making this all possible, just as we appreciate our succession of Ford cars which over the years have provided unlimited pleasure. Long may you wave!"[7]

Ford consumer Hagge was not alone in expressing love, admiration and gratitude for the marketing tool created by the Ford corporation. Around the same time, Ruth Nash Chalmers, Editor at the *Scarsdale Inquirer*, wrote a similar letter to the staff: "For months and months I've been meaning to write you and say what a complete joy the '*Ford Times*' is. Even if the Ford were not my favorite car, I could never bear to switch to another, because then I'd miss the fun of reading your magazine."[8] In March of 1951, Joseph Navarre wrote about his family's love for the *Ford Times* magazine, "The

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[6] Circulation figures are cited as around 2.1 million and readership around 8 million in the mid-1970s. Rosenthal, "The Little Magazine with a Big Mission."

[7] Letter from Helen S. Hagge, Acc 544, Box 1, PR Pubs and Correspondence, Jan-March 1951, Ford Motor Company Records, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.

[8] Letter from Mrs. Ruth Nash Chalers, January 26, 1951, Acc 544, Box 1, PR Pubs and Correspondence, Jan-March 1951, folder 7, Ford Motor Company Records, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford..

collective imagination of the entire gang has been set on fire by the trips and travel articles. The places revisited through picture and story have brought new fun and adventure. We are all very grateful for the friend you send to visit us and who brings nothing but joy and pleasure with him. We regret that we are so often too busy and preoccupied to give him the time and attention he justly deserves. We realize we are the losers because our charming friend and guest, the *Ford Times*, seems to be dedicated to the task of exposing us to the thrills, the wonders, and the happiness which are all about us, so easy of access to most of us, and so lavishly and wonderfully provided by a bountiful God. It is, therefore, in a spirit of thanksgiving that I write to express my sincere gratitude to you, your staff, and the Ford Motor Company and dealer Clem Davis for our guest and charming friend The *Ford Times*." These were not the only letters of gratitude written to the magazine. The Benson Ford Research Center archive contains files of unpublished reader letters from the postwar period; former Ford Advertising Director John Vanderzee also notes many readers sent letters of dismay to the company upon learning the magazine would be shuttered in the 1990s.[9]

Like the *Ford Times*, this dissertation is about more than the selling of cars. It describes how the *Ford Times* magazine constructed community, reinforced certain ways of thinking, worked as a branding tool, and offered content that far surpasses product features. In order to create a "view of America through the windshield" the *Ford Times* blended narratives about automobile consumption, nationhood, and brand membership. In

[9] John Vanderzee (former Advertising Director of the Ford Division), in discussion with the author, November 2010.

doing so, the company presented a chronicle of stories that addressed the identity of citizens, consumers, workers, family, corporations and community members.

Drivers of Community

By examining the narrative properties of Ford's advertising and public relations activities, this research contributes to scholarship that addresses how consumption activities become steeped in social meaning. Like other studies focused on consumption, this research connects to important social questions, such as: what is the changing nature of social solidarity and cohesion? When and where have forms of community flourished? How have social ties influenced our understanding of ourselves, others, the nation and the larger social world? These questions are central to how America understands itself as a nation and "imagined community."[10]

The relationship between consumption and citizenship is especially central to understanding American community and culture.[11] Cohen writes, "For late twentieth-century Americans, mass consumption is the overriding cultural experience, much the way religion must have been in the seventeenth century, revolution in the late eighteenth century, and industrialization a century ago. To try to understand the relationship between the consumer and the market is to ask questions as significant as those which probed the relationship between individual and church, citizen and state, and worker and capitalist. In the twentieth century, the consumption experience became the central arena where

[10] "Imagined Community" is Benedict Anderson's term. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006).
[11] Robert Reich, "How Did Spending Become Our Patriotic Duty?" " *The American Prospect*, September 23, 2001.

American society revealed the nature of its philosophical commitment towards individuality, freedom and equality."[12] Cohen also writes, "If we all are citizens and we all are consumers, how we choose to mix the two reveals a great deal about who we are as individual Americans as well as about the virtue of the America we live in at any particular moment in time."[13]

Consumption is an important arena for understanding American community and citizenship, and no product has played a more important role in shaping the nation's shared culture than the automobile. In 1908, with the introduction of the Model T, Henry Ford embarked on an ambitious mission: to bring the automobile to "the masses."[14] A century later, Americans cannot deny Ford's success. As the U.S. Federal Highway Administration stated in a 2005 survey report, we are a nation of drivers.[15] In 2003, the U.S Department of Transportation estimated that only 8 percent of American households do not own a vehicle.[16] Biographers credit Ford with drastically changing the American landscape, restructuring manufacturing, and reforming standards for labor.

More significant for this project, car consumption is also connected with American feelings of social identity, nationhood and citizenship. Today, television sitcoms, music videos and writers cite motor cars as evidence of "making it," and cars figure prominently in notions of the American Dream. Companies like Ford link citizens'

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[12]Lizabeth Cohen, "Review: The Mass in Mass Consumption," *Reviews in American History* 18, no. 4 (1990).
[13]L Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (Vintage, 2004), 15.
[14] The Henry Ford Museum, "The Model T: You Can Paint It Any Color…So as Long as It's Black,"(1999), http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/showroom/1908/model.t.html
[15] U.S. Department of Transportation, "2005 Traveler Opinion and Perception Survey (Top), November 2005," ed. Federal Highway Administration (2005).
[16]U.S. Department of Transportation, "Dot Releases New Nhts Showing Vehicles in Households Outnumber Drivers.," ed. Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

patriotic sentiment to car purchases in campaigns built upon "buy American" slogans. Automobile ownership also has come to symbolize personal freedom, as Christopher Finch writes: "As is exceedingly clear from the history of the automobile in America – its rise to a position of dominance in the transportation field – the average citizen equates the car with personal freedom, which is held to be a self-evident and inalienable right guaranteed by the Constitution."[17] Individual liberty, a mainstay of American citizenship, has been translated to signify personal power, including the right to vote and express oneself freely, writes Finch. The automobile has become an "expression of personal power at both practical and symbolic levels. It could be an everyday tool, a passport to leisure, a provider of privacy, and at the same time a status symbol."[18]

Historians' stories about the Ford Motor Company emphasize the contentious leadership of Henry Ford, the company's impact on mass production, and the legacy it left on automobile design. James Flink writes that few would disagree that the innovations at the Ford Motor Company, including the Model T, the five-dollar-eight-hour workday, and the moving-belt assembly line, more profoundly influenced twentieth-century American historical development than the collective reforms that emerged from the New Deal and Progressive Era combined.[19] This research does not intend to further contribute to the "popular cult of Henry Ford" or glorify the "heroic" contributions of Ford innovations like the Model T.[20] The focus instead is on how the Ford Motor

[17] C. Finch, *Highways to Heaven: The Auto Biography of America* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 372.
[18] Ibid., 373.
[19] JJ Flink, "The Car Culture," (1976): 2-3.
[20] Ibid.

Company created a reader community and directed America's social and cultural understandings of the auto within the pages of the successful *Ford Times* magazine.

In order to foster the connection between consumption and citizenship, early automobile manufacturers relied on more than smart engineering and pricing strategies: the Ford Motor Company and its competitors also directed much of the social and cultural conversation surrounding car ownership. As Richard Lanham writes, "capital" also resides in the power to direct cultural conversations or to take the language we "inherit and spin from it new patterns for how to live and to think about how we live."[21]

Because of the impressive longevity and legacy of the Ford brand, the company's marketing, advertising and public relations activities offer a unique, focused insight into a century of struggle to secure this "capital." Along with traditional forms of communication like press releases and ads, the department produced motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, special events, booklets, radio shows and speeches aimed at creating a "preference for Ford as a neighbor and a citizen, as well as a maker of cars." [22] This research takes a nuanced look at the rituals, stories and symbols used by Ford to offer a "view of America" that made their brand an important part of America's shared experience;" "capital" that connects the consumption of cars to nationhood.

Scholars have raised important questions about how the growing influence of public relations has threatened journalism's commitment to ideals like objectivity and

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[21] R.A. Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 9.

[22] "Report of Management Meeting, March 1950". Acc 422, Box 2, Ford Motor Company Records, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford. At the management meeting in March of 1950, Charlie Carll, the Director of Public Relations for the Ford Motor Company, declared that the company's number one public relations' objective was "good citizenship" and competition for "public confidence and goodwill" was as important as car sales.

balance.[23] This is important work; however, scholars must also treat public relations as more than simply an information provider to the press. The next chapter describes how concepts like brand journalism serve as a useful frame for understanding the historical and theoretical work of commercial content in imparting information, developing collective beliefs, and framing shared space among reader communities. Like journalism, corporate magazines provide narratives, rituals, and symbols directly to the public, and in turn, shape understanding of consumption, citizenship, and community.[24] Bogart uses the term "commercial culture" to describe not only the central place of material goods and related symbols in American life, but to also to describe the important influence of advertising and public relations on the flow of information and expression that shape national character. He points out that advertising and public relations messages are not extraneous intrusions into the flow of ideas and entertainment; instead, commercial messages are an "important element of media content and have a significant impact on what we think and how we act, as consumers and citizens."[25] Investigating these connections is important, for as McGovern writes, a "truly democratic culture of abundance can only exist when people look beyond goods to one another."[26]

Company Press

[23] K.K. Gower, *Public Relations and the Press: The Troubled Embrace* (Northwestern Univ Pr, 2007), 3.
[24] James Carey's "transmission" and "ritual" roles of communication support this research, which is described in chapter two.
[25] L. Bogart, *Commercial Culture: The Media System and the Public Interest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 89.
[26] C. McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

This research pays particular attention to factors that contributed to the development of a company magazine, its content over the last century, motivations shaping its creation, and efforts by editors to foster a reader community. This is important work; as Holmes writes, magazines are "full of stories which we tell about ourselves, which we make up about ourselves, which we accept as being about ourselves."[27] Abrahamson also writes that magazines are powerful catalysts for social change and products of specific social and cultural moments.[28] Mass communication scholars have overlooked corporate magazines as a cultural form, and company magazines are an underestimated and understudied form of communication. [29] Company-produced magazines especially have not received the academic attention they deserve, largely because scholars have not always treated consumption and commercial messages as serious objects of study important to American history and culture.[30] Even scholars specializing in public relations history have not fully investigated company magazines; as the next chapter discusses, public relations history has been constrained by a progressive frame that over emphasizes media relations and a handful of colorful characters at the determent of long-standing tactics like the company press.

Company magazines must be recognized as a significant part of public relations history. [31] By 1928, American companies were producing 700 to 800 corporate magazines.[32] By 1950, American businesses were circulating 70.7 million copies of

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[27] T. Holmes, "Mapping the Magazine: An Introduction." " *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 515.
[28] D Abrahamson, "Magazine Exceptionalism," *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007).
[29]Holmes, "Mapping the Magazine: An Introduction." ".; Daphne Jameson, "Book Review: Corporate Magazines of the United States," *Journal of Business Communication* 31(1994).
[30]L.B. Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader* (Cornell Univ Pr, 1999), 7.
[31] Riley, *Corporate Magazines of the United States*, ix.
[32] P.M. Wagner, *Factory and Industrial Management,* , July 1928.

house organs.[33] Despite their long history and proliferation, there has been "little critical examination of this unique organizational medium."[34] Scholarship on the company press often catalogs magazine titles, describes "typical" or "common" aspects of house organs or offers prescriptive "how-to" tips for public relations professionals and company editors.[35]

Few scholars have examined corporate created magazines as a nexus of community or analyzed reader-submitted content like letters to the editor. Reader and Moist found only one study that dealt with the construction of 'community values' via magazine content.[36] This research adds to that body of research and extends it to the strategic communication realm by examining magazine content and community building around a particular product brand.

Methods for this dissertation

This research explores topics and themes that unite the *Ford Times* magazine and investigates how editors helped the magazine remain valuable to readers and internal brand stakeholders over the course of the twentieth century. In doing so, this dissertation describes how the Ford Motor Company used language and images to tell their corporate story, to unite a community of consumers, and ultimately, to sell automobiles. The purpose of this dissertation is to understand "the work" *Ford Times* performs for the

[33] A.F. Hausdorfer, *House Organ Production: A Bibliography* (Temple University Libraries, 1954).
[34] P.G. Clampitt, J.M. Crevcoure, and R.L. Hartel, "Exploratory Research on Employee Publications," *Journal of Business Communication* 23, no. 3 (1986): 5.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Bill and Kevin Moist Reader, "Letters as Indicators of Community Values: Two Case Studies of Alternative Magazines," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (2008).

corporation and how the magazine constructs narratives about community and American "values and patterns of life."[37] Scholars have long recognized journalism's importance to constructing social bonds and shaping national identity. This study addresses how public relations messages also shape our understanding of the "good citizen" and the "good consumer," and the limits of these constructions.

This dissertation is essentially a study of a particular public relations tactic – the Ford Motor Company's attempt to use their company-created house organ, *Ford Times*, to communicate with consumers, employees and other stakeholders. This research uses the archives of an American business to tell a story about a particular public relations tactic; the pages ahead situate the magazine within the history of public relations, explore how the house organ fits into the larger cultural landscape, and address how the editors built core values that mix patriotism and consumption of cars.

This dissertation takes a cultural history approach, in which research focuses on the text, the group of readers and managers that made the magazine successful, and the larger web of social meaning.[38] In the footsteps of business historians, like Susan Strasser, Oliver Zunz, Roland Marchand, and Angel Kwolek-Folland who blend institutional and cultural history in examinations of corporate institutions, this research treats the corporation as a complicated nexus of power in which many individuals and ideas struggle for dominance. [39] As Nye writes, business history must be "more than the

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[37] M. Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (Basic Books, 1984), 11.
[38] W. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Pantheon Books, 1984).
[39] Regina Lee. Blaszczyk, "Review: The Octopus Transformed: Big Business and American Culture," *Reviews in American History* 28, no. 1 (March 2000).; S Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 1989).; O. Zunz, *Making America*

story of balance sheets, labor relations, successes and defeats in the marketplace, and inventions. To survive, a corporation must provide employees and customers with interpretations of the world. It must project not merely a good public image but a construction of reality that organizes the dispersed facts of experience. This construction of social worlds was necessary for the functioning of large corporations."[40]

Ford Times editors created a cohesive magazine that appealed to the reader community and upheld branding goals. To better understand how they did so, this research explores the following questions: What topics are included in *Ford Times* magazine articles as relevant to the brand and reader community? What issues, symbols, narratives, and themes are present in articles? In other words, how did editors frame the purpose of their magazine and construct a "view of America out the windshield"? How did this vision change over time? To answer these questions, this research required immersion in the *Ford Times* magazines, cookbooks, automotive histories, and company archival information published from 1908 to 1917 and from 1943 to 1993, as described below.

Approach to Research

Research was shaped by Saukko's three "validities" for qualitative and historical work: dialogic validity, which explores how truthfully the research captures the lives of

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Corporate, 1870-1920 (University of Chicago Press, 1992).; R Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul* (University of California Press, 1998).; A. Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).; Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, 3.

[40] D.E. Nye, *Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric, 1890-1930* (The MIT Press, 1985), 148.

those studied; deconstructive validity, which judges how well the research unravels discourses; and contextual validity, which asks how well the work is located within social context.[41] The availability of an array of primary documents, a robust collection of secondary literature, and the opportunity to deeply immerse in *Ford Times* content strengthened this research.

The first stage of investigation focused on understanding topics, content categories, and article formats selected by the editors. The choice of content was purposeful, i.e., editors had many options when they set out to fill the magazine. By examining the content selected, this research explores magazine structure, content deemed relevant to the reader community, and the intended purpose of editorial departments.

Because of the vast number of *Ford Times* issues and the large time period covered, this project relied on a constructed-year sample, which included four *Ford Times* issues from every third year of publication, to ensure a mix of months, seasons, and years. The final sample includes over 80 issues of the magazine and more than 1,000 articles. *Ford Times* was not published continually over the course of the twentieth century and the sample studied reflects the intermittent nature of publication. *Ford Times* was introduced in 1908 as a magazine for dealers; corporate executives expanded circulation to include consumers in 1910. The company stopped publishing the magazine in 1917 at the start of World War I, largely due to paper shortages and strain on company

[41] P. Saukko, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches* (SAGE, 2003).

resources.[42] *Ford Times* magazine hiatus lasted until World War II; in 1943, *Ford Times* was briefly revived as an employee magazine for workers on the home front. At the war's end, as Ford converted manufacturing facilities from aircraft engine production to making automobiles for the American public, it also retooled *Ford Times* for consumer audiences. The magazine remained consumer-directed from 1946 until its last issue in 1993.

Constructed Year Sample of Ford Times Issues

Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1908				x			x			x		
1911		x			x			x			x	
1914			x			x			x			x
1917	x			x								
1943				x			x			x		
1946		x			x			x			x	
1949			x			x			x			x
1952	x			x			x			x		
1955		x			x			x			x	
1958			x			x			x			x
1961	x			x			x			x		
1964		x			x			x			x	
1967			x			x			x			x
1970	x			x			x			x		
1973		x			x			x			x	
1976			x			x			x			x
1979	x			x			x			x		
1982		x			x			x			x	
1985			x			x			x			x
1988	x			x			x			x		
1991		x			x			x			x	
1993	x											

[42] Company presses, however, did not pause for long. Although the company retired the *Ford Times* title between the wars, Henry Ford continued to publish an astonishing number of company publications, including a newspaper called *Ford News* that was similar in content to the *Ford Times*. Ford Motor Company's interwar publications, including *Ford News,* are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Historical analysis required a close reading of articles to determine the main topic of each story – for example, "travel" or "fashion" or "outdoor recreation." The table of contents for each issue and archival material, like internal memos, were useful in determining how editorial staff set out to organize content and departments. After devising a comprehensive list of topics, all articles were analyzed. To do so, the issue month and year, article title, page number, most dominant story topic, and any mention of car, Ford brand, or Ford Motor Company were recorded. For details on categories, please see the full list of topics in the Appendix.

As these editorial decisions reflect assumptions about the subject matter, their audiences, and the goals of the magazine, this research also sought to understand where these categories of content came from, themes are embedded in each, and the purpose they served for the community of readers and for the corporation. To do so, the second stage of research included a frame analysis of magazine content. The sample was expanded to include significant issues and articles. For example, issues created during important moments in the company history and issues that reflect major format or content changes instituted by Ford editors and executives were included.

Frame analysis research techniques helped uncover how magazine content "hung together" and connected to Ford's brand image. [43] As Hallahan notes, framing is especially pertinent to public relations scholars. Public relations is about creating shared frames of reference between companies and consumers; it reflects strategic choices made

[43] As Peter Larsen writes, analysts of text seek to "bring out the whole range of possible meanings" within a text. Meaning is an "indeterminate field" in which "intentions and possible effects intersect." K.B. Jensen and N. Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* (Routledge, 1991), 122.

by brand managers and corporate communicators. It is about including, excluding, and emphasizing certain information within a particular communicating text. Hallahan writes, "This construction process might be dismissed as manipulation. However, because defining reality is the very essence of communication, constructionists would argue that the process is neither inherently good nor bad."[44] In particular this research is concerned with story framing, which involves understanding key themes and ideas at the center of a particular message and examining the variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme.[45]

To conduct the frame analysis, articles were re-read and a general overview of the article and the purpose, themes, narratives, values, rhetorical devices, and style prominent in each article were noted. Themes that appeared within and across the topic categories described above were noted; this technique helped illuminate how editors created a coherent editorial voice for the publication.

Besides the formal analysis of *Ford Times* content, research also included historical archive work. Corporate archives are a unique resource, well suited to cultural history approaches. As Marchand writes, "we may ultimately find that some of the most perplexing, unanswerable questions in cultural history can best be approached, although never entirely resolved, through the kinds of evidence that corporations, through astute archival practices or passive accumulation, may have preserved."[46]

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[44] K. Hallahan, "Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 11, no. 3 (1999): 206-07.
[45] Ibid.
[46] R. Marchand, "Cultural History from Corporate Archives," *Public Relations Review* 16, no. 3 (1990).

Primary research materials include corporate records of the Ford Motor Company housed at the Benson Ford Research Center in Dearborn, Michigan and writers' notes from archival collections at Murray State University in Kentucky. The Benson Ford Archives provided invaluable primary material on internal marketing and communication decisions made by staff members, especially during the postwar period. The Murray State University archives provided notes, memos, research and letters of key editorial staff members and added a great deal of insight to writing decisions made during the 60s and 70s. Interviews with former staff members added details about editorial direction and decisions made during the last period of this study.

Departmental memos and reports, correspondence between editorial staff members and writers, and consumer research conducted by Ford's marketing and public relations departments revealed internal concerns of Ford's advertising and public relations staff members, the dynamics of organizational change, and editorial strategy. These documents also show how Ford Motor company executives imagined their brand consumers and the purpose of their communication activities.

This research is also concerned with how consumers viewed the purpose of the magazine. *Ford Times* published almost a century's worth of reader letters that describe consumers' reactions to the publication, Ford company and their vehicles. The archives at the Benson Ford Research Center hold additional files of unpublished letters from consumers and the results of marketing research conducted by the corporation and outside firms like Roper.

The work of scholars who focus on advertising and public relations practices, the automobile industry, mass marketing, citizenship and consumption were pertinent to the understanding of the context shaping production and reception of the *Ford Times*.[47] As Van Dijk writes, contextualization helps media scholars understand the underlying ideologies that shape how texts are assigned meaning by individuals within particular societal norms.[48] Research was guided by Berkhofer's description of contextualization as historical methodology. Historians seek to understand the past, but can never truly "know" it; they gather and synthesize evidence, try to understand artifacts within the context of their culture and time, and discuss this sense-making as "facts." He writes, "Words and sentences must be read in the context of the document, and the document as part of its community of discourse or of the ideological and belief system that gave it meaning at the time. Discourses and worldviews in turn demand the context of their cultures and times. Likewise, human activities and institutions are to be understood in

[47] For example, Pamela Laird, Roland Marchand, and Michael Schudson examine the history of advertising and public relations; Allan Nevins, Douglas Brinkley and Steven Watts write about Henry Ford and his legacy at Ford Motor Company; Virginia Scharff, and Chris Wells describe the political meaning of the automobile within US society; Lizabeth Cohen, Rozenweig, and Charles McGovern work at the intersection of history, citizenship and the consumer society; and Susan Strasser, Richard Tedlow, and Richard Butsch address the history of mass marketing and marketing segmentation. P.W. Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).; R. Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Univ of California Pr, 1985).; Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society*.; A. Nevins and F.E. Hill, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1933-1962* (Scribner, 1963).; D Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003* (Viking Pr, 2003).; S. Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century* (Vintage Books, 2005).; V. Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999).; C.W. Wells, *Car Country: Automobiles, Roads and the Shaping of the Modern American Landscape, 1890-1929* (University of Wisconsin--Madison, 2004).; Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.; McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945*.; R. Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).; Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*.; RS Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950* (Jai Press, 1979).; R. Butsch, *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Temple University Press, 1990).

[48] Van Dijk, Teun. "Media Contents: The interdisciplinary study of news as discourse," in Jensen and Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*.

relation to the larger network of behavior or social organization and structure of which they are said to be a part."[49]

In sum, this research addresses the *Ford Times* magazine, motivations of its editorial staff, reader's reactions to the magazine and the cultural context influencing the magazine's development and success. As public relations historian Raucher argues, the study of public relations must be both a history of ideas and a history of actual practices. [50] In turn, business history, specifically public relations and advertising history, will help us better understand modern American society.[51]

Roadmap: What lies ahead

This first chapter introduced the dissertation, provided a brief overview of the publication, described the significance of this research, and shared method details. Chapter two develops the contemporary term "brand journalism," recently used by strategic communication professionals to describe their work, in order to discuss the theoretical framework and literature that shapes subsequent chapters. Brand journalism – and brand*ed* journalism – are interesting concepts that might help companies provide credible, substantial, relevant, and interesting stories to groups of consumers; however, the concept of brand journalism is not brand new. This discussion, taken up by Chapter two, illustrates why this historical study of the *Ford Times* is relevant to contemporary practitioners and scholars of public relations history.

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[49] R.F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 31.
[50] A.R. Raucher, *Public Relations and Business, 1900-1929* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).
[51]Marchand, "Cultural History from Corporate Archives."

Chapters three through six focus on the *Ford Times.* Chapter three begins the early story of the *Ford Times*. This chapter looks at why the publication emerged in 1908 amid an era of reform and improvement, describes content found in the magazine's first issues, and discusses how the magazine circulated narratives about the 'corporate family' among dealers and then consumers. The early purpose of the magazine – and the themes described in Progressive Era content – shape the publication's editorial scope for many years and lay the foundation for later branding work by Ford. Chapter three concludes with the magazine's 1917 suspension for the coming war. It also briefly foreshadows *Ford Times* resurrection during World War II.

Chapter four takes up the *Ford Times* postwar resurrection in detail, focusing on the years 1943 to 1960, when the magazine became a consumer publication. Rather than focus on the Ford organization, the postwar *Ford Times* set out to illustrate the 'deeper meaning' of motoring, giving writers the 'freedom to express their hearts' and embark on literary adventures that illustrated love for car and country. Chapter five focuses on the *Ford Times* of the 60s and 70s. In this period, driven by new popularity in marketing segmentation and a proliferation of product lines, the magazine ramped up content that directly featured new models of Ford cars for sale. The magazine promised consumers that their unique lifestyle needs could be met in the Ford lineup; it also used features on American history, culture, and commemoration to remind readers of their shared heritage. Chapter six discusses *Ford Times* content beginning with the 1980s and continuing until the publication's 1993 suspension. During this period, the *Ford Times* – echoing the growing popularity of personality journalism used by magazines like *People* – relied on

profiles of Ford brand enthusiasts and consumer-submitted stories, which allowed editors to frame the magazine as a family scrapbook. The final chapter, Chapter seven, concludes the dissertation.

Chapter Two - Brand Journalism: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter examines the contemporary notion of 'brand journalism' and uses the term to discuss the theoretical framework and relevant literature shaping this dissertation. Recently, advertising and public relations professionals have applied 'brand journalism' to company-created content, including social media campaigns and websites, that directly reach, educate and inform a community of consumers or employees. It is the "blending of journalistic principles with organizational communication strategies."[52] Like traditional journalists, brand journalists look to communities to gather and circulate valuable, relevant, and timely stories that meet a group's informational needs. While this might be a valuable frame for brand messages, contemporary practitioners and critics largely ignore theoretical and historical tensions between corporate communication and journalism, as well as the long history of the company press. This dissertation illustrates brand journalism is an age-old concept and more than merely a "flash in the pan" marketing strategy.

Brand Journalism, introduced

"Mass marketing is dead," declared Larry Light, the chief marketing officer for the McDonald's Corporation, during his speech to industry professionals at the AdWatch: Outlook 2004 conference. Light predicted that a new concept, "brand

[52] M Kounalakis et al., *Beyond Spin: The Power of Strategic Corporate Journalism* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), xiii.

journalism," would replace industry reliance on the 'unique selling proposition,' be responsible for "the end of brand positioning as we know it," and rewrite the history of advertising and public relations. Brand journalism is telling the story of "what happens to a brand in the world and creating ad communications that, over time, can tell the whole story of a brand." Like regular journalism, brand journalism's goal is to "inform, entertain and persuade" by collecting and communicating "news, events and happenings."[53] Just like a magazine editor, Light said, the brand journalist looks at the lives of consumers and uses their experience to compile a set of stories that fits together under a single voice.[54] The brand journalist shares these chronicles with consumers to give them a more multifaceted understanding of the company and brand.[55]

Some advertising and public relations professionals use the term "corporate journalism" interchangeably with "brand journalism."[56] Introduced in 1999 by journalist Markos Kounalakis, corporate journalism is the application of traditional journalistic principles to organizational communication, in order to "achieve alignment and action behind the organization's purpose, vision, values, strategies, operating principles, and priorities."[57] Kounalakis advises communicators to avoid hype, sensationalism, and propaganda in lieu of accurate, attributed, timely, and relevant information. Faceless, nameless bureaucrats and mass advertising campaigns must be replaced by authored news and targeted information, essentially, an organization-based "free press."[58]

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[53] Larry Light, speech at the AdWatch: Outlook '04 conference in New York in June 2004.
[54] Simon Canning, "Many Tales, Just One Tagline," *The Australian*, July 22, 2004: .
[55] Mercedes M Cardona, "Mass Marketing Meets Its Maker; Mcd's Chief Espouses ' Brand Journalism' Approach," *Advertising Age*, June 21, 2004.
[56] Marty Weil, "The Rise of Corporate Journalism."
[57] Kounalakis et al., *Beyond Spin: The Power of Strategic Corporate Journalism*, 229.
[58] Ibid.

An organization-based free press, supporters argue, has the potential to guide strategic communicators through an important quandary: how do corporations create dynamic, relevant messages that are cohesive yet flexible enough to respond to the nuances of different clusters of consumers?[59] According to Light, Kounalakis, and other proponents of brand journalism sticking with "one consistent positioning concept" is no longer a viable strategy for corporations due to the overall increase in marketing segmentation, digital channels, consumer-to-consumer communication, and quantity of information available to potential audience members.[60] Light advised corporate communicators to "beware of the so-called positionistas" who "say that a brand can only stand for one thing in the mind of the market."[61] He called for "an end to the out-of-date, simplistic concept of brand positioning; that marketing lock-box that locks brands into uni-dimensional, uni-segment, monotone marketing." Light stresses that contemporary consumers "will not accept a monotonous repetition of the same simplistic message. They want a dynamic, creative chronicle."[62]

This sounds like an exciting new strategy for strategic communicators, but what, exactly, counts as brand journalism? Practitioners have applied the term to a wide range of corporate communication. In June of 2009, senior correspondent at *BusinessWeek*

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[59] DDBWorldWideCommunicationGroup, "Brand Narratives: Positioning in the Time of Media Fragmentation," in *Yellow Papers Series*.
[60] Al Ries and Jack Trout made the term "positioning" popular among advertising and public relations leaders in the early 1970s with a series of articles for *Advertising Age* magazine. Ries and Trout argue that brand managers must stick with one consistent positioning concept for "the best approach to take in our overcommunicated society is the oversimplified message." ibid.; Doc Searls, "The New Character of Positioning: Where You Come from Matters More Than Where You're Going."; Al and Jack Trout Ries, "Positioning Era Cometh," *Advertising Age* 1972.; A. Ries and J. Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* (McGraw-Hill, 2000), 8.
[61] AdvertisingAge, "Larry Light " (June 15, 2004).
[62] Ibid.

David Kiley embraced brand journalism as "not advertising, not public relations, and not brand content," but an information-driven approach to communication that combined "elements of all three" in order to construct good stories in the marketplace; it is "writing or otherwise producing engaging content to appeal to current populations and public interest in a framework and context designed to enhance and nurture the shared associations people have with a brand, product, or service."[63] Web-based communication campaigns from auto companies often serve as good models for authors exploring the term. For example, in September of 2009, author and consultant David Meerman Scott visited General Motors to learn how they are sharing the company's story of "reinvention." On his blog, Scott recaps his interviews with General Motors executives and highlights the Chevrolet Voltage and GM Design Lab web-based campaigns as "great examples of brand journalism" in which the corporation builds a network of consumers and starts public discussion on issues like vehicle electrification.[64] Similarly, in February of 2007, Colleen DeCourcy, the Chief Experience Officer at ad agency J. Walter Thompson (JWT), applied the term brand journalism to Ford's *Bold Moves* marketing effort, which her agency developed. Industry professionals can no longer "just pick a target, aim and it's in the can," according to DeCourcy. Brand journalism occurs when companies generate good content, give stakeholders "a lightening bolt to gather around" and keep up with brand experiences that are constantly in-flux. [65] Ford's *Bold*

[63] David Kiley, *Presentation: Brand Journalism* (Marines' Memorial Club in San Francisco, CA).
[64] David Meerman Scott, "Brand Journalism, Cool Cars, Copycat Ads, and the Future of Gm," in *WebInkNow*.
[65] Scribemedia.org, "Advertising and Pr for Everyone: Who Is Winning the Race for Marketing Dollars?" (paper presented at the The Software and Information Industry Association: Industry Information Summit, New York City, January 30-31, 2007).

Moves campaign, argues DeCourcy, is "journalism about the brand" and includes films, blogs and message boards that document the recent past and potential future of Ford products, "warts and all."[66] Other JWT spokespeople herald the campaign as a major sea-change for Ford: "*Bold Moves* is so much more than a tag line change," said George Rogers, president of JWT Detroit. "It's a new way of thinking at Ford that delivers marketing actions and more brand and customer focus."[67]

Whether it is labeled brand or corporate journalism, proponents argue that these "new" forms of content meet the informational needs of the audience, foster connections among consumers "that transcend transactions," and in some ways, even rival traditional journalism. [68] Brand and corporate journalists produce sets of rich, fluid and adaptable narratives that tell a corporation's story to diverse audiences who view brands from their unique cultural and social perspective. [69] They capture conversations occurring within a community of consumers and contribute to those conversations in ways that benefit corporations.[70] By acting as organizational ombudsmen, corporate journalists commit

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[66] "Ford on the Web, Warts and All," *Businessweek.com*, October 30, 2006 ; Kdoctor, "Get Ready for Brand Journalism.," *Content Bridges*, February 2, 2007.
[67] FordMotorCompany, "Bold Moves Puts Consumers at Center of All-Ford Brand Marketing," *PR Newswire*, May 2, 2006.
[68]D.M. Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and Pr: How to Use News Releases, Blogs, Podcasting, Viral Marketing, & Online Media to Reach Buyers Directly* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 8.; Gillin, Paul. Foreword to J. Pulizzi and N. Barrett, *Get Content Get Customers: Turn Prospects into Buyers with Content Marketing* (McGraw-Hill, 2009), xv.
[69] Nick Ragone, "Don't Count ' Brand Journalism' Out," *PR Week (US)*, June 25, 2007.
[70] If marketers can't think like journalists, Scott suggests hiring them. He encourages reporters and editors to consider becoming brand journalists: "I'm not talking about PR and media relations here. This isn't about writing press releases and trying to get your former colleagues to write or broadcast about you. Instead, I'm talking about creating stories as you are now, but for a corporation, government agency, nonprofit, or educational institution instead." He adds, "You don't need to compromise your integrity. You still tell stories. You still practice your craft. You still have followers who care about what you do. You still change people's lives…The idea of using your journalistic skills should be to educate and inform, not to overtly sell products."

themselves to finding relevant, credible, and accurate stories and increasing the free flow of communication among an organization's employees and consumers.[71]

The "new rules of marketing and pr" state that buyers should be "invited" to read stories written with their needs in mind rather "interrupted" with one-way, product focused advertising or "ignored" by public relations professionals who often write news releases meant only for reporters or editors.[72] David Meerman Scott tells marketers: "Before the Web came along, there were only two ways to get noticed: buy expensive advertising or beg the mainstream media to tell your story for you. Now we have a better option: publishing interesting content on the Web that your buyers *want* to consume. The tools of the marketing and PR trade have changed. The skills that worked offline to help you buy or beg your way in are the skills of interruption and coercion. Success online comes from thinking like a journalist and a thought leader."[73]

"Brand journalism" circulates stories that are directly tied to a product or organizational brand; with the drive for content, some practitioners assign more value to a concept they call "brand*ed* journalism" in which a company provides content and starts conversations that have little to do with their organization, products or services. This is "normal ol' journalism, brought to you by Brand X," argues one practitioner from advertising agency JWT.[74] Smart companies "know that they need to be something more

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[71]Kounalakis et al., *Beyond Spin: The Power of Strategic Corporate Journalism*, 100-15.
[72] Andrew Davis, "Online Content Marketing Blurring the Lines between Branding and Journalism," in *Tipping Point Labs*.; Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and Pr: How to Use News Releases, Blogs, Podcasting, Viral Marketing, & Online Media to Reach Buyers Directly*; Denise de Murcie, "The Lines Are Blurring between Branding and Journalism" " *Mass High Tech magazine*.
[73] Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and Pr: How to Use News Releases, Blogs, Podcasting, Viral Marketing, & Online Media to Reach Buyers Directly*.
[74] Shel Holtz, "Brand Journalism Was Never Meant to Replace Independent News Reporting," in *Holtz Communication and Technology*.; Kyle M. [psued]. New York, NY, comment on "Brand Journalism Was

than just vendors, so they've learned how to become significant content providers for their current and future customers. They've realized that they can be publishers and can fill the void left by the faltering media," explain Pulizzi and Barrett. [75] Gillin even states: "Today, marketers can *be* the media."[76]

This dissertation argues that brand journalism cannot be a substitute for independent news reporting, further, this close look at *Ford Times* content illustrates that "brand*ed* journalism" is really still about strengthening brand tenets. There is value, however, in building a brand journalism frame that encourages strategic communicators to mimic journalists' ability to produce accurate and relevant stories that inform and engage audiences for credible corporate storytelling.[77] In 2011, David Henderson said, "Unfortunately, many of the techniques of traditional public relations, marketing, communications and advertising have not changed in decades and are considerably less effective in the digital era. I've known many executives to view those traditional techniques as expense items, not assets for their companies. That is one explanation for the growing and considerable interest in the technique of what is being called 'brand journalism' – both in the U.S. and Europe – as a means to connect with audiences, broaden awareness and build trust in corporate brands."[78] Rather than dismiss traditional public relations techniques, this research closely examines the *Ford Times* to explain how

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Never Meant to Replace Independent News Reporting," in *Holtz Communication and Technology*, posted September 2, 2011.

[75] Pulizzi and Barrett, *Get Content Get Customers: Turn Prospects into Buyers with Content Marketing*.

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[77] Steve Kayser, "Brand Journalism Connects: The Next Era of Business Communications," in *CINCOM EXPERT ACCESS* (June 1, 2011).

[78] Ibid.

editors successful created a long-standing reader community by pursuing both brand and branded journalism for more than 50 years.

But, wait… is brand journalism really new?

Despite declarations of major paradigm shifts from proponents, the concept of brand journalism is not brand new. The chapters ahead illustrate how the Ford Motor Company created their own media vehicle to tell a compelling brand story, applied journalistic principles to organizational communication, relied on insights from consumers, complied a set of stories that fit together under a single voice, and shifted content in attempts to help *Ford Times* remain relevant to its varied reader community. Ford was, in essence, pursuing the practice of brand journalism for much of the twentieth century. It was not the only company to do so. Advertisers have looked to consumers for insights and paid attention to how brands function differently in the lives of consumers since the advent of marketing research.[79] Corporate public relations departments have also tried to develop deeper relationships with key constituents by providing content for decades – long before the proliferation of new media technologies and the 'we-are-all-publishers' era. Since the days of P.T. Barnum, public relations professionals have been aware that their jobs depend on finding great narratives within an organization and getting those stories into the hands of the public. When journalists weren't available or

[79] Strasser, for example, illustrates that manufacturers used some principles of market segmentation and "re-positioning" to create multiple product identities among groups of consumers as early as 1914. Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*, ix, 126.

willing to share those stories, companies have produced their own media vehicles – films, magazines, newspapers, and now, websites – to reach buyers directly. [80]

And.. is it really journalism?

Critics of the term 'brand journalism,' like former newspaper editor Ken Doctor, decry marketers' application of the term 'journalism' to what he sees as company 'propaganda.' Doctor writes, "Call it what you want, but 'brand journalism' isn't journalism. It's public relations, customer connection, engagement -- whatever you want to call it -- on the new steroidal Intel chips. And it can produce good stuff that's useful to us as buyers of goods and services. But it's not journalism." [81]

Doctor's uneasy reaction to the term "brand journalism" highlights assumptions about the conflicting functions of journalism and advertising. Despite its complex history, journalism is commonly classified as a service necessary to a democracy that serves the public good by providing citizens with objective information about elites and institutions.[82] Conversely, advertising is labeled as a tool of elites and institutions used for persuasion that is necessary to maintain a capitalist marketplace, support product demand and help fulfill the private material desires of consumers. Journalism enables

[80] For example, editors of company magazines have long touted the benefits of company-authored news over mainstream journalism. As early as 1885, executives from the Toronto-based Massey Manufacturing Company described their desire to create an alternative to newspapers; with the *Trip Hammer*, Massey Manufacturing Company hoped to lead their reader community to 'better, higher and nobler things.'" Peter Johansen, "For Better, Higher, and Nobler Things," *Journalism History* 27:3.

[81] Kdoctor, "Get Ready for Brand Journalism.."

[82] As discussed below, historians have illustrated that objectivity hasn't always been a critical ideal of all journalists especially during the first part of the twentieth century. For example. Schudson and Tifft argue that it wasn't until the postwar years that objectivity was "acknowledged to be the spine of the journalist's moral code" in the United States. Schudson, Michael and Susan Tifft. "American Journalism in Historical Perspective," In G. Overholser and K.H. Jamieson, *The Press* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 27.

citizenship; advertising aids consumption. Observers often construct Americans' identities as citizens and consumers as completely distinct from one another – or as opposing forces in which the consumer society is forcing private, materialistic concerns to overpower consideration for the public good. The main tension in the contemporary notion of corporate journalism is this: objectivity is the ruling ethic of journalistic culture; advocacy is the ruling norm of public relations.[83]

In spite of the difficulty of realizing it in practice, objectivity remains a "chief occupational value" and distinguishing norm of 20th-century American journalism.[84] As Mindich writes, "If American journalism were a religion…its supreme deity would be 'objectivity.'"[85] Despite celebration of the ideal, objectivity is notoriously difficult to define and achieve.[86] Mindich offers the following as its main components: detachment, nonpartisanship, commitment to facts, balance, and use of the inverted pyramid style.[87] Schudson describes objectivity as much more than a set of rules: "Objectivity is at once a moral ideal, a set of reporting and editing practices, and an observable pattern of news writing."[88] The press's belief in objectivity is a practice but also "a moral philosophy, a declaration of what kind of thinking one should engage in, in making moral decisions." It is also "a political commitment, for it provides a guide to what groups one should acknowledge as relevant audiences for judging one's own thoughts and acts."[89] At the

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[83] G. McBride, "Ethical Thought in Public Relations History: Seeking a Relevant Perspective," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 4, no. 1 (1989).
[84] M. Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism*," *Journalism* 2, no. 2 (2001).
[85] D.T.Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (New York University Press, 2000), 1.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism*."
[89] M. Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (Basic Books, 1978), 8.

heart of objective reporting – writing that is unemotional, fair, and balanced – is a professional commitment to the separation of facts and values. Schudson writes that "the belief in objectivity is just this: the belief that one can and should separate facts from values. Facts, in this view, are assertions about the world open to independent validation. They stand beyond the distorting influences of any individual's personal preferences. Values, in this view, are an individual's conscious or unconscious preferences for what the world should be; they are seen as ultimately subjective and so without legitimate claim on other people. The belief in objectivity is a faith in 'facts,' a distrust of 'values,' and a commitment to their segregation."[90]

Of course, objectivity has not always guided the practice and purpose of the press; the objective report is not the only form of writing that counts as journalism.[91] Different 20th century writers – including muckraking journalists, "interpretive" journalists of the 1930s, advocacy journalists, "new" journalists of the 1960s, and citizen journalists – have all called into question various tenets of the objectivity ideal, in turn, expanding 'what counts' as news. These journalists argue that even though they do not rely on the objective report, the information they share also contributes to society in productive ways. Despite the tendency of critics to complain about the lack of neutral news, objectivity might be a "peculiar demand" to make of journalistic institutions, as historian

[90] Ibid., 6; ibid.

[91] Journalism historians, including John Hartsock, illustrate that American press came to adopt objectivity as a guiding value during certain historical and cultural moments; further, journalists practicing narrative or literary journalism have resisted the "objectified" news format. Postmodern understandings of "truth" and its challenge to the idea that reality can be objectivity captured has also led some scholars and writers to question this ethic. J.C. Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form* (University of Massachusetts, 2000).

Schudson points out.[92] That said, the idea that news must be nonpolitical, factual, and neutral is widespread.[93]

When objectivity is used as a key value and standard to judge what is and is not "journalism," brand or corporate journalism fails miserably. It is nearly impossible for a corporation to create the distance, access, standards and balance necessary for objective reporting about their own activities and brand. Corporate attempts at journalism should not be celebrated as a brand new form of media nor heralded as a replacement for independent news reporting. Despite the failure of brand journalism to produce objective content, corporate attempts at feature writing also must not be easily dismissed. Journalism's role as an objective watchdog that relays facts to the public is not the only service it provides for society, as the following section discusses.

Strategic Communication, Journalism, and Community

As media scholar James Carey writes, the function of journalism is not only the transmission of information but also the affirmation of shared beliefs.[94] Likewise, Lule argues that any discussion of journalism that does not account for myth and storytelling ignores "a vital part of the news."[95] Instead of simply evaluating news as fact, these scholars argue that there is value in considering "journalism as story," like folklore, that provides important myths and narratives that help put new experiences into perspective

[92] Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, 3.
[93] Ibid.
[94] J.W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Unwin Hyman, 1990).
[95] J. Lule, *Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism* (The Guilford Press, 2001).

for media audiences.[96] Storytelling, of course, is not the simple representation of reality, rather stories construct a particular way of viewing the world which privileges certain interests over others. In his examination of journalism in the late 1890s, Schudson draws upon Mead to describe one role of the news as "to create, for readers, satisfying aesthetic experiences which help them to interpret their own lives and to relate them to the nation, town or class to which they belong." Schudson explains, journalism "acts as a guide to living not so much by providing facts as by selecting them and framing them."[97]

Magazines more than any other media form are a "full of stories which we tell about ourselves, which we make up about ourselves, which we accept as being about ourselves."[98] In order to foster a group of readers into a successful magazine community, Holmes writes that editors target a specific group of readers, tailor content to their "needs, desires, hopes, and fears," create a bond of trust, encourage community-like interactions among readers and editors, and respond in a fluid manner to larger cultural shifts and changes.[99] The reader community and editors together construct what 'counts' as news. Magazine exceptionalism, argues David Abrahamson, allows this media form to create a common community of interest between writers and readers, a community of interest that leads to action or "allows readers to do something" with the information being provided.[100]

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[96] S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert Dardenne. "Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News" in D.A. Berkowitz, *Social Meanings of News: A Text-Reader* (Sage Publications, Inc, 1997).
[97] Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*.
[98] T Holmes, "Mapping the Magazine," *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 515.
[99] Ibid.
[100] D Abrahamson, "Magazine Exceptionalism," ibid.: 670.

The notion that people within a particular society use forms of communication to establish shared knowledge and maintain agreed upon conventions, which in turn shapes reality for the collective, draws upon theories of social construction. Although many sociologists, including Durkheim, address these ideas, Berger and Luckmann are the first to coin the term "social construction." They apply the sociology of knowledge to everyday interactions, arguing that social and cultural codes guide our understanding of reality. In their illustration of the social construction of reality theory, they discuss how human interaction creates shared reality for a society and habitual actions institutionalize normative meanings and beliefs. All communities, including modern markets and nations, need consensus around shared aims, aspirations and knowledge.[101] Communication plays an intimate role in shaping collective values. As Dewey writes, it is communication that allows society to exist, as men and women "live in community in virtue by the things they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common."[102] In other words, the function of communication is the maintenance of community.[103]

Journalism, in particular, it is assumed, forms and sustains particular communities in time and space.[104] Within the field of mass communication, scholars frequently connect the concept of community to Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined community." He describes nations as "imagined communities" and challenges the notion

[101] J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Macmillan, 1916).
[102] Ibid.
[103] P. Berger and T. Luckmann, "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge," (1966).
[104] James Carey, "A Short History of Journalism for Journalists: A Proposal and Essay," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. 12, no. 1 (2007).

that time, space or personal relations are vital elements of "true" or "real" community. Nationalism requires imagined fellowship because people cannot know all citizens of a nation, and yet they believe in the unity and communion of a nation. Mass communication is central to the rise of this national consciousness. For Anderson, "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." [105] As a unified field of language and print-capitalism grew, Anderson writes, citizens found "these fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particle, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community."[1] Anderson's concept has been used to understand the role of newspapers, magazines, books and the Internet in spreading and reproducing nationalism.

Carey also describes news writing and reading as not only the transmission of information but also a "ritual act" like "attending a mass" in which "a particular view of the world is portrayed and confirmed" for a group of readers.[106] Instead of guardians, journalists are valued as storytellers and public historians. This shift is significant, for as Carolyn Kitch writes, "To journalists, the tasks of interpretation and reminiscence are antithetical to the professional codes that define news (i.e., the timely and unknown) and objectivity, which maintains that journalists merely report reality without experiencing it or explaining it."[107]

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[105] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 15.
[106] Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, 20.
[107] C. Kitch, "Twentieth. Century Tales: Newsmagazines and American Memory," *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 1(1999); ibid.

Scholars do not view all forms of communication as having an equal potential to build nations or communities.[108] Unlike journalism, communication related to brands has often been portrayed as detrimental to the formation of community. Tension between brand communication and journalism has its roots in grand narratives that pit commerce against community. Many arguments about the loss of community describe its "breakdown" in the face of modernization and consumption. Great social theorists worried that advancing industry would thwart social and cultural unity and create crisis, disorder, and alienation within society. The 'fathers' of sociology shaped conventional understandings of consumer culture, which have focused on – and often offered moral judgments of – the arrival of mass culture in the twentieth century.[109]

Although they do not deny that messages about consumption contain important views about ideology and power, recent scholars of consumer culture have begun to question some assumptions that undergird moralistic critiques pitting commerce and community. Glickman writes that scholarship on American consumer history experienced a revolution in last decade of the twentieth century in which consumption became recognized as a useful framing device to better understand American history and communal themes of national identity.[110] Rather than simply claim that western history has been "invaded and colonized" by commodities and commodity relations, historians have begun to reexamine what the consumer society is, when it emerged, and factors that

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[108] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.
[109] M. Friedman, "The Consumer Culture Research Landscape," *The Journal of American Culture* 30, no. 1 (2007).; McGovern, Charles, "Consumption" in *A Companion to 20th-century America,* ed. Stephen Whitfield (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 336-337.; Agnew, Jean-Christophe. "Coming Up for Air" in Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*.
[110] Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*.

contributed to its growth.[111] A reexamination of consumer culture also allows scholars to understand the moral and political consequences of messages related to consumption – from corporations and consumers themselves.[112] For example, Cohen describes how unionists in industrial factories leveraged the shared consumer experiences of the working-class to build "a culture of unity" among workers in Chicago during the mid-1930s that helped them overcome divisions and organize. Instead of depoliticizing workers, mass consumer culture helped workers reach out to one another and mount more effective political action.[113] Further, Cohen illustrates how consumption influenced many other aspects of social life, including class structure, race relations, and gender dynamics. African Americans were able to use their spending power as a "legitimate and effective agent of protest" that could be used to mobilize mass action by individual consumers.[114] Every purchase must not be understood as a rebellious act, as Cohen warns, and we must acknowledge vast power differences between consumers and producers. Yet, consumer society is dynamic and that there exists a dialectical relationship between "structures of capitalism" and more "indigenous forms of cultural meaning and expression," as Cohen argues.[115]

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[111] See "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930" in R.W. Fox and T.J.J. Lears, *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (Pantheon, 1983).; T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford University Press, 2004).
[112] J.C. Agnew, "Coming up for Air: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective," *Intellectual History Newsletter* 12(1990).
[113] L. Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 357.
[114] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 53.
[115] L. Cohen, "Escaping Steigerwald's Ìplastic Cagesî: Consumers as Subjects and Objects in Modern Capitalism," *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 2 (2006).

In efforts to revisit the meaning and emergence of America's consumer society, contemporary historians have begun to tell a more nuanced story about the way consumption "is woven into the fabric of American life" and ways in which it is "bound up with national unity as well as fragmentation; democracy as well as inequality; conformity but also protest; work and play."[116] Michael Schudson, who remains wary of the tradition of moralizing consumption and romanticizing civic behavior, writes: "The relationship of consuming to democracy is not a constant but a variable; consuming may or may not be a detriment to civic life. It all depends on what kind of consuming under what kinds of conditions."[117]

Contemporary scholars of history and consumer culture are not the only ones revisiting grand narratives about commerce and community. As Diamond writes, contemporary consumer researchers and practitioners have become focused on understanding brands' sociocultural nature, the symbolic nature of brands, and the role of brands as relationship partners and cultural agents, which marks "a significant shift in the way marketers think about successful brands, brand relationships, and the effective management of brands." [118] Scholars of consumer research have also begun to explore ways in which fellowship exists among groups of consumers. For example, Muniz and O'Guinn introduced the term "brand community" in 2001, which they define as a non-geographically bound community based on structured social relationships among

[116] Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*.
[117] M. Schudson, "Citizens, Consumers, and the Good Society," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 611, no. 1 (2007).
[118] N. Diamond et al., "American Girl and the Brand Gestalt: Closing the Loop on Sociocultural Branding Research," *Journal of Marketing* 73, no. 3 (2009).

admirers of a product brand.[119] They argue that even though a branded good or service unites the group, it still exhibits traditional markers of community, including shared consciousness, ritual and tradition, and a sense of moral responsibility. With brand community, the ethos of fellowship is situated within a commercial context. The notion of brand community reconceptualizes brand meaning from something delivered unaltered from advertiser-to-consumer to one that is co-produced in the interaction between producer, consumer, and other consumers. Most emphatically, Muniz and O'Guinn argue that studies of brand community must be about brands. A particular product brand must be the "tie that binds." Many sources supply consumers with information about the commonality and the cultural capital they share with other brand enthusiasts, including communication from the institutions that manage the brand.[120]

Given this more subtle treatment of consumption, scholars also need to examine public relations and advertising as more than monolithic "oppressive" or "impressive" institutions that simply assure commodity purchases. Because many intellectuals spent the twentieth century celebrating or demonizing America's consumer society, much advertising and public relations history has been split between historians who describe corporate communicators as conspiratorial manipulators desperate for social control and those who offer a "celebratory hagiography" of early admen and women. Like many other contemporary scholars, Schudson admits that he has "grave doubt about the

[119] Muniz and O'Guinn are also careful to separate their concept from consumption communities, subcultures, and lifestyle segments which have been studied by other researchers. Unlike previous work on consumption communities, Muniz and O'Guinn argue that brand community members do not have to be in close geographic range in order to find fellowship, and as such, the mass media are an important source that "informs" the brand community. A.M Muniz Jr and T.C. OGuinn, "Brand Community," *Journal of consumer research* 27, no. 4 (2001).

[120] J.H. McAlexander, J.W. Schouten, and H.F. Koenig, "Building Brand Community," *Journal of Marketing* 66, no. 1 (2002).

conviction shared by both the critics of advertising and its most enthusiastic promoters that advertising is highly effective in manipulating the minds of consumers and so in promoting a consumer culture."[121] However, he also admits "advertising may influence cultural life in the large even when it is not doing much to sell goods piece by piece."[122]

To better understand the role of advertising and public relations in shaping the meaning and purpose of consumption, scholars must examine the nuanced way brand narratives became part of cultural history during course of the consumer century. Like Marchand writes, advertising might not reflect social reality but it does contribute to the "shaping of a community of discourse, an integrative common language shared by an otherwise diverse audience."[123] In doing so, this research joins other scholarship that argues consumption, and related communication about brands, contributes to cultural meaning, expression and forms of community within society, much like forms of journalism.

Journalists and corporate communicators both construct social narratives needed to affirm values, promote social order, and shape what it means to be members of a community, including citizens of nations, workers, and consumers of brands.[124] Advertising and public relations messages contribute to the formation of "imagined community" or nationhood. Rather than view journalism or advertising simply as the transmission of "pure information" about products or elites, these forms of

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[121] Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society*, 9.
[122] Ibid., 10.
[123] Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, xx.
[124] Lule examines journalism's role in providing social narratives that affirm social order, especially in times of crisis. J. Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page: The New York Times Responds to September 11, 2001," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2002).; Similarly, Kitch examines popular magazines' role in affirming collective values. C.L. Kitch, *Pages from the Past: History and Memory in American Magazines* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

communication also present a historic reality that constructs community, "gives life an overall form, order and tone," and invites readers to assume social roles within "an arena of dramatic forces and action."[125]

Given this expanded role for commercial messages, public relations and advertising should be studied as "a form of social communication about material culture, as an institution within which the market economy and culture are coordinated and negotiated, and as a cultural resource used by individuals for a variety of reasons, many of which may have little to do with the purchase of a product."[126]

The pages ahead argue for space within public relations and journalism history to consider the contributions of the company press – or early attempts at "brand journalism" by advertising and public relations professionals – in building community and circulating shared narratives about more than products. Adding the story of the company press to public relations historiography helps us understand why public relations is more than simply the "illegitimate offspring of journalism."[127] It also helps build a more solid roadmap for contemporary practitioners interested in using brand journalism as a frame for corporate messages. First, the next section reviews public relations historiography.

Public Relations Historiography

Historians are still writing a definitive history of public relations. Public relations' story is slowly expanding to include more practitioners, agencies, organizations, areas of

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[125] Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*.
[126] W. Leiss et al., *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 17; ibid; ibid.
[127] Karla Gower, "Us Corporate Public Relations in the Progressive Era," *Journal of Communication Management* 12, no. 4 (2008).

practice, tactics, and approaches. The field is ripe for analysis. Historian R.E. Brown writes, "One of the misleading commonplaces about public relations scholarship is that it is a-theoretical. Today, after several decades of energetic theory-building, it would be more accurate to describe the gap in public relations scholarship as history, not theory."[128] Public relations history often focuses on one small area of public relations: media relations.

With few exceptions, scholars and textbooks point to the early twentieth century as the "birth" of modern public relations.[129] From this birth, public relations' story becomes a tale of progress, in which manipulative, publicity-driven practice evolves into the ethical, dialogical practice of today.[130] Recently, historians have pointed out how this progressive narrative paints a false and misleading picture of public relations and constrains work to understand the emergence, development, and impact of the field. [131]

In particular, this narrative constrains public relations history by overemphasizing a handful of charismatic personalities and their publicity efforts - at the expense of

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[128] R.E. Brown, "Myth of Symmetry: Public Relations as Cultural Styles," *Public Relations Review* 32, no. 3 (2006).

[129] Historian Cutlip points to the progressive era, when the nation's first publicity agency opened, as the starting point of modern public relations. SM Cutlip and FW Wylie, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations, a History* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Hillsdale, NJ, 1994), xvi-xvii.

[130] Hoy et al. found that the majority of public relations textbooks use this narrative when covering public relations history. As discussed below, their citation analysis could not trace this narrative back to a single author; however, they suggest that Edward Bernays' influential work placed an evolutionary frame around the roots of public relations to "spin" the image of the profession. P. Hoy, O. Raaz, and S. Wehmeier, "From Facts to Stories or from Stories to Facts? Analyzing Public Relations History in Public Relations Textbooks," *Public Relations Review* 33, no. 2 (2007).

[131] In her 1989 article, Genevieve McBride questions the notion that journalism and public relations share an ethical base and is one of the first scholars to disown the "overreaching" evolutionary frame for the growth of pr. Most recently, in early 2010, Lamme and Russell analyzed scholarship about public relations prior to 1900 to illustrate that public relations did not "conform to a pattern of increasingly sophisticated or more ethical practice." Other scholars who challenge the evolutionary frame as discussed below. M.O. Lamme et al., *Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History* (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2010).

longstanding tactics like the company press. Company magazines as a genre and their place within public relations historiography have been largely ignored. The next section reviews the progressive frame that has long constrained pr history.

The "Spin" on Public Relations History

In 1948, Goldman wrote this about public relations: "No activity has a more tangled history; few provoke more heated differences." He attributes this controversy to "the fact that present day American public relations is the product of an evolution in which the stages overlap bewilderingly."[132] His book, *Two Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel*, simplifies public relations' tangled past by describing three major periods that progress from detrimental to beneficial: the *"public be fooled,"* the *"public be informed,"* and the *"public be understood."*[133]

The first phase in public relations' development, the *public be fooled,* was practiced by deceptive, pre-1900 press agents and big business executives "committed to the doctrine that the less the public knew of its operations, the more efficient and profitable – even the more socially useful – the operations would be."[134] Press agents distracted the public away from the "inopportune" discovery of truth; big business leaders operated under a secrecy policy designed to keep the public out of business affairs. A

[132]E.F. Goldman, *Two-Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel* (Bellman Pub. Co., 1948), 1.
[133] This characterization of public relations is different from that offered by another historian working during the same time. Goldman recognizes business history Professor N.S.B Gras of Harvard's Graduate School of Business – who devoted a Bulletin of the Business Historical Society to "Shifts in Public Relations" in 1941 – as the "only American scholar who has studied the history of public relations intensively;" However, Goldman does not cite or engagement with Gras's insights. Goldman, 3. N.S.B. Gras, "Shifts in Public Relations," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 1. In his article, Gras admits that business history came late to the interest in public relations. Ibid., 101.
[134] Goldman, *Two-Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel*, 3.

pervasive respect and awe for big business and industry stopped the public from demanding more openness from corporations.[135]

According to Goldman, this respect for business leaders disappeared abruptly in the early 1900s, making way for the *"public be informed"* era. Muckraking journalists assaulted the corrupt practices of big business; these corporations now needed publicity to respond to indignant accusations and improve the public trust. [136] In 1906, a journalist-turned corporate communicator named Ivy Lee ushered in this second stage of public relations – the "public be informed." He released a "Declaration of Principles" to city editors that lobbied for the "honest" presentation of facts by corporations to the public. Lee wrote that his goal was to "supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which is of value and interest to the public to know about." A relationship between corporate spokespeople, journalists and the public was important for "corporations and public institutions give out much information in which the news point is lost to view. Nevertheless, it is quite as important to the public to have this news as it is to the establishments themselves to give it currency."[137] Goldman wrote that with Lee's statement: "the public was no longer to be ignored, in the traditional manner of business, nor fooled, in the continuing manner of the press agent. It was, Lee declared, to be informed."[138]

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[135] Gras characterizes the first period in the development of public relations as the "public must help business" that occurred during the 12-18th century. Gras's second period is the "let the public keeps its hands off" during the 18th and 19th century. The third period, running during the 19th and 20th centuries, is "the public must help business solve its problems as well as those of society, even though we return to strict regulation and initiate partial control." Gras, "Shifts in Public Relations."
[136] Goldman, *Two-Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel*, 4-5.
[137] R.E. Hiebert, *Courtier to the Crowd: The Story of Ivy Lee and the Development of Public Relations* (Iowa State University Press, 1966).
[138] Goldman, *Two-Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel*, 8.

The next stage in public relations development, the *"public be understood,"* not only disassociated public relations from the "press agent's avoidance of inopportune truth" but also advanced the profession beyond the vision of publicity men "primarily concerned with honest and attractively presented information," like Lee. Goldman highlights the book *Crystallizing Public Relations*, written by Edward Bernays and Doris Fleischman in 1922 for business leaders, as the force responsible for ushering in this stage of public relations. The book describes "public relations counsel" as a "two-way street" that changes both company policy and public attitudes to bring about "a rapport between the two."[139] Goldman positions Bernays as a revolutionary for the profession; under his watch, public relations practitioners started to realize the "social value" of their work and their ability to influence public opinion.[140]

However, Goldman did not reveal to readers that Edward Bernays, the prominently featured revolutionary, heavily influenced the writing of Goldman's book. Bernays biographer Tye writes, "Eddie had come up with the idea for *Two Way Street,* and the idea of Goldman as the author. He'd helped Goldman find a publisher, and he was deeply involved in the editing and packaging. And Eddie purchased from Goldman, for $900, all rights, title and interests in the book."[141] The engagement with Goldman was not Bernays' only attempt to "spin" the history of public relations and improve the image of practitioners.[142] In articles and books of his own he also described the field's

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[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 18.
[141] L. Tye, *The Father of Spin: Edward L*, Bernays and the Birth of Public Relations (1998), 239.
[142]Hoy, Raaz, and Wehmeier, "From Facts to Stories or from Stories to Facts? Analyzing Public Relations History in Public Relations Textbooks."; Lamme et al., *Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History*. It was also not Bernays only attempt to "spin" his own legacy and secure a

development as a "progression" in which the twentieth century marks the beginning of responsible, ethical and modern practice. [143]

By framing public relations history as a progressive narrative, Goldman and Bernays "cleansed" the image of public relations by disassociating current practice from misdeeds of previous persuaders. The frame positioned Bernays and his fellow "public relations counselors" as heroes who would "advise businesses on how to achieve positive results" and help them not "drift off into unfortunate or harmful situations." These heroic public relations counselors had more in common with lawyers and other trusted advisors rather than crude press agents like P.T. Barnum who wanted to "get something for nothing from publishers" and worked to promote circuses and other small-time actresses.[144] As Gower points out, it also positioned Lee as simply a precursor to Bernays, the true "father of public relations."[145]

Goldman and Bernays' narrative of progress and emergence of "modern" public relations has shaped scholarship of subsequent historians and textbook writers.[146] Contemporary textbooks written for undergraduate courses often rely on a common cast of novel figures – including P.T. Barnum, Ivy Lee, and Edward Bernays – to illustrate a progressive arc in which the practice of public relations grows increasingly professional,

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position in history as the "father of public relations." Biographer Tye describes Bernays work to influence interpretations of his work and life. Tye, *The Father of Spin: Edward L*, 241-47.

[143] Edward Bernays, "The Revolution in Publicity," *Saturday Review of Literature* 24(1941): 3-4, 18.

[144] Tye, *The Father of Spin: Edward L*, 96.; E.L. Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (Liveright, 1934).

[145] Gower, "Us Corporate Public Relations in the Progressive Era."

[146] Hoy, Raaz, and Wehmeier, "From Facts to Stories or from Stories to Facts? Analyzing Public Relations History in Public Relations Textbooks." In their 2007 analysis of major public relations texts, Hoy et al. illustrate the prominence of the "progressive" frame to describe the field's history and acknowledge Bernays role in popularizing this perception of history. [146]

ethical and dialogical.[147] Like Goldman and Bernays, textbooks quickly acknowledge that "public relations-like activities" occurred in ancient times and claim that even early Greeks and Romans managed their communication activities. Public relations, defined as the effort to persuade, textbooks argue, is as old as civilization. This first phase of public relations heavily features the tactics of the unethical and publicity-driven circus-promoter P.T. Barnum.[148] Public relations textbooks then start the story of "modern" public relations with Ivy Lee's declaration and the field's use of social science with Bernays.[149]

Criticizing the 'spin'

In 2003, Brown summarizes the narrative above as "public relations began 'asymmetrically' and 'one-way,' in lies, flim-flam and manipulation, but was eventually saved by its reformation into a practice based on science, negotiation and ethics." With this narrative, Brown accuses public relations scholars of advancing a "triumphalist story" rather than practicing "historical criticism" and labels work as the "Big Bang Barnum concept." [150] Cutlip agrees that "earlier histories of public relations have usually telescoped and oversimplified a fascinating and complex story by tending to emphasize novelty and personalities."[151]

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[147] Ibid., 191.
[148] Lamme et al., *Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History*, 286.
[149] Hoy, Raaz, and Wehmeier, "From Facts to Stories or from Stories to Facts? Analyzing Public Relations History in Public Relations Textbooks," 194.
[150] R.E. Brown, "St. Paul as a Public Relations Practitioner: A Metatheoretical Speculation on Messianic Communication and Symmetry," ibid.29, no. 1 (2003).
[151] Cutlip and Wylie, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations, a History*. Although Cutlip expands the scope of public relations historiography beyond that of corporate communication activities, he does reinforce the "evolutionary" narrative by positioning his case studies as "forerunners of modern public relations."

It also ignores the historical roots of the tension between practitioners, reasons for shifts in strategic communication tactics, and how public relations influenced changes in what 'counts' as journalism. For example, it was the desire of media organizations to protect their own economic interests, as historian Lucarelli argues, that spurred tension between corporate communicators and journalists in the first part of the twentieth century. Struggle between journalists and public relations professional mounted during a 1917-1921 campaign by newspaper publishers to "stamp out free publicity." The campaign against "spacegrabbers," or public relations professionals seeking news coverage on behalf of organizations, was created to protect the revenue streams of newspapers amid a post World War I business climate of falling advertising business and soaring production costs. Trade journals encouraged newspapers to restrict access by redefining journalism and drawing a strict boundary between editorial content and corporate communication. She writes, "The newspaper industry attempted to build a fortress around its news columns by encouraging a return to strong editorial leadership and objective reporting. The legitimate definers of news were those inside the newspaper organization. Those outside the newspaper organization who said they too had news were, according to the trade journals, space thieves intent on fooling editors with propaganda disguised as news."[152] An alternative view would be to see "free publicity" as an aid to the free flow of information, as Lucarelli writes: "Walter Lippmann regarded the rise of specialized organizations as a positive development and noted that the press

[152] S. Lucarelli, "The Newspaper Industry's Campaign against Spacegrabbers, 1917-1921," *Journalism Quarterly* 70(1993).

agent owed his existence to the fact that there was 'enormous discretion as to what facts... shall be reported.'"[153]

The historians above are not the only critics. A growing group of scholars have called for a departure from the linear frame and offered revisions to public relations history that paint a more complete picture of the field's development within the United States.[154] In 2000, Miller wrote that for public relations historians much work remains: "A definitive history of corporate public relations cannot be written without studies of more people, more agencies, and more companies." In 2010, Lamme and Miller reiterate this call: "no area of public relations history has been adequately researched."[155] Most work to revise the "progressive" narrative has focused on backdating the emergence of public relations and revisiting definitions of the field. Backdating the emergence of public relations, for example, allows historians to more thoroughly examine motivations and methods driving communication.[156] Such work raises important questions about how to define and interpret the public relations function and the motivations of the field's practitioners.

This dissertation joins the scholars above in criticizing the progressive frame and expanding public relations history beyond a handful of practitioners and their publicity efforts. It also expands the field's history beyond the first few decades of the twentieth

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[153] Ibid.
[154] Lamme et al., *Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History*.; Raucher, *Public Relations and Business, 1900-1929*.
[155] Lamme et al., *Removing the Spin: Toward a New Theory of Public Relations History*, 356.
[156] Ibid., 338. Historians Lamme and Miller used this tactic to illustrate five prominent motivations for public relations that cut across time and sectors – profit, recruitment, legitimacy, agitation, and advocacy – which were employed for both unsavory and ethical ends. They illustrate that these motivations drove a wide-range of formal public relations outreach and familiar campaign tactics, such as print materials, events, and media outreach, which also remained consistent across time, even during significant cultural change.

century; little research has examined public relations development in the last half of the twentieth-century. A close look at *Ford Times* illustrates that the 'progressive arc' described above is much too simple of a story for a complicated field like public relations. Not all early pr can be dismissed as lies and 'flim-flam;' not all contemporary pr efforts should be revered as valuable, two-way communication. *Ford Times,* for example, was concerned with fostering dialogue among its reader community at the start of the twentieth-century, as illustrated in Chapter 3. As the subsequent chapters discuss, this concern did not grow progressively stronger; rather, it rose-and-fell throughout the century, along with changing editorial conceptions of the publication, the popularity of different types of journalism, and varying corporate marketing needs.

Brand Journalism, revisited

Brand communication does far more than simply transmit information about products. In order to explain 'what happens to a brand in the world,' corporate communicators draw upon, and in turn shape, broad cultural understandings of identity and community. Advertising and journalism are both social and cultural institutions that can draw people together, teach an "ideology," mediate social structures, and shape people's notions of reality.[157] Brand communication affirms community membership and worldviews. Like journalists, branding strategists "draw their materials from everyday life, they select them carefully; much is included, but also much is omitted. By choosing

[157] Berger and Luckmann, "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge."

only some things and by re-integrating them into the meaning system of advertising, ads create new meanings."[158]

It is obvious that journalists and advertisers are distinct occupational groups governed by different norms, purposes and traditions. The objective news report – and the notion that reality can be "truthfully" and fully captured by a news report – protects the press's role as guardian of American democracy and watchdog on governmental power. Byee writes, "There is a long held and often repeated assumption within liberal pluralist theories of the press that modern democracy rests on the foundation of the informed citizen who makes decisions based on rational, objective criteria and that the news media are perhaps the most crucial source of this information. The citizen, the media, and democratic government are neatly stitched together in this civic trilogy."[159] It should not be assumed that public relations, advertising, or alternative ways of writing the news are detrimental to the civic trilogy described by Bybee. Brand journalism might not be able to provide "objective facts" like traditional media organizations, nonetheless, it does more than simply sell products.

Light's use of the term 'brand journalism' does not challenge the importance of the press to American society. This chapter, and this dissertation, does not advocate abandoning journalism for the company press. Brand communication shares company information, viewpoints, and product meaning that furthers the organization's agenda; brand journalism cannot serve the valuable watchdog role of the mainstream press and it is unlikely to expose readers to ideological viewpoints that challenge notions they already

[158] Leiss et al., *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*.
[159] C. Bybee, "Can Democracy Survive in the Post-Factual Age?: A Return to the Lippmann-Dewey Debate About the Politics of News," *Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs* 1, no. 1 (1999).

hold. As Turow points out, media in general, and all customized magazines in particular, ingratiate themselves to readers and advertisers by making sure content aligns rather than challenges readers' viewpoints.[160]

However, brand journalism does question the notion that "the whole story of a brand" is simply that it fosters the private consumption of a commodity or promotes only self-indulgence among consumers. Brand messages can be dynamic "creative chronicles" that create and affirm communities and worldviews. Like journalism, commercial messages contribute content to the flow of ideas, information, and values. Brand stories influence the marketplace as well as our understandings of citizenship, nationhood, gender, ethnicity, labor, and history. As other scholars have argued, in some ways, we might consider advertising to be "commercial news;" it transmits company and product information, details fellow user experience, and provides a social narratives that frame shared values.[161]

Brand journalism also questions the idea that advertising and public relations messages shape static "positions" for a brand. As Bogart writes, the goal of advertising and public relations is more than simply exposure or salience; it is familiarity. Strategic communication helps the public get to know a corporation or a product, including its informational features, personality and traits of character. Building this familiarity, just like getting to know someone, is a continual process. The level of our familiarity depends

[160] J Turow, *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 192.
[161] Other scholars have described advertising as "commercial news." See John Eighmey, "Social Media Multiplier Effect and the Super Bowl," in *Psychology of Advertising: Authoritative Observations About What Advertising Can Be* (January 15, 2011).

upon the quality of our encounters or the "intensity of common experience."[162] Brand journalism is a valuable frame for communicators looking to build this common experience.

As the following chapters illustrate, the brand journalist's work is strikingly similar to that practiced by the industrial editor writing for the company press over the last century. Like brand journalists, company editors inhibit a space somewhere between journalism and public relations. Chapter 3 starts the investigation of brand stories found in the *Ford Times* and illustrates how the magazine met informational needs of audience members, provided a narrative of connection, gave readers a deeper sense of Ford brand tenets, and offered moral base for car consumption; goals that editors continued to pursue over the course of the twentieth century.

[162] L. Bogart, *Strategy in Advertising: Matching Media and Messages to Markets and Motivations* (NTC Business Books, 1984).

Chapter Three - Starting a Family: Birth of the *Ford Times*, 1908-1917

Ford's 1908 decision to introduce the *Ford Times* company magazine was not revolutionary or an unusual move for a growing corporation. Its creation occurred amid a nation-wide swell of public relations activity, strong growth in magazine circulation, and a period of reform and improvement in America. It was the heyday of the muckrakers and a time of strong anti-business sentiment.[163] It would be easy to dismiss the magazine as a knee-jerk reaction by the company to defend itself against attack. The "muck" raked up by reform journalists often pit business interests against "the people;" further, there is a "temporal coincidence between the beginnings of PR and the hey-day of the muckrakers."[164] Historians have used the muckrakers as an explanation for the "birth" of public relations and the increase in publicity efforts that occurred at the turn of the century, as corporate "robber barons" set out to combat negative press and respond to investigative reports.[165] A close look at the *Ford Times*, however, illustrates that the "story of public relations is much more complex and ambiguous."[166] *Ford Times* did not simply rise as a defense against anti-business sentiment. Reform journalism influenced the creation of the magazine by serving as a model for *Ford Times* and its practice of

[163] A. Weinberg and L.S. Weinberg, *The Muckrakers* (University of Illinois Press, 2001).
[164] R.L. Heath, E.L. Toth, and D. Waymer, *Rhetorical and Critical Approaches to Public Relations Ii* (Routledge, 2009).
[165] Weinberg and Weinberg, *The Muckrakers*, xxv.
[166] This assertion follows in the footsteps of business historian Tedlow, who argues that public relations did not disappear when anti-business sentiment declined, further, non-business institutions also ramped up their public relations capabilities at this time. R.S. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950* (Jai Press, 1979).; Heath, Toth, and Waymer, *Rhetorical and Critical Approaches to Public Relations Ii*.

brand journalism. Executives and editorial staff wanted to magazine to foster feelings of community and dialogue, to inspire readers to improve moral and societal ills, and to improve the standardization of communication amid corporate maturity and growth.[167]

The Ford Motor Company envisioned their magazine as a "clearinghouse" where members of the Ford family, namely consumers and dealers, could share information, values, and experience. Ford used the magazine to first build brand tenets among dealer audiences, many new to the budding company, and then to inform and inspire consumer audiences. Largely influenced by progressive social movements, the *Ford Times* appealed to readers' sense of social justice and called on them to improve the moral fabric of the nation by purchasing and selling Ford cars. Ford hoped the house organ would create common culture, vision and values between the corporation, dealers and consumers. The magazine was wildly successful in bridging these stakeholders. Soon after its 1908 debut, the house organ had a wider circulation than any other auto manufacturer's magazine, and within a few years, readership grew to be the largest of any industrial publication in the United States. By 1910, the company magazine was reprinted in four different languages and sent to 2,100 dealerships worldwide. [168] By March of 1917, *Ford Times* could claim circulation figures exceeding 900,000 readers. Although remarkably successful, *Ford Times* was not novel, for at least two other industry manufacturers issued similar house organs by the time of its debut.[169]

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[167] Heath, Toth, and Waymer, *Rhetorical and Critical Approaches to Public Relations Ii*.
[168] David Cole, "Ford News," *V8 Times*, January-February 1983.; D.L. Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company* (Wayne State University Press, 1976), 48-49.
[169] The Olds Motor Works and the Winton Motor Carriage Company offered the motor industry's first house organs at the turn of the century. Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*.

This chapter illustrates why *Ford Times* emerged when and where it did, and describes content and messages contained in early issues, focusing on the *Ford Times* first issue in 1908 and ending with its 1917 suspension for the impending war. With the start of World War I, the successful magazine was shuttered and the *Ford Times* title remained dormant for more than 20 years. The end of this chapter briefly introduces the publication's revival after World War II, which is addressed more fully in Chapter 4. Most importantly, this section of the dissertation illustrates how *Ford Times* pursued the following goals: it tried to meet the informational needs of audience members, provide a narrative of connection, give readers a deeper sense of Ford brand tenets, and offer a moral base for car consumption. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 illustrate how *Ford Times* continued to pursue these goals, set during the Progressive era, decades later.

Birth of an Industry

"The whole country seems to have gone automobile mad," observed an official from the U.S. Patent Office in 1901.[170] It was only a slight exaggeration. Between 1900 and 1910, automobile manufacturers increased production from 4,000 to 187,000 vehicles, and Americans increased the number of motor vehicle registrations from 8,000 to 469,000.[171]

According to Berger, the automobile changed 20th-century American lives more than any other technological innovation, except maybe television: "The social and economic changes ushered in by the motor car have not only modified our daily routine

[170]Edwin Emerson, "Automobiles Today," *Ainslee's Magazine*, April 1901.
[171] J.B. Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History* (University of Chicago Press, 1965), 33..

but also altered the fundamental nature of personal relationships and the social institutions in which we interact."[172] He is not alone. Another scholar of motoring Seiler argues that during the first part of the twentieth century, "automobility emerged as a shaper of public policy and the landscape, a prescriptive metaphor for social and economic relations, and a forger of citizens."[173] Automobile historian James Flink writes, "a mass market for automobiles existed in popular sentiment long before the volume production of the Ford Model T made it a reality."[174] Peter Ling argues that "the automobile was embraced by Progressive Americans as a facilitator of many of their social objectives: ending rural isolation, establishing experts in local and national government, reducing urban congestion, avoiding potentially explosive or at least unpleasant social encounters, and controlling the workforce in the interests of efficiency in a way that legitimized that subordination."[175]

The powerful impact of Henry Ford on the industry, and on American life, is indisputable. At the turn of the 20th-century, Henry Ford set in action his simple but legendary plan: mass-produce a car for the "multitudes" and pay workers enough so they could afford to buy one. Henry Ford filed the papers to incorporate the Ford Motor Company in 1903.[176] With the introduction of the Model T for $850 in 1908, Ford was "selling not just a car but the dream of a better future to workers, farmers and others

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[172] M.L. Berger, *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide* (Greenwood Press, 2001), 143.
[173] C. Seiler, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3.
[174] Flink, "The Car Culture," 18-19.
[175] P.J. Ling, *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform, and Social Change* (Manchester University Press, 1990), 168.
[176] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*, 63.

generally forgotten by the Automobile Age."[177] Almost a hundred years later, in a profile of Henry Ford's great-grandson, a *Time* reporter credited this strategy with "practically inventing the auto industry, not to mention blue-collar consumerism." [178] Likewise, Jack Beatty writes that in creating and selling an affordable people's car, "Henry Ford made American dreams come true" more than "any other inventor, artist, writer, or politician."[179]

Ford Family: Birth of a Brand in an Age of Improvement and Reform

Henry Ford's iconic legacy – and many Ford brand tenets – came to be during an era of reform and improvement in America. The country experienced "growing pains" from the industrial revolution; corruption in business and in politics was widespread at the turn of the century. Outrage at factory working conditions sparked general rejection of capital power and wealthy class privilege. As muckraking journalists like Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Upton Sinclair exposed horrific labor practices, government corruption, and abuse of corporate power, public support for programs that helped small business owners, farmers, and working class Americans mounted. Journalists tried to illustrate the need for organized reaction to flaws in the democratic system.[180] Democracy, journalists and reformers argued, was depended upon checking capitalism and corporate power.[181] Howard Good writes that rather than "practice exposure for

[177] Ibid., 113.
[178] "Can This Man Save the Auto Industry?," *Time Magazine* 2006.
[179] J. Beatty, *Colossus: How the Corporation Changed America* (Broadway Books, 2001), 257.
[180] C. Tichi, *Exposes and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900-2000* (Univ of Pennsylvania Pr, 2004).
[181] For a good overview of changing historical notions about consumption and citizenship see S. Kroen, "A Political History of the Consumer," *Historical Journal* (2004).

exposure's sake," progressive era journalists sought the moral regeneration of American society.[182]

Journalists asked Americans to better themselves, politics, business, and the moral fabric of the country. Rather than reporters of news, reform journalists saw themselves as activists. It is important to note that journalists before World War I did not adhere to the 'objective' report nor believe in a sharp divide between facts and values; instead, improving the public good was the main philosophy of journalism during this time.[183] "Telling a good story," being colorful, and writing "literature," were as important as "getting the facts," as Schudson points out.[184] Partisanship and sensationalism in the press "ran deep" well into the twentieth-century, and muckrakers – who adhered to an "activist brand of journalism" that "made no apologies about advocating change" – used popular national magazines to attack privilege, wealth, abuse and to lobby for change.[185]

In response, movements to eliminate social problems – like alcoholism, prostitution, inadequate nutrition, and sanitation – to raise standards of living, and to better working conditions grew. Historian Richard Hofstadter writes, "The fundamental critical achievement of American Progressivism was the business of exposure, and journalism was the chief occupational source of its creative writers. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind,

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[182] Tichi, *Exposes and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900-2000*; R. Miraldi, *The Muckrakers: Evangelical Crusaders* (Praeger, 2000).
[183] W.D. Sloan, J.G. Stovall, and J.D. Startt, *The Media in America: A History* (Publishing Horizons, 1993), 283.; L.C. Hillstrom, *The Muckrakers and the Progressive Era* (Omnigraphics, 2010).
[184] It wasn't until after World War I – and the widespread use of propaganda – that journalists became convinced that "the world they reported was one that interested parties had constructed for them to report." Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, 6.
[185] Michael Schudson and Susan Tifft, "The Press," in *Institutions of American Democracy Series*, ed. Geneva Overholser and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

and that its characteristic contribution was that of the socially responsible reporter-reformer."[186]

Reform wasn't only a mantra taken up by a small group of writers. The entire country embraced the ethos of improvement between the Civil War and World War I, writes historian Jackson Lears, and Americans devoted decades to spiritual, physical and moral regeneration and rebirth. He writes, "As daily life became more subject to the systematic demands of the modern corporation, the quest for revitalization became a search for release of the predictable rhythms of everyday." This longing for rebirth, escape, and revitalization resonated with American myth of reinvention.[187]Americans of all classes responded to reformers' requests. It was, in fact, in their best interest to do so. For working class Americans, progressive reform sought to improve their day-to-day work and family life. For middle-class Americas, the Progressive movement protected their newly comfortable lives. For corporations, better working conditions and worker morale often meant more efficient and productive workforces.

Henry Ford embraced the ethos of this era, in public and internally at Ford, out of both altruism and self-interest. Despite his wealth and business success, he saw himself – and so did the public – largely as a reformer rather than a 'robber baron.' Due fortuitous timing and his legacy as a "folk hero," Ford escaped the wrath of the muckrakers.[188] Biographies of Henry Ford detail his deep appreciation for the outdoors and rural life – developed while boating, fishing and hunting on the family farm – his love of mechanical problems, his distrust of financial power, his loyalty to working Americans and farmers,

[186] R. Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Edition, 1955), 186.
[187] J. Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (HarperCollins, 2010), 1.
[188] R.M. Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass-Roots America* (University of Michigan Press, 1972), 6.

and his obsession with work efficiency and work ethic.[189] Henry Ford was an eccentric leader, obsessed with improving the moral values of fellow workers and Americans. He was both a common man of the people and a legacy larger than life; he was a self-made millionaire, a reformer, a folk hero, a mechanical genius, and even labeled, "America personified."[190] Wik writes, "one ostensible reason the Ford legend flourished was because the man epitomized values dear to the hearts of the average American. Rural Americans tended to believe in him because he mirrored the thought of grass-roots elements in society, and so extended a blanket blessing on all his works. Here rests the origin of the Ford halo."[191]

Henry Ford was not unaware of the power of his public image, as Watts writes: "While newspaper and magazine stories were telling his story, he simultaneously maneuvered to take advantage of this newfound personal status. Company advertising and publicity used the picture of its founder as a homespun hero."[192] Ads for the Model T, promotional literature to dealers, newspaper publicity, and company pamphlets capitalized on the cult of Henry Ford's personality and the Progressive Era's rejection of corporate power. The "Ford-as-folk-hero" narrative shaped public perception of the company founder, FMC products, and began to define the Ford brand.[193]

On January 5, 1914, the company made an announcement that cemented the "Ford-as-folk hero" narrative. The Ford Motor Company revealed a much-lauded "Five

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[189] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*; A. Nevins and F.E. Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company* (Scribner, 1954); ———, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1933-1962*; R. Bak, *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire* (Wiley, 2003).
[190] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 166.
[191] Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass-Roots America*, 8.
[192] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 169.
[193] Ibid., 171.

Dollar Day" reform plan to raise the Ford Motor Company minimum wage of certain classes of employees and to share profits among the workforce. To qualify for these wages, employees had to subject themselves and their families to home inspections by the newly created the Ford Motor Company Sociological Department and "Americanization" program.[194] According to the company, the plan was designed to increase the work efficiency of Ford's factory floor, enhance the purchasing power of working-class employees, and make "real citizens" out of Ford workers.[195] Henry Ford wanted employees to use the wage increase and shared profits to upgrade the quality of their lives, and in turn, to improve their work ethic. Consumption was a strong part of Ford's vision for better American citizens, assimilated immigrants, and preferred workers in the Ford family.[196] The Five Dollar Day plan, in the words of Henry Ford, "created a lot of customers."[197] Henry Ford viewed improving the buying power of ordinary citizens as both a business decision and social service. Along with the Five Dollar Day plan, Henry Ford committed the company to large-scale production of the utilitarian Model T and pricing that put a car within reach of more Americans. In doing so, Henry Ford positioned FMC as "democratizing consumption" rather than simply producing a toy for

[194] An excellent discussion of the impact of these programs can be found in Clarence Hooker, "Ford's Sociology Department and the Americanization Campaign and the Manufacture of Popular Culture among Assembly Line Workers C.1910—1917," *Journal of American Culture* 20, no. 1 (1997). May also discusses how Ford's policy reproduced gender divisions in the "family wage" in M. May, "The Historical Problem of the Family Wage: The Ford Motor Company and the Five Dollar Day," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 2 (1982).
[195] Hooker, "Ford's Sociology Department and the Americanization Campaign and the Manufacture of Popular Culture among Assembly Line Workers C.1910—1917."
[196] Americans, in general, embraced material standards for measuring progress between the Civil War and World War I, as Laird points out. Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing*, 65.
[197] H. Ford, S. Crowther, and N. Bodek, *Today and Tomorrow* (Portland, OR: Productivity Press, 1988 [1926]), 9,158. Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 183.

wealthy Americans. [198] Henry Ford pitched the Model T as "a motor car for the great multitude," and promised "it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one – and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's greatest open spaces."[199] These efforts made Henry Ford the "people's tycoon," writes Watts, and a businessman that tried to "mass-produce virtue as well as vehicles."[200] These efforts also gave birth to key tenets of the Ford family: celebration of the common man, American ingenuity, and longing for escape and revitalization; these tenets drove *Ford Times* content over the next century.

Advertising and PR at Ford

During the early years, the Ford Motor Company's public relations and advertising efforts were informal, sporadic and of little importance to company executives.[201] The Ford Motor Company's publicity efforts became more sophisticated in 1908. Instead of promoting Ford cars by exhibiting, racing and advertising new models, the company began telling a compelling story about the company, its cars, executives, and factories.

From 1903 to 1908, Henry Ford and James Couzens, handled company advertising and press relations, except for a brief period in 1907 when E. LeRoy Pelletier was hired as Ford's advertising manager. Pelletier left the company in December of 1907;

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[198] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*.
[199] The quote appears in Ford Times, June 1913, p. 355. ; For a discussion of the Model T and its impact see Garet Garrett, "The World That Henry Ford Made," *Look*, March 25, 1952., and Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*.
[200] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 205.
[201] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 38.

H.B. Harper and his assistant Robert Walsh replaced him in 1908 after his departure.[202] Before 1908, Ford invested in some newspaper, trade journal and magazine advertising; these ads followed the lead of industry advertisers who convinced the public of the viability of their organization and superiority of product. They did not want to be viewed as "selling experiments" or as unable to deliver product. Lewis, who analyzed Ford newspaper and magazine advertisements from 1903 to 1908, writes that copy themes rotated frequently but emphasized utility, simplicity, initial low cost, durability, and contest victories. The most significant advertising development at Ford during this time was the creation of the company's famous and long-running advertising slogan, "Watch the Fords Go By."[203] Unlike competitors – who courted the press with lavish dinners, model previews, stories, photos, and conferences – Ford did little press relations during the early years. Company founders mainly fielded interviews at races and auto shows and sporadically issued statements from the home office.

The corporation mainly relied upon a tried-and-true method of promotion – car racing. [204] Henry Ford said, "When it was found that an automobile really could go and several makers started to put out cars, the immediate query was as to which would go fastest. It was a curious but natural development - that racing idea… the public refused to consider the automobile in any light other than as a fast toy. Therefore later we had to race."[205] By 1908, the company needed a new communications strategy. The public began to view speed racing as a dangerous sport and the vast amount of medals given to

[202] Ibid., 27, 36-37, 493. The slogan was used by the company from 1907 to the 1940s. There is some controversy over who created the phrase –Pelletier or W.S. Hogue, the company's traffic manager.
[203] Ibid., 36-37.
[204] Ibid., 59.
[205]H. Ford and S. Crowther, *My Life and Work* (Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 36.

winners forced racing to lose prestige among industry followers.[206] Due to racer deaths, the Ford Motor Company decided to abandon all speed racing in the fall of 1907, a boycott that lasted two years.[207] The company was not alone, as industry publications also banned race results for a short period of time.[208]

The industry also could not rely on the daily press to keep their name in front of stakeholders. Lewis writes, "When cars were a novelty, the daily press liberally reported automotive activities. As automobiles became more commonplace, however, resistance stiffened." Newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune, declared in 1908 that it would not mention the name of any motorcar manufacturer in its pages. The American Newspaper's Publishers Association (ANPA) and the Associated Press also tried to ban automotive publicity, but manufacturers and dealers threatened to pull their advertising dollars unless the policy was changed.[209]

In 1908, everything changed for the Ford Motor Company. Lewis writes that the corporation "abruptly left the pack" and would dominate industry sales and output for the next eighteen years. Henry Ford, driven by his mission to build an inexpensive car for working Americans, "clarified his vision of the automobile he wanted to make and

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[206] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*., 26. He writes that race events began to award medals in seven or eight classification groups based on horsepower, weight and price. This greatly increased the number of gold medals awarded and lead many industry enthusiasts to view racing results as a farce.

[207] Lewis writes that the Henry Ford abandoned racing at this time for good, while the company did not partake in races for two years. Ford was shaken by the near death of Ford racer and mechanic Frank Kulick at the Michigan State Fair track in 1907. After the accident, Ford "declared that until the industry could agree on limiting the speed and power of racing vehicles, he and his company would forego the sport." Lewis also suggests that Ford stopped racing because the company ran out of competition in their low-price, lightweight class. Ford did continue to participate in "endurance" runs during this time. Ibid., 26-27.

[208] Motor Age refused to run articles about speed racing and other magazines suggested that speed racing be replaced by endurance runs. Ibid.

[209] Ibid.; J.C. Long and C.K. Hyde, *Roy D. Chapin: The Man Behind the Hudson Motor Car Company* (Wayne State University Press, 1945).

consolidated a structure for realizing it" by 1908.[210] As the company became a formidable industry player, it began to pay more attention to advertising and press relations. Lewis writes, "Two or three years after 1908, the broadening stream of public relations and promotional activities helped make the Ford Motor Company and its product better known to the general public than any other automobile firm or car, within another two years – by 1913 – the company was regarded as one of the outstanding business institutions in the country. Its leading owner-executive, Henry Ford, had become the motor world's commanding figure and one of America's leading industrialists."[211] Of the more formal and sophisticated public relations activities launched in 1908 at the beginning of this journey was a magazine for the Ford organization: *The Ford Times.*

Starting the Presses

As stated above, in this environment, Ford's decision to start a company publication was not an unusual move for a growing corporation.[212] Corporations of all types were searching for more formal and sophisticated communication tactics at the beginning of the twentieth century. Largely due to efforts by muckrakers, corporate communicators were expected to disclose activities and disseminate information to the public beyond product advertising.[213] Publicity, as corporate communication activities were referred to during this time, shifted from something given by newspapers to a

[210] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 107.
[211] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 40.
[212] The *Ford Times* joined other long-running company magazines - like *The Locomotive* published by the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company, and *The Furrow* published by the Deere & Co. – were introduced in the mid 1800s. Riley, *Corporate Magazines of the United States*, 87, 131, 67.
[213] K. Stoker and B.L. Rawlins, "The Light of Publicity in the Progressive Era: From Searchlight to Flashlight," *Journalism History* 30, no. 4 (2005).

person, event or issue to something provided by businesses and industries.[214] Both corporations and social reformers embraced organizations' efforts to make information public. Political leaders even started requiring it: "Theodore Roosevelt's agitation for 'corporate publicity,' meaning mandated release of information from the trusts, was an important contributing factor in the timing of, as well as the motivation for, the rise of corporate publicity programs." [215]

As corporations grew in size and power during the first half of the twentieth century, they threatened the balance between family, church, education, the press, government and work.[216] For the early twentieth-century corporation becoming an institution, Marchand writes, "meant more than simply acquiring the status of a customary, established entity. It meant rising above mere commercialism and removing the taint of selfishness."[217] He continues, "In our more secular, less naïve contemporary world, we see such attempts to augment moral legitimacy as campaigns to gain corporate prestige or a reputation for social responsibility. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both advocates and critics of the giant corporations spoke of similar aspirations as quests for a 'corporate soul.'"[218]

Corporations understood the importance of sharing information – and developing their 'soul' – on their own terms, largely by playing journalists and producing media vehicles for employees and customers. Starting a company magazine made sense to turn-

[214] Russell and Bishop make this argument by examining newspaper and magazines writer's definitions of publicity and press agentry from 1865 to 1904. K.M. Russell and C.O. Bishop, "Understanding Ivy Lee's Declaration of Principles: Us Newspaper and Magazine Coverage of Publicity and Press Agentry, 1865-1904," *Public Relations Review* 35, no. 2 (2009).
[215] Ibid.
[216] Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*.
[217] Ibid., 2.
[218] Ibid., 4.

of-the-century communicators. Printing, paper, and postal rates were cheap, and magazines geared towards middle and working class Americans proliferated.[219] According to historian Frank Mott, Progressive Era magazine editors of all types largely "locked up their ivory towers and came down into the marketplace."[220] Corporate communication to employees and to consumers also changed dramatically towards the end of the nineteenth century. From 1850 to 1920, business communication, especially internal communication, became much more complex, systematic and extensive. Historians, including Yates, argue that growing corporations of this period largely rejected word-of-mouth, informal communication methods favored by small, family-owned firms for systematic, informal, managerially mandated communication processes, designed to improve efficiency and control of workers. As part of the larger movement of scientific management, formal methods of internal communication became a major tool of management that was "exerted towards the goal of achieving system and, thus, efficiency."[221] Historian Laird describes advertising's evolution from the Civil War to 1920 in similar terms. Commercial messages proliferated and manufacturers began to rely on professionals with formal strategic communication experience to craft messages. As face-to-face marketplace interactions among workers, manufacturers and consumers grew scarce, advertisers, public relations professionals, and industrial editors – who, of course, stood to benefit – claimed that the printed word was a ready substitute for

[219] Frank Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958-1968).
[220] Ibid., 2.
[221] JA Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Johns Hopkins Univ Pr, 1993), xvii.

dialogue.[222] Due to the rich nature of magazines, their ability to share in-depth feature information, and the opportunity for both editors and readers to submit information, magazines especially were touted as a prime venue for "mutual communication" between the company and the audience, an effective tool to create goodwill among stakeholders, and a way convince readers of the company's benevolent nature during the first part of the twentieth century as companies expanded from small operations to sprawling, decentralized giants.[223] As growing corporations embraced the idea that they were accountable to the public and needed to operate in ways that benefited a common good, Gower writes, "successful corporate public relations required more than the hiring of a press or publicity agent; it required a mature individual who understood the business and the public." [224] For the Ford Motor Company, that individual was Norval A. Hawkins.

Birth of a Magazine

Ford Times was the brainchild of "perhaps the greatest salesman the world has ever known."[225] Norval A. Hawkins, the commercial manager of the Ford Company, created the first issue on April 15, 1908 to "afford a means for the interchange of ideas among employees of the Ford Motor Co."[226]

[222] Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, 108.
[223] Ibid; Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management*; Nye, *Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric, 1890-1930*. WJ Cadigan, *The Icie File: A History of Industrial Journalism* (International Council of Industrial Editors, 1961).; Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*.; Riley, *Corporate Magazines of the United States*. ibid.
[224] Gower, "Us Corporate Public Relations in the Progressive Era."
[225] Nevins and Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*, 342-43.
[226] *Ford Times*, April 15, 1908, 8.

Henry Ford and James Couzens hired Hawkins late in 1907 to manage sales and marketing.[227] Hawkins writes that he landed the position by "selling Henry Ford" on the idea that the company lacked certain services that he could provide.[228] The Michigan-born and educated accountant first served as an outside accounting consultant for the company and installed an accounting system that would track monthly sales and profits.[229] According to Hawkins, "After I completed my work as an accountant, Mr. Ford talked with me about taking a permanent position with the Company in the capacity of 'Commercial Manager.'"[230] The title perfectly sums up the vision and variety of experience Hawkins brought to the role. He was responsible for "the distribution of products, advertising, collections, selection of branch managers and their corps of assistants, operation of branch houses, appointment and direction of agents, employment and control of the entire sales force, etc., etc." In Hawkins own words, the position was "much broader than that of Sales Manager, as it included also the accounting and organizing of nearly every department of the business."[231]

The Ford Motor Company did, indeed, need a "Commercial Manager." James Couzens could no longer manage marketing, shipping, sales, advertising, and branch offices due to the rapid growth of the company.[232] Hawkins, however, was an unlikely candidate for the job. In 1894, Hawkins was the cashier for the Standard Oil Company

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[227] Nevins and Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*.
[228] In his book published after working at the FMC, Hawkins writes that his work as a public accountant for Ford revealed that the company needed a commercial manager and sales organizer. He convinced Ford to hire him, even though he did not have experience handling sales agents and dealers, by presenting his ideas on how the job should be done. N.A. Hawkins, *Certain Success* (1920).
[229] Hawkins, *Certain Success,* 222.
[230] N.A. Hawkins, *The Selling Process: A Handbook of Salesmanship Principles* (N. A. Hawkins, 1920).
[231] Hawkins claims that during the twelve years he spent in charge of marketing the Ford Company's sales increased 132 times – from 6181 to 815912 cars per year. Ibid.
[232] Nevins and Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*, 343.

and had been convicted of embezzling $8,000 from the company. Georgia E. Boyer recalls, "the Standard Oil Company told Mr. Hawkins that if he would tell and show them how he had manipulated the records, they would guarantee his release."[233]

After serving his prison sentence, Hawkins started an accounting firm that counseled businesses, including twenty-eight automobile companies, on how to improve efficiency and increase profit.[234] Hawkins said, he "believed in my (own) ability, not only to organize a selling and distributing force for successfully marketing a standard product, but also to extend that force over a world field and to control it in all the details of its operations, from opening the mail to the declaration and payment of dividends, more efficiently than the average sales or commercial manager. So, I had no hesitancy in undertaking the Ford job, which, even at that early date, I visualized as culminating in a big one."[235] In his later books filled with selling tips and techniques, Hawkins used details from his life to illustrate prowess at "recreating" a successful image for himself. He writes that his prison sentence and subsequent fruitful business career "demonstrate how a man of character and brains, after a bad slip, could make an enduring success."[236]

Once at the Ford Motor Company, by all accounts, Hawkins achieved his goal of "certain success."[237] Hawkins was an efficient 'numbers man,' a savvy businessman, an effective motivator, and a master salesman.[238] He revolutionized the sales operations of

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[233] Georgia E. Boyer Reminiscences, Ford Motor Company Archives, Oral History Section, January 1954, 10.
[234] Nevins and Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*.; Hawkins, *Certain Success*.
[235] Hawkins, *Certain Success*, 223.
[236] Hawkins, *The Selling Process: A Handbook of Salesmanship Principles*, 36..
[237] The FMC board of directors awarded Hawkins a generous bonus of $13,000 after less than two years on the job for his good work. Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 130.
[238] W.A. Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America* (Harvard University Press, 2005), 213.

the company by creating intensive territories for semi-independent dealers based on a branch management distribution system. Hawkins and Couzens revamped the sales organization by opening company branch agencies in major North American cities, which assembled cars to save on shipping costs, provided service and repairs for customers, and supported dealers.[239] By 1913, Hawkins' sales network consisted of over 7,000 dealers and 32 branch offices throughout North America.[240]

Protecting ongoing relationships between the corporation and dealers, and in turn between dealers and customers, was vital; dealers were both partners and customers of the company. Like other automobile manufacturers, Ford did not sell directly to consumers but sold cars at a discount to dealers, approximately one-quarter the price of the car.[241] The company relied on its dealers and their sales teams to help generate demand among prospects, fight competition, send market information back to corporate headquarters, and respond to changes from Ford executives.[242] Ford also needed dealers to retain customers so they would return for repairs, and eventually, to purchase future models. Hawkins encouraged dealers to canvass neighborhoods and go door-to-door to interact with potential customers. He often rode around with dealers to meet top prospects, to give dealers sales tips, and to study the marketing environment.[243]

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[239]J.M. Rubenstein, *Making and Selling Cars: Innovation and Change in the Us Automotive Industry* (Johns Hopkins Univ Pr, 2001). ; Leslie Allen, "Rise and Fall of Ford's Sales Network Architect: Prison, Success, Bankruptcy," *Automotive News*, September 25, 2006.
[240]Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 129.
[241] Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America*, 211.
[242] T.S. Dicke, *Franchising in America: The Development of a Business Method, 1840-1980* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992).; Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America*, 209-10.
[243] Nevins and Hill, *Ford: The Times, the Man, the Company*, 344.

As partners, customers, stakeholders, and bridges to customers, dealers needed more than one-dimensional news, gossip, or personnel details; they needed engaging, motivational, informational and relevant stories – or brand journalism. The company had to implement an efficient system to get information and enthusiasm flowing between dealers, consumers and the corporation; they had to motivate dealers to advocate on behalf of the corporation. Hawkins knew he had to first "weld together the geographically scattered Ford sales force," retain dealers, standardize communication from the home office, and foster a common company culture.[244]

He found the answer in the creation of a house organ – the *Ford Times.*[245] The slick, sixteen-to-forty-page magazine, initially targeted to dealers and branch managers, featured sales techniques, advertising techniques and tips on running an efficient business. In line with the era's dedication to reform and improvement, especially by magazine journalists, and Henry Ford's image as folk hero, the magazine also offered general moral guidance, motivational quotes, and company history. Its focus was three-fold: information, inspiration and instruction. Articles reported the results of car races and stunts, company personnel news, changes in design, tips on car repair and maintenance, and industry news.

In a 1927 Detroit News article, Hawkins describes the *Ford Times* as "the largest house organ in the world. Cyrus H.K. Curtis said once we should take over the Saturday

[244] Dicke, *Franchising in America: The Development of a Business Method, 1840-1980.*; Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*.
[245] ———, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century.*; Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America*, 211.

Evening Post and use it for a house organ."[246] Hawkins enlisted H.B. Harper, who was Ford Motor Company's advertising manager from 1908 to 1910, and his assistant Robert Walsh to write most of the initial copy. Other executives besides Hawkins, including Vice President James Couzens and Henry Ford, also contributed a significant amount of early content.

As discussed in previous chapters, scholars often dismiss house organs like the *Ford Times* for their "trivial" content, namely articles that recognize and motivate employees, and focus on the "dreaded three Bs: bowling scores, birthdays, and babies."[247] As the rest of this chapter illustrates, *Ford Times* did more than simply share personnel news or push messages about Ford products; it also provided a narrative of connection, met the informational needs of audience members, gave readers a deeper sense of Ford brand tenets, and offered moral base for car consumption. Like reform journalism of this period, the brand journalism practiced by Progressive Era Ford tried to inspire readers to improve the social fabric of the nation. The section below describes how editors framed the magazine as a 'family' newsletter and constructed a view of America in which brotherhood was built on the Ford brand.

Magazine for Dealers, 1908-1910

Hawkins wanted his magazine to tie together his geographically disperse dealer network, and later, to connect Ford customers. The initial mission of the magazine, for its first two years of existence, was to create a common culture among Hawkins's expanding

[246] , *Detroit News*, February 2, 1927.
[247] Clampitt, Crevcoure, and Hartel, "Exploratory Research on Employee Publications."

dealer network. Unlike other house organs produced for early twentieth-century for factory workers, editors of the *Ford Times* had to engage an unusual audience: Ford middle-class dealers were uniquely workers, business partners, and customers. *Ford Times* met the informational needs of this group by blending material typical of employee publications with content common to advertising campaigns of the era – they introduced the Ford family, offered inspirational messages, and shared business how-to tips.

Interactive Orientation. Unlike advertising copy or traditional newspaper articles, the *Ford Times* had a co-creational orientation; the magazine wanted to partner with dealers to produce magazine content that would be relevant to the reader community. From the inaugural issue, editorial staff made it clear that the *Ford Times*' purpose was to facilitate conversation; magazine content was the joint responsibility of the company and readers. Harper and Hawkins pressed dealers to contribute material and serve as correspondents by reporting on the sales environment of their particular region. *Ford Times* staff members saw the magazine as a "participatory" form of communication and substitute for face-to-face dialogue. Editors sought relationships with and among readers and invited readers to share in the creation of brand stories circulated between the corporation, dealers and customers.

The magazine's masthead declared that *Ford Times* was "published solely to afford a means for the interchange of ideas among all dealers and employees of the Ford Motor Co, Detroit."[248] Harper declared the magazine is dedicated to "every Branch – every Agency – every Manager – every Sales Man – every Bookkeeper –every clerk –

[248] This masthead ran from April 15, 1908 until February 1, 1909. In February, editors dropped the mission statement from the cover of the magazine. In October 1911, the slogan "*Ford Times*, Evidence that *Ford Times* are the Best Times," appeared on the first page of the magazine.

every cashier –every stenographer – every individual interested in promoting the best interests of the Ford Company."[249] Editors told readers, "anything that advances the interests of the Ford Motor Company is wanted for this paper, and by all contributing we can make the *FORD TIMES* very valuable."[250] In the September 1908 issue, editors write that they "want to make the *Ford Times* a Clearing House of ideas, selling methods, sales takes, etc, and our only intent is thereby to increase the effectiveness of our entire organization."[251]

Dealers were encouraged to submit content and take an active role with the magazine in order to help themselves and fellow dealers. Editors write, "Every dealer who is successful has some methods peculiar to himself which he applies to making sales. Likewise no dealer knows it all or is so learned that he cannot be helped by the other dealers."[252] Dealers were encouraged to "tell us how you work; what makes sales for you; how you overcome competition; what your strongest talking points are; what your customers admire in Ford cars; how you get close to potential buyers; how you take care of repairs; and so give us your experience in exchange for the experience of other dealers."[253]

Dealers *did* respond to these calls for content. For example, in the September 1, 1908 issue, C.F. Weeber of Albany, N.Y. gives other dealers tips on how to secure prospects, namely by encouraging customers to keep up with their neighbors, competitors, and friends who are Ford owners. Dealers from Oklahoma and Wisconsin

[249] *Ford Times*, April 15, 1908, 8.
[250] *Ford Times*, July 1, 1908, 8.
[251] *Ford Times*, September 1, 1908, 11.
[252] *Ford Times*, September 1, 1908, 11.
[253] *Ford Times*, September 1, 1908, 11.

shared letters that they mailed to lists of potential Ford customers in hopes that their tactics would be "valuable to other dealers."[254] Numerous photographs, news briefs, selling tips and techniques, quotes and quips appear in the first two years, attributed to dealers.

Although they did contribute, dealers did not submit enough material to satisfy the *Ford Times* editorial staff. Editors reprimanded dealers: "don't be selfish. Don't read this paper twice a month for the hints it may contain for you and hold tight to all you know about making sales."[255] In January of 1909, Harper chastised dealers to not 'backslide so early in the year' and send more articles and pictures. He wrote, "Glance over the ruled lines at the top of this – yes, it is there still and is as old as the 'Times.' This note begins, 'We want pictures, stories, etc.,' but can always be interpreted 'We NEED pictures, etc.'"[256]

Introducing the Ford Family. Like many other company magazines directed to employees, articles relied on a "family" metaphor to unite readers. The "corporation as family" metaphor was pervasive in communication directed to factory workers in the first part of the twentieth century to ease labor problems, counter unionization movements, and implement corporate welfare programs.[257] As Mandell writes in her book, "Corporation as Family," this metaphor allowed corporate executives to assume the role of "corporate benefactor" rather than "ruthless or uncaring exploiter" and ask for loyalty, cooperation and hard work from laborers. Familial terminology reminded workers that

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[254] *Ford Times*, November 1, 1908, 15; *Ford Times*, November 15, 1908, 10
[255] September 1, 1908, 11.
[256] *Ford Times*, January 1909, 8.
[257] N. Mandell, *The Corporation as Family: The Gendering of Corporate Welfare, 1890-1930* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

everyone within the corporate had distinct, complementary roles. Workers were "obligated" to stick with the corporation in good and bad times, and should "want" to repay employers with cooperation and gratitude.[258]

The family metaphor allowed the *Ford Times* to reinforce the "common man" brand tenet and to demand loyalty, cooperation and hard work from their dealers. Dealers must "cooperate" with headquarters in order to utilize resources like the advertising department and the dealer network. Hawkins and Harper reminded dealers that they even "owed" the corporation their "cooperation": "the Ford Motor Company is advertising to build up a business, is manufacturing as good a car as they know how so as to insure their future success – the man selling Ford Cars surely should co-operate to the extent of enthusiasm, interest, intelligence, and business system."[259]Articles reminded dealers that "candidly and just between us as members of the Ford family," Ford cars were really "all the advertising claims."

The convention of branch managers was described as "the annual Ford family reunion": "it was a season of family job participated in, in the largest measure, by every member of the Ford family."[260] Articles assured dealers that loyalty to the Ford family would be rewarded: "instead of going outside and selecting new men, a most discouraging thing to the man who has worked for it and is overlooked, Mr. Ford, as is his custom, picked out fellows who have grown up with the organization, men who have made good in other positions here and these men were given a chance to prove the stuff

[258] Ibid., 46.
[259] *Ford Times*, November 1, 1908, 5.
[260] *Ford Times*, October 1911, 22.

in them."[261] These articles position the Ford Motor family of workers, dealers and executives as a loyal, hard-working, self-sufficient, self-made, and down-to-earth group.

The magazine did not address labor-management relations directly; however, when it did discuss factory conditions, editors included factory workers as part of the Ford family, toiling for a similar mission: to increase company and dealer profits. In an article titled, "Factory Help An Important Part of Selling Force," Hawkins writes, "We don't ask the Factory to back-up the Sales Department. We want every employee in it to be a *part* of the sales organization." He assures readers that every position in the factory, every administrative clerk, every designer, and every dealer is equally a "very important" member of the Ford selling force. Company employees must remember that "it's the customer who controls the business, that it's the customers who put the money in the pay envelopes and keep the wheels revolving."[262] If everyone does their job, readers' mutual goal will be achieved: every Ford buyer would become an enthusiast and a booster for another sale. Another article writes, "the entire factory had been made part of the Sales Department with only one thought in mind – INCREASE THE OUTPUT."[263] Dealers, executives, and factory workers of the Ford family were united in the mission to make profits for the corporation.

Employee news, major sales by top dealers, visits or "vacations" to the factory by dealers and their teams, and general reports on business from different areas of the country – some of it similar to the "trivial" content in other house organs of the period –

[261] *Ford Times*, April 1, 1908, 8
[262] *Ford Times*, April 15, 1909, 5.
[263] *Ford Times*, May 1, 1909, 11.

did appear in early issues.[264] The magazine ran extended personnel announcements and profiles of individual dealers, branch managers and executives that casually "introduced" members of the Ford family to one another, demonstrated the success of those associated with the company, and reinforced Ford company values. For example, the August 1, 1908 issue profiles branch manager "Warren C. or better know by most of his friends as 'Fuzzy'" under the title "Who is St. Louis?" The light-hearted article describes Anderson's confident spirit, largely boosted by his successful work to build personal contact with all Ford car owners in and about St. Louis, and encourages all readers to write to "Fuzzy" to get to know him and his associates better.

Editors recognized and motivated dealers, shared tips and techniques on selling autos, and described the company and its products in order to "sell" dealers on the Ford brand. Like other house organs, these items promoted loyalty and hard work; they also assured readers of the health of the Ford family. From branch manager Mr. E. Roger Stearns who visited the factory and joked that business was so good in Buffalo that he wanted Ford "to build a factory to take care of Buffalo orders only" to Kansas agent Mr. H. H. Tayor who visited the factory and "looks well and prosperous and tells us he expects a record business this season," these news items encouraged competition among branches and assured dealers that they were joining a successful organization with secure prospects.[265] This was an important message for dealers, as they assumed much personal financial risk by joining the organization.

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[264] For a discussion of traditional "employee news" of the time see Clampitt, Crevcoure, and Hartel, "Exploratory Research on Employee Publications."
[265] *Ford Times*, July 1, 1908, 9.

Ford Times encouraged dealers to treat customers as family and focus on building long-term relationships with prospects: "Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the face that when you have sold a car to a customer your acquaintance and business relations with that customer have only just commenced – not ended."[266] The magazine gave specific tips to dealers on how to build this relationship, most notably, in developing owners' clubs. The first was organized in St. Louis when some "red hot enthusiasts" approached a local branch dealer to suggest forming a club of local Ford owners. St. Louis branch manager Fuzzy Anderson, mentioned above, invited all Ford owners in the city to be his guests at Meramee Highlands report. 110 people showed up. The magazine suggests that forming Ford owner clubs is a good idea for "it promotes sociability among members, boosts the automobile industry generally, assists in Ford sales in particular." The company promises to design an emblem for club members' radiators, so members can identify one another.[267] Magazine editors offer to be a connection among dealers interested in starting such clubs: "The Times will be pleased to hear of the starting of similar clubs and will be glad to offer suggestions if called upon for them." Baltimore dealers Kaehler and Eastwick, stated *Ford Times* May 1, 1909 issue, took up "Fuzzy's" suggestion and mailed letters to each Ford owner in their territory, a method that "can be advantageously followed by other Ford dealers." The letter tells Ford owners that the dealers plan to "hold a reunion of the big family of Ford owners in and around Baltimore" by hosting a, 80-mile ride through the pretty Green Spring Valley. The Ford Motor Company promised to pay for tolls, dinner, entertainment, and a "souvenir" 16 x

[266] *Ford Times*, May 15, 1908, 5.
[267] *Ford Times*, July 1, 1908, 33.

20 group photograph of those taking part in the trip.[268] The magazine also reported other ritual activities that dealers created and readers participated in with their Ford cars. The article "Ford Day in Wisconsin" describes how "Fordites" in Wisconsin decided to hold an event that would bring business to Milwaukee while "promoting greater sociability among the army of Ford owners."

Family Values. Editors also stressed Ford family values – hard work, bravery, persistence, and unpretentiousness – in content. In early issues, editors describe the Ford Motor Company as a brave trailblazer: the company was a "successful new-comer with independence enough to desire to paddle his own canoe."[269] Henry Ford and the Ford Motor Company were interchangeable. Henry Ford fought "tormentors" and overcame "effort to smother the little Ford Motor Company." The editors write, "such, in brief, is the story of the growth of the Ford Motor Company – the story is quickly told and it's the old story of right winning over might, for it's a growth that sprang out of nothing plus an indomitable genius, and an unswerving determination to make the world recognize the genius and purchase the product. Step by step this upward march has progressed, opposed every inch of the way by the millions and minions of an envious helpless competition. The fight has been a glorious triumph – for triumph it surely is with the Ford car outselling any other make and Ford opposition on the defensive."[270] Just like other Ford family members, these "men in the Ford Motor Company are not rich men, who owe their prestige and position to wealth that they have inherited but they are men who have

[268] *Ford Times*, May 1, 1909, 10.
[269] *Ford Times,* July 1, 1908, 6, 2.
[270] *Ford Times,* July 1, 1908, 6, 2-3.

by hard, consistent, persistent, and insistent effort forced their way to the top and the positions they hold, they won."[271]

Heads of the Ford family were not the only ones demonstrating these values. Profiles and photos of dealers and branch managers also reinforced values like unpretentiousness, persistence, and hard work. The caption underneath photos of "typical" garages submitted by dealers Geo W. Care Co in Port Jervis, New York and Korb & Stewart in Evansville, Indiana, reads "the splendor of a man's establishment, the number of square feet in his garage, the plate glass front, are not always indicative of maximum success. Here are two hustlers, housed in unpretentious quarters, who by application of hard work and hustle have made money with the Ford cars."[272]

Instructing the Ford family. The *Ford Times* did not only introduce members of the Ford family to one another; it also took up the task of informing or educating the reader audience. The lead feature article in most issues was often penned by Hawkins, H.B. Harper, or a branch manager and usually included basic techniques on salesmanship, business efficiency, "profit chokers," and how-to information on "making the sale." Salesmanship was an "art" and a "profession" practiced by "clean-cut young men with brains and ambition."[273] Hawkins reminded his selling force "a real salesman is a man who alters another man's state of mind. He is not a salesman unless he does."[274] Some articles, like "Competition," by Oklahoma manager T.B. Funk share methods of

[271] *Ford Times*, July 1, 1908, 9.
[272] *Ford Times*, November 1, 1908, 8.
[273] *Ford Times*, January 15, 1909, 4.
[274] *Ford Times*, May 1, 1909, 11.

persuasion, like how to compare Ford cars with competitors, when talking with customers. Funk details how he allows customers to explain what they like about competitor models, and then after demonstrating the Ford model, attacks competitors in such a way that customers do not realize it.[275]

Because dealers were also customers, the magazine introduced product offerings to sell both dealers and consumers on the Ford company and brand. The magazine ran features on their cars, accessories, model upgrades, components, and materials. Stories describing Vandaium steel were especially prominent in the first two years of issues; editors quoted experts, like metallurgists and U.S. government officials who decided to use the steel in warships, and reminded readers that the dealer "who neglects to emphasize the Vanadium steel argument is missing an important point, for without exaggeration or fear of intelligent contradiction, any Ford salesman can state that by using this steel Henry Ford puts better, higher grade material into Ford cars than is used in any other car manufactured."[276] Feature articles also interwove "facts" about Ford cars, suggestions for potential target audiences for the models and accessories, and talking points on the superiority of the Ford brand. Hawkins and Harper often ran "scripts" for sale encounters, like "there are fewer parts to the Model T than to other touring cars" and "we can deliver this car today" that might convince customers to purchase a Ford car.[277]

Inspiring the Ford family. In line with the Progressive Era's dedication to improvement, editors sprinkled general motivational quotes about working hard, making

[275] *Ford Times*, August 1, 1908, 2.
[276] *Ford Times*, November 1, 1908, 14.
[277] *Ford Times*, February 15, 1909, 8.

ethical decisions, using time wisely, and being efficient, often under the title "inspirations," throughout the *Ford Times*. Some articles, quotes and jokes on motivation and moral conduct were pulled from popular magazines, like *Life*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *Harpers Weekly*, *Automobile*, and *Mahin's Messenger*, while others were attributed to popular figures, company executives and editorial staff. Articles, especially those penned by Hawkins, tried to inspire the sales force to uncover new prospects, be confident, be competitive and sell more cars. These self-help-like articles told dealers that the Ford company and its products were so excellent and desired that the only obstacle to a salesman's success was confidence and effort. With almost spiritual or evangelical undertones, Hawkins tells the sales force, "the men who have really done things in this world, who have achieved results in life, have always been the men who believed firmly and everlastingly in themselves."[278] Also, "Man's capacity for good, wholesome work is limited only by his self-confidence and hopes."[279] The articles submitted by dealers and branch managers were much less "evangelical" in nature than Hawkins'; however, they too reiterated the idea that technique and confidence were the only barriers to a sale rather than demand or product deficiencies.

Ford Times **for Consumers, 1910-1917**

The *Ford Times* remained an employee magazine, with content designed mainly for dealers and salesmen, for its first two years of existence. After editor Harper was promoted to export manager and Hawkins's responsibilities expanded, Ford Motor

[278]*Ford Times*, August 1, 1908, 11.
[279] *Ford Times*, November 15, 1908, 12.

Company's advertising staff took control of the magazine and initiated significant changes in magazine content and distribution.[280] In September of 1910, the company expanded readership to include Ford owners and prospective customers.[281] The company started sending copies of the magazine to dealers, based on the number of cars they sold; dealers forwarded *Ford Times* on to purchasers of Ford vehicles.[282]

The advertising staff members and agencies preparing most issues also enlarged the publication, produced it monthly rather than semimonthly, printed covers in four colors, and began to accept advertising from car accessory makers.[283] Content slowly began to focus less on sales techniques and staff members accepted more articles written by experts outside of the organization. Travel information began to appear in the magazine, as did articles describing "Owners Experiences," mechanical advice to drivers, and pieces advocating for the "Good Roads" movement.[284] By December 1913, editors were dedicating the house organ to external rather than internal stakeholders. Editors promised, "*Ford Times* is a magazine devoted to the automobile public in general – and

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[280] After spending two years as advertising manager and assistant commercial manager, H.B. Harper was promoted to export manager. "In the Realm of the Makers," *Automotive Industries*, July 7, 1910. Harper left Ford to join the Willys-Overland company in February of 1911. *Ford Times*, February 1911, 179. Glen Buck was in charge of both advertising and editing the magazine in 1912 and 1913.

[281] In the article titled, "Cooperation between Dealer & Factory," the Commercial Manager lists all the good things the company does for dealers, including "publish a House Organ – *Ford Times* – which is being sent to all dealers and will hereafter be mailed also occasionally to owners and prospects." *Ford Times*, September 1910, 14.

[282] ; ibid.

[283] The magazine switched from a semi-monthly to a monthly format in January 1911, as mentioned above. Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 49.

[284] "Good Roads" was an ongoing column in the *Ford Times*; it was also a nation-wide movement to increase education and access to improved road conditions, especially in rural areas. The Good Roads movement was started by bicycle riders and manufacturers and taken up by automobile makers, drivers, and legislators. For more on the Good Roads league see W.C. Hilles, *The Good Roads Movement in the United States: 1880-1916* (Duke University., 1958). For a good discussion of the need for campaigns to frame roads as a "technological" phenomenon that needed engineering for social ends rather than a "natural" phenomenon in order to gain the support of rural farmers, a frame that benefitted automobile manufacturers like Ford, see C.W. Wells, "The Changing Nature of Country Roads: Farmers, Reformers, and the Shifting Uses of Rural Space, 1880-1905," *Agricultural History* (2006).

to Ford owners in particular. But somewhere between its covers will be found something of interest to everyone."[285]

With the new focus on consumers, editors did not change the co-creational orientation of the company magazine. Even with the new focus on consumers, readers were invited to "help edit the magazine" in order to make it more relevant. Editors write: "It is our intention to make *Ford Times* even more of a real magazine of interest to its readers than it has been in the past. We want you to look forward to the coming of *Ford Times* with the same anticipation you do the arrival of your other favorite periodicals, and we want you to get it the first of each month. We want *Ford Times* readers to help us edit the magazine so that it shall contain exactly what they want." They continue, "*Ford Times* readers should assist us in making *Ford Times* magazine that shall have a regular place on every Ford owner's reading table. The way to do this is to send stories and pictures."[286]

Editors stressed that *Ford Times* was the only "authentic" voice of the Ford brand community and asked for reader feedback to help it stay relevant: "Remember that *Ford Times* is absolutely the only magazine that authentically speaks for the big Ford organization and the more than half million of Ford owners throughout the world. And don't forget we always invite criticism. Let's have yours."[287] The voice of other Ford owners is also valuable for "you may like to read what we have to say, but you also like to read what other Ford owners have to say."[288]

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[285] *Ford Times*, December 1913, back cover.
[286] *Ford Times*, August-September June 1914, 484.
[287] *Ford Times*, August-September June 1914, 484.
[288] *Ford Times*, August-September June 1914, 484

Like earlier issues that appealed to dealers for content, editors issued similar calls to readers. In the January 1914 issue after appealing again to the community for contributions, "*Ford Times*, while published by the Ford Motor Company, belongs to Ford owners. It wants to tell the things in which Ford owners are interested. If your Ford has accomplished a feat which you want to talk about to other Ford owners, send the story to *Ford Times*. *Ford Times* will publish just as much of this news as its forty-eight pages can contain. *Ford Times* isn't a one-man proposition. It takes many contributors to make a good magazine."[289]

The *Ford Times* creates the vision that the corporation serves the community of readers, and editors are merely "a clearinghouse" for employee and consumer concerns.[290] By collaborating with readers to develop content for the magazine, the *Ford Times* invited consumers to join dealers in playing a role in the articulation and representation of corporate identity and culture.

In the Family: 'Two Persons and a Ford'

Interestingly, editors also extended the family metaphor to consumers. However, the mission of the family – to increase profits – was often in conflict with the desire of customers to get a good deal on an automobile. To include customers as a member of the Ford family, editors relied on language and metaphors driven by the movement towards a new science of salesmanship and the democratization of auto ownership, which together

[289] *Ford Times*, January 1914, 147.
[290] Webb discusses this editorial tactic in her examination of the Reiman publications. Sheila Webb, "The Narrative Core of Traditional Values in Reiman Magazines," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 83, no. 4.

positioned auto selling and consumption as a moral crusade rather than simply increasing company profits. This positioning gave the "family" of *Ford Times* readers a new common purpose and allowed all to relate to and to participate in magazine creation.

Owners also submitted content that echoed the importance of the Ford car within their family. In the article, "Ford is Indispensible" a New York owner wrote to the magazine to share what his Ford car meant to him: "I thought my happiness was complete when my baby boy came ten weeks ago. The Ford has brought outings to him and pleasures to his mother and to me that, much as we had driven with friends, we never knew till we had made a Ford car a member of the family."[291] In quote box: "How many are there in the family? Three –two persons and a Ford."[292]

Profiles of dealers and personnel announcement became less frequent in later issues. Instead, editors ran more letters directly from owners that described their activities and "proof of Ford popularity" in their towns. The editorial staff slowly substituted customer testimonials, descriptions and features for dealer and branch manager profiles. *Ford Times* also gave extensive coverage to Ford "owners' events" and other events hosted by local dealers that gathered local owners of Ford vehicles together for recreation. For example, the October 1911 issue featured a clambake, a parade, and a picnic by local dealers. Much like company-sponsored recreation for employees, these events were designed to create a sense of community and "family" among consumers of the Ford brand.

[291] *Ford Times*, August-September June 1914, 515.
[292] *Ford Times*, January 1914, 181.

Ford Times editors commemorated the company anniversary each July with a special issue devoted to re-telling the Ford family story. The magazine aligned the genealogy of the Ford Motor Company with the history of industrial America. For example, in an article that describes how the company was going to cut the price of new cars in order to share profits with retail buyers of new Ford cars. This move "was in thorough harmony with Ford history – and the record of the Ford Motor Company of Detroit is, and must continue, to form a veritable part in the history of industrial development in America in the history of the higher development if the social life of the industrial masses of America – yes and of the entire civilized world, for the Ford plan of profit-sharing with employees was the first practical expression of that greater humanity which will greatly help to lift the race into the genuine 'Brotherhood of Man.'"[293] Articles on company history also position the patriarchal head of the Ford family as a brave, self-made pioneer, and the Ford brand as built for the 'common man' and representative of 'real' American ingenuity, echoing the 'family values' described above.

Another feature, that ran in an early *Ford Times* issue commemorating the company's fifth anniversary, includes a spread on Mr. Henry Ford and Mr. James Couzens that describes their backgrounds, current duties, driving philosophies, and personalities. Underneath sober photos of the executives behind their desks, the biographies assure readers that the best is yet to come for the humble, smart, and hard-working company leaders. After citing recent production figures, a feature on the company anniversary reads: "These facts are really stupendous of themselves, yet they

[293] *Ford Times*, August-September 1914, 483.

but testify, not alone to the possibilities of American genius in creating; to American skill in manufacturing and to American ability in executing –but likewise a tribute to the great national wealth with which this country is blessed, because this great business has been made possible *simply through its own business merit.* (Emphasis is *Ford Times*)." [294] In other articles, the magazine continually highlights the FMC's ability to do business without financial support: "There has been no call for additional capital; no flotation of bonds or securities; nothing of high finance; no borrowing from the banks or trust companies; no loans from the people."[295] This achievement is credited to "the founders of the Ford Motor Company, the makers –the company itself – were not composed of wealthy men, but they possessed that which is greater than money – brains, industry, energy, fearlessness."[296]

A Virtuous Drive: Ford as Vehicle for American Brotherhood

Once the magazine focused on consumer audiences, editors describe the company mission – to sell automobiles – as a moral crusade. Instead of just a route to profits, buying and selling autos became a means to create brotherhood, spread democracy, improve humanity, and protect the moral code uniting the nation.[297] *Ford Times* did not stop describing sales techniques with the inclusion of consumers in the reader community. During the Progressive Era, business schools, trade journals, and

[294] *Ford Times*, June 1911, 258
[295] *Ford Times*, June 1911, 258
[296] *Ford Times*, June 1911, 259.
[297] Consumption of cars was, at times, also portrayed as a "moral" crusade before 1910. For example, the October 15, 1908 issue tells salesmen that Ford's Model T is "really the one chance for the man of moderate means to buy a high grade car. It places within the reach of thousands a better car than they ever hoped to own."

corporations adopted a more professional, systematic view of selling that relied on psychological ideas and systematic methods. For example, a series of lectures from Alexander Hamilton Institute of New York for businessmen, some of which were reprinted in issues of the *Ford Times*, described selling as a "service" undertaken by "principled men."[298] Selling was more motivation than persuasion, and beneficial to all involved in transactions.[299] Salesmanship was the "means of realizing one's best inner qualities and inducing customers to realize theirs;" salesmen "served their communities by introducing high quality goods" and sharing the latest advancements in science and technology.[300] This science made salesmanship an ethical, principled activity that improved the social fabric of the nation.

Most of all, *Ford Times* offered a vision of America where cars created community, making ownership an ethical, principled activity. Feature articles described the role of the car in American life, where product ownership united those divided by geography, class, and generation. In the introduction to the June 1913 issue, the editors write "Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! A merry throng is passing. Bankers and lawyers, merchants and farmers, city dwellers and country lovers! Here is a new democracy. Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! The motion reduces itself to a quickly pulsating rhythm. Scarcely can the faces of the riders be distinguished. By they come –and by they go –in a never-ending line. The rapid commingling of faces, stern and merry, young and old, at last photographs upon the eye's retina a composite picture – a picture of the totaled personality of those who delight

[298] "The Dominance of Salesmanship," *Modern Business Talk*, no 11 (revision 1923; New York: Alexander Hamilton Institute, 1919), 8, 12.; Zunz, *Making America Corporate, 1870-1920*, 181.
[299] *Ford Times*, March 1912, 171.
[300] Zunz, *Making America Corporate, 1870-1920*.

in Ford travel. It is a personality of strong, lithe, light, supple and simple – remarkably resembling the telling characteristics of the car itself. It is the face of the true democrat – America personified."[301]

The automobile was also constructed as a connection between community members, especially rural farmers and their families. The May 1914 issue states: "Ask anyone to name the two things that have done the most to make the life of the farmer more worth living, and almost without exception the answer will be, the telephone and the automobile. The telephone linked neighbors, joined villages, and revolutionized methods of carrying on the business of the farm. It knocked off the shackles of isolation that held the average farm family from the outside world; it made possible the interchange of ideas between neighbors, it permitted the voice to go visiting. But the automobile went a step further…The automobile did for the body what the telephone had done for the voice. With the automobile the farmer and his family not only can talk with friends and neighbors with comparative ease, but they can actually visit friends and neighbors from whom they had hitherto been separated by impossible distances."[302] The car made the farmer "truly the most independent member of the nation-family." If the farmer benefits, all Americans benefit: "The more prosperity to the farmer, the more prosperity to the whole nation."[303]

Auto purchases would allow Americans to travel and to build connections among themselves. Editors write, "Consequently we find the man from the coal breakers and the man from Wall Street pulling together in double harness for the common good – for the

[301] *Ford Times*, June 11, 1913, 361
[302] *Ford Times*, May 1914, 338.
[303] *Ford Times*, May 1914, 339.

automobile has made them brothers. Truly, it is an age of understanding – of mental broadening – and of automobiling."[304] This "unity" did not stop at the nation's borders: "The automobile has brought about an age of understanding. In New York they understand New Zealanders better than they did twenty years ago. The Frankfort man knows something of the Filipino and the Fiji Islander knows a great deal about the man of Ford, Ont. Which all is by way of saying that men nowadays are citizens of the world instead of a village and that vision is limited by the horizon where it formerly was limited by the home."[305] Auto travel made brothers of fellow men: "Men whom distance formerly made aliens, with the coming of the automobile became intimates. Minds leaped at one bound from the township road to the national highway. The man in Maine began to think the same thoughts as the man in Morocco and vice versa."[306] It also brought peace to humanity: "And now, after the marketing of nearly four hundred thousand Fords – and some other cars – we have this result: One brother is no longer anxious to go to war with another and they are meeting at the Hauge to see if the barbarous practice cannot be stopped."[307]

It is obvious why Ford dealers should give thanks for Ford success for sales were tied directly to their profit; however, positioning auto consumption as a moral crusade also gave consumers a reason to be grateful for the worldwide domination of Ford: "If you can realize, and every reader of the *Ford Times* ought to, what the motor car means

[304] *Ford Times*, February 1914, 194.
[305] *Ford Times*, February 1914, 193.
[306] *Ford Times*, February 1914, 193.
[307] *Ford Times*, February 1914, 193.

in the lives of the people, in the industrial activities of our nation, one must know that the Ford car is not only a national utility but a national blessing."[308]

Publication Suspended

As illustrated above, the *Ford Times* offered consumers and dealers a narrative of connection, offered content that informed, inspired and instructed the reader community, and built a moral base for car consumption. These themes made *Ford Times* a successful house organ for the company. Circulation figures exceeded 900,000 readers by March of 1917. Besides circulation to readers, *Ford Times* became instrumental tool in company press relations and source of company news for other media outlets; it was sent to newspapers and quoted by journalists. Hawkins reprinted articles as press releases and sent these to dealers and branch managers to forward to their local newspapers.[309] With the magazine's help, dealers used the articles to standardize advertising, encourage participation in consumer clubs and events, and spread company brand tenets.

Despite this success, the Ford Motor Company silenced the *Ford Times* house organ in April with the United States 1917 entry into World War I. Lewis writes, "Undoubtedly, the firm assumed – correctly as it turned out – that it would have to devote much of its productive capacity to military needs for the duration of the war."[310]

Although the company discontinued the *Ford Times* magazine, the company presses did not lay idle for long. As prominent newspaper journalists of the interwar

[308] *Ford Times*, December 1911, 65.
[309] Although Hawkins, branch managers and dealers sent the Ford Times to newspaper journalists the extent to which stories were picked up is unclear.
[310] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*., 496

period captured momentous events – "Armistice Signed, End of the War!" (*New York Times,* November 11, 1918), "Suffrage Wins in Senate; Now Goes to States," (*New York Times,* June 5, 1919), "Lindbergh Does it!" (*New York Times,* May 21, 1927), "Wall Street Lays an Egg" (*Variety*, October 30, 1929) and "War: Declared on Japan by US" (*Honolulu Star Bulletin,* December 8, 1941) – so did the Ford Motor Company.

Between the Wars: *Ford News*

Henry Ford continued devoted an astonishing amount of resources to company publications between the wars. One notable publication, very similar to the *Ford Times,* was *Ford News.* It was introduced on November 1, 1920, as an internal newspaper for Ford employees that would report Ford activities and production-line news. In 1928, Ford started to include dealers and salesmen on their distribution list. In April of 1931, Ford News became a monthly magazine for Ford employees, dealers, and customers. Throughout these changes, content remained largely focused on internal Ford activities, new models, dealer news, and company operations. In 1937, Edsel raised concerns about the lack of content for Ford customers and asked the editorial staff to include travel features, history articles, and general features. The company also began encouraging dealers to share names of customers for the distribution list, and instruct branch managers on how to gather suitable editorial material to submit to *Ford News.*[311] Dealers were "enthusiastic" about the publication and told the company they valued *Ford News* content, ability to catch reader attention and "subtly sugar coat" the promotion of Ford

[311] Dave Cole, "Ford News," *V-8 Times,* February 1983, p. 34-37.; Departmental Communication, Acc 285, Box 2287, 1939-1940, FMC Dearborn, Ford News, W.A. Simonds, W.A. Scotton, Report, p.1.

cars; however, many large city dealers raised concerns in 1939 about the cost of sending the magazine to customers in their large territories.[312] World War II abruptly halted publication of *Ford News* in 1942; however, much of the content, readership focus and dealer involvement in distribution would be carried on in the postwar years by another Ford publication: a revived *Ford Times*.

The next section briefly introduces the publication's revival during World War II for employees; the next chapter offers an in-depth look at *Ford Times'* postwar revival and expansion to consumers.

Ford Times resurrected: The company at work, at play, and in service of the nation

On April 2, 1943, Ford added yet another publication to its portfolio: a revived *Ford Times*. Edsel Ford, annoyed at conflicting reports, rumors, and wide speculation about Ford's war production output and postwar plans, was determined to coordinate Ford Motor Company communication and provide a cohesive voice for the company. To do so, he hired publicist Steve Hannagan to lead public relations outreach in June of 1942.[313]

In addition to coordinating the company's media outreach functions, the management team soon concluded the company needed a new employee publication.

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[312] Departmental Communication, Acc 285, Box 2287, 1939-1940, FMC Dearborn, Ford News, W.A. Simonds, W.A. Scotton, Report, p.1.

[313] Historian Cutlip describes Hannagan as one of "America's greatest press agents." Hannagan gained significant attention promoting Miami Beach, Florida and Sun Valley, Idaho as tourist destinations during time. Anderson (2001) describes Hannagan's noteworthy work connecting baseball, business industry, democracy and community needs during Major League Baseball's centennial celebration in 1939. WB Anderson, "The 1939 Major League Baseball Centennial Celebration: How Steve Hannagan & Associates Helped Tie Business to Americana," *Public Relations Review* 27, no. 3 (2001); Cutlip and Wylie, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations, a History*.

Like many other manufacturers, the Ford Motor Company had a hard time maintaining its wartime workforce due to competition from other factories and the war draft, especially at factory locations far away from downtown Detroit.[314] Workers also needed to be reassured that their homefront factory work mattered to the larger war effort. In October of 1942, Clarence Gabrielson an employee at the Willow Run plant wrote a letter directly to Henry Ford that mentions the need to raise worker morale: "I believe if men were given pep talks every once in a while, it would help; they like to work, some of them, but it don't pan out right…When on production and the B-24E comes out, it will make every man proud to know and see what Willow Run can do when the big fellow and the little fellow get together to beat our common enemy."[315]

The "new" *Ford Times* seems like a direct response to Gabrielson's appeal. The mission of the revamped *Ford Times* was to capture the experience of Ford workers: "it is our urgent hope that we may reflect accurately the ebb and flow of Ford employee activity. *Ford Times* has no axe to grind. Its job is to report and to record." Their goal was to bring readers "up-to-the-minute news of your company, of your fellow employees, of your activities, and will seek constantly to keep you informed on matters important to you as a United States citizen, and as a member of your particular community."[316] At first, the new *Ford Times* was limited to U.S.-based employees and published every other Friday.[317] The editors wrote, "*Ford Times*, appearing today for the first time, is your

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[314] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*, 466.
[315] Ibid., 468.; Clarence Gabrielson to Henry Ford, October 23, 1942. Accession 285, Box 2491, Folder – Willow Run, General, Benson Ford Research Center.
[316] *Ford Times*, April 2, 1943, 2.
[317] *Ford Times*, April 2, 1943, Masthead.

newspaper…It has one purpose – to serve you." The revived issue was labeled "number one" for the old *Ford Times* was "discontinued so long ago, and because the new publication is so different, we are starting over at volume one, number one."

The wartime *Ford Times* began as an eight-page, roto-produced, tabloid-sized, bi-weekly snapshot of Ford employees at work, at play and in service to the country. Similar to the early years of the *Ford Times* magazines, readers were asked to help capture news and contribute material for the Ford family: "Names make news; in the *Ford Times* the names of Ford employees will make the news. In this main endeavor, you can help. Whenever you have done something you would like to see in print, or your friends have done something, or your department has done something or is planning something, make a note of it and send it to the *Ford Times*." Editors wrote, "Remember, *Ford Times* is your paper. Anything it can do to be of service to you it wants to do. However, at not time will its columns be used to promote the special interest of any individual or group, when they are opposed to the best interests of all employees."

The war also provided a way for the magazine to buoy Ford's image as a benevolent organization and to provide a moral base for its activities. Like many other corporate magazines during World War II, *Ford Times* melded loyalty to the corporation with war patriotism. The magazine also tried to connect loved ones and activities of war. It constructed the Ford Motor Company's work and employee's contributions within the plant as expressions of patriotism. Editors shared news from the battlefield and performance reviews on Ford tanks, planes, jeeps, cars, and engines, ran pictures and anecdotes of employees on the manufacturing line, described personal successes and

sacrifices of individuals outside of work, and highlighted important visitors to the Ford plant. The magazine ran profiles of model employees, like Willow-run based Miss Mary Von Mach, the first transport pilot ever to hold a license in the state of Michigan. She was honored by the War Congress of America and hailed by the *Ford Times* as a "typical, hardworking, patriotic and ambitious type of employee who did so much to build America in the past and who plays such a vital role in war production."[318] *Ford Times* stories also connected the industrial work performed in the plant to the personal sacrifice and service of many former Ford employees and family members of Ford employees, like Art Krausmann, head of the photographic department, who *Ford Times* mentioned was "proud" of his three sons in the Navy and Mrs. Irene Alling, who builds bombers to "help" her sons who might fly them in service to the country.

Rebirth again, for postwar consumers

The revamped, employee-focused *Ford Times* "newspaper" ran for about a year. Then, as production lines began to refocus on consumers, so did the *Ford Times*. Henry Ford, anxious that employees were not reading the magazine thoroughly, demanded that the *Ford Times* be "reborn" once again. An avid reader of Readers' Digest, Henry decided that the *Ford Times* must be a similar size and requested the editorial team to resize the publication so it would fit into the front suit pocket of a man's dress shirt. The May 12, 1944 foreshadows the move to a more "convenient" sized publication. The Ford Motor Company originally planned to run the new, revamped issue in June of 1944, however, all United States magazines agreed to run the image of a war bond on its cover

[318] *Ford Times*, April 2, 1943, 2.

that month to support the war effort. Ford, ever the rebel, did not want to conform, and decided to suspend the publication for a month and introduce the revamped, pocket-sized *Ford Times* in July 1944. Despite the new format, editors promised the magazine would continue to serve the Ford family of employees, including all branches, plants and service men and women.[319] The July 1944 *Ford Times* masthead states that "within the Ford organization is material of interest to everyone, and the purpose of the magazine is to highlight this material, to acquaint those of one branch with all of the other branches, to inform and to entertain. As a member of the great Ford family, your ideas and criticisms will be welcome; so will tips on stories."[320]

Once the war was over and reconversion was in swing, *Ford Times* quickly shifted their focus from employee to consumer audiences. With the April 1946 issue, editors declared that the magazine would be geared towards employees *and* the motoring public. By the November issue, editors declared that all content was geared towards the motoring public and said they would only send information to employees who gave a written request to remain on the mailing list. The back page of the March 1947 issue contained this message: "The November (1946) issue of the Times announced that Ford employees would be retained on our mailing list only when they requested it. Since that time, thousands of letters and post cards have arrived with comments indicating a much wider interest than we expected. As a result, it has been decided to keep everyone on the list, except during temporary paper shortages. Our special thanks to those who took the time and trouble to write."

[319] *Ford Times*, May 12, 1944, 1.
[320] *Ford Times*, July 1944, 1.

The next chapter addresses the revival of the company magazine and its return to consumer audiences in the postwar years.

Chapter Four – 'Freedom to Express Our Hearts': *Ford Times* as Literary Adventure, Postwar Years

Ford Times was a successful customer publication in the postwar era and valued by readers as source of travel information, adventure, and entertainment. By 1948, the publication could claim the largest total readership in the history of company publications and boast readership comparable to *Time* and *Colliers* magazines.[321] On June 28th of 1951, reader P.L. Gabbert of Oklahoma City writes to commend the editorial staff on their excellent publication: "This morning I read your July 1951 edition of *Ford Times* from cover to cover. In a day of much 'mouthing and many words,' this little mag stands out as an oasis of well-written and compact information. Pierre Berton's 'The Living Ghosts of Dawson City' is a brief masterpiece of fact and compelling nostalgia. I've been in several ghost towns in mining areas, but Berton's sketch makes me want to hitch up the Ford and start out to see Dawson City for myself."[322] Similarly, R.J. Anderson writes on August 13, 1951, "I am writing to tell you just how much I appreciate and enjoy reading your little magazine. Small, but just full of interesting and educational reading." Mr. Anderson wasn't a Ford owner, but writes, "I have hopes of again becoming a Ford owner as soon as finances permit and hope that I will continue to receive the *Ford*

[321] Another "Ford First?," Acc 727, Box 5, PR National Ford, Dealers' Council, Nov 1948, Ford First, 1.
[322] Letter to Mr. William D. Kennedy, Editor, Ford Times from P.L. Gabbert. June 28th, 1951. Acc 544, Box 1, PR Pub Correspond., April-July 5, Folder 8, The Henry Ford.

Times."[323] Readers weren't the only ones impressed. In 1951, the publication won an award for excellence from the International Council of Industrial Editors (ICIE).[324]

How did the company hold the attention of so many American motorists? Why did postwar readers and other stakeholders consider it an excellent publication? Was the magazine significantly different from its Progressive Era predecessor? A quick glance at *Ford Times*' eclectic content deepens the mystery. Articles written during this era include a study of a circus in the off season, a travelogue about a small Wisconsin town, an educational article about bobcats, and a recipe for fruit cocktail cake. While postwar advertising messages of the period clearly reveal new models for sale and press releases announce company news, the *Ford Times* does not contribute to Ford's public image or promote the sale of new vehicles in obvious ways. Nonetheless, an examination of internal memos, letters, historical sources, and the pages of the *Ford Times* reveals the publication sought to solve a major public relations challenge of the era, one similar to its predecessor: to bridge the corporation, dealers, and consumers. Like earlier issues of the *Ford Times*, the postwar magazine provided a narrative of connection, met the informational needs of audience members, gave readers a deeper sense of Ford brand tenets, and offered moral base for car consumption; yet, it did so using different types metaphors, themes, and content. In the postwar period, *Ford Times* continued to practice brand journalism by mimicking travel journalism's ability to interpret, inform, inspire and instruct reader's escape and journey on the road. This chapter describes article topics, reports prominent narratives in the magazine, and discusses how content aligns with the

[323] Acc 544, Box 1, Pr. Pub Correspond., Aug-Dec 1951, Folder 7.
[324] Acc 544, Box 1, PR Pub Correspond. Aug-Dec 51, Folder 7.

public relations goals of the corporation, the practice of journalism, and broader trends in postwar America, and in turn, this chapter illustrates how the *Ford Times* created a reader community in the postwar years.

Postwar PR Challenge: Bridging Corporation, Dealers and Consumers

The Ford Motor Company was one of the top defense contractors for the United States during World War II, churning out bombers, aircraft engines, generators, trucks and tanks for the troops until June 28, 1945. According to historian Lewis, as the national media turned its attention turned to the country's military might and industrial strength, the Ford Motor Company became one of the most successfully publicized war suppliers. Elmo Roper and J. Walter Thompson conducted postwar public opinion polls that show Americans felt that the Ford Motor Company did more to aid the war effort than any other automobile company, despite the fact that the value of General Motors' war contracts exceed that of the Ford Motor Company. It is especially noteworthy that Henry Ford's past pacifist views and his limited personal contributions for the war effort did not stand in the way of glowing press accounts of the auto magnate and American assessments of his actions. After the war, Roper found that Henry Ford ranked second in men believed to have contributed the most to the war effort.[325]

Internal challenges. Even though the Ford name carried considerable goodwill and the company had vast resources to retune itself after the war, the postwar years were

[325] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 347, 63, 540.; A Survey of Attitudes Towards and Opinions About the Ford Motor Company, Submitted to FMC by Elmo Roper, Oct 1944, Acc 134, Box 17.

tumultuous at the Ford Motor Company.[326] Like many industry giants, Ford struggled with reconversion, inventory-related challenges, consumer expectations, and price controls as the war ended.[327] Car manufacturers were not able to switch assembly lines quickly and had to deal with government restrictions on production until late 1946. Poor sales and little product design foresight added to the pain of reconversion at Ford; the company had experienced declining sales since the 1930s and did not have plans for models that were significantly different than its prewar autos. Ford also faced changes in leadership. Edsel Ford, Henry Ford's son who had been elected president of the Ford Motor Company in 1918 suddenly passed away on May 26, 1943. The elder Henry Ford, almost eighty years old, resumed the presidency for a couple of years, until he passed it on to his twenty-eight-year-old grandson Henry Ford II in 1945. [328]

Damaged Relationship with Dealers. Most significant for this project, the company had damaged relationships with its dealers. The Depression strained dealer relations before the war; the dealer network was hit hard again by the lack of new car sales and difficulty securing repair parts during the World War II.[329] Tension between dealers, corporations, and consumers was not unique to Ford. Dealers, consumers and corporate managers across the industry faced marketing challenges in the postwar years that forced them to confront one another uneasily in the marketplace. Annual model changes, proliferation of financing options, production inaccuracies, and an increase in

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[326] Ibid., 425-27.; Flink writes that an automotive "buyer's market" started in the mid 1950s .Flink, "The Car Culture."
[327] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*.
[328] R Genat, *American Car Dealership* (Motorbooks, 2004), 10.
[329] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*, 503.; Gilbert Burck, "Henry Ford Ii," *Life magazine* October 1, 1945.; Genat, *American Car Dealership*, 11.

trade-in negotiations created lower profits for dealers and tension over cost burdens and profitability.

Dealers also had a strained relationship with the general public. Many businessmen knew that a solid relationship with community members and longevity were key to running a successful dealership.[330] The image of the salesman took a hit after World War II, as critics argued that salesman, along with publicity agents and advertising men, created unnecessary "wants" in audiences.[331] In the 1940s and 1950s, car dealers also started to move their operations from locations nestled on America's main streets to more expansive facilities and showrooms.[332] Salesmen had to work harder to be perceived as good community members, friends and neighbors in the postwar years.[333]

New purpose for Ford Times. In his first postwar public speech to the National Automobile Dealers Association, Henry Ford II promised dealers a new "progressive" relationship with the corporation. Along with new sales manager J.R. Davis, Henry Ford II vowed to visit dealers across the country to personally view their enterprises, hear their concerns, and help Ford pay attention to sales, advertising, and distribution as well as manufacturing. One step in this direction was a new purpose for the company publication: instead of focusing on employees, the *Ford Times* was to bridge dealers, the company and consumers. The company instituted dealer sponsorship of the magazine; dealers began to finance the cost of magazine distribution on a per reader basis.[334] They

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[330] ———, *American Car Dealership*, 32.
[331] Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman: The Transformation of Selling in America*.
[332] Genat, *American Car Dealership*, 56.
[333] Ibid., 87.
[334] Ford Motor Company was successful with a similar policy in which dealers briefly sponsored *Ford News* in the 1930s, as described at the end of Chapter 3.

submitted lists of past and potential customers to be added to the reader mailing lists, in return, readers received a note on the back cover of the magazine with the name and address of the local dealer that was sponsoring their issue of the magazine: "The Times comes to you through the courtesy of your local dealer to add to your motoring pleasure and information."[335] Dealers were also encouraged to "sell" the magazine to customers and send the magazine to local business, schools, libraries, and even give copies to newsstands.[336]

How it fits with corporate communication strategies. The *Ford Times* increased focus on the motoring public and their relationship with local dealers was part of Henry Ford II's expansion and reorganization of Ford's public relations and advertising resources. [337] At the close of World War II, a 5-man news bureau served Ford's public relations needs while "scores of personnel in a dozen units and eleven field offices" handled public relations work at General Motors; by the end of 1953, the Ford public relations department consisted of 188 employees, which was roughly the same size of General Motors public relations department.[338] As part of the postwar public relations revamp, *Ford Times* moved to the Sales and Advertising division along with other dealer and customer publications. Employee publications were transferred to the newly established Employee Relations Department in the Industrial Relations division.[339]

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[335] *Ford Times*, July 1948.
[336] Dearborn Sales Conference, April 1949, Acc 831, Box 1. Staff praised one enterprising dealer who handed out copies to newsstands and asked owners to give them to customers purchasing other travel magazines like Holiday and National Geographic.
[337] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 447.
[338] Ibid. 449.
[339] *Ford Times* moved with dealer and customer publications to the sales and advertising division in 1946. Ibid., 448; 553.; FMC Executive Committee Minutes, June 4, 1947, Acc. 452, Box 3.

With its move to the sales and advertising division, the *Ford Times* joined an "aggressive" strategic communication program. Besides traditional newspaper and magazine ads, Ford bought billboards, created radio jingles and programs, and sponsored televised events. The company fired Maxon and McCann advertising agencies and partnered with J. Walter Thompson company, cementing what would become a long-lasting business arrangement.[340] Ford's best known postwar advertising slogan was "there is a Ford in your Future," a campaign inspired by a *Ford Times* article describing postwar cars.[341] The advertisements included crystal ball illustrations with references to postwar cars and pictures of peaceful family life. The company continued to use the "Ford in Your Future" campaign, adding the message "Ford's Out Front" which positioned Ford as an industrial and trend leader. [342]

Advertising and public relations, at Ford and elsewhere, took on renewed importance during the postwar years. The baton of cultural authority passed from "a war weary government to an energetic corporate machine" ready for mass production.[343] Advertisers, business leaders, journalists, and government officials touted product production and consumption as a key part of America's strength and fight against communism.[344] As historian Cohen writes, the notion that mass consumption raises the standard of living for all Americans and that economic abundance equals democratic

[340] John Mcdonough, "The Brand That Changed America," *Advertising Age*, March 31, 2003.
[341] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 382.; Fred Danzig, "Ford and Jwt: A Marriage Built to Last," *Advertising Age*, March 31, 2003.
[342] Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 382-83.; Overview of Advertising Department, Acc 831, Box 3, 1946, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[343] H.G. Warlaumont, *Advertising in the 60s: Turncoats, Traditionalists, and Waste Makers in America's Turbulent Decade* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 25.
[344] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.

freedom was widespread from the late 1940s through the 1960s.[345] Conventional wisdom of the time enforced the message that consumption was one way to fulfill civic obligations.[346] America at large, writes historian Kroen, embraced a "positive conception of the consumer *as* the quintessential citizen and free enterprise as the ideal medium for democracy" after World War II.[347] Business leaders even aligned corporate profitability with the "great goals of the human race."[348] For example, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) president Howard Chase asked companies to lead the quest for public welfare, democracy, and individual freedom.[349] At Ford, Director of Public Relations Charles E. Carll told supervisory personnel that public relations was good citizenship.[350]

These visions of consumption as good citizenship helped companies maintain synergy between the interests of the corporation, the people and the nation. In the peaceful, postwar period, company communicators had difficulty maintaining the vision of a "necessary, joint effort for a higher purpose" and union between loyalty to the corporation and patriotism; themes had been easy to link during the war. [351] Once the war ended, company communicators revamped communication vehicles to focus on customer audiences and continued to pursue a vision of the corporation as an entity that "works for

[345] Ibid., 127.
[346] Cohen quotes Life and Bride magazine. Ibid., 119.; Kroen, "A Political History of the Consumer."; Agnew, "Coming up for Air: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective."
[347] Kroen, "A Political History of the Consumer."
[348] Howard Chase, "Human Relations: The Key to Corporate Survival," *Public Relations Journal* 3(1947).
[349] S. Ewen, *Pr!: A Social History of Spin* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996). ; Howard Chase, "Treat the Individual as Consumer and Citizen," *Public Relations Journal* 1(1945).
[350] "What is Public Relations?" A memo circulated on July 18-29, 1949, Acc. 727 Box 2, PR Correspondence. From remarks made by Carll in Dearborn, MI on November 1, 1948, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[351] Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, 316-23.

the nation as a whole – not merely for its own stockholders" and as a social community.[352]

Company publications in general. As part of the renewed connection between corporate activities and public welfare in messages to postwar consumers, company communicators reinvested in their industrial publications. *New York Times* reports that publications grew during World War II in order to explain defense products to employees and other stakeholders.[353] As companies realized that magazines could increase intimacy, strengthen relationships and raise morale among employees, it was logical to extend this connection to consumers, as many corporations did, in the postwar years. Historian Cadigan estimates that over 76 percent of all companies whose revenue surpassed $5 million published an internal or external magazine by the early 1950s.[354] The *New York Times* declared in 1952 that company magazines were now "big business" and any organization that did not produce news for its stakeholders must do so in the near future.[355] Corporate journalism was a growing and reputable form of journalism; colleges and university started programs to train students in business journalism, industrial editing, and industrial journalism.[356] In June of 1957, *Industrial Editors* was launched, a trade journal for "company communicators who produce newspapers and magazines for employee training and understanding, sales promotion, public relations and dealer,

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[352] Ibid. Quote is from an Armour and Company ad. See Marchand for additional details.
[353] ""Company Magazine Now Big Business," *New York Times*, September 14, 1952.
[354] Cadigan, *The Icie File: A History of Industrial Journalism*, 7.
[355] ""Company Magazine Now Big Business."
[356] Missouri and Kansas State had early programs that focused on these specialized forms of journalism. An advanced degree program in business journalism was introduced at Oklahoma State University in 1933 and in industrial editing in 1947. The American Council for Education in Journalism accredited their sequence in 1957. W.J. Cadigan, *The Icie File: A History of Industrial Journalism* (International Council of Industrial Editors, 1961).

consumer or distributor education."[357] In April of 1958, the official magazine of the Technical Publishing Society *Technical Communication* merged with *Industrial Editor*, so that the new audience consisted of everyone covering "all phases of company publishing" including newspapers, magazines, catalogs, brochures, and visual aids.[358]

In the 1940s and 1950s, magazines were the primary cultural storytellers. The large circulation mass-audience magazine format – built upon the promotion of shared values among the national community – was still king. Television had not yet started to draw advertising revenue away from general-interest consumer magazines.[359] The cultural importance of consumer magazines seemed absolute in postwar America, writes historian David Abrahamson, and they reflected the "consensual, communal spirit of the age."[360] The 1950s were also an unusual time of consensus and conformity for many Americans and a time when the status quo reigned. Abramson writes, "Clearly, the major mass magazines of the period both reflected and promoted this satisfied, unruffled view of the world." The growth of special interest and special audience publications especially remained unhampered by World War II and the growth of television.[361] Americans bought more magazines after World War II than they did before the war; magazines focused on outdoor sport and hobby activities realized the largest gains, due to newfound

[357]"Well, Here We Are," *Industrial Editor*, June 1957.; "Two in One," *Industrial Editor*, April 1958.
[358] "Two in One."
[359] D Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical* (Hampton Press, 1996).
[360] Ibid., 17.
[361] D.E. Sumner, *The Magazine Century: American Magazines since 1900* (Peter Lang, 2010), 99.

leisure time.[362] *Ford Times* joined other popular special interest publications for car enthusiasts, like *Motor Trend* which was launched in 1949.[363]

"Boxing the Compass": Editorial Leadership and Mission

The *Ford Times* went through a quick succession of journalists and corporate communicators after the war. Ex-newspaperman B. Mark Mulchay was the first postwar editor of the *Ford Times*, serving only until June 30th, when he left Ford to accept a position with the Office of War Information. John Weld, who previously worked at the aircraft company Consolidated Vultee, succeeded Mulchay as editor until July 1945. Irene Cornell served as an interim editor until William Kennedy was hired in late 1945. Kennedy, one of the longest serving publication editors, directed content until 1960. Kennedy had worked briefly at J. Walter Thompson Company, served as an officer in the Army Air Forces, and was a dean at the Harvard Business School before taking over the *Ford Times* as editor.

Kennedy's background and good work on the magazine quickly caught the attention of Ford executives, and he was promoted to Director of Public Relations. Kennedy took the position reluctantly, as his passion and interests were in editing and publishing rather than directing the company's public relations strategy. At the time, public relations efforts focused on press relations; Kennedy admitted, "in this I had little experience." After serving less than a year as public relations director, Kennedy

[362] R. Root and C.V. Root, "Magazines in the United States: Dying or Thriving?," *Journalism Quarterly* 41(1964).; E.K. Thomas and B.H. Carpenter, *Mass Media in 2025: Industries, Organizations, People, and Nations* (Greenwood Press, 2001), 42.
[363] Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical*, 15.

requested to be relieved of the director role and happily returned to managing Ford's publications.[364]

Kennedy relied on a staff of key editorial experts to produce the magazine. Art director Arthur T. Lougee became a mentor to many up and coming artists, and he used the *Ford Times* as a platform to launch the careers of painters, photographers, and illustrators including famous artist Charley Harper, who did a great deal of work for the publication. [365] Managing editor Edmund Ware Smith was an outdoor sports enthusiast and novelist who wrote many short stories about outdoor adventures from his home in the Maine woods for the *Ford Times* and other publications.[366] Roving editor Burgess H. Scott joined the *Ford Times* in 1946 after serving as foreign editor for *YANK*, a global weekly of the U.S. forces.[367] Associate Editor Nancy Kennedy wrote recipe, food, and fashion articles from the 1940s until the early 1990s and became a well-respected institution at the magazine.[368] Contributing writers and artists created most *Ford Times* content; these freelancers were journalists, novelists, photographers and painters working to publish their works elsewhere rather than copywriters. Although most contributors were not well known, some were already famous writers, artists, and political figures, including E.B. White, illustrator Charley Harper, poet Berton Braley, novelist John Marquand, and writer Phillip Wylie.

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[364]Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, 447-51.; Overview of Succession 545, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[365] Harper says Lougee was his mentor in a profile piece from "The Minimal Realism of Charles Harper," *Dwell*, May 2006.; Harry Borgman (former freelance artist for the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, July 2009.
[366] "Edmund Ware Smith," in *The Outdoor Sporting Library*.
[367] *Ford Times*, April 1946, 4.
[368] Neil Shister (former Publisher of the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, October 2010.

Magazine Mission: Boxing the Compass. In April 1946 editor Kennedy proclaimed a sea change for *Ford Times* content: the magazine would contain information for the motoring public rather than news of Ford operations for employees. He promised, "this does not mean that the TIMES will be published exclusively for the world of today – the world of graceful new cars gliding over smooth cement highways. It will be published also for the world of yesterday which is still with us."[369] He added, "Industrial America has a splendid slogan: to furnish more and more good things to more and more people at ever lower prices. It is well to remember, however, that the best of all good things is a good tool and the best of all good tools is efficient horsepower. America is a big country. It takes a lot of effective horsepower doing a lot of different jobs in a lot of different places to put the good things of life in many people's hands." The fate of the nation depends not only on political and military power, Kennedy writes, but also on its power to produce and consume commodities: "America more than once has changed the course of history, and the reason is largely to be found in a six-power alliance within its own borders. It is the alliance of power in the factory…power in the home…power in the fields…power on the roads and rails…power on the water…power in the air."[370] Celebration of America, consumption, technology, ingenuity, and tradition shaped the editorial mission of the magazine until Kennedy relinquished the post of editor-in-chief to C.H. Dykeman in 1961.

Instead of reporting activities in the business offices, on the sales floors, and in the factories of the Ford company, writers took to the road. They told stories about

[369] *Ford Times*, April 1946, 63-65.
[370] *Ford Times*, April 1946, 64.

visiting America's mountaintops, small towns and main streets – experiences largely made possible by the Ford automobiles and the expanding American highway system. Writers used the space provided by the Ford corporation to tell interesting, informative, and romantic stories about travel, nature, technology and American life, and in turn, to illustrate the deeper meaning of motoring. It fell on Kennedy's shoulders to meet the business goal of the magazine: to sell cars. The next section describes the topics used by the editorial team to bridge these goals and create a reader community among Ford owners, dealers, and corporate leaders.

Much in a Small Space: *Ford Times* as literary adventure

In a letter to William Kennedy on June 28, 1949, associate editor Edmund Smith self-congratulates the team for good work on the publication, and in turn, reveals editorial focus and goals: "I've been having a wonderful time reading the July *Ford Times*. I think it's extremely good – well balanced geographically, and varied in subject matter and tone. It's a nice example of multum in parvo, which would make a good TIMES slogan. The one-pages and shorts are crisp, the cartoon is funny, and the Bunyan – I'll Take Elephants-Show Boat combination is a swell scattering of interests. Ghost Towns and Enterprise are good – tops, and the White Mountains showed up better than I'd thought it would. I congratulate us."[371]

Ford Times editorial staff *did* cover "much in a small space." The postwar, consumer-directed *Ford Times* used a literary-style and combined fiction, fact-based features, personal narratives, reader letters, recipes, games, profiles, and images of Ford

[371] Acc. 727, Box 1, Folder 1-10. Ed to Bill. June 28, 1949. Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.

cars. Rather than a 'family' newsletter, the postwar *Ford Times* described itself as a unique "symposium of interpretation" in which artists, photographers, and writers were given creative "freedom to express their hearts" about the unique regions of the United States. This heartfelt interpretation of the "real" America from the road made the *Ford Times* distinctive and unique, according to the magazine, for this passion and creative freedom was not typical of travel literature or human-interest publications.[372]

Although editors did largely abandon the "family" metaphor for this period, they continued to frame a vision of American where brotherhood was built on the Ford brand. Editors based narratives of community and connection on patriotic themes and appealed to readers' shared sense of duty as American citizens to connect with consumers. Ford offered a vision of democracy and Americanism built upon product purchase. They, of course, weren't the only ones, as mentioned above, for consumption and democratic citizenship became more intertwined in the postwar period as advertising, popular culture, and government, and messages stressed the compatibility between consumption and civil obligations.[373] The *Ford Times* staff still positioned the magazine as a clearinghouse in which the corporation functioned as a place of exchange between writers and readers. Instead of sharing tips and advice about selling, the postwar magazine positioned itself as a place where drivers came together to share their pride and love for the nation, as experienced on the road.

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[372] Description of magazine in quotes is from *Ford Times* Special Edition, New England Journeys, Number 4. "Foreword."
[373] S. Strasser, C. McGovern, and M. Judt, *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Editors turned again and again to one vast topic during the postwar years to connect readers: the American landscape. Above all else, *Ford Times* was a general-interest travel magazine. From 1943 to 1960, over half of *Ford Times* articles focused on travel.

Topics of Feature Stories in Ford Times, 1943 -1960 (n= 293)

Table 1943-1960		
Travel	154	52.56%
Cars	44	15.02%
Nature	21	7.17%
Outdoor Sport and Recreation	21	7.17%
Food, Restaurant, Entertaining	20	6.83%
Humor	15	5.12%
Ford Motor Company	12	4.10%
General Technology/Industry	6	2.05%
Total	293	100.00%

Internal memos from editorial staff and letters to the magazine, both published and unpublished, compare *Ford Times* to *Holiday* magazine, a travel magazine created by the Curtis Publishing Company. [374] It is an apt comparison. In travelogue essays, adventure stories, field guides, and place profiles, writers describe adventures waiting just beyond the asphalt for every car owner. *Ford Times* writers invite readers to follow their tire tracks to idyllic small towns, nature refugees, majestic river valleys, hidden beaches, canyons, deserts and mountaintops.

[374] "'Holiday' Magazine Sold to 'Travel'. ," *The Ledger,* , July 10, 1977.

The editorial decision to focus on travel made good business sense: vacation business boomed in the postwar period.[375] Unnecessary travel was curtailed during World War II; Americans had to depend on gasoline rationing coupons for the first time and were forced to question the necessity of each car trip. *Time* magazine describes American citizens as "marooned at home" for most of the war with federal restrictions on rubber and gas making "mockery" of the roaming potential of their cars.[376] Once restrictions were lifted, Americans quickly embraced the return of mobility. By the mid 1950s, there were over 52 million cars on the road and families with two automobiles parked in the garage were no longer unusual.[377] Postwar prosperity and increasing financing options made car ownership a reality for many Americans. The 1956 passage of the Interstate Highway Act also created more to explore, specifically over 41,000 miles of new roads across the nation.

Rising affluence and increased paid time off also created a vacation boom. Once a benefit extended to wealthy Americans only, postwar middle-class workers claimed their right to work sabbaticals, leisure trips, and outdoor hobbies. Paid vacations became a staple in most worker contracts by the start of World War II. [378] Americans finally had time and resources to see the world and the possibility of vacations captured the postwar public imagination.[379] As record numbers of middle-class American families hit the asphalt to see the country from 1945 to 1970, which historians dub the "golden age" of

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[375] Richard Popp, "Magazines, Marketing, and the Construction of Travel in the Postwar United States" (Temple University, 2008).
[376] Berger, *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide*; "U.S. At War, Vacations, 1943," *Time Magazine*, July 5, 1943.; Flink, "The Car Culture."
[377] Berger, *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide*, xxiv.
[378] SS Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Univ Pr of Kansas, 2008). ; Popp, "Magazines, Marketing, and the Construction of Travel in the Postwar United States".
[379] Popp, "Magazines, Marketing, and the Construction of Travel in the Postwar United States".

the family road trip, consumers needed to know where to go.[380] *Ford Times* joined other travel magazines, organizations like the National Geographic Society, oil companies and the Rand McNally map company in providing facts and inspiration for visits to American destinations.[381]

Despite the widespread enthusiasm for road trips, in reality, most Americans used their cars for more mundane trips: suburban commuting and errands. Car ownership was a crucial part of life in the suburbs. Postwar utopia was widely envisioned as a home in the suburbs, a car in the garage, and a yard full of children.[382] Millions of American migrated to the city's edge after this dream; the American population residing in the suburbs grew by 43 percent from 1947 to 1953.[383] The car was not only a significant marker of middle-class status in the postwar period, it was a necessary means of transportation to school, work, and retail centers. Flink writes, "An AMA analysis of extensive statistics on automobile use complied by the Public Roads Administration revealed that 85 percent of all automobile trips were thirteen miles or less and were for essential purposes."[384] Nevertheless, the mundane nature of most automobile trips did not stop *Ford Times* from encouraging readers to dream of their cars as vessels to exciting forays in forests, mountaintops, small towns, and deserts.

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[380] Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*, 43,2.
[381] Popp, "Magazines, Marketing, and the Construction of Travel in the Postwar United States".; Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*, 43.
[382] ET May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (Perseus Books Group, 2008). Coontz points out that despite the widespread and powerful cultural images of the traditional "Ozzie and Harriet" nuclear family made popular in the 1940s and 50s, this was a new phenomenon for much of American society. S Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic Books, 2000).
[383] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 195.
[384] Flink, "The Car Culture."

In all, Smith's claim that the publication was a good example of *multum in parvo* rings true. The magazine did rely on many topics, styles, and formats to tell interesting tales about the diversity of thrills waiting for motorists. This content was not necessarily revolutionary or drastically different from other magazines of the era. Interpretive reporting, in which the goal is to inform and explain, was popular during the postwar period, especially connected to travel narratives. Like other forms of postwar travel journalism, *Ford Times* stories were largely autobiographical and focused on a search for authenticity and meaning. Travel journalists give a physical description of surroundings but also usually embark on a journey in which everyday life is left behind to find a true place, a free self, connection with others, and pristine natural surroundings. However, *Ford Times* also had a unique quandary: like other magazines, it had to create a believable travel narrative and cohesive editorial focus that would keep readers interested; it also had to align content with its corporate identity in order to sell cars. To do so, editors framed a view in which real America – and true Americans – could be found using the Ford brand. The next section describes major themes that unite content, create a reader community and connect material to brand tenets.

From Sea to Shining Sea

Writers set out to capture the "flavor and color" of particular regions of the United States and introduce readers to fellow people, places, and cultures across the nation. They borrowed from creative nonfiction genres, like memoir and essay, to engage readers in travelogues that recount recent journeys and describe favorite getaways and hometowns.

The magazine also ran fact-filled pieces that reported particular community events, attractions, and regional experiences and gave readers the necessary information to re-create a trip of their own.

Travel destinations were wide-ranging. Stories describe small towns, cities, natural sites, historical monuments, museums, and parks. Writes also recount journeys along scenic highways and daring excursions along nature's trails. Most travel articles in this era focused on natural attractions like rivers, deserts, mountains, or lakes rather than manmade attractions like museums, hotels, or amusement parks. Historical sites and small towns were also frequently the focus of postwar travel articles.

Focus of Travel articles, 1943-1960 (n=154)

Travel, 1943-1960		
Travel - Natural Attraction	50	32.47%
Travel - Historical Site	25	16.23%
Travel - Small Town	22	14.29%
Travel –Highway	14	9.09%
Travel – Hometown	13	8.44%
Travel - Manmade Attraction	10	6.49%
Travel - City Destination	9	5.84%
Travel -Cultural Event	7	4.55%
Travel -Region, State	3	1.95%
Travel –Tips	1	0.65%
Total – Travel	154	100.00%

Destinations were mainly domestic due to the fact that North American dealers were bearing the burden of magazine cost, as Kennedy explains in a rejection letter that responds to a writer's proposal for a foreign travel article: "Unfortunately, we have very limited space that we can give to foreign travel because of the fact that the *Ford Times* is paid for entirely by our domestic dealers and we do not feel justified in any extensive

foreign coverage. In the last two years I believe we have had one story on Mexico and one of South Africa, and nothing much else with the exception of Canada."[385]

The back cover of every issue named the local Ford dealer responsible for sponsoring magazine content. In other places, dealers were described as travel guides, community experts, and local hosts who were proud of their unique regions and welcomed motorists to visit their particular part of the country. As a service to the community, the "Ford Dealers of New England" even reprinted parts of the *Ford Times* magazine that covered their area into an annual booklet and map, a free publication that has "become something of an event, like the arrival of spring," to help readers enjoy their journeys in their area.

A few reoccurring travel columns appeared in *Ford Times* pages during the postwar years. In "Our Favorite Town" column, writers share details about life experiences in their hometowns and invite readers to visit. "One Picture Stories" were image-centric columns that prominently feature a Ford automobile parked in front of a breathtaking view, like a mountain, a recognizable landmark, or a winding trail that cuts through a desert or forest. An extended caption explains the location to readers, sharing pertinent visiting information and brief historical details. "Americamera" was a similar one-page image-focused feature that highlighted scenic spots, interesting destinations, and historic monuments. Accompanying photos and illustrations often show the inside and outside of the featured location or the moment when a Ford motor car approached the described destination.

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[385] William Kennedy, Letter to Mr. Robert Schmuhl of Michigan City, Indiana, on June 3, 1949. Acc. 727, Box 1, Folder 1-8. Schumuhl Letter. Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.

In 1946, the *Ford Times* also started a regular food column, "Favorite Recipes of Famous Taverns" written by Nancy Kennedy, which featured paintings, addresses, owner information, and recipes from restaurants across the nation. Directions from the nearest interstate accompany most listings. The column, written "for those who cannot get to all the famous places they would like to visit" and those "who were waiting to go," helps readers create or revisit memories of the road from their home kitchen and dining tables.[386] This column appears in every *Ford Times* issue studied from 1946 to 1993 and continued to be credited to Nancy Kennedy into the 90s. In a manner similar to contemporary travel articles that connect the car and kitchen, this column stresses the local, regional character of cuisine and describes the diversity of restaurants as a quilt of national treasures.[387] Restaurants and recipes are both gourmet and down-home: "From the Northeast to the Southwest (Canada and Hawaii, too), here are adventures in good eating for the motorist – in elegant metropolitan restaurants and famous country inns, in cozy motels and roadside eating places featuring regional specialties."[388] In 1950, the company created the first of many cookbooks based on a compilation of content from the column. In the foreword to the first edition, William Kennedy writes that the department was a top favorite among readers, and within the first year, travelers and "stay-at home

[386] *Ford Times*, April 1946, 12.
[387] For a contemporary example, see J. Stern and M. Stern, *Roadfood: The Coast-to-Coast Guide to 800 of the Best Barbecue Joints, Lobster Shacks, Ice Cream Parlors, Highway Diners, and Much, Much More* (Crown Publishing Group, 2011).
[388] N. Kennedy, *The Ford Times Cookbook: Favorite Recipes from Popular American Restaurants* (Simon and Schuster, 1968).

gourmets" created "a growing and insistent demand" for collections of *Ford Times*' recipes.[389]

Although writers include driving directions to most destinations, Ford cars rarely make an overt appearance in the text of travel articles during this period. However, Ford cars *were* prominent in illustrations, photos and paintings that accompany travel and food articles. In these images, new Ford autos sit against a background of stunning, rugged outdoor terrain while drivers stand with their backs to the camera looking out over beautiful vistas. These images of Ford cars, as editor Kennedy promises dealers at a 1949 April Dearborn sales conference, were an "effective, low-pressure promotion" that includes a great deal of "sell" which the staff gets "into the magazine without the reader knowing it."[390]

Preserving America's History. Editors situate travel locales within the context of American history, and they describe motor journeys as a way to reconnect with the nation's common past. Instead of learning about history in a museum, writers invite readers to grab their magazine, fire up their Fords, and take to the road where "history envelops us."[391] Recreating journeys to America's main streets and mountains described in the magazine would "bring history books to life," promise *Ford Times* writers. Articles construct cars as tools to strengthen Americans' attachment to their common heritage, history, and natural birthright.

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[389] William Kennedy, Foreword, "The Ford Treasury of Favorite Recipes from Famous Eating Places." Simon and Schuster, New York, 1950.
[390] Dearborn Sales conference notes, Acc. 831, Box 1, April 1949, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford Museum.
[391] *Ford Times*, March 1949, 2.

Place profiles, travelogues, and essays about hometowns stress the importance of particular towns, rivers, and parks to the nation's history and culture. In Washington, Connecticut, for example, travelers see the same lighted windows that once "welcomed Lafayette and his French troops, who paused here on their long march from Newport to join Washington at White Plains." After describing the culture, beaches, people, and architecture of his favorite town, writer Colin Jameson recounts Key West's early founding and reminds readers that the town "held the hinge position in the blockade of the South" during the Civil War, and it was an important base for submarine and anti-submarine activities during World War II.[392] Edward Weeks, in a profile of the shores of Massachusetts, closes his article with a call to honor common history: "Remember on your drive back to Boston to pause for ten minutes at Plymouth and doff your hat to the Rock. For that's how we got here; that's how it all began."[393] In the far northeast corner of New Mexico, motorists could touch evidence of the nation's history; Veda Conner writes: "No highway is more deeply engraved in the history of courage and heartbreak of the American West. Although seventy years have passed since the railroad supplanted the Trail, the ruts of the wagon trains are still to be seen – in some places four feet deep." She continues, it was here in 1841 that "Kit Carson wrote a new chapter in our expansion when he went to avenge an Indian attack on a wagon train…"[394]

These historical facts give an aura of importance, nostalgia and timelessness to the exploration of towns and landscapes. In a "My Favorite Town" column, for example, R.W. Hatch frames Old Deerfield, Massachusetts as a "cradle of national character and

[392] *Ford Times*, January 1952, 41.
[393] *Ford Times*, August 1955, 6.
[394] *Ford Times*, February 1955, 55.

ideals, a kind of treasury – an island in time."[395] Tourists visit New Mexico, for example, because "the Old West is still alive here."[396] Visitors to villages would "sense the graceful fusion of the past and present." [397] Similarly, "Stonington has its memories that are more solemnly called history. It has an air of life lived, of time endured, of misfortunes overcome."[398] Places like Ashe County are reminders of the "quiet, the unhurried life of long ago."[399]

Car as preserving community. *Ford Times* travel articles provide a script in which writers frequently found community, connection, and reprieve from modern life on their adventures. In their discovery of beautiful landscapes, unique small towns, and daring adventures, writers describe finding a sense of belonging and connection with others along the expanding highway system. Articles about hometowns also construct the idea that there is an unwavering commitment to community found in American towns that motorists could readily join. *Ford Times* writer Dana Burnet, for example, illustrates how the "strength and genuineness" and "tradition of neighborliness" begun by the town founders persists today in his new hometown of Stonington, Connecticut: "Call it whatever you like – pride of workmanship, old-fashioned interest in the job, the American instinct to give a bit more than good measure – whatever it was, it added up to something like neighborliness. And it was all scrupulously honest." Newcomers to town and long-time residents are "bound by those invisible threads of interest and emotion that

[395] *Ford Times*, March 1949, 8.
[396] *Ford Times*, February 1955, 55.
[397] *Ford Times*, December 1958.
[398] *Ford Times*, October 1949, 22.
[399] *Ford Times*, November 1955, 40.

makeup the fabric of community life."[400] These were places where "neighbor helps neighbor," as in Dorothy Grant's "Hard Freeze is Hog Time."[401] Franklin M. Reck takes a humorous look at community building in his "Favorite Town on Ice: Perchville, Michigan" article that describes how the businessmen of Tawas City, MI created a mini town, complete with a mainstreet and a replica of a Ford dealership, on a frozen lake using fish shanties during the winter freeze. Even the Mayor participates by handing out keys and bait to visitors.[402] The unique Perchville, writes Reck, was the result of community members coming together, working hard and being creative. The end result provides an escape for town residents and a chance for them to connect, socialize, mediate, and relax together.[403] R.H. Fletcher writes about Butte, Montana: "There is only one Butte in the world – generous, boisterous, sentimental, swaggering, friendly. Nowhere else have I found such spontaneous and prodigal response to charitable or patriotic call, such whimsical humor and mischief, or such an assortment of unusual characters."[404]

Ford's Shared excursions, Shared escapes. Ford Times described cars as facilitators of shared civic pilgrimages in which Americans learn about their country, appreciate the distinct regions of the nation, and enjoy reprieves from atomic age life. Maps and driving directions provide readers with tools needed to recreate experiences. Articles promise Ford owners that steering their cars down America's new roads and freeways would give them a better sense of our country, nature, history, fellow

[400] *Ford Times*, October 1949, 21-22.
[401] *Ford Times*, December 1958, 55.
[402] *Ford Times*, January 1952, 25.
[403] *Ford Times*, January 1952, 29.
[404] *Ford Times*, July 1952, 8.

Americans, and themselves. The magazine creates common real-life experiences for readers; they could all use the magazine to travel to the same museums, parks, towns, and restaurants across the nation, and shared dream worlds, in which readers might imagine trading their work commute for action-filled journeys.

Readers were encouraged to imagine joining the author's adventures, on road in their own cars and surrounded by their families. Ken Paddock's "L'il Boy River" article encourages readers to become one of thousands of American families who make the trek to Minnesota to perform a national ritual: jumping over the headwaters of the Mississippi River.[405] Williard Luce constructs a visit to Utah as an irresistible personal challenge, "Back home you'll tell how hard it is to hike to the top of Mt. Timpanogos. You'll tell how your legs and your back ached before you got there. And you'll swear by all the gods of Timpanogos never to go glacier sliding again. But you will. Next year you'll be back along with about 1200 other people. It's that way with the Timp Hike."[406] Writers of these articles often switch between first-person narration, in which the reader and writer experience the journey together, and second-person narration, in which the writer uses the pronoun "you" to help the readers to place themselves within the action.

Car journeys revive personal and national spirit. Visits to quintessential American towns and parks were constructed as more than pretty drives; these journeys were to revive and refuel the personal and national spirit. For example, Hatch's essay described Old Deerfield as a spot where you can "get caught in the atmosphere of another

[405] *Ford Times*, November 1946, 8-10.
[406] *Ford Times*, July 1952, 14.

age" and leave "the torrent of atomic-age life" behind.[407] Hatch details the scene out the car window when leaving town and tells readers as they speed back to modern life, "you've been changed by being reminded of something important," by visiting Old Deerfield. In the article "Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge: Oasis for Birds and Men," Virginia Hunter writes, "Bitter Lake is just one of many wildlife refuges over the country. We have built perhaps better than we knew. These are refuges for us, too, from the monstrosities which man has wrought to destroy life. Here are not guns, but wildlife; not machines, but sensitivities; not demands, but composures; not frustrations, but peace."[408]

Preserving "real" America. Writers also stress that these destinations are worth visiting because residents, towns, and surrounding landscapes embody "true" American values like perseverance, self-reliance and commitment to a general good. Motor journeys both honor and preserve these American ideals. In a profile on St. Louis, C. Theodore Houpt asks readers to "afford an appreciation of the efforts of the pioneers and the city builders who once stood on the west bank of the Mississippi and faced with courage and hope the unknown."[409] In an introduction to Phil Strong's essay on Washington, Connecticut, a note reveals that Hurricane Diane "trailed her skirts on the Village," nearly obliterating the town on September 19, after the original article was completed. Despite $4 million in damages to the town of 2300 people, the article assures

[407] *Ford Times*, March 1949, 2.
[408] *Ford Times*, November 1955, 51
[409] *Ford Times*, March 1958, 34.

potential tourists that they will not notice any damage by next summer. And that perseverance "is Yankee, too."[410]

At Play in a Great Land

Ford Times, hoped editorial leaders, would encourage readers to "get more pleasure out of the recreation opportunities offered by their family cars."[411] To do so, editors and writers share tales about hunting trips, described camping excursions, reveal secret fishing spots, highlight the fascinating skill of local wildlife, and recap exciting encounters with animals on adventures. Outdoor Sport and Recreation articles – most focused on hunting and fishing during this period – often took a journalistic or literary tone, in which the writer recounts their personal experience in a particular place, shares advice for others planning trips, and inspires others to embark on similar excursions. Nature articles were educational and focus on scientifically explaining some phenomenon. Animal profiles, for example, highlight the fascinating skill of beavers, skunks, crows, bears, salmon, and fox and celebrate their contributions and place in nature's ecosystem. These articles reflect the personal interest of a major editorial force on the magazine; outdoor enthusiast and associate *Ford Times* editor Edmund Smith wrote many articles about hunting and fishing from his home in the Maine woods for the *Ford Times* and other publications.[412] Outdoor Library, in reference to his non-Ford short stories and novel, writes: "In a time when magazines and newspapers played a dominant

[410] *Ford Times*, November 1955, 2.
[411] Kennedy, W.D. "Foreword." Ford Treasury of the Outdoors. Ford Motor Company, 1952.
[412] Acc 727 Box 1 Folder 1-10, Ed to Bill. Benson Ford Collections, The Henry Ford; "Edmund Ware Smith."

role in American life and culture, Smith was one of the iconic writers who brought the beauty, serenity and majesty of the Maine woods, as well as the uniqueness of its inhabitants, to the minds of readers across the country."[413]

In a book-length reprint of *Ford Times* articles, titled Ford Treasury of the Outdoors, Kennedy describes the significance of writing about the outdoors for Ford. He writes, "it has been stated –this is probably more of a guess than a statistic – that Americans depend on their motor cars for 80 percent of their outdoor recreation. In any event, it can hardly be denied that over the past fifty years the automobile has given us an increasingly greater participation in outdoor activities. It is a fact that nowadays every trout in America is in danger for its life." The *Ford Times*' focus on the outdoors "may perhaps suggest a concept which stands simple, clear, and understandable in a confused world – the concept of a young, vigorous people at play in a great land," writes Kennedy.[414]

Ford car as preserving the outdoors. Ford Times' stories about America's parks and outdoor landscapes link the Ford brand with fulfillment of civic virtue and duty. This linkage is nicely underscored in an article that appears in the June 1949 issue. The story, addressed to "we the 140,000,000 people of the United States," describes Americans' shared "outdoor heritage" – the highly developed national and local park system – and reminds readers that "the land, the water, and the sky belong to us – our privilege, our responsibility."[415] The article that follows details a few of the nation's magnificent parks, arboretums, zoos, playgrounds; it is an embarrassment of riches that "provides so much

[413] Ibid.
[414] Kennedy, W.D. "Foreword." Ford Treasury of the Outdoors. Ford Motor Company, 1952.
[415] *Ford Times*, June 1949, 19.

and such varied recreation that no one citizen can begin to embrace it all." These common, green places are essential to the nation's history, legacy and sense of community: "in the park the boys of America hit their first home runs. Their fathers gather to observe Memorial Day ceremonies and the explosion of fireworks on the 4th of July…In transition and growth you see the park with its statue of the Civil War Veteran, its cannon polished by the breeches of urchins, its flagpole, its old man asleep on the bench with his newspaper fallen, its young couple walking hand-in-hand in the Spring, its policemen, forsythia and flower beds, its man with the lawn mower, and its band concert pouring forth music over a sea of straw hats on a summer's night."[416]

The article closes with gratitude for early land stewards and contemporary park personnel: "To the men who have had the vision and energy to enlarge, multiply and preserve our original 'village green,' and to those who have learned and applied the complicated skills of park management, we all owe much. They have showed us how and where to fulfill our outdoor heritage. We are grateful for the privilege, and we accept the responsibility implicit in our citizenship."[417]

The tools needed to fulfill this duty of citizenship are clear. Two photographs sit opposite the final page of the article: in these images, 1949 model Ford motor cars sit parked in front of majestic park views as owners stand beside their vehicles with their backs to the camera, looking out over beautiful vistas. By making the corporation, its dealers, and in turn, Ford owners stewards of our national heritage, the company made Ford motor travel one way to fulfill patriotic duty.

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[416] *Ford Times*, June 1949, 21.
[417] *Ford Times*, June 1949, 29.

The Ford Motor Company, of course, was not alone in constructing tourism as a patriotic, civic act. Leaders of the National Parks system also claim that travel to parks and communing with nature made better citizens.[418] The June 1949 issue described above was an exceptional piece of public relations promotion distributed in conjunction with other agencies. The Ford Motor Company sent this particular issue to readers on the magazine mailing list; further, in order to honor National Park and Recreation Week, Ford partnered with private and public agencies – like the Boy and Girls Scouts of America, Kiwanis International, and American Recreation Society –to distribute the issue's content to the public, along with a note indicating that the information was provided courtesy of Ford Motor Company dealers.

In descriptions of small towns, parks, and cities, writers illustrate the bold ingenuity of town founders, early explorers, and stewards of the park system. American inventiveness unites writers' experiences; it was uncovered in small towns, parks, and mountaintops across the nation. The section below describes how this brand tenet was also connected more directly to Ford products.

An American Engine-uity

Although cars were rare within the text of travel articles, they were not absent from other magazine stories. Cars appeared in 15.02% of articles during this period. These articles often took the form of success stories in which a Ford car or engine solved

[418] Ken Burns, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea."

a particular problem for the user, allowing them to serve the larger community in some way, ensure their own livelihood, or make "a living a little easier to obtain."[419]

Focus of Car articles, 1943-1960 (n=44)

Cars, 1943-1960		
Car – Success Story	26	59.09%
Car – Driving or Model memoir, Legacy of Ownership	7	15.91%
Car – General Trend, Racing, Economy	5	11.36%
Cars – Models	3	6.82%
Cars – Accessories	3	6.82%
Total Cars	44	100.00%

Ford Times celebrates mechanical know-how, ingenuity and practically, making 'inventiveness' a defining value that unites Ford owners, dealers, and company engineers. *Ford Times* chronicles resourcefulness, commitment to hard work, creativity and inventiveness, and in turn, connects these values to the Ford brand.

Mechanical Marvels. Alongside the travel articles described above about the resourcefulness of town founders and current residents, the magazine ran stories that described the inventiveness of Ford owners by reporting "unusual and unpredictable uses of old and new automobile engines."[420] Here, Ford cars and motors became tools to help self-reliant, "real" Americans continue their devotion to Yankee ingenuity. In an article titled, "Report on Kentucky ENGINE-uity," editors write, "The atomic era is at hand, we're told. But in a fascinating and little known part of real America our Roving Editor

[419] *Ford Times*, August 1946, p. 25.
[420] *Ford Times*, August 1946, 25.

finds colorful evidence that the native genius, while waiting for the Split Atom engine, is still drawing economic nourishment from relics of the Model T and Model A era." Burgess Scott's column regularly uses the success story format to describe the resourcefulness and "native ingenuity" of residents and businesses; for example, he describes fishermen who crafted a motorboat engine out of an old Model T, a river towing firm that reconditioned a Model A engine to pump water and guide barges, a town that uses a 1936 Model V-8 engine to pump water to homes and business, and mining companies that use Ford engines in their operations. The highlighted stories display "the type of resourcefulness that enabled those pioneers to build their homes with no tools but an axe," according to Scott.[421] Scott also writes, "no state or section of the country has a monopoly on inventiveness" for across the nation the "story is the same: no matter how hard the job is, there's always somebody around who can rig up an old car engine to do the job more quickly and with less trouble."[422] In some profiles, the Ford car and owner's ingenuity protected their livelihood by allowing them to continue their traditional way of life. E.E. Lowd, a natural ice businessman from New Hampsire is the focus of Melvin Beck's article, "Yankee Enterprise: Zero, Inc." With his reliable Ford delivery trucks, Lowd is able to continue his delivery business, even when competing against "new-fangled" inventions like electric refrigerators and artificial ice.[423]

In other success stories, Ford dealers are the inventive focus of the article as they use Ford engines to create machine for a particular community. For example, in an article focusing Salina-area farmers, who supply 85% of the nation's lettuce and get food to

[421] *Ford Times*, April 1946, 3-9.
[422] *Ford Times*, August 1946, 25.
[423] *Ford Times*, August 1946, 33.

America's tables with "fantastic speed," Brady Gibbs writes, "The Gaudin Motor Company, Ford dealers for Salinas and vicinity have done more than their bit in adding to this speed in perfecting a ponderous machine which they have named, simply, a lettuce loader." An accompanying image feature shows a special truck built by a West coast Ford dealer for the lettuce industry that has two 100 h.p. V-8 engines crammed under its hood.[424] The same issue features the story, "Thank Cape Cod for Cranberries," in which Burgess Scott describes how H.A. Suddard, the local Ford dealer, creates a flooding outfit with a V-8 Ford engine and a portable stand to power pumps for cranberry growers. With his help, growers can "assure the United States of a plentiful supply of the little red berry which, along with the turkey and the football, has come to be a symbol of Thanksgiving."[425]

The "custom conversions" column also regularly paid homage to the inventiveness of Ford owners. Here, editors describe how Ford owners use "welding torches, power hammers, and other sheet working tools" to change the exterior, interior, and power of their vehicles. *Ford Times* compares the creatively and ingenuity undertaken in this masculine "hobby" as similar to when "the housewife makes over last year's dress."[426] Owners recondition Ford cars to suit their individual desires and business needs. J.R. Weatherly of Crossett, Arkansas, for example, created a station wagon from an old Model A business coupe as a hunting and fishing car that can travel where "mud turtles hesitate to travel."[427] A likewise resourceful pair of brothers in Alexandria, Virginia "caused quite

[424] *Ford Times*, November 1946, 2; *Ford Times*, January 1946, 60; *Ford Times*, November 1946, 30.
[425] *Ford Times*, November 1946, 2.
[426] *Ford Times*, October 1949, 53.
[427] *Ford Times*, August 1955, 16.

a stir" of excitement when they modified the mechanics, interior and exterior of a 1949 Ford convertible to enable it to seat 6 passengers, carry extra luggage and tow their sailboat. Dubbed the Yachtsmen, the car's beautiful mahogany wooden top, power, and unique styling generated over five hundred chances for the brothers to sell their creation for substantial sums.[428]

Dedication to the Ford Brand. Stories about Ford cars also celebrate owners' dedication to the Ford brand. *Ford Times* models commitment to the brand in stories about the legacy of Ford ownership by individual car owners. The June 1958 issue features readers who owned Fords exclusively since they started to drive. In September, editors ran a follow-up article due to the "considerable response from exclusive Ford owners" reading the magazine. The articles feature long-time continuous Ford owners - William Weaver of Pennsylvania who used Ford exclusively for 51 years and Edward G. Wenzel of California who purchased 43 Fords in the last 48 years.[429] Published letters from readers demonstrate their commitment to Ford tradition and respect for the history of the brand. There are many photos of Model T's parked beside new model Fords; readers, like A.J. Sordoni of Pennsylvania, describe how they enjoy both the old, traditional Ford and the company's comfortable, new models.[430]

Ford Times also ran articles celebrating the art and science of industrial design in applications from autos to agriculture. Articles about the Ford Motor Company describe the general Ford design process, celebrate manufacturing milestones and corporate good works, and detail Ford's role in auto industry events. Many articles gave readers a

[428] *Ford Times*, January 1952, 16.
[429] *Ford Times*, September 1958, 15.
[430] *Ford Times*, December 1958, 63.

glimpse into Ford's engineering process or describe new technology being developed to improve Ford vehicles.

Editors also ran features about an individual that embodies perseverance and resilience similar to American pioneers – Henry Ford. For example, the March 1958 article celebrates the 25 millionth V-8 engine produced by the Ford company, "only slightly more than twenty-six years after the 'experts' told Henry Ford that such an engine could never be mass-produced." The article recounts the story of the V-8 engine – describing its invention and its critics – and celebrates Henry's ability to overcome roadblocks to produce the industry's leading engine, which many deemed impossible.[431]

In the September 1958 issue, *Ford Times* features an article of about Ford cars in service to the U.S. postal service. Two photographs accompany the articles – one of a Model T in 1919, "one of a large fleet of Model T's which contributed to the efficiency and dependability of the postal service back in the days when the automobile business was just beginning to open up new horizons in commerce and in the Federal service." The other photo is of a 1958 Ford Courier utilized by the post office at Dearborn, MI. It was one of 594 new Fords delivered to the Post Office Department for use in cities across the nation. The article states these utility vehicles complement other ways in which Ford ingenuity has served the community throughout history.[432]

American Engine-uity was also a theme found in humor articles. *Ford Times* ran serial features centered on fictional characters – Dilbert and Paul Bunyan. Dilbert, an illustrated, hapless character created by Robert Osborn as a teaching tool for U.S. Navy

[431] *Ford Times*, March 1958, 48-49.
[432] *Ford Times*, September 1958, 48.

pilot training manuals, demonstrates how *not* to drive planes or automobiles. In the August 1946 issue, under the header Welcome Home Dilbert, editors announce "the *Ford Times* is both happy and proud to present Dilbert in all his civilian glory. He had just bought a motor car and is about to set out on a series of adventures that might be called 'how not to drive an automobile.'"[433] In subsequent issues, Dilbert does everything wrong: drives too fast, annoys other drivers, stalls his car, is flashy, drives while drunk. The morale of the column is be safe, respect pedestrians, and cooperate with other drivers on the road. William Hazlett Upson created articles that featured another mythical character for the magazine: Paul Bunyan, a resourceful hero who uses his mechanical know-how to save a town, outsmart unethical businessmen, and battle fire on behalf of a community. Instead of Babe the ox, *Ford Times*' Bunyan relies on a blue Ford truck as his trusty companion. His mechanic, Ford Fordsen, often lends a helping hand.

Communities of all types differentiate between true, "legitimate" and marginal members. Often, dedication to a particular shared value helps set this demarcation.[434] It is important to recognize that gender did mediated demarcation between "real" and "faux" members of the reader community. Women were noticeably absent from articles celebrating American inventiveness; mechanical mavericks were always male in the articles studied. Besides excluding women from columns celebrating mechanical inventiveness, humorous cartoons in the postwar *Ford Times* made fun of women drivers and their lack of technical know-how. Half-page cartoons in many postwar issues feature quips from couples at odds on the road. Cartoons depicted stereotypical characters such

[433] Ford Times, August 1946, 2
[434] Muniz Jr and OGuinn, "Brand Community."

as the nagging housewife, poor woman driver, and lost man reluctant to ask for directions. For example, a cartoon in the November 1946 issue pictures two women driving on the sidewalk as passersby jumped out of the way. The female driver turns to her friend and explains, "this way we're not passing the red light – technically speaking!"[435] The cartoon in the October 1952 issue features a woman, who is getting a ticket from a policeman, exclaiming, "I don't care what your speedometer says – when I go over fifty, my hat flies off!"[436] The July 1952 issue shows a woman in a "driving school" car hit a tree. The last image is of her leaning over the driver test instructor, shouting frantically, "Oh, Mr. Loveland, Mr. Loveland…speak to me…speak to me….did I flunk?"[437]

By celebrating Yankee ingenuity and at the same time making fun of women's ability to be mechanics, the *Ford Times* upheld the masculine nature of car culture. When paired with articles connecting the car to patriotism and civic duty, humorous cartoons also deny women citizenship. Cowan writes, "For the better part of its cultural life, the United States has been idealized as the land of practicality, the land of know-how, the land of Yankee ingenuity. No country on earth has been so much in the sway of the technological order or so proud of its involvement in it." Further, if the judge of "true" Americanism is practicality, mechanical mastery and know-how, Cowan argues that

[435] Ford Times, November 1946, 26.
[436] Ford Times, October 1952, 29.
[437] Ford Times, July 1952, 36.

women are trained to be un-American. She writes, "We have trained our women to opt out of the technological order as much as we have trained our men to opt into it." [438]

Chapter Conclusion

Magazine historian Kitch writes, "magazines offer a blend of authority and interpretation that allows them to explain what American life means."[439] *Ford Times'* vision of "what American life means" supported a general movement that began during the postwar reconversion period in which consumer purchases were constructed as a route to bettering the lives of all Americans.[440] During the war, ties between consumption and 'the good citizen' were obvious and direct. Homefront purchases rivaled the battlefield in direct servitude to the country's mission. After World War II, corporations struggled to continue defining consumption activities as a civic responsibility rather than personal indulgence.

Ford decided to embark on a literary adventure and showcase the American landscape in order to frame automobile consumption as a civic responsibility – in ways congruent with Cohen's 'purchaser as citizen' ideal – in the postwar period. Like the progressive era *Ford Times,* the postwar *Ford Times* connected the car and Ford brand to American history and patriotic values. It also celebrated American ingenuity and inventiveness and describes how readers might reconnect with fellow citizens and revive the national spirit by taking to the road. These topics, themes and strategies allowed *Ford*

[438] RS Cowan, "From Virginia Dare to Virginia Slims: Women and Technology in American Life," *Technology and Culture* 20, no. 1 (1979).
[439] C Kitch, "Anniversary Journalism, Collective Memory, and the Cultural Authority to Tell the Story of the American Past," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 36, no. 1 (2002).
[440] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 130.

Times to create a cohesive editorial voice and use travel information, historical facts, and recipes as a branding tool. The brand journalism practice pursued by editors encouraged shared experiences, rituals, and knowledge that made motoring a civic duty and fostered a sense of community between consumers, writers, dealers and the corporation in postwar America.

In the next chapter, the *Ford Times* begins to acknowledge that buyers were made up of unique members with diverse concerns, needs and taste. The magazine began to frame the buyer community – and the nation – as a composite of specialized interests. Our nation's differences, promised the *Ford Times,* could still be met in the product lineup.

Chapter Five: Revolution by Variety – A Model Catalog, *Ford Times*, 1961-1979

During the 1960s and 70s – two decades characterized by protest, revolution, and counter culture – *Ford Times* continued to associate American themes with the consumption of Ford cars. The magazine celebrated key moments in American history and published essays full of longing for simpler eras. Travel remained an important editorial topic; features did shift slightly to focus more on cultural and historical events. Overall, nostalgia for the American past was a strong brand value, and Ford continued to connect loyalty to the nation to brand loyalty.

Despite this continuity, times *were* a-changin' and the Ford Motor Company noticed. In 1961, *Ford Times* added a new editorial mission: to educate consumers about the different models of cars in Ford's line-up. A proliferation of Ford products occurred during this period: in 1962, Ford offered consumers thirty-three new models – a greatly expanded line-up more than 5 times what Ford offered in 1949 and a far cry from the Progressive era's limited Model T and Model A days.[441] With the new focus on marketing segments, the magazine started to describe "difference" and "variety" among Ford consumers and connected these terms to new car models and the American landscape. In car ads, buyers' guides, and product feature articles, the magazine acknowledged that consumers differed by income, recreation preferences, and lifestyle – and promised that the company would meet readers' need to express their unique personality in the Ford product line-up.

[441] *Ford Times*, October 1961, 17.

Ford promised to grant consumers freedom to express their individual personalities by purchasing cars customized to their particular needs; this promise was paired with stories that celebrated a nation diverse in region, recreation and culture. This approach to content helped *Ford Times* meet a challenge faced by all messages in an era of marketing segmentation and cultural revolution –how to "nurture common bonds while appealing to the interests of distinct groups."[442] In spite of the language about "variety" and "difference" among Americans, the magazine continued to buoy the image of a harmonious brand community built on shared history and heritage. *Ford Times* brand journalism directed reader attention to the past of the nation, reaffirmed nostalgic reflections of American history and culture, and forged a "narrative of belonging," similar to commemorative journalism.[443] Together, *Ford Times* articles told the story of an independent and patriotic community coming together in celebration and commemoration. Dealers, the brand, and the corporation were constructed as a community that honored and enjoyed the differences among its melting pot of readers. The magazine, and Ford's product lineup, promised to offer something for everyone.

A Revolution

The Ford Motor Company entered the 1960s with a new business mindset, one that would change how Ford communicated with consumers about their products and how they told stories within the *Ford Times*. During the previous two decades, the

[442] Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*.
[443] CL Kitch, *Pages from the Past: History and Memory in American Magazines* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); C. Kitch, "Placing Journalism inside Memory and Memory Studies," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 3 (2008).

company introduced new cars largely in reaction to General Motors. By 1960, Ford ramped up their own marketing research capabilities and began to rely more on information about consumer demographics and lifestyles to drive the introduction of new models. By segmenting the market and offering a large range of cars, Ford moved away from "standard" Ford models that offered consumers simple engine and body styling options. In 1960, Ford's car lines proliferated to include the high-end Galaxie, the sleek Thunderbird, the mid-sized Fairlane 500, and the compact Falcon.[444] By 1962, the company produced twenty-three passenger vehicles, which was five times what they produced after the war.[445] In 1979, Ford ran an ad in the *Ford Times* touting more than 40 models and options available to consumers.

This move to more segmented markets and proliferation of product lines posed a challenge for corporate magazines like the *Ford Times* that were directed to all brand enthusiasts. Magazines had to address the uniqueness of market segments while maintaining "the fiction" of a unified consumer community. This chapter addresses how the *Ford Times* approached the challenge. The analysis of *Ford Times* content below describes how the magazine shared information about unique product lines, while at the same time, continued to stress brand tenets like inventiveness, adventure and heritage – and related narratives about a shared national history, experience, and preservation – in order to maintain a cohesive reader community.

For Ford, marketing and product segmentation was more than the latest trend; it was a tactic necessary to survive a saturated market. Most American families owned a car

[444] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*.
[445] *Ford Times*, February 1961, 38.

by the 1960s. To expand sales, Ford had to construct cars as personal items and encourage families to become owners of multiple vehicles; to do so, they had to address the needs of individual family members in product messages. The corporation also had to make models become obsolete more quickly. Ford joined other automobile companies in pursuing this business strategy after World War II; the auto industry's proliferation of product lines, yearly model updates, and ornamental body styling – complete with tailfins in the 50s and 60s – are widely cited examples of "planned obsolescence."

Ford was not alone in ramping up product segmentation practices in the 1960s and 1970s. Product competition, more flexibility in production processes, and an increased interest in consumer motivation research boosted the practice during the late 1950s; by the end of the 1960s, manufacturers of all types began to target products more precisely and move beyond simple stratification by price. In hand with product segmentation, marketing segmentation – and an overall rejection of the axiom that mass marketing was the only way to support mass consumption – became a wide spread phenomenon during this time.[446] Of course, marketing segmentation was not a strategy new to corporations; historian Strasser argues marketers sowed the seeds of segmentation at the turn of the twentieth century when they started to stress differences in tastes and traditions in different regions of the country.[447] Segmentation was also not completely new to the automobile industry. Alfred Sloan of General Motors touted his "car for every purse and purpose" market segment strategy in the mid-1920s; business historians point to this strategy as one main reason for GM's success over rival Ford. However, market

[446] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.; Turow, *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*.
[447] Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*.

segmentation strategies became much more sophisticated and popular starting in 1960, especially at Ford. Wendell Smith and Pierre Martineau officially introduced market segmentation as a new rule of marketing in the *Journal of Marketing* in the mid 1950s and it rapidly gained popularity.[448] To keep up and compete in the marketplace, company communications of the 1960s and 70s had to pay attention to demographic and psychographic differences among consumers.

The country *was* experiencing great cultural change, of course. Groups of all types were making new claims for inclusion, access, and self-identity. In 1963, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* was part of a new wave of feminism that sought to increase the agency of women. Rev. Martin Luther King passionately appealed to the public for racial equality and challenged the exclusion of blacks from full citizenship. Marketers were listening, and companies shifted corporate strategy to study consumer preference among groups defined by race, class, gender, age and ethnicity. [449]

The quick rise in marketing segmentation that began in the late 1950s had a broad impact on American social and political culture. Protest groups used the changing consumer culture to demand access to public sites of consumption and to build unity

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[448] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.

[449] Cohen, "Escaping Steigerwald's Ìplastic Cagesî: Consumers as Subjects and Objects in Modern Capitalism." That said, just because marketers were paying attention doesn't mean that power hierarchies shifted. By 1965, seventy-nine percent of American families owned a car. Historian Clarke writes that it is tempting to assume that the expanding automobile market is associated with the leveling of social hierarchies, but was not, due to credit restrictions. Most of these new cars were still purchased by white male household heads. Before the passage of the 1974 and 1976 Equal Credit Opportunity Act, lenders defined creditworthiness based on social hierarchies, and women, consumers of color, and retirees were often denied access to financing needed to purchase large ticket items, like automobiles. However, the civil rights movement, women's movement, increase in labor participation, and growth of the suburbs did give these consumers the base needed to push for more fair credit practices during the mid-1970s. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: From Colonial Times to the Present* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), series Q 175, 717. S.H. Clarke, *Trust and Power: Consumers, the Modern Corporation, and the Making of the United States Automobile Market* (Cambridge Univ Pr, 2007), 242. ; ibid., 280.

among members of a subculture.[450] The focus on market segmentation also made it very difficult to sustain postwar visions of a unified mass market.[451] The marketplace became like other segregated places, propelled "away from the common ground of the mass, toward divided, and often unequal, territories of fragments." As advertising and public relations messages became more focused on the unique relationship between the segment and the product and stressed symbolic lifestyles differences among consumers, according to Cohen, segregating not integrating the public sphere became more comfortable for marketers. Men and women, teenagers and the elderly, and Americans of different social classes became viewed as distinct – and profitable – groups with varied needs, desires, and roles in product purchases.

The Hard Sell: *Ford Times* as Model Catalog, 1961-1979

It was, as the 1961 issue of *Ford Times* declared, time for a "revolution." The publication experienced change in its editorial leadership and content. In 1961, there was a changing of the guard among *Ford Times* editorial management. Editor William Kennedy – who led the *Ford Times* through the postwar years – retired from the Ford Motor Company. In his place, C.H. Dykeman assumed reign of the *Ford Times*. Dykeman, who supervised of all Ford dealer and consumer publications during this period, worked in the Office of War Information and with Kennedy on an Air Force magazine during World War II. Before joining Ford, Dykeman wrote radio scripts for

[450] Cohen, "Escaping Steigerwald's Ìplastic Cagesî: Consumers as Subjects and Objects in Modern Capitalism."
[451] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 298.

network serial shows. He ran the publication until his sudden death in 1966.[452] From that moment on, the publication was rapidly passed among editors, a trend that continued throughout the following decades. Although the magazine was not able to secure an editor with tenure as long as Kennedy's, long term staff members, like Burgess H. Scott and Nancy Kennedy, continued to serve the publication.

While the postwar *Ford Times* relied on a "soft" sales technique to share information about Ford product offerings, the magazine was more of an obvious sales tool after 1961. Postwar editors had boasted to dealers that the magazine gets a lot of "sell" into content without the consumer knowing it; images of postwar models were often set against striking backdrops alongside travel features, but specific details about new cars themselves were rarely explicitly addressed in detail within the text, as discussed in the previous chapter. This changed dramatically during the 60s and 70s, as the magazine began to directly promote the company's expansive brand offering.

Topics of Feature Stories in Ford Times, 1961-1979 (n= 437)

1961-1979		
Travel	168	38.44%
Cars	92	21.05%
Food, Restaurant, Entertaining	42	9.61%
Outdoor Sport and Recreation	35	8.01%
Ford Motor Company	28	6.41%
Nature	28	6.41%
Memoir-Essay	17	3.89%
Fashion, Culture, Art or Hobby	11	2.52%
Humor	8	1.83%
Product Roundup	5	1.14%
General Technology/Industry	3	0.69%
Total	437	100.00%

[452] "C.H. Dykeman Dead at 61; Ford Publications Manager," *New York Times*, July 4, 1966.

A large portion of the magazine began to showcase product lineup and describe options available on particular models of new cars. More than 70% of car articles during this era were more direct features about particular car models. The editorial staff created new car 'digest' sections in the magazine that touted models with detailed specs; they ran ads within the magazine that announced changes and features of forthcoming vehicles. The magazine also included feature articles on accessories available to consumers. With this change in content came a new emphasis on "customizing" cars with options to fit a particular lifestyle and make the car exactly what the consumer desired.

Focus of Car Articles, 1961-1979 (n=92)

Cars 1961-1979		
Cars – Models	66	71.74%
Car – Success Story	8	8.70%
Car – Driving or Model memoir, Legacy of Ownership	7	7.61%
Cars – Accessories	6	6.52%
Car – General Trend, Racing, Economy	5	5.43%
Total Cars	92	100.00%

Ford Times did not relinquish its editorial focus on travel articles; almost 40% of articles studied were still devoted to this topic from 1961 to 1979. Travel articles were to range in subject, mood and geographic territory, according to the editors.[453] In an anthology of *Ford Times* articles, editor Dykeman promised readers that the *Ford Times* would continue to capture the "beauty, vigor and variety of our country."[454]

[453] Foreword, Best of the Times, 1977.
[454] Dykeman, "Foreword." *Ford Times* Guide to Travel in the USA: An Informal Tour with America's Outstanding Writers and Artists. Ford Motor Company, 1962, 3.

To do so, *Ford Times* still described the wondrous canyons, national parks, and lakes found just off the American highways; however, the focus of travel articles shifted its focus to events like historical commemorations and community festivals. From the Maple Leaf festival that honors a town's Swedish pioneers to church bazaars in Hawaii to the anniversary of a Michigan university, travel articles invited Ford owners to "come together" in celebration over a shared cultural heritage, national history, or common experience. Some of these events honor European roots, however, these articles assure readers that these are "American" celebrations. For example, in Petersburg, Alaska, Norwegian residents honor Norway's independence day on May 17th yet the article assures readers that all are "enthusiastic Americans" and who treat the event as an American holiday with American flags on display.

Focus of Travel Articles, 1961-1979 (n=168)

Travel, 1961-1979		
Travel -Cultural Event	39	23.21%
Travel - Historical Site	36	21.43%
Travel - Natural Attraction	29	17.26%
Travel - Small Town	19	11.31%
Travel - City Destination	11	6.55%
Travel - Manmade Attraction	9	5.36%
Travel - Hometown	8	4.76%
Travel -Highway	7	4.17%
Travel -Tips	6	3.57%
Travel -Region, State	2	1.19%
Travel -Other Country	2	1.19%
Total - travel	168	100.00%

Besides cataloging new car models and travel spots, *Ford Times* continued to list restaurants off American highways and recipes for readers to try at home. In addition,

editors profiled types of foods, described food trends, shared entertaining tips, and highlighted food festivals during this period. From sourdough in San Francisco to soul food in Chicago, the magazine uses descriptions of regional cuisine to encourage readers to join the writer in restaurants and shops across the nation.[455] Besides being "of particular help to motoring Americans looking for something a little better than the ordinary at mealtimes during a journey by car," the food column sought to educate readers about the various, native, ethnic, and delectable types of American food.[456] Articles described food as embodying a unique slice of Americana and as an integral part of community. More food-related 'how-to' articles also appear during this period; the 'how-to' focus often centers on entertaining friend and hosting social events. For example, *Ford Times* teaches readers how to build an outdoor bread oven for the neighborhood, how to host a tailgating party, how to cook Hawaiian food while camping, and how to create an elegant roadside meal.[457]

Editors also began to make direct appeals for reader-submitted material again. Cartoons and humorous fictional pieces disappeared from the magazine during this time; in its place, editors ran round-up articles featuring reader-submitted quips from the road. "Glove compartment," was a regular feature during this period. In the inaugural column, editors write, "Henceforth, the Glove Compartment will be a regular feature of FT. We

[455] *Ford Times*, April 1976, 32; *Ford Times*, April 1970, 60.; *Ford Times*, January 1979, 22.
[456] Foreword, Nancy Kennedy, Ford Diamond Jubilee Recipe Collection, 1978.
[457] *Ford Times*, June 1976, 54; *Ford Times*, October 1961, 43; *Ford Times*, January 1973, 46; *Ford Times*, September 1976, 20.

invite our readers to contribute material - short bits of humor, driving hints, travel information, anything you think is of interest." [458]

The New American Pluralism: 'Variety of Car and Country'

The Ford Motor Company built its brand on the spread of mobility and democracy. [459] Beginning with the Model T - a low-cost, "universal" automobile that revolutionized manufacturing, changed visions of the good life, and made millions of American car owners, Henry Ford positioned the company as concerned with the needs of the "great multitude" rather than the wealthy elite.[460] In a 1961 editorial, the magazine evoked Ford's mission to mark another sea change: "car revolution by variety." The magazine made a new promise: readers would be able to satisfy their unique, personal needs within the company's proliferating product line-up. The company would again serve the public, spread democracy and mobility, and bring choice and variety to all Americans rather then reserving it for "the wealthy few."[461] It was choice, not access, that America needed this time.

Age of Variety. Ford Times began to talk about differences in recreation, lifestyle, gender and life stage among its readers. America needed more models of cars, the magazine told readers, to meet the transportation needs of economy-concern retirees and college students, of busy families in the suburbs, and of adventurous outdoor enthusiasts. Editors write: "No car owner is 'typical' any more; no one's travel plans are 'average.'

[458] *Ford Times*, January 1961, 16.
[459] Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century*, 118-19.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ford Times, February 1961, 40.

Everyone is different. And so are everyone's individual needs in a car."[462] The magazine quoted an unnamed Ford executive who said: "There no longer is just one right size of car for a market as diverse as ours. America's auto buyers have different requirements, different needs, different wants." Cars going forward, said the magazine, would be tailor-made models for "different classes of car buyers" – a "real revolution by variety" in car design. Americans had a need for "different cars just as for different clothes." [463] The approaching decade should be labeled the "age of variety," according to the magazine, for the country was undergoing change so great. By once again bringing cars to the people, the magazine promised to help readers secure the freedom to pursue the "national habit."[464]

Matching Cars and Country. Diversity wasn't just found among the lifestyles of the American people but also in the diversity of the American landscape. *Ford Times* promised readers the company would match the "variety" of our wonderful country with an "amazing variety of new automobiles."[465] Travel articles and car features directly link the variety in product offerings to the varied American landscape. For example, in October of 1961, the *Ford Times* ran an article titled, "New Ford Cars for 1962…the year to visit the U.S.A." The editors write: "For America's favorite sport and social habit – which is motoring – Ford has created an amazing variety of new automobiles to match the variety of a wonderful country." The images that accompany the article pair travel posters touting American regions with new Ford models. The first image splices a picture

[462] *Ford Times*, October 1961, 17.
[463] *Ford Times*, February 1961, 29.
[464] *Ford Times,* October 1961, 1.
[465] *Ford Times*, October 1961, 1.

of the statue of liberty, under the title "Visit the Northeast," with the new Ford Galaxie hardtop sedan. The car was the key to enjoying these diverse places. A new Ford automobile was a "magic carpet to a happy summer" promised the June 1961 issue, which shared sixty new vacation ideas for "the beach, the water, the woods – all built to go with your Ford wherever you chose." Recreation and travel were booming, stated the articles, because cars bring the American outdoors within easy reach no matter where you live.[466]

United By Passion for Ford. Despite the variety of car and country, the magazine illustrated how diverse groups of Americans and families came together over their passion for particular Ford models. Burgess Scott's feature in the April 1970 issue titled "Torino – the People Pleaser" which recapped the crowd's reaction to Ford's new Torino at a recent Detroit Auto Show, describe how different Americans share a love of Ford. The article quotes unnamed fans from a variety of life stages: a "young family" concentrates happily on the "brilliant red Torino GT SportsRoof" with mom and dad in the front seats and the boys "absorbed in the muscled architecture" under the hood; a young female student exclaims over the upholstery; a young waiter in his late 20s enthusiastically reacts to the motor; a young auto assembly line worker likes the sharp Laser stripe on the side of the car; a middle aged steam engineer admires the body finish and roof; wives were impressed with the interior cabin; and an elderly retired gentleman approves to the ease of entry. The article closed with the line "it's a car for just about everyone, and the Detroit Auto Show proved it."

[466] *Ford Times*, October 1961.

A New Corporate Ingenuity. The "variety" theme revived Ford's role in expanding the "democratic" nature of consumer choice; it also shifted the type of innovation celebrated by the corporation. Beyond the mechanical mavericks described in the last chapter, *Ford Times* described FMC's ingenuity in understanding human nature and diagnosing the public's needs. Under the heading 'a new social science,' editors write, "Automobile makers, in other words, are involved in much more than the mere nuts and bolts of building a car. They are involved in finding out how people actually live today and in predicting how they will choose to live tomorrow."[467]

Product proliferation was a direct response to the demands of the public, according to the magazine, as shared with the corporation through marketing surveys. Editors write, "Whether we will have still more models in the future is a question not simply answered – for the reason that we at Ford are not the ones who do the deciding." It was the American public, and everyone who drives a car, who dictates what transportation needs are in the forthcoming years. The company was a listening post for consumers; they used "scientific" methods to respond to the needs of the diverse American public with new car models. For example, the November 1961 article, "The Public Writes the Specs," describes how the Ford Motor Company is designing a new type of "in-between" car that mixes compact and standard model features – specifically the 1962 Fairlane series featured in-depth in the December issue – for "which the public itself has written the specifications."[468] Although consumers wrote new car specs they

[467] *Ford Times,* February 1961, 39.
[468] *Ford Times*, November 1961, 11.

still require *Ford Times* and dealers, according to the pages of the magazine, to diagnose their needs and guide purchase decisions in the confusing and saturated marketplace.

When the magazine did describe "nuts and bolts" inventiveness, it celebrated the corporation's ability to develop cutting-edge autos and dealer's ability to provide inventive services to drivers rather than 'enginue-ity' of consumers. Melvin Beck notes in '61 that his column, typically reserved for car wizards and their custom conversions, would now be dedicated to describing the services – like re-conditioning, test-driving events, and warranty extensions – provided by dealers. Articles also describe the company's hard work to develop new advantages in technology. These articles illustrate how the Ford Motor Company was leveraging its internal intelligence to improve the world for all Americans, from developing an arboretum to improving emissions control technology to advancing auto safety.

Country and Corporation United: Celebration, Commemoration and Remembrance

Ford Times continued to connect cars and American history. Owners were still encouraged to grab their magazines and fire up their Fords in order to make American history come to life. Instead of exploring small towns and landmarks, editors describe events connected to two major national commemorations: the 100th anniversary of the Civil War and the 1976 American Bicentennial.

Coming together in Commemoration. From 1961 to 1965, *Ford Times* joined the United States federal government, many states, and private sector corporations in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the American Civil War. Congress created the

Civil War Centennial Committee to encourage participation among the public and private sector in 1957. Commemoration committees sought to strengthen patriotic feelings in Americans across all age groups.[469] Events were carried out in the shadow of the civil rights movement and would become a "troubled commemoration" in the words of historian Robert Cook.[470]

The *Ford Times* "prepared" Ford owners by alerting motorists to upcoming celebrations and sharing "pertinent historical background material" with readers.[471] A typical article described the importance of a battlefield to the war and gave re-enactment event details for visitors. For example, the January 1961 issue kicked off the series by focusing on the "Star of the West" observance –created by the South Carolina Confederate Centennial Commission to honor of what "may be considered" the first shots of the war – which was to include parades, luncheons, banquets, a Confederate Ball, and re-enactment of the firing on the steam sidewheeler merchant vessel *Star of the West.* In April of 1961, *Ford Times* ran Burgess Scott's "Re-enactment of the First Bull Run" feature, part of an ongoing series "Motorists Guide to Civil War Events," which tells the story behind Manassas Battlefield Park, scene of the Civil War's "first big clash" in July of 1861 and encourages motorists to be one of the expected 75,000 audience members attending a re-enactment of the battle on July 22 at the park.[472]

The magazine also ran pictures of Ford dealer-sponsored signs that would line the highway near historical sites in their territory to greet motorists. The magazine tells

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[469] R.J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 23.
[470] Ibid.
[471] *Ford Times*, January 1961, 2.
[472] *Ford Times*, April 1961, 2-6.

readers "this sign will be a welcome from Ford dealers of the Southland inviting you to drop in and say hello as you tour historical battlefield and shires of 1861-65 during the coming four and one-third years of the national Civil War Centennial." [473]

Reader letters commended the magazine on the coverage and expressed their gratitude for the information. V.C. Jones of Washington, D.C. and a member of the Civil War Centennial Commission, wrote that other Civil War coverage did not compare to the articles found in the *Ford Times*.[474] *Ford Times*' glowing coverage of the Civil War was decidedly different from that of *Holiday* magazine, a travel publication that *Ford Times*' editorial staff and readers often used as a point of comparison. In 1961, Holiday magazine referred to the large scale, Civil War Centennial a "shabby circus."[475]

The 1976 American Bicentennial was also a major focus for the magazine. In the July 1973 issue, editors announced a new series: "Our Native land." Over the next few years, issues would include articles related to the "events, men and ideas associated with the beginnings of the United States" culminating with the 1976 American Bicentennial. The series had a three-fold purpose: to share a "vision of America's meaning," to show history as "both true and interesting" and to inform motorists about Bicentennial events throughout the nation to help with vacation planning.[476] The first two articles in the series are a history of "old Glory," "the inspiration of mighty deeds," and "Independence Hall."

Corporate Commemoration. The Ford Motor Company directly tied these American moments in history to another commemoration – their own corporate

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[473] *Ford Times*, January 1961, 1.
[474] *Ford Times,* May 1961, 63.
[475] M. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (Knopf, 1991), 607.
[476] *Ford Times*, July 1973, 22.

anniversary. In 1978, the *Ford Times* editorial staff reprinted a collection of the *Ford Times* articles connected to the Civil War and American Bicentennial in honor of the company's 75th anniversary or "Diamond Jubilee observance." In the introduction to the volume, Henry Ford II mentions gratitude for American patriots, as well as employees and customers: "We of Ford Motor Company have observed our Diamond Jubilee in a number of ways, but each event or action has provided an opportunity to honor the people who have made our first 75 years a success – our employees, dealers, suppliers, stockholders, and our customers, past and present. In a larger sense, however, we owe an even greater dept of gratitude to the heroic patriots who conceived, fought for, and won the freedoms that make America unique."

Henry Ford II's introduction draws a direct connection between American history and Ford Motor Company's story: "My grandfather had skill, drive and capacity for hard work, but most important, he was fortunate to live in a country where those qualities were, and still are, given free rein. In no other country can men and women and their families prosper from their ingenuity and labor as they can here in America. I think it proper, therefore, that Ford Motor Company publish this collection of stories of our heritage as part of its Diamond Jubilee Observance."[477] His hope was that reading the *Ford Times* articles, "will deepen our appreciation of the principles that make this country great, and I hope this book will especially inspire young readers to explore further the rich and inexhaustible history of our country."[478]

[477] Henry Ford II's introduction in FordMotorCompany, *Ford Times Bicentennial Series: A Tribute to America* (1978).
[478] Ibid.

Nostalgia. Besides honoring history *Ford Times* articles continued to express nostalgia for a simpler past. *Ford Times* writers created reflective essays that described their insights about life, family, fate, and friendship gathered on personal journeys. These often emphasized the author's longing for by-gone eras and appreciation for simplicity in life. Writers, said the editors, held in common "their ability to explain America to itself, not in the role of scholars but as tellers of simple tales."[479]

For example, in William Buchanan's essay on a summer spent in a large, turn of the century Virginia farmhouse he teaches his children how to hunt for wild honey, utilizing the family station wagon; in reflecting on the experience, Buchanan is pleased and saddened when he realizes his family "momentarily entered an era that is quickly vanishing from the American scene."[480] In her motor travels, Lou Ann Ruark finds a "friendly and honest place that recaptures the essence of an era –all in an almost mystically unspoiled setting" in the Arkansas Ozark Folk Center. More than simply remembering the past, "these hill folk" were preserving "knowledge, legends, and music" for anyone who appreciates history.[481] Nancy Kennedy uncovers a "living museum" at Conner Prairie in Indiana that "delights young and old and literally transplants them to another, almost forgotten era."[482] Mary Reeves Mahoney finds on her journey to rural Virginia, "The buffalo are long gone, but the landscape remains much the same. The

[479] Foreword, Best of the Times, Editors, 1977.
[480] Ford Times, September 1976, 29.
[481] *Ford Times,* September 1976, 52.
[482] *Ford Times,* December 1976, 39.

folks here, high-thinking and right-living, haven't changed much either. They certainly mean to keep their slice of Virginia the way they want it to be."[483]

Articles about hobbies were also written for those valorized the past over the avant-garde. Articles focus on the renaissance of old hobbies like quilting or needlepoint or feature tips on collecting items like dolls and sheet music. Some pieces reveal background stories about particular pieces of community art or feature the work of local craft artists. Articles about collecting antiques, sheet music and dolls stress reader's appreciation of the past and their respect for restoration and material objects. Janet Balmforth in an essay about her small, walnut bedside chair writes "often furniture is more than it's made up to be;" she describes how the chair has stood by other beds for more than 125 years and watched generations of her family live their lives. She lovingly restores the chair and gets ready to pass it on to her daughter.[484] Pete Czura teaches readers how to "become a frontier relic hunter" – stressing that "you should have a good off-the-road vehicle like the Bronco I used" – when searching for memorabilia and saving the vanishing fragments of Western history.[485] Articles also celebrate the resurgence of old hobbies and crafts of the past. Writer Dolly Connelly details how America is "going back to the quilting bee" in her piece about the revival of quilting. She writes "quilting is a woman's art, as much today as it was 250 years ago when lonely rural homemakers used up precious scraps of handloomed material to make warm bed covers." The article celebrates quilts as more than functional objects. Connelly quotes an

[483] *Ford Times,* January 1979, 6.
[484] *Ford Times*, January 1979, 14.
[485] *Ford Times,* December 1976, 18.

elderly quilter who runs her fingers over appliquéd bits of dresses, family wedding gowns, baby clothing while saying, "My whole life is in this quilt."[486]

Freedom, Balance, and Self-Expression: In Reach of Every Citizen

Outdoor recreation continued to be a strong editorial focus of the *Ford Times*. In 1961, editors promise to continue their focus on the older sports like hunting and fishing, but also to expand coverage to address "new" forms of outdoor sport, like camping, sailing, hiking, mountain climbing, and skiing - "all booming because a car brings water, woods, or hills within easy reach no matter where you live."[487] And it was true: travel and recreation did grow during the 1960s and 1970s; these were the greatest decades for outdoor recreation and visitations.[488]

Ford Times carried their brand tenets forward by connecting accessibility, democracy and Ford to the exploration of America's outdoor resources. In profiles of outdoor trends and descriptions of adventures, *Ford Times* portrayed the outdoors as accessible and the great equalizer among citizens. Bill Thomas' article on "Snurfing," –or snowboarding – promised readers that this new sport appeals to a multitude of people due to its ease. The businessman who created the first "snurfboard" is quoted in the article, describing how even his six year old girl uses the board. In Louise Barton's article on rock climbing, she promises, "all that's needed is a strong rope, stiff boots and nerves of steel."[489] Erwin Bauer's article recounts an early morning spring hike with his wife in

[486] *Ford Times*, March 1976, 46.
[487] Ford Times, October 1961, 17.
[488] CR Jensen and S Guthrie, *Outdoor Recreation in America* (Human Kinetics Publishers, 2006).
[489] *Ford Times,* May 1973, 21.

which "we left our station wagon where a grove of giant cottonwoods surrounds a turnoff in Utah's Zion National Park," he tells readers that short holidays "are possible almost anywhere in American and often year round, near towns and cities, as well as in parks or lonely wilderness areas. Age or physical condition are not important, any number can participate and anyone can afford to go daypacking." Day hikes make life a whole lot happier, promises Bauer.[490]

Ford Times connected the popularity of outdoor recreation with recreation accessories for vehicles. Reoccurring columns during this period include a product round-up article titled Recreation Unlimited that described and tested outdoor products like ski racks, boat trailers, campers, and other gear for road trips. It wasn't the only product round-up article; the magazine also ran features describing potential 'gifts for car owners' around the holiday season.

Nature articles continued to profile amazing skill of wild animals; beginning in March 1970, editors also ran educational articles on ecology that described the delicate balance between humans and nature. Editors explain, "The way nature works is of vital importance to humans. Every form of life depends on some other form, and if we upset the balances in nature we threaten our own environment. To explain this interdependence, *Ford Times* plans to public occasional articles on aspects of ecology."[491]

The need for freedom and balance was a theme found in other *Ford Times* articles as well. With the 1973 and 1979 oil crisis, the car industry also had to again sell its product as an essential part of American life. Likely in response to environmental

[490] *Ford Times*, June 1976, 2.
[491] Ford Times, March 1970, 25.

concerns of the car, Philip Wylie writes an article celebrating freedom afforded by the auto, as cars make "out of the way places available to all." The most valuable aspect of the car, writes Wylie, is that is "stops where you want to go" and allows American to "get away from it all" in "these days of pollution, contamination, crowds and noise." He writes, "The guy in the car knows, from the moment he leaves his ranch house till he gets to the parking garage under his office skyscraper, that he doesn't have to do it that fast. He can stop on the way to town and pick flowers, if he wants. He can turn off the throughway at any spot and drive somewhere else and stop there without, if he chooses, even going to work."[492] This freedom is an act of self-preservation, explains Wylie for living in crowded, polluted places, "prevents one from self-identification" and makes one "a confused and partial self."[493]

Coming together. Articles about recreation and adventure on the road also stressed how the whole family would enjoy the adventure – vacations and destinations promised something for everyone. The articles also described adventures in which a diverse group came together over their passion or journey. For example, in William Pauli's article recapping his sailing trip, he writes, "We were a diverse crew, to say the least. In our ranks: a couple celebrating their sixth wedding anniversary, a bride and groom married the night before in Newport, on a honeymoon at sea; two young school teachers who looked anything but old-fashioned; another young pair – he recently returned from Vietnam, she a New York University coed – engaged to be wed; a truck salesman and his Canadian Indian wife who had driven all night from Buffalo to make

[492] *Ford Times*, July 1970, 4.
[493] *Ford Times,* July 1970, 4-9.

the trip; a New York businessman off on a holiday; a research analyst from *Fortune*; an architect; and a dowager from Virginia, who in her 60s, put the rest of us to shame with her book-learned knowledge of spinnakers and spars. As different as we were, we had one common bond – a passion for the sea."[494]

Recreation journeys were decidedly accessible and not highbrow. Hal Butler commends Door County, Wisconsin for the peninsula's welcome lack of posh accommodations, its "Ma and Pa culture," rustic atmosphere, and options for those seeking contentment and kinship with the outdoors.[495] B. Wayne Rhoades fondly recounts her family's "piggy bank vacation" in which "our old sedan purred along that beautiful freeway swooping down into the valleys and up over the hills" on their great adventure. She writes, "the nation's innkeepers may shudder, but when you're on a shoestring budget, every campsite is a Shangri-la."[496]

At Home on the Road. As historian Rugh points out, the decision by so many families to take to the road challenged the fear and "domestic containment" that characterized much of the postwar period. *Ford Times* did encourage female participation on the outdoors, but mainly as wives and mothers. Camping and recreation articles also stressed that women would enjoy camping not because they could escape from the stress of their daily duties but because they could take their kitchen tasks with them. Articles encouraged women to take the home on the road. [497]

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[494] *Ford Times*, May 1973, 2.
[495] *Ford Times*, May 1973, 34.
[496] *Ford Times*, May 1973, 47.
[497] Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*.

Chapter Conclusion

Overall, a prominent theme that helps magazine content "hang together" during this period is 'strength in diversity.' This is an important American idea. The notion that our country is a collection of identities, a quilt of unique regions and people from "sea to shining sea," is key to our national consciousness. The very substance of American national identity, writes Fry, draws upon distinctions and tensions. [498] America's strength – especially against Soviet Union's communism – was not only its diverse landscape, but also its rich forms cultural expression. This belief, writes historian Bold, depends upon the notion that landscape can be translated into culture. [499] This theme – and the approach to content described above – allowed the magazine to meet a challenge faced by all consumption messages and activities during this period: the "ability to nurture common bonds while appealing to the interests of distinct groups."[500]

Like issues from postwar and progressive era years, *Ford Times* of the 60s and 70s continued to describe brotherhood and community found among motorists. Motoring also remained a moral crusade; this time it was mobility, access, and variety of choice that helped make car consumption a patriotic endeavor. During these decades, the magazine offered the most direct tie between American history, the car, and the corporation, especially in articles focused on travel to war commemoration events. Writers also offer nostalgic essays that valorize a simpler past. The magazine upheld "ingenuity" as a value brand value, this time it shifted the focus of stories away from

[498] Katherine Fry, "Regional Consumer Magazines and the Ideal White Reader: Constructing and Retaining Geography as Text," in D. Abrahamson, *The American Magazine: Research Perspectives and Prospects* (Iowa State University Press, 1995).
[499] C. Bold, *The Wpa Guides: Mapping America* (Univ Pr of Mississippi, 1999), 31.
[500] Glickman, *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader*.

mechanic marvels of consumers and towards corporation's ability to uncover consumer needs, tailor automobiles, and understand human nature.

Chapter Six: Brand Pioneers and Patriots – *Ford Times* as family scrapbook, 1980-1993

Ford Motor Company Vice President Bill Bourke, in response to questions from *Forbes* magazine about how the company would cope with new regulations and competition, said, "In the next few years a revolution will sweep the industry and its competitive face will be totally changed."[501] Bourke was right. Ford Motor Company – and its Detroit counterparts – would weather a difficult transition by the early 80s: they fell from "masters of the universe to servants of a larger system."[502] The industry was increasingly forced to respond to government regulators, foreign competitors, and a jaded consumer base. Safety concerns and environmental pressures started to mount in the late 1970s, and by the 1980s, consumers were unsympathetic to slow changing American automobile companies.

Ford, specifically, was in major trouble. From 1980 to 1982, Ford Motor Company lost $3.62 billion.[503] More than money was at stake: Ford's "historic, institutional importance" to the "nation's cultural heritage and self-image" was in limbo as well.[504] A turnaround did happen, of course. As an organization, Ford became leaner, re-focused itself on product quality, launched the widely successful Taurus, and in turn,

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[501] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*.; Kathleen K. Wiegner, "Detroit Fights Back," *Forbes*, July 15, 1977 1977.
[502] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*, 659.
[503] Alton F. Doody and Ron Bingaman, *Reinventing the Wheels: Ford's Spectacular Comeback* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1988).
[504] Ibid., 23.

weathered the storm by the turn of the century.[505] One tool, however, did not survive industry pressure, revolution, and change: the *Ford Times.* By 1993, dealers felt the *Ford Times* was no longer a relevant communication vehicle, and the Ford Motor Company retired the magazine in 1993. The chapter below examines how content did – and maybe more importantly – did not change during the last decades of the twentieth century.

PR Challenge: A World Industry

By the early 1980s, the Detroit 3 could no longer ignore foreign competitors. Ford was losing money and market share.[506] Companies like Toyota – with lean production techniques, efficient vehicles, and U.S. based assembly facilities – were rapidly capturing the attention and respect of American consumers.

In the midst of foreign competition, production changes made it more difficult for American car manufacturers to claim purchase of their product as a patriotic act. First, due to both domestic and foreign manufacturing changes, country of origin became more difficult to discern.[507] U.S. carmakers stopped making many of their own parts, which shifted the geography of vehicle production, material selection, and assembly. At the same time, foreign companies like Toyota opened large assembly centers in the southern United States.[508] Second, U.S. carmakers, stuck on mass production techniques, were slow to implement lean manufacturing processes in their plants, resulting in a quality gap

[505] See Doody and Bingaman for a detailed discussion of the industry challenges and eventual turnaround of FMC in the 1980s.
[506] J.P. Womack, D.T. Jones, and D. Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production* (1991), 243.
[507] Rubenstein, *Making and Selling Cars: Innovation and Change in the Us Automotive Industry*.
[508] T.H. Klier and J.M. Rubenstein, *Who Really Made Your Car?: Restructuring and Geographic Change in the Auto Industry* (WE Upjohn Institute, 2008).

between companies like Ford and Toyota. Third, besides confusing nationality, American and foreign-made cars began to look the same.[509] To cope, Ford rapidly cut budgets of all activities that didn't deal directly with product development.[510]

It wasn't a completely gloomy time for Ford, however. The company experienced bright moments – like the Taurus launch in the mid-80s, for example – that raised confidence and earnings for the automotive giant.[511] Yet, consolidation, competition and economics permanently shifted how the industry did business, and it could no longer rest on messages about American history, tradition, and heritage to sell cars.[512] Most importantly for this project, during the 80s and 90s consumer – dealer dynamics changed, reducing the value stakeholders placed in the *Ford Times* magazine.

Due to industry competition, car dealerships started to consolidate and "mega" dealers became the norm in most areas during the 80s and 90s. Dealers were no longer clearly members of the local community. Instead of a single outlet that serviced a particular community, dealers operated many sites across a state and carried multiple brands. The number of U.S. car dealerships dropped from 45,500 in 1947 to 25,100 in 1989.[513] Instead of small businessmen of the local community with relationships ties to generations of local car owners, dealers became large franchise owners. [514] Although

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[509] JM Rubenstein, *Making and Selling Cars: Innovation and Change in the Us Automotive Industry* (Johns Hopkins Univ Pr, 2001), 318.
[510] Neil Shister (former Publisher of the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, October 2010.
[511] David Magee, *Ford Tough: Bill Ford and the Battle to Rebuild America's Automaker* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2005).
[512] Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003*. "Quality" became an internal and external mantra for Ford.
[513] Automotive News Market Data Book; Womack, Jones, and Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production*, 175.
[514] J.A. Jakle and K.A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Univ of Georgia Pr, 2008).; Genat, *American Car Dealership*.

customer service remained vital, large volume dealers did not rely upon – or value – the personal connection with their customers that had been key to maintaining repeat business for rural and small territory dealers during previous decades. Car deals took on a more impersonal tone where price was king.[515] These big, high volume dealers became the Ford Motor Company's focus.[516]

Customers also needed less help from dealers to create the model that met their unique needs. An enormous variety of car models were still available to consumers yet 'customization' opportunities drastically fell. In the 1980s, Ford eliminated many special order options for consumers in order to improve factory and supply chain efficiency.[517] Car buyers were more likely to pick a standard car available on the dealer lot rather than work with a dealer to order a customized car.

As the company entered the 1980s facing the challenges above, dealers continued to underwrite a significant portion of the *Ford Times* magazine distribution costs. As the decade worn on, many began to see it as an out-of-date communication tool. Instead, dealers preferred to invest marketing funds in co-op advertisements that shared pricing details with consumers.[518] Due to a rise in postage rates, budget cuts, and a loss of interest from company dealers, *Ford Times* shuttered the magazine in 1993. [519]

Content: *Ford Times* as Family Scrapbook, 1980-1993

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[515] Neil Shister (former Publisher of the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, October 2010.
[516] Neil Shister (former Publisher of the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, October 2010.
[517] Womack, Jones, and Roos, *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production*, 178.
[518] John Vanderzee (former Advertising Director of the Ford Division), in discussion with the author, November 2010.
[519] John Vanderzee (former Advertising Director of the Ford Division), in discussion with the author, November 2010.

Despite the changes above, editors of the 80s and 90s continued to focus on patriotic themes, brave pioneers, and interesting travel destinations. The magazine was, in the words of a former editor, a "potpourri" of content during its last decades. Editors wanted it to be "lively and readable, like a Sunday supplement."[520] However, strong brand journalism – and good magazine journalism – requires the set of stories to fit together under a cohesive voice; by pursuing "variety" editors diluted the *Ford Times* editorial voice in content during its last decades.

Like previous periods, *Ford Times* staff had a simple mission – to share stories about "people, places, food, and trends that reflect American culture. For the better part of a century, that culture evolved along with Ford Motor Company and the freedom afforded by the automobile."[521] Content, like American culture and the auto company itself, evolved slowly too.

Stories about individuals – maverick, intriguing Americans with unusual hobbies or professions – were king. There was a significant rise in the amount of articles focused on "people;" almost 16% of articles were editor-generated profiles of interesting individuals, Ford employees, and Ford owners – often set in a narrative similar to the 'brave pioneer' theme of previous decades. Editors also call for quite a bit of reader submitted content during this period, namely in columns that call for owners to describe their favorite cars, achievements with their vehicles, memories of driving, travel anecdotes, and jokes. This focus, along with the driving memoirs, all described below, made the magazine feel like a family scrapbook.

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[520] Neil Shister (former Publisher of the *Ford Times*), in discussion with the author, October 2010.
[521] *Ford Times*, August 1991, 2.

Ford Times was not the only magazine turning to profile pieces to explain American life. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Americans became more interested in entertainment, leisure, and lifestyle information rather than political or economic news. In efforts to attract a time-conscious and young readership magazine and newspapers began to feature more food, home and fashion trend content.[522] "Personality journalism" or "infotainment," which heavily relied on narratives about the private lives of individuals, reigned supreme by 1980. Publications like *People* simplified and domesticated complex issues by telling the news using profile articles based on celebrities, politicians, and remarkable Americans.[523] Human-interest or personality based journalism was not new – it was also became popular at the turn of the century with the rise in cultural interest in developing the authentic" self. [524] Personality stories reaffirm the accessibility of the subject; those profiled are like the reader and assure the reader that they too can create interesting and compelling life stories.

Story Topics from 1980 to 1993 (n = 219)

Travel	42	19.18%
Profile	35	15.98%
Cars	35	15.98%
Food, Restaurant, Entertaining	34	15.53%
Humor	19	8.68%
Ford Motor Company	17	7.76%
Outdoor Sport and Recreation	11	5.02%

[522] Overholser and Jamieson, *The Press*.
[523] Thomas and Carpenter, *Mass Media in 2025: Industries, Organizations, People, and Nations*.; Anne Helen Petersen, "The Gossip Industry: Producing and Distributing Star Images, Celebrity Gossip, and Entertainment News, 1910 – 2010" (University of Texas - Austin, May 2011).; C. Sparks and J. Tulloch, *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates over Media Standards* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
[524] C.L.P. Leon, *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Nature	9	4.11%
Fashion, Culture, Art or Hobby	8	3.65%
Memoir-Essay	5	2.28%
General Technology/Industry	4	1.83%
Total	219	100.00%

Editors did not relinquish their focus on "place;" almost 20% of articles studied still focused on travel to American small towns, cities, museums, mountains, and other attractions, Cultural events and historical sites remained a significant part of travel pieces. Although these topics remained popular in the *Ford Times*, their popularity fell among government supporters and the general public. There were substantial budget cuts to historical education and preservation programs during the Reagan years; visitation figures to historical monuments and national parks also waned in the 1980s.[525]

Although the number of travel articles appearing in the *Ford Times* remained strong, the amount of space devoted to destinations and events fell. Issues still usually include one multi-page travel feature, but most information about destinations – especially information about cultural events, commemorations and historical sites – appear in short, round-up style articles. "Glove Compartment" was one such reoccurring column in which editors and readers share brief listings of small or unusual community events – from fish fries to state fairs – humorous quips, news and fun facts. In the January 1961 issue, editors state: "Henceforth, the Glove Compartment will be a regular feature of FT. We invite our readers to contribute material - short bits of humor, driving hints, travel information, anything you think is of interest." [526] "Interstate Quick Stops" was a

[525] Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*, 614-20.
[526] *Ford Times,* January 1961, 16.

feature, like the postwar years' "Americamera," that shares a brief, one-page, fact-based overview of a museum, scenic spot, or other interesting destination, pertinent visiting details and driving directions. In August of 1982, editors describe the column's purpose in the introduction: "Exit the interstate. Enter a world of self-discovery. And all it takes is a quick stop. Beckoning everywhere along the 4200-mile Interstate system are the little known off ramps to nearby recreation, relaxation, and family adventures. They're places - scenic, historic and often wonderfully rewarding - you shouldn't pass by."[527]

Focus of Travel articles 1980 to 1993 (n = 42)

Travel –Cultural Event	15	35.71%
Travel - Historical Site	9	21.43%
Travel- Manmade Attraction	6	14.29%
Travel – Natural Attraction	6	14.29%
Travel - City Destination	3	7.14%
Travel -Region, State	2	4.76%
Travel - Small Town	1	2.38%
Total – travel	42	100.00%

The People of Ford

A major shift in content for the 80s and 90s was the rise of profile pieces. These feature articles focus on celebrity and non-celebrity Americans at the top of their field. Profile subjects – which included a ballerina, stuntwoman, actress, firefighter, shrimper, and female trucker – were often portrayed as brave pioneers or mavericks who were hardworking and passionate about their work. "Changemakers" or the "Good News Makers" was a reoccurring profile column that appeared during this period; this column celebrated individuals serving the community in a unique way. For example, the January

[527] *Ford Times,* August 1982.

1988 column focused on a downhill ski expert who helps the blind get out on the slopes. Editors wanted the column to sing the praises of unheralded heroes and step in where traditional journalism fails: "When people go out of their way to help strangers, their unselfish deeds seldom make headlines. In this new series, we salute some of those whose unheralded actions have indeed brought 'good news' to their fellow humans."[528]

The *Ford Times* continues to celebrate the ingenuity and resourcefulness of those profiled throughout the 80s and 90s. Instead of illustrating how writers uncover American ingenuity in small towns on their travels, writers profile extraordinary Americans – some celebrities, some 'ordinary folk' – who excel in their profession or hobby by being dedicated, resourceful and passionate. Rather than "mechanical marvels" who demonstrate their ingenuity by tinkering with cars, *Ford Times* profiles modern maverick Americans who demonstrate hard work and passion in their career.

These individuals defy the odds – a 72-year-old female trucker, the first African American female publisher, a musician from modest upbringing – to be successful. For example, "Flame-snuffer" Paul Adair battles out of control fires across the nation at 68, an age when "most men consider bouncing a grandchild on their knee to be excitement," according to the writer.[529] Profiles also stress individual's dedication to their passion, enjoyment of hard work, and the value they place in practical knowledge. Shrimper Nora Warren is quoted in Diane Gentry's article, "A Shrimper's Life for Her," saying, "We were lucky to find the one thing that satisfied us. Most people never do."[530] Similarly, ballerina McKerrow asserts her passion for dance never fades: "I'm basically a shy

[528] *Ford Times,* January 1988, 5.
[529] *Ford Times,* November 1982, 11.
[530] *Ford Times,* February 1982, 27.

person, but when I dance I don't feel that way at all. I know some people have the kind of jobs that they start and leave behind them at 5, but I could never do that. I think about dancing all the time."[531] Publisher Johnson says, "I always thought of journalism as fun. I never thought of it as work."[532]

Writers describe the personal journeys of these self-made, brave, modern pioneers – athletes, musicians, artists, business leaders, actors – who work to fulfill their dreams. Often these profiles mention the subject's modest upbringing or challenging early life. For example, shrimper Warren and her husband are both "products of broken homes." Although Warren had a rich father, she spent her childhood working hard on her grandparents' farm. Publisher Pam Johnson was the oldest daughter in a "very-poor, very religious family of five." 17-year-old ballerina Amanda McKerrow, who was the first American dancer ever to won a gold medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition, grew up in a middle-class family and rose to stardom due to her quiet determination and singleness of purpose.

There is a down-home, accessible nature to these profiles, even in features about celebrities. The profile piece on Bo and John Derek show them in rugged country in cowboy hats and jeans. The article assures readers, "At their California ranch, Bo and John Derek are light years away from the glitter of Tinseltown."[533] The profile on John and Bo Derek also stresses their decision to be independent and elude the norm – from their difference in age to their decision to live on a rural, modest ranch – they are the

[531] *Ford Times*, May 1982, 13.
[532] *Ford Times*, May 1982, 43.
[533] *Ford Times*, November 1982, Table of Contents.

"antithesis of the stars' life."[534] Similarly, "Mississippi Shorty, the Highball' Grandma" assures readers she is "as common as pig tracks and I'd drive off in a river if it come natural." Zennie Mae Moreland also says, "I've been driving something or other since I was 10 years old. I started out helping my daddy haul timber in an ol'T Model truck that didn't even have a windshield."[535]

Previous *Ford Times* focus on "accessible" outdoor recreation options and stress the "democratic" nature of enjoying the outdoors. In the 80s and 90s, articles shift to professionals and unusual forms of outdoor sport – like racing sled dogs or hovercraft boating – instead of adventures open to average American drivers. Rather than encourage readers to get out and enjoy nature with other Americans, outdoor sport and recreation articles tend to feature sports professionals, national and international race events, the history of a sport, or advances in equipment.

In some columns, writers highlight how a Ford vehicle allowed them to be successful in their chosen field. In the issue described above that profiles Bo and John Derek, the cover image is of Bo crouched on the ground petting a dog with a Ford Truck prominent in the background.[536] Within the article, recapping her typical day, Bo Derek states that she drives her Ford pickup into town and around the ranch almost every morning. The connection between American inventiveness and the Ford car was especially prominent in the Gallery of Ford owners' column. Cars and owners were partners in success. "Patients Rely on her – and her Thunderbird" states an article on Brenda Gillespie, a hospice nurse in Pennsylvania: "I can be called out anytime to help.

[534] *Ford Times,* November 1982, 7.
[535] *Ford Times*, February 1982, 44.
[536] *Ford Times,* November 1982, cover.

It's nice to know I have a reliable, solidly built car to help *me.*"[537] Similarly, Wilson and his sons, who use their Ford as a mobile hangar for radio controlled model airplanes, had "high expectations of their 1982 Ford Supervan" – and "the van has come through with flying colors," notably, the vehicle allows them to enter and win competitions across the nation.[538]

Ford's employees and products. Starting with a special issue in 1991, the *Ford Times* focused a great deal of content on the Ford Motor Company. Alongside these profile pieces, editors ran articles about Ford employees using their knowledge, passion and inventive nature to produce vehicles for the American people and help particular lines of cars come to life. The articles often profile executives who worked on different models – like the Taurus – and recount how different departments collaborated to create a 'quality' vehicle. The magazine also interviews company executives in order to share their philosophy and achievements with readers. Editors promise to tell readers "more about the company in which you've placed your trust. You'll discover how quality became Job 1 at Ford."[539]

The "Ford Tech" column and the "Times of Ford" – both reoccurring columns introduced towards the end of the magazine's run – gave readers insight into company news and happenings. The "Times of Ford," promise editors, shares new product information, describes Ford corporation's efforts to continually improve their products, and introduces readers to other Ford owners who "take pride in the cars and trucks they

[537] *Ford Times,* March 1983, 43.
[538] *Ford Times,* August 1982, 11.
[539] *Ford Times*, August 1991, 2.

drive."[540] Ford Tech describes a particular technology or option package for readers. Editors also frequently ran articles focused on general car maintenance tips or services from dealers. Some pieces focus on science-related trends – like ergonomics, advancements in plastics, or changes in fuel efficiency – and report how Ford leverages this knowledge in their manufacturing process.

For example, Ford's chief design executive Jack Telnack is the focus of a ChangeMaker column in August 1991. Writer John Barron writes, "Telnack, who changed the shape of American automobiles with the landmark Ford Taurus, has a new vision: to give passengers more space."[541] Telnack, an "automotive Da Vinci," "prophesied, promoted, and promulgated the automotive aerodynamic revolution of the 1980s," writes Barron.[542] Articles that focus on new model introductions – especially the Taurus and Escort – also stress the brave pioneering nature of those connected to the Ford company. The magazine interviews the engineering and design intellects behind car creation and illustrates how the corporation leverages science to put the best product possible on the market.

Brotherhood and Revival on the Road

Difference disappears on the journey. Writers continue to describe how they connect with other citizens on adventures – in car, on bike, or on the water. For example, in an article on biking across Vermont, Jeanne Porterfield and Lisa Chickering write, "When the tour came to an end, it was almost like a graduation. We had a feeling of

[540] *Ford Times*, August 1991, 18.
[541] *Ford Times*, August 1991, 28.
[542] *Ford Times*, August 1991, 28.

accomplishment and fulfillment, with a bit of sadness that it was all over. Differences of age, race, and lifestyle had vanished somewhere in the Vermont hills."[543] Similarly, in "C'est Formidable, Pardner!" writer Melinda Berge describes how a group of Americans and French tourists come together and overcome cultural difference while riding horses through the American West.[544] In "Deep in the Hills of Texas," writer Don McLeese describes how his family found a place – a paradise for sportsmen, environmentalists, and history buffs who lament a vanishing rural America – where folks who barely know each other soon trade life stories. At the end of the article, and throughout the text, the writer mentions the adventurous trip took place in his Ford Aerostar van.[545]

Car, Access, and Freedom. Many stories of adventure featuring a Ford car stress the freedom, access, revival and economy afforded by the vehicle. In an article on car camping to California, Stafford Campbell writes that their 12,000 mile round trip from New York to San Francisco, they used many gadgets and innovations to make the trip easier, cheaper and more fun. "However, I must admit that the best of these was not of our own devising – it was our Ford Fairmont station wagon."[546] He writes "we returned home convinced that station wagon camping as we did it has a lot of plusses – the pleasure of living outdoors, the economy of driving a compact car, and the freedom of not having to hunt for motels and restaurants, or to look for campsites with complicated trailer hookups. And the very best part is that you can do it without going broke."[547] The magazine celebrates adventures taken by boat and bike as well for, like cars, drivers are

[543] *Ford Times*, August 1982, 8.
[544] *Ford Times*, August 1982, 12.
[545] *Ford Times*, November 1991, 34.
[546] *Ford Times*, August 1982, 21.
[547] *Ford Times*, August 1982, 23.

able to "chart their own course" and reconnect with nature.[548] Articles also describe the importance of stopping to remember the important things in life, such as the simple joy of childhood activities, like making sandcastles.

Instead of focusing on American history, the *Ford Times* focused on preservation of outdoor landscapes, animals, and ways of life. Travel articles described locations for those who lament the loss of rural America and "history buffs". Some travel articles detail the historical background of an area; however, rather than state how this is part of America's shared history, articles stress the uniqueness of the region or its European roots. For example, the "quick stop" article in May 1991, details "Old World" taste of the Amana colonies, founded by a group of religious German, Swiss and Alsatian families.[549] War battlefields, museums, and other historical pit stops appeared in the brief roundup articles; instead of describing shared commemoration events, these pieces often offered straightforward visiting details.

Ford Times continued to run its popular restaurant recipe column. The magazine did not deviate from its tried-and-true format throughout the years; Nancy Kennedy continued to describe a handful of featured restaurants and share recipes from executive chefs and owners. In the 80s and 90s, the column did begin to note that featured restaurants were 'recommended' by particular Ford dealers in the area. *Ford Times* also ran longer food-focused articles that celebrate regional delights, restaurants, chef, foodstuffs, and specialty shops. Articles also describe new food trends like summer drinks, tapas, or the rise of American coffee shops. The magazine also shares how-to

[548] See *Ford Times,* August 1982, 7.
[549] *Ford Times,* May 1991, 43.

entertaining and cooking tips. Some were directly connected to Ford cars, for example, in February 1982, the food column describes how to sew picnic accessories for the Ford Escort sedan.[550]

Carrying Our Memories: My car, My life

The personal story, which often includes owner – vehicle relationships, was at the core of the *Ford Times* magazine during the 80s and 90s. Using a personal story format, the magazine modeled ways in which the Ford car could serve as a memory object for consumers. In reader submitted and writer created material, articles used the car to return to favorite memories, to tell their life story, or to recall important moments in their life. In these pieces, the *Ford Times* continued to model how the brand could be leveraged to carry on family traditions and preserve memories.

Rather than new model digest features, car articles most frequently took the form of driving memoirs that recount a significant journey or a favorite vehicle. The "Gallery of Ford Owners" or "Ford Gallery" column was a one-page article that includes a photo of a car and its owner and describes how owners leverage their car to improve their lives, be successful, run a business, or serve the community. Editors requested submissions for this column from readers and dealers. They state, "we are always looking for owners of Ford products who use them in interesting ways, or who have unusual jobs or hobbies."[551] The reoccurring "My Favorite Car" section, another reader submission column, features a memory of a particular Ford car and its relevance in their life. Editors

[550] *Ford Times*, February 1982, 48.
[551] *Ford Times,* bottom of column. For example see *Ford Times,* March 1983, 43.

ask readers to "tell us about your favorite Ford" and in 1985, the magazine paid $100 for each published 250-word submission.[552]

Focus of Car articles, Ford Times 1980 to 1993 (n = 35)

Car – Driving or Model memoir, Legacy of Ownership	15	42.86%
Cars – Models	8	22.86%
Car – Success Story	8	22.86%
Car – General Trend, Racing, Economy	4	11.43%
Total Cars	35	100.00%

For example, in the Gallery of Ford owners' column, Georgia Jones celebrates 14 years with 1968-model mustang, a coming-of-age car that has taken her through high school to young adulthood. [553] David Mielke writes about his '56 Ford vehicle: "The Customline carried me to the prom, to graduation, and on the daily 35-mile commute to my freshman classes in college. It carried me to the Army recruiting station the next winter, and a year later, it carried me to the airport on my way to Germany."[554]

Reader letters continued to demonstrate their commitment to the brand and pride in being a "Ford family." In August 1985, the magazine ran a series of reader letters under the title, "buying by the numbers" expressing reader pride in their dedication to Ford. Donna Kruggel of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin writes, "Your April 'Gallery' article on Ruth McKim and her 13 Fords got me thinking about my father, Theodore Kruggel.

[552] *Ford Times,* January 1985, 8.
[553] *Ford Times,* May 1982, 32.
[554] *Ford Times,* March 1985, 16.

Dad turned 66 in April and he has had nothing but Fords – 16 in all." Similarly, Karl Schooler of Indianola, Iowa writes, "My 1915 Model T was the first of 19 Fords."[555]

Similar to the last decade, essays reflect longing for a simpler past, lament the pace of contemporary American life, and recall joy in returning to child-like activities like building sandcastles. They also reflect on the meaning of American life and recount with nostalgia memories tied to material objects. Nostalgia, as Carolyn Kitch has noted, creates a social experience for it is recollection "based on shared ideas about the past and present and on cultural definitions of better and worse."[556]

Instead of cartoons or fictional short stories, *Ford Times* created a column called the "Road Show" that shares humorous short stories, quips on life and experiences on the road. Editors accepted reader submission for this column and paid $50 for each 150-word submission. Editors wanted "brief, never-before published anecdotes" that "related amusing incidents from personal travel, vacations, automotive or dining-out experiences."[557] Longer essay-like articles in the humor category often describe funny aspects of husband-wife or parent-child dynamics when packing or travelling. A few of these columns did connect sports or recreation with particular car models; for example, writers describe how handy the station wagon is for car camping.

[555] *Ford Times,* August 1985, 2.
[556] Kitch, *Pages from the Past: History and Memory in American Magazines*.
[557] *Ford Times*, January 1985, 37.

Chapter conclusion

As this chapter illustrates, *Ford Times* of the 80s and 90s continues to stress the pioneering nature of those connected to the brand, the value of the Ford family tradition, and the benefits afforded by motor journeys. The magazine moved away from tying these brand tenets to patriotic themes and American history. Less an object to fulfill rituals of citizenship, the Ford brand was framed route to personal entitlement, success, and satisfaction.

These shifts might reflect changes and challenges in the industry discussed in the chapter introduction. They also align with historians Cohen's observation that towards the end of the twentieth century; Americans found little encouragement to look beyond their own self-interests as consumers and few scripts for how the nation's agenda might "represent a negotiation among its constituent parts." Consumer identity became a claim to self-entitlement rather than collective well-being, and consumers and corporations increasingly abandoned goals of social inclusion and retreated from discussions of the general good.[558]

[558] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 387.

Chapter Seven: Steering a Reader Community - Discussion and Conclusion

For public relations professionals, 'brand journalists,' and historians, *Ford Times* is a vehicle for understanding how a corporation assembled and steered a reader community. Editors framed communication with consumers as a literary adventure, model catalog, and a family scrapbook. Editors used these frames to make public relations more than an information provider to the press; the company magazine met the informational needs of readers, shared narratives about community with consumers, and provided a moral base for consumption. Although they did not describe it as such, *Ford Times* used journalistic principles, insights from consumers, and a set of stories that fit together under a single voice to drive brand tenets and engage in credible corporate storytelling over the last part of the twentieth century; these are some of the key markers contemporary strategic communication professionals describe as 'brand journalism.'

The magazine fostered a "consciousness of kind," or a "we-ness" among readers by encouraging consumers to read and submit content, advice, letters, profiles and pictures from fellow brand users.[559] The journeys portrayed in the magazine formed shared rituals and escapes for Ford owners; by following writers' taillights, readers could embark on the same adventures and experiences – from the road or their armchair. By re-

[559] Scholars Muniz and O'Guinn describe three essential markers of community: moral responsibility, consciousness of kind, and rituals and traditions. The most important of these is "consciousness of kind" in which individuals in the group share a way of thinking about things. More than a sense of similarity, it is a "knowing of belonging."[559] Rituals and traditions allow the community to perpetuate its shared history, culture and consciousness – in essence, it is how a group forms, celebrates, and maintains its social solidarity. Moral responsibility is the felt duty or obligation to the community and other members. Muniz Jr and OGuinn, "Brand Community."

telling the Ford Motor Company corporate history, and framing it as part of American political and industrial history, the company perpetuated shared history and culture for readers. Values like nostalgia and ingenuity helped legitimize "true" members of the community and encouraged readers to see these values as integral to the Ford Motor Company brand. *Ford Times* described our nation as a place where automobile purchases connect citizens to their history and heritage, support patriotic values and civic duties, and allow owners to find amity among fellow Americans on their adventures. By describing how "real" America is found on the road and defining motor trips as patriotic rituals of citizenship, *Ford Times* writers made Ford brand purchases one way to fulfill duties of American citizenship for its reader community. Ultimately, editors framed a "view of America through the windshield" in which brotherhood and community were built on the Ford brand.

By selecting travel-related topics and framing consumption as one route to American history and patriotism, the editors also afforded the magazine a cultural authority not given to other forms of corporate communication. *Ford Times* educated readers about history found along the interstate, celebrated a common heritage and used historical facts to bring to life towns and landscapes encountered on road trips. Instead of being dismissed as promotional literature, *Ford Times* function was constructed as educating readers. Narrative links between the corporation, its cars, and history were naturalized by the informational genre and its associated truth claims. As Bold argues in her history of the WPA travel guidebooks, informational genres like guidebooks "do not

announce themselves as ideological" and the genre's "documentary status camouflages its constructions as found landscapes and social relations."[560]

This dissertation also illustrates how the Ford Motor Company leveraged travel topics, historical themes, and an informational approach to content – i.e. the trope of use – to construct public relations as a service to owners deserving of their gratitude. Consistent with gift-giving theories, the magazine was able to forge social bonds and encourage reciprocal behavior. [561] This frame allowed *Ford Times* to increase the intimacy of their relationship with consumers, create feelings of indebtedness and goodwill, and foster group membership among the company, consumers, and dealers. This mission resonated with readers; their letters detail gratitude to both the editorial staff and their particular dealers sponsoring the magazine. On January 9, 1951, Mrs. Paulson of Wisconsin Rapids, WI wrote to the *Ford Times* editorial staff: "Thank you very much for your fine gift, the *Ford Times* subscription. It is a very fine magazine and can assure you it is greatly appreciated. I understand this magazine is given gratis. Just cannot understand how you can issue such a fine little magazine, with all its fine colored pictures and complete stories, which are <u>true</u> and not <u>fiction,</u> free of charge. The first time I saw this magazine was at my dentist's office last summer, then after looking thru it, I immediately began to investigate as I wanted this magazine. I really feel in love with this magazine, *Ford Times*." In 1949, reader G.R. Eriksson writes, on letterhead from the Detroit Board of Education, to congratulate the editorial staff on its high-quality

[560] Bold, *The Wpa Guides: Mapping America*, 4-5.
[561] For a discussion of gift-giving theory, see J.F. Sherry Jr, "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research* (1983). For a discussion on how gift-giving theory works at corporate events, see McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig, "Building Brand Community."

publication: "It is superior to ninety-five percent of the magazines on today's news stands. The entire editorial staff should be congratulated. Publication of '*Ford Times*' is a public service of the first order."[562] Reader letters echo gratitude for information and escape. On January 13, 1951, J.T. Cassell, writes about the January issue: "The feeling I had when reading it was that it afforded me the same effortless pleasure and enjoyment I get when I'm driving my 1950 Ford convertible."[563]

These themes, and especially the focus on American history, gave the magazine new venues for circulation, and in turn, legitimacy usually withheld for non-company forms of journalism. In a 1948 memo to dealers, William Kennedy reports that schools – especially art, geography, reading, driver training, and cooking classes – were using the magazine as educational material. He states, "The fact that we are now in about 25,000 schools (10% of the total) without planned promotion indicates that this is one of the most promising fields for further development."[564] The educational mission resonated with readers like Edith Faville of Palo Alto, who writes in 1949, "As an ex-8th grade teacher, and the mother of boys and grandchildren, I want to say I think the *Ford Times* magazine is one of the best teachers of geography and human nature I have known. It makes its readers want to know where places are, and what is to be found in those places, as well as the human nature evidenced on the way. To want to know is the basis of all learning."[565] Similarly, Reese James, the Director of Courses in Journalism at the

[562] Letter from G.R. Eriksson, Acc 727, Box 1, Folder 1-11, Eriksson letter, June 18, 1949, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[563] Acc 544, Box 1, PR Pubs and Correspondence, Jan-March 1951, Folder 7, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[564] Acc 831, Box 1, Nov. 1948, Publications, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[565] Acc 727, Box 1, Folder 1-11, Faville letter, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.

University of Pennsylvania writes on October 10, 1951, thanking staff members for the "jolliest little magazine ever published" and noting that he often uses it in classes.[566] In 1982, the magazine ran another letter of gratitude from a teacher in Texas, "I am a teacher and I use many of the stories in my classroom. The article in the October 1981 issues about the jellybeans has been one of our favorites. Keep up the good, clear, informative work," writes reader Jenny Lind.[567]

Ford Motor Company – and other American automakers – did not abandon the link between consumption and citizenship with the 1993 closure of the magazine, as the next section discusses. They did, however, abandon the company press's ability to serve as a content provider to consumers and build a lasting reader community.

The Way Forward

It has been a difficult decade for the Big Three from Detroit. Journalists, politicians, and corporate leaders sounded a death knell for American automakers at the end of 2008. In November of 2008, Chrysler's Chief Executive Officer Bob Nardelli admitted to the U.S Senate Committee that the company was in a "very fragile position" and by the end of the year would likely come "dangerously close" to running out of the financial resources necessary to stay in business.[568] Similarly, General Motors lost $2.5 billion in the third quarter of 2008 and warned political leaders that they would be out of

[566] Acc 544, Box 1, Pr Pub Correspond. Aug-Dec 11951, Folder 7, Benson Research Center, The Henry Ford.
[567] *Ford Times,* February 1982, 2.
[568] Tim Higgins, "The Case for Chrysler: Nardelli: We Could Run out of Cash Soon," *Detroit Free Press*, November 18, 2008.

cash by mid-2009 if the U.S economic slump continued and the government refused to give aid to the carmakers.[569] Although Ford said its economic position was more secure than that of its competitors, CEO Alan Mulally warned that a GM or Chrysler failure would devastate the dealer network and supplier base shared by the three companies and prevent Ford from profitably producing vehicles.[570] To avoid an industry-wide crisis, the CEOs of GM, Ford and Chrysler pleaded for $50 billion in loans from Congressional leaders to keep afloat and to subsidize the development of fuel-efficient vehicles. In December of 2008, industry leaders again asked the House Financial Services Committee for $34 billion in federal loans.

The first pleas for an automaker "bailout" were not answered by Capitol Hill, as the bill collapsed in negotiations in early December.[571] On December 17, 2008, Chrysler announced that it would be stopping all vehicle production in the United States for at least a month. Ford made plans to temporarily close ten assembly plants while General Motors temporarily closed 20 factories to cut vehicle production. On December 19, 2008 the Bush administration "rescued" the automakers by allowing them to access $17.4 billion in emergency loans.[572] Despite the federal assistance, Chrysler filed for bankruptcy protection at the end of April in 2009, and GM filed for bankruptcy at the

[569] "Gm Reports Loss, Warns Cash Could Run out by '09," *Chicago Tribune,* , November 8, 2008.
[570] "Testimony of Alan Mulally, President and Chief Operating Officer, Ford Motor Company, for the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs."
[571] Chris Isidore, "Auto Bailout Collapses in Senate," *CNNMoney.Com*, December 12, 2008.
[572] "President Bush: Automakers to Get $17.4 Billion," *Minnesota Public Radio*, http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/12/19/auto_bush/?refid=0.

beginning of June in 2009.[573] Although Ford avoided bankruptcy court, the company lost $1.42 billion in the first quarter of 2009.[574]

Automakers and many supporters of the 'bailout' claimed that economic repercussions of the auto industry crisis would resonate far beyond Detroit. Rick Wagoner, General Motors chairman and chief executive officer said to the Senate, "What would it mean if the domestic industry were allowed to fail? The societal costs would be catastrophic: three million jobs lost within the first year, U.S. personal income reduced by $150 billion, and a government tax loss of more than $156 billion over three years… not to mention the broader blow to consumer and business confidence."[575]

Most interesting for this research, others argued that the bailout was more than an economic issue – it was a matter of national pride, security, and history. Ford CEO Alan Mulally reminded members of Congress that Ford was an important "American company and an American icon" and said, "Our industry is proud of the role we have played through the years in meeting our national security needs, and we believe that role will continue to be critical in the years to come." [576] The automakers weren't the only leaders drawing upon national pride and patriotism to garner support from taxpayers and their representatives. Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm characterized Republican Senators opposition of the bailout as "un-American behavior" and accused GOP leaders

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[573] Brady Dennis and Peter Whoriskey, "All Eyes Turn to Gm and Its Bondholders," *The Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/01/AR2009050101290.html.
[574] Andrew Grossman and Peg Brickley Jeff Bennett, "Ford Likely to Supply Majority of Visteon Financing," *Wall Street Journal Online*, http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20090528-716323.html.
[575] David Patton, "Auto Executives Testimony: What They Said," *The Wall Street Journal*, http://blogs.wsj.com/autoshow/2008/11/18/auto-executives-testimony-what-they-said/.
[576] "Testimony of Alan Mulally, Chief Operating Officer, Ford Motor Company, in Front of Senate Banking Committee, November 18, 2008," *Wall Street Journal*, http://s.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/WSJ_MulallyTestimony-081118.pdf.

of "protecting the foreign companies that are in their borders" and "not acting as Americans."[577] On May 1, 2009, the Washington Post remarked that even President Barack Obama had become "salesman-in-chief" for the Detroit automakers, as the President asked his constituents to consider buying an American car and promised that federal help would give the American corporations a "new lease on life." The paper compared Obama to a showroom salesman, as he assured a television audience that the government would guarantee the warranties of American automakers even if the companies went bankrupt.[578] When a group of lenders rejected the U.S. government's offer to save the Chrysler company from bankruptcy, Obama questioned the patriotism of the bondholders.[579] Once a strategic alliance between Italian automaker Fiat and S.p.A and Chrysler LLC allowed the company to emerge from bankruptcy, Chairman and CEO Bob Nardelli compared devotion to country with loyalty to the corporation in his farewell letter to employees: "During the darkest hour of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine wrote of the 'sunshine patriot' who disappears when the going gets tough. I have found there are no sunshine patriots at Chrysler—just men and women who stand tall and persevere, who never lose hope or faith despite adversity and the negativism from this great industry's detractors. You are men and women who believe in the company, in each other and in a better future."[580]

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[577] Kathy Barks Hoffman, "Granholm Outspoken in Defense of Auto Industry, but Washington Still Evaluating Bailout," *Associated Press*, http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2008/12/granholm_outspoken_in_defense.html.
[578] Whoriskey, "All Eyes Turn to Gm and Its Bondholders."
[579] David Nason, "Chrysler Crisis Is No Mere Pit Stop," *The Australian*, http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,28124,25415739-643,00.html.
[580] Free Press Staff Report, "Bob Nardelli's Farewell Letter to Employees," *Detroit Free Press,* , http://www.freep.com/article/20090610/BUSINESS01/90610030.

As the automakers struggled to stay in business, the *Detroit Free Press* claimed that America would never be the same if the car manufacturers failed and reminded readers of previous patriotic alliances between the country and its automakers. The newspaper's opinion piece, titled "Dear Members of Congress," reads, "Remember, too, that Detroit helped rescue America as the Arsenal of Democracy in World War II and, through GM's no-interest loans, helped jump-start the battered economy after 9/11. Now, when our automakers and autoworkers need a hand up, will America really turn its back?" The paper claimed that the automakers' "survival is in America's best interests. You can help them. And if you don't, make no mistake: There will be bleeding throughout the land."

In a note that accompanies the editorial, *Detroit Free Press* editor Paul Anger writes, "We have chronicled the U.S. auto industry since its birth, as Detroit became the world's Motor City, as cars and trucks changed the American culture and landscape, as assembly line jobs gave rise to the American middle class. Our journalists have reported the automakers' triumphs and exposed their troubles. We know this industry better than anyone. We also know that while a newspaper needs to inform, there are times when a newspaper needs to speak up for what's right. We know what automakers and autoworkers mean to this nation. We know what will happen if one of the auto companies is allowed to collapse. We know because this industry has been our story since it started. And we know that America needs this story to continue."[581]

Of course, the automakers' story did not end with the bailout crisis. Ford, it seems, came out on top after the crisis. After turning down funds from the Troubled

[581] "Editorial: Invest in America," *Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 2008.

Asset Relief Program (TARP) – even though the company lost $14.6 billion in 2008 – Ford consumers expressed their appreciation and pride in the company for its self-sufficiency.[582] Further, in 2010, for the first time ever, *Advertising Age* crowned the Ford Motor Company 'Marketer of the Year.' Their success was attributed to new models, new media strategies, and new marketing messages.[583] At the 2010 North American International Auto Show, Ford used the theme "heritage" to structure its media presentations, according to analyst David Kwan, trying to leverage company history and their position in the automotive industry recovery to turn "made in Detroit" into "a good thing."[584] A quote from Henry Ford, "Opening the highways to all mankind" introduced the 2012 Ford Focus to industry stakeholders. [585]

Ford is not alone in these efforts to capitalize on bailout using nationalist themes of community. In the 2012 Superbowl, Chrysler ran a commercial titled "It's Halftime in America," that uses gritty images of Detroit and patriotic tones to inspire viewers to help the country recover by rallying around American automaker brands.[586] In the 2012 spot, actor Clint Eastwood acknowledges the current economic downturn, "I've seen a lot of tough eras, a lot of downturns in my life. And, times when we didn't understand each other. It seems like we've lost our heart at times. When the fog of division, discord, and blame made it hard to see what lies ahead." Then, he offered a pep talk: "But after those trials, we all rallied around what was right, and acted as one. Because that's what we do.

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[582] Michael Bush, "Ford Picks up Pr Points for Declining Auto Bailout, ," *Advertising Age*.
[583] Patrick Rall, "Ford Motor Company Announced Marketer of the Year," in *Detroit Autos Examiner*.
[584] David Kwan, "Heritage Emerges as Detroit Auto Show Theme Even as Manufacturers Look to Future," in *AnnArbor.com*.
[585] Ibid.
[586] Of course, the spot ignores the fact stated earlier that after the bailout the majority of Chrysler is owned by Fiat SpA, an Italian car company.

We find a way through tough times, and if we can't find a way, then we'll make one. All that matters now is what's ahead. How do we come from behind? How do we come together? And, how do we win?" Finally, the spot connected these themes to American made autos: "Detroit's showing us it can be done. And, what's true about them is true about all of us. This country can't be knocked out with one punch. We get right back up again and when we do the world is going to hear the roar of our engines."[587]

Despite the soaring rhetoric about community and patriotism, the ad has been criticized as sending a partisan message, an accusation that has set a tone of discord and division rather than chord of community around the spot.[588]

America in the Rearview Mirror

The tie between commerce and civic duty expressed during the recent auto crisis is not unique to automakers or the current economic situation, as this dissertation illustrates. Throughout the history of our nation, politicians, marketers, and fellow Americans have included loyal consumption in the list of patriot responsibilities.[589] At different moments in American history, the corporations that provide the goods of consumption have been constructed as criminals, citizens, manipulators, neighbors, polluters, and fellow patriots.

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[587] Chrysler Group LLC, "It's Halftime in America," television commercial created by Wieden + Kennedy, aired on February 5, 2012 during Superbowl 2012. The commercial plays on the 1984 "Morning in America" re-election commercial by Ronald Reagan.
[588] For accusations that the commercial is "pro-Obama" see Jeremy Peters and Jim Rutenberg, "Republicians See Politics in Chrysler Super Bowl Ad," *New York Times*, February 6, 2012.
[589] McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945*, 2.

Media scholars must continue to investigate these constructions. As Cohen writes, "To what extent a linkage of citizen and consumer facilitates or negates a politics that champions a democratically arrived at common good is an open question." She continues, "I think it is unrealistic to assume we can reverse a century-long trend of entwined citizenship and consumership." All we can do is "identify a usable legacy that maximizes its benefits and minimizes its costs."[590]

As Turow writes, marketing and media professional strive to imagine, understand and construct a portrait of America; theirs is a purposeful goal, albeit, not necessarily a conspiratorial one.[591] The effectiveness of their work depends upon deep understanding of consumers and the ability to create resonating messages and relevant content. However, as Turow worries, it might have a disastrous effect on society: media fragmentation might drive us further and further apart until Americans aren't able to recognize issues from alternative viewpoints or partake in many shared experiences.[592]

Many scholars lament that consumer experience is the most common shared bond between Americans, rightfully so, yet we must recognize that the narratives offered in that space are complex. The Ford Motor Company, like other marketers and media organizations, has a vested interest in sharing a particular "view of America out the windshield." Media scholars must continue investigating these portraits for their complexity and fluidity. The role of brand communication is especially poignant. It is important to understand why and how these corporations have framed American citizens

[590] Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 409.
[591] Turow, *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*, 184.
[592] Ibid.

as neighbors, friends, and fellow patriots – and acknowledge the limits of these constructions.

As we investigate brand journalism it is also vital to remember that corporate communication – in any form – cannot replace a robust media system. At the end of the day, brand journalism is still a form of advertising and public relations. Unlike alternative forms of journalism, brand journalism will be unable to question dominant corporate culture or challenge ideologies outside those that support our capitalist-dominated social system. Brand journalism is also unlikely to challenge restrictive ideologies based on race, class or gender, due to fear of offending powerful market segments. In this regard, brand journalism might be especially problematic when it connects product purchase and the rewards and responsibilities of citizenship. In the messages found in *Ford Times*, the ability to purchase Ford cars and roam the United States freely on vacation is an important barrier to fulfilling the magazine's vision of American citizenship; certain groups were unable to surmount this barrier in order to experience freedom on the road. In the postwar years, as historian Clarke writes for example, it is tempting to assume that the expanding automobile market was associated with the leveling of social hierarchies, but it was not, due to credit restrictions. Most of new cars were still purchased by white male household heads. Before the passage of the 1974 and 1976 Equal Credit Opportunity Act, lenders defined creditworthiness based on social hierarchies, and women, consumers of color, and retirees were often denied access to financing needed to

purchase large ticket items, like automobiles.[593] This denial also restricted their ability to fulfill the vision of citizenship as detailed in the pages of the *Ford Times.*

This dissertation illustrates how the *Ford Times* told the story of its brand using techniques and themes connected to American history, values, and heritage, and in turn, created a shared social space among consumers, dealers and the corporation. By using brand journalism to connect the nation's resources, responsibilities, and history with their automobiles, *Ford Times* was able to "inherit and spin from it new pattern for how to live and to think about how we live" for a large part of the twentieth century.[594]

An important social function of journalism, especially magazine journalism, is to explain the past as well as the present.[595] An important social function of public relations, especially that fitting the brand journalism model, is also to explain the past as well as the present. Robert Bellah writes, "In order not to forget [its] past," a social group must "retell its story, its constitutive narrative."[596] This is a good lesson for any social group – including those built around brands.

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[593] S.H. Clarke, *Trust and Power: Consumers, the Modern Corporation, and the Making of the United States Automobile Market* (Cambridge Univ Pr, 2007). p, 242.
[594] Quote, also used in Chapter one to introduce this dissertation, is from Lanham, *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of Information*.
[595] C Kitch, "Ìuseful Memoryî in Time Inc. Magazines," *Journalism Studies* 7, no. 1 (2006).
[596] R.N. Bellah, R. Madsen, and W.M. Sullivan, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life : With a New Preface* (University of California Press, 1985).

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Appendix – List of Story Topics

A: Issue Month and Year_____

B: Page number_____

C: Article Title_____

D: Story Topics

1. Travel – City Destination
2. Travel – Small Town
3. Travel – Hometown
4. Travel – Manmade Attraction: Resort, Motel, Camp, Amusement Park
5. Travel – Natural Attraction: Mountain, River, Park, Lake
6. Travel –History (Natl Monument, battlefield, Museum)
7. Travel – Cultural, Community Event
8. Travel – Highway, scenic overlooks from road
9. Travel – Tips
10. Travel – Region, State
11. Travel – Other Country
12. Memoir Essay
13. Outdoor Sport and Recreation
14. Nature (animals, gardening, farming)
15. General Technology/Industry (non-car)
16. Food, recipes, restaurants, entertaining
17. Humor
18. Fashion, Culture, Art, Hobbies
19. Profile – Celebrity
20. Profile – non-celebrity
21. Ford – Corporation, Employees, Car technology, maintenance
22. Car – Model profile, tech specs
23. Car - Accessories
24. Car – Driving or Model memoir, legacy of ownership
25. Car –Success Story, Customization
26. Car- General Trend, Racing, Economy
27. Product roundup (not car accessories)
28. Other

F: Product details

1. No mention of car
2. No mention of specific car, but article includes driving directions, describes road, or mentions driving experience
3. Yes - Mention of specific car with description (brand name, specs, model)

G: Corporation details

1. No mention of Ford Corporation
2. Mentions Ford Corporation

Frame ANALYSIS

H
Description- Notes

I
Themes

J
Narratives

K
Values

L
Rhetorical Devices

M
Notes on style of article (essay, round-up, profile, main feature, games, letter, reader submission)