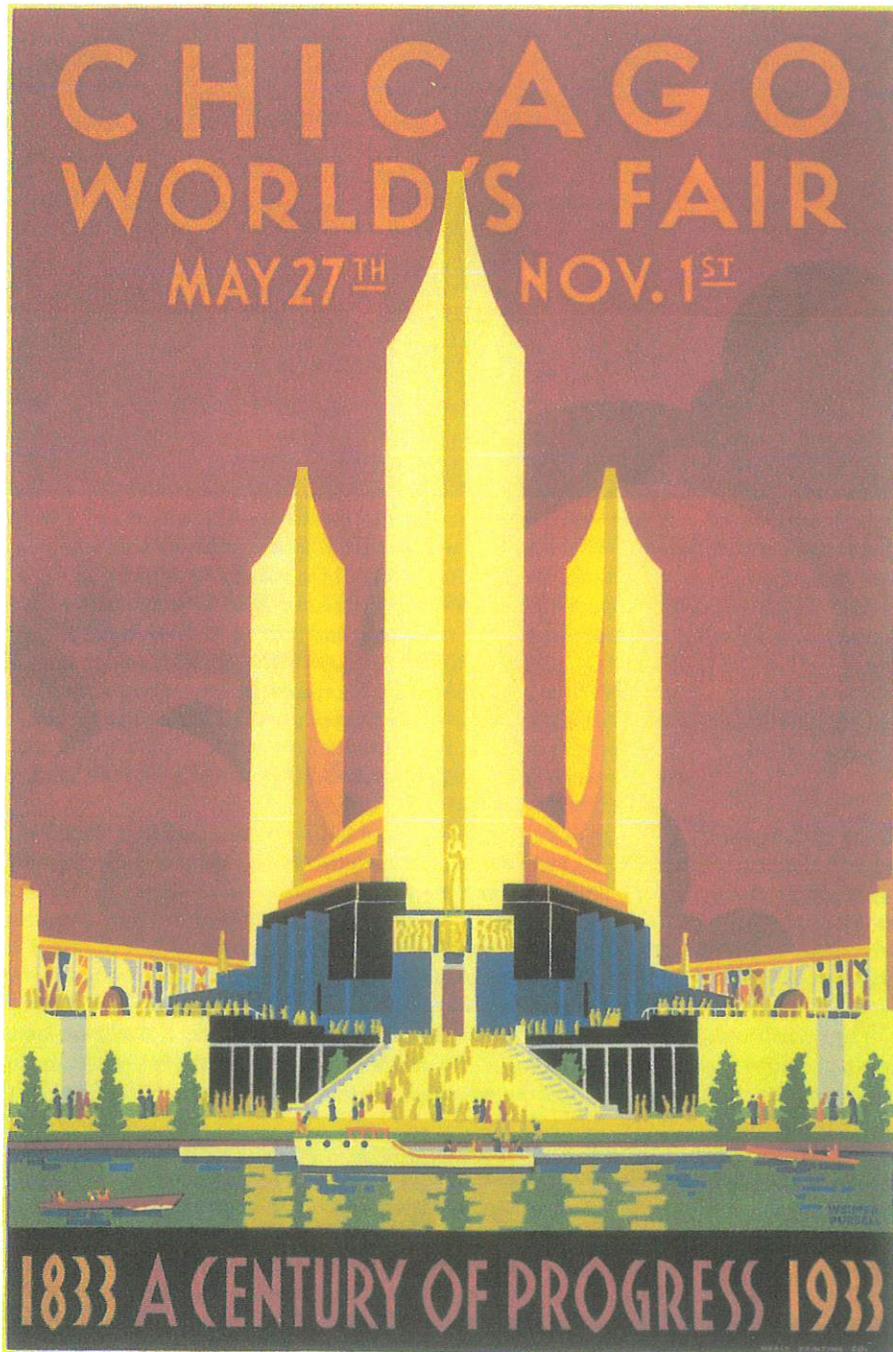


A Century of Progress: The 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair

Chicago's World's Fair was as much about the American automobile industry as it was about celebrating the Second City's first 100 years



BY TERRY SHEA
PHOTOS AS CREDITED

In the first three decades of the 20th century, American automobile business had grown into a colossal industry, and the car itself became ubiquitous throughout the land, transforming—and transforming—the way we lived. American automobiles were defining what it was to be “in business” in the 20th century. And no wonder was that fact on display with more fanfare, glory and aggrandizement than the 1933-'34 Chicago World's Fair, *A Century of Progress*.

The “century” in that title refers to the 100 years between Chicago's incorporation as a city in 1833 and the fair itself. Chicago's growth, from a small outpost of some 4,000 souls on Lake Michigan (formerly known as Fort Dearborn) into the fourth largest city on the planet in just 100 years was unprecedented in world

history. With 3,376,438 people counted on the 1930 census, New York, London and Paris were larger.

Just as unprecedented as Chicago's growth those few years remains the growth of the automobile industry, from its infancy in the 1890s to its place at the very top of the inc

In addition to having a showroom with the latest from its many car lines, GM built a working assembly line inside that snaked 400 feet in each direction in a large hall in its pavilion where two and four-door Chevrolet sedans went through final assembly, as many as 30 per day. Up to 1,000 people could stand on the balconies and watch as production automobiles were built right below them. The exhibit proved immensely popular and also probably prompted Ford to join the fair in its second year. But GM had exclusive rights to any on-site assembly line, and Ford, its name synonymous with bringing assembly lines to the American people, had to come up with something else.

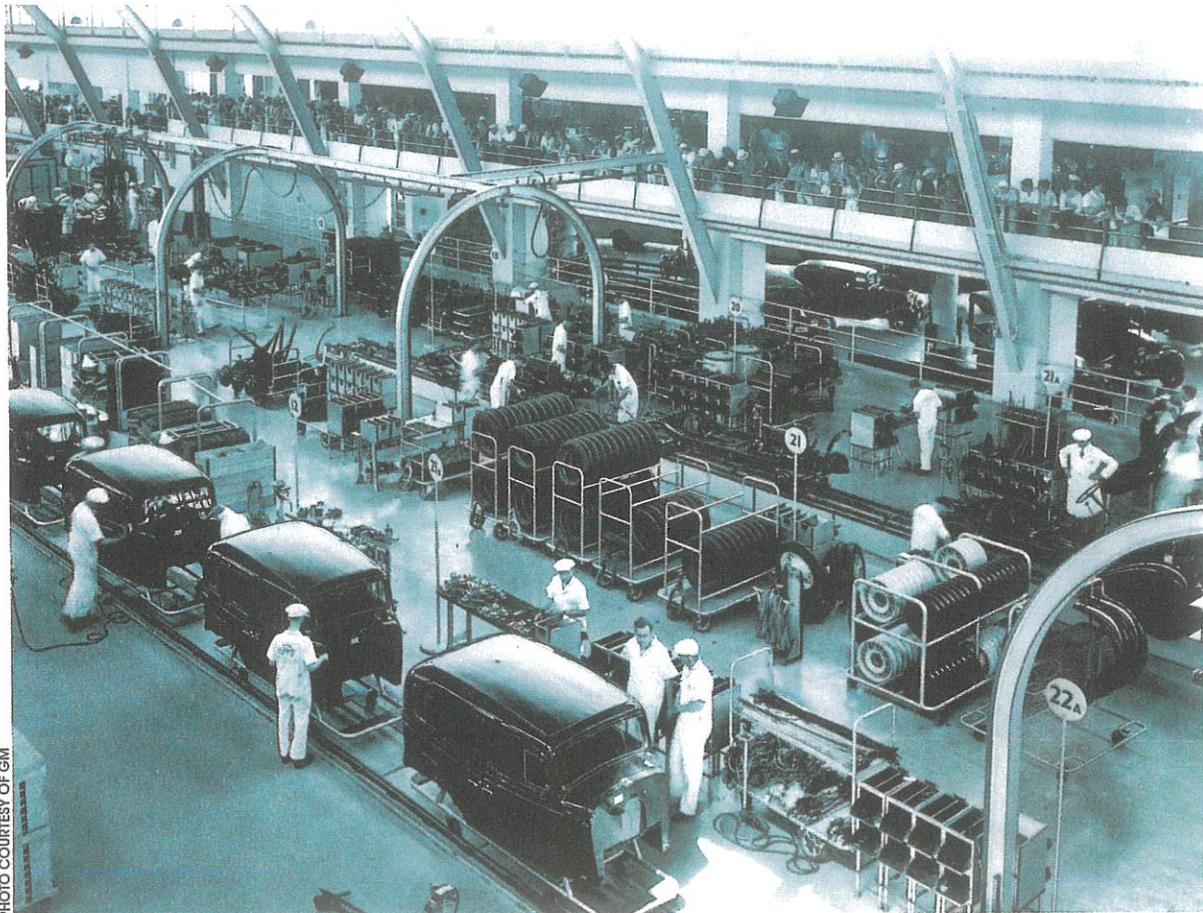


PHOTO COURTESY OF GM

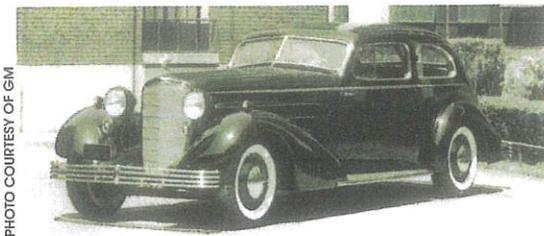


PHOTO COURTESY OF GM

The 1932 Cadillac Aerodynamic Coupe was one of GM's first dedicated show cars and the centerpiece of its vehicles shown at A Century of Progress.



Modern as the "Century of Progress"

Two motor cars entirely new, and different in every aspect of design—brilliantly interesting the styling, the appointments, and the type of performance most lauded today.

THE very spirit of modern advancement is expressed in these Oldsmobiles built in grand proportion mainly an essential requisite. This shows in their lines, and will continue to be, a fundamental Oldsmobile principle. Let us make it clear, therefore, that the 1933 Oldsmobiles and 1934 Oldsmobiles are advanced in performance as they are in appearance—the latest, most powerful, most dependable cars in Oldsmobile history. The Six is capable of 75 to 80 miles an hour, and the Eight will do 80 to 85—actual top speed. Both the engines operate very quietly and without perceptible vibration. And let us say just this about price— you simply can't purchase Oldsmobile that way, because never before in this price field has any car offered a combination of style, performance and quality so closely comparable to that of Oldsmobile. A saving in maintenance and a large claim for Oldsmobile—but we make it adventurously and feel confident you will agree with us, once you have seen and driven the splendid new Oldsmobile Six or Eight.

Your nearest Oldsmobile dealer will gladly place one of these cars at your disposal, in order that you may personally test and fully appreciate the unusual qualities we have built into it.

THE 1933 OLDSMOBILES

Distilling Value No Other Equalizes

The New Six \$725 and the New Eight \$825

The Masterpiece of Tire Construction

SELECTED BY A CENTURY OF PROGRESS FOR 1934

Spoke it is a tribute to progress and science to again be selected by the Century of Progress to represent the Rubber Industry at the World's Fair. The Firestone Factory and Exhibition Building will be the world's rubber exhibit in the Hall of Science here assembled and arranged to include many other industrial exhibits.

See how rubber is produced from the tree on the Firestone Plantation in Liberia, Africa. See it as it is used in the huge moving machines. See how the rollers of extra thick Firestone high stretch such are automatically tested and coated with liquid rubber by the Firestone patented process of Dip-Coating, insuring greater strength, safety and longer service. See the new Firestone Low Pressure Air. Follow the air inside from the safety of the vehicle to the tire and see its improved life.

Firestone engineers and manufacturers in Firestone factories. See the dynamic exhibit of the new Firestone Low Pressure Tires, White and Red. Visit the Science Club Exhibit in the Firestone gallery. You can see the tire and see the only machine of its kind in the world.

When you want to be the first to have the Firestone Service Drive on Science Drive in your community, contact your nearest Firestone dealer, battery and auto shop, that you may have an available and ready-to-go tire. There is no charge for this service.

Not to be outdone by the automakers' exhibits, Firestone had its own building and its own on-site production demonstration, manufacturing tires from raw rubber at the World's Fair.

Oldsmobile advertising touted its connection to A Century of Progress with its new models displayed in front of the fair's Hall of Science, the true centerpiece of the exposition.

chain by the 1930s. The auto business had become an economic powerhouse whose size few could have predicted in 1900, but by the end of the 1920s, from Wall Street to Main Street, it defined American business. And each company did its best to outshine the competition from the cars they made to the glamor associated with

them. And what better way in the years before television to reach more people than at a World's Fair? The grand exhibition, held on 427 acres along Lake Michigan, ostensibly focused on science and industry. Hundreds of companies participated, quite a few nations showed up with their own