



1908

General Motors is formed

William Durant combined Buick, Olds, Cadillac, Elmore and Oakland to create what is now General Motors Incorporated. Durant offered different brands in order to target a broad market of incomes and preferences. In 1904, he invested in the Buick brand and used the profits to buy out future automobile companies. Durant purchased Olds Motor Works, the first automobile company in Michigan and then Cadillac from Henry Leland, who previously reorganized the Henry Ford Company when Henry Ford resigned. Cadillac produced automobiles similar to Henry Ford's Model A using methods of mass production Ford left behind. By 1910, Durant was forced to step down as management of General Motors. In 1914, he was able to buy back a controlling interest in General Motors due to profits generated from the Chevrolet brand.



¹ William Durant founded General Motors.

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² Chevrolet Automobile

Courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library

³ General Motors vehicles outside of liquor store

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Credits:

Davis, Michael W.R. *General Motors: A Photographic History*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

Pelfrey, William. *Billy, Alfred, and General Motors*. New York: AMACOM, 2006.

Keywords/Topics:

Business, Work/Jobs

Questions:

1. Why did William Durant use Henry Ford's methods of mass production?
2. What companies did Durant combine to make General Motors?
3. Are those same companies still part of General Motors?
4. Why was the Cadillac similar to the Model A?

Links to Internet Websites:

http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1973/5/1973_5_10.shtml

<http://www.cars-directory.net/history/gmc/>

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1809.html>

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The grandson of Michigan governor Henry Crapo, William Durant began his career as a cigar salesman. He soon began selling carriages, making his company, the Flint Road Cart Company, the top selling carriage company in the world. His innovative ideas and drive for success led to the creation of General Motors.

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Courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library

In 1911, William Durant organized the Chevrolet Motor Car Company, which became part of General Motors when Durant bought a controlling interest. The Chevrolet automobile, shown above, was one of the many brands that General Motors offered in this multi-brand company.

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