

Read this and you'll be amazed at all the fun & history which awaits!

Interesting Background Information:

(Photos courtesy of Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland & Collette Tours)

GREENFIELD VILLAGE & HENRY FORD MUSEUM

Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, had always had an interest in collecting historic objects, and with the huge wealth he acquired from his car company, he was able to indulge that interest. In 1919, he decided to restore the wooden farmhouse where he was born and lived until he was 16, as a memorial to his parents. This restoration was the first that Henry Ford attempted, and began a life-long effort in preserving and restoring historic properties from around the nation and the world.

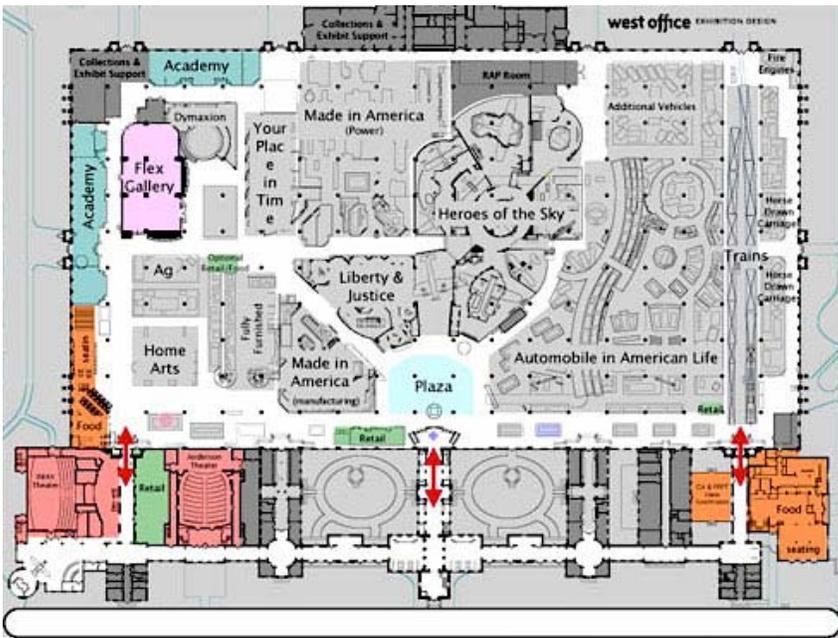
Mr. Ford also developed life-long friendships with many of the era's most famous and influential inventors and creators: **George Eastman** (of Eastman Kodak), **John D. Rockefeller**, and **Orville Wright**, among many others, but none perhaps was as important as his friendship and near worship of **Thomas Edison**. Mr. Ford's appreciation of Mr. Edison's contributions, along with his developing passion for historic preservation, led to the creation of one of this nation's most important repositories of historical objects and structures — Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum, jointly known as the Edison Institute.

A large tract of land in the middle of several Ford Motor Company facilities was set aside for a massive historic development, one that became what I consider America's first "theme park." It was dedicated on October 21, 1929, the 50th anniversary of the creation of the electric light, and Thomas Edison was there for the dedication. Since then, this remarkable collection of millions of historic artifacts, engineering achievements and famous structures has grown and evolved into one of the nation's most distinguished and popular museum complexes. Even the name has changed — it is now known simply as The Henry Ford.

The first structure seen by visitors arriving at the complex is the massive Henry Ford Museum. Covering 49,000 square meters, or about twelve acres, this structure is one of the largest museums in the country and contains a staggering variety of attractions and exhibits. The main entrance of the museum is a careful recreation of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, flanked by a symmetrical procession of brick colonial-style structures. When the museum was being designed, Mr. Ford sent architects to Philadelphia to study and measure the original Independence Hall, and while there, they discovered that one of the windows was actually off-center. It had been placed one brick too far to one side. The architects told Mr. Ford what they had found and informed him that they would not make the same mistake — and he instructed them to recreate it exactly like the original, misplaced window and all!

Behind this long historic panorama are found restaurants, gift shops, an IMAX theater and many other visitor support facilities, but most important are the wide hallways leading back into the huge main body of the museum. It is difficult to conceive just how large this space is. It is not divided up into galleries or rooms like so many museums are — it is one huge exhibition hall, with massive columns supporting soaring arches that stretch far off into the distance. The size and scope of the hall could be overwhelming if it weren't for the brilliant exhibit designers and their grouping of attractions by theme. Using a plan similar to the now-well-known themed lands in today's theme parks, the museum is organized into sections that allow visitors to explore areas of special interest either in detail or in general, depending on their personal desire and how much time they have.





More than a dozen themed areas, containing thousands of exhibits, are found in the museum. Some are what you would expect in a museum named after Henry Ford, pioneer of the modern transportation industry, but others show the depth and imagination that the museum designers have in showcasing the development of the American way of life and how technology drove that development. A few examples are:

- Heroes of the Sky: The first forty years of powered flight, from a replica of the first Wright flyer to the earliest helicopter.
- Your Place in Time: Here you can rediscover once commonplace artifacts from everyday life, from a 1950 Motorola TV to a

window banner hung in the window of WWII soldier's home to a 1978 Speak & Spell. These everyday objects have largely been lost but not forgotten and can be found here.

- Automobiles in American Life: Of course there are cars here, hundreds of cars, trucks, motorcycles, and every other type of transportation vehicle imaginable, and no, they are not all made by the Ford Motor Company.



- With Liberty and Justice for All: Four important eras in America's quest for liberty and justice are explored: The Revolutionary Era (featuring an original copy of the Declaration of Independence); The Antislavery Movement (featuring both an original copy of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, and the chair that President Lincoln was sitting in when he was shot at Ford's Theater); the Women's Suffrage Movement; and the Civil Rights Movement, with the actual bus that Rosa Parks was riding when she refused to give up her

seat to a white man and thus began the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

The Henry Ford Museum places special importance on the preservation and presentation of important historical and cultural artifacts. The following list is just a small sample of some of the priceless historic exhibits that can be viewed here:

- The first Ford Quadricycle, his first automobile, hand-built and powered by ethanol
- George Washington's camp bed that he used during the Revolutionary War
- The 1961 Lincoln Continental, SS-100-X that President Kennedy was riding in when he was assassinated in Dallas



Not all of the displays are serious and of historic importance. Many are also displays of popular culture and its influence on our daily life. Some of these displays include:

- A 1976 Apple-1 computer, one of the first fifty built by hand in Steve Jobs' garage and one of the few still operating (purchased on auction this Fall for a record \$905,000!)
- An Oscar Meyer Wiernmobile
- A full-size Holiday Inn sign and recreations of early motel rooms from the 1930's through the 60's (including the "Sanitized For Your Protection" paper seals on the toilets seats!)
- An actual drive-in movie theater (cars already provided)

- The Golden Arches sign from an original McDonald's Restaurant

As a free-standing museum, the Henry Ford Museum would be a world-class destination by itself, but right next door to it is the place that I truly believe is the first theme park in America — Greenfield Village. Henry Ford wanted to preserve not just objects or things, but in his own words:

"I am collecting the history of our people as written into things their hands made and used.... When we are through, we shall have reproduced American life as lived, and that, I think, is the best way of preserving at least a part of our history and tradition."



He decided that, to appreciate the importance of the objects he had collected, they had to be seen in the original setting where they were created and used. To this end, he began to assemble structures from all over the nation, and in some cases the world, bringing them to Dearborn, Michigan and creating his own village filled with homes, shops, factories, and even complete farms. The 1920's, when he began this endeavor, was when the concept of historic preservation of buildings was just beginning to be considered important. Many of the buildings that he acquired and brought to Greenfield Village were in a sad state of disrepair, their importance forgotten and their

physical structure neglected. Had Mr. Ford not had the vision to see the importance of these structures (and the financial ability to rescue them) many if not most of the buildings now standing in Greenfield Village would have been lost to us.

This collection shows how far-sighted Henry Ford was, and you would argue that Greenfield Village was the first theme park in America. He designed it as an actual village, centered on a beautiful village green with streets leading to residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods. The village itself covers 90 acres, with another 150 acres of forest, pasture and river surrounding much of the village and acting both as a buffer against the outside world intruding on the historic atmosphere and providing pasture land for the many farm animals used in the Village. A tall brick wall surrounds the grounds, both for security and to act as a further buffer. The Green is surrounded by historic buildings typical of the kind that would have been found in thousands of villages around the nation. The circ. 1831 Eagle Tavern, the Town Hall, the Logan County Courthouse from Lincoln, Illinois (where, from 1840 to 1847 a young lawyer named Abraham Lincoln argued cases, usually involving land disputes), the one-room Scotch Settlement School (which Henry Ford attended), and the circ.1858 J.R. Jones General Store all can be found here, all open to visitors and all designed to bring the daily events of the 1800s to life.



Main Street: This area is the Historic District that surrounds the Village Green and was described earlier. Two important structures not mentioned previously are the Wright Brothers Home and Cycle Shop, brought to the Village from Dayton, Ohio. Wilbur and Orville Wright lived in the home from 1870 to 1913. The income they earned from running the cycle shop next door allowed them to finance their early aviation



experiments, and the knowledge they gained in understanding mechanics made possible their creation of the first airplane. Also found in this District is one of the most popular attractions in the Village — Gog and Magog, wooden statues that form part of a nearly 150-year-old mechanical clock that once stood five stories above a London street as part of the Sir John Bennett Shop. The new version of this shop, now standing just two stories tall, attracts visitors all day long as they fill the park benches that face the shop and wait for the quarter hour, when Gog and Magog ring the bells that hang in the middle of the clock.

Railroad Junction: A fully-functional railroad roundhouse from 1884 contains several historic steam locomotives. Nearby is the 1858 Smiths Creek Depot, a train station where a young newsboy names Thomas Edison sold candy and newspapers.

Working Farms: Greenfield Village is so large that the fully-functional Firestone Farm was brought here in 1985. It includes the 1828 home ("modernized" in 1882) and the surrounding farm buildings, including a large barn. Fields of crops and pastures for the grazing of animals line a long road as visitors approach this classic example of American rural life. Harvey Firestone, Firestone Tire fame, grew up in this home, which is interpreted as a living, working farmhouse. You will often find a "family" of living historians cooking and sharing meals in the kitchen.



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Edison at Work: This area is not so much a restoration but a recreation of Menlo Park, Thomas Edison's research center, where the great inventor created the electric light, phonograph, and so many other historic inventions. Detailed research on the original site and the salvage of the remaining structures make this one of the most important districts in all of Greenfield Village. His Lab is as messy as he left – all re-created in detail!

Porches and Parlors: This is the residential district of Greenfield Village, and the list of important homes that now stand here would require an article of its own. The following list is just a sample of what can be found in this District:

- The Robert Frost Home, an 1835 Greek Revival home where the great American poet wrote so many of his best poems while working at the University of Michigan.
- Cotswald Cottage, a stone cottage from the Cotswald region of England, brought here in memory of the millions of immigrants who left their homes to settle in America.
- The Daggett Farmhouse, a 1754 "saltbox" home from Connecticut where historic interpreters cook in the fireplace, weave on the loom and grow vegetables in the kitchen garden.
- The 1823 Noah Webster House, where the famous lexicographer published the first American dictionary in 1828.

This list is just a sample of the many historic homes that line the streets of the Porches and Parlors Historic District. From elegant Colonial mansions to stark slave quarters, the history of daily American life can be discovered in this remarkable area.

Liberty Craftworks: Here visitors can watch glass being blown, pottery being created, wood being turned from logs into furniture, and nearly a dozen other crafts that were so essential to the change of America from an agricultural nation to an industrial power.

Most of these structures are historic buildings brought to Greenfield Village from towns all over Michigan, and many of these craft shops create goods that can be purchased by visitors.

Henry Ford's Model T: The life of Henry Ford can be discovered in this District, including Mr. Ford's first preservation effort, the wooden farmhouse where he was born in 1863. This simple home and some of its surrounding structures were brought to the Village in 1944. Nearby stand replicas of the buildings where Mr. Ford created his first automobile and established the Ford Motor Company and its revolutionary production line method of building cars.

Historic baseball: Most weekends find baseball games being held between area baseball teams that use the original rules of 1867: The "Striker" (batter) told the pitcher where he wanted the ball to be thrown; gloves were allowed (but frowned upon as being "unmanly") and didn't have fingers; there was no pitcher's mound. Every year the World Tournament of Historic Baseball is held on the Walnut Grove baseball field (located near the old Suwanee Park) and attracts dozens of historic baseball teams from around the world.

FOOD: Much is discussed about the quality and variety of food in theme parks. Greenfield Village has a claim for some of the best and most unique food choices of any park. From a nearly two hundred year old stagecoach stop and tavern to an early food truck, the variety, selection and quality of the food items available here is unmatched. Some examples of these choices are:

- Eagle Tavern (1831): Diners are served by costumed re-enactors who bring them into a recreation of dining in a stagecoach tavern of the 19th Century, with a period-appropriate menu
- Mrs. Fisher's Southern Cooking: BBQ, sweet potato cheesecake and sweet potato tots

- Owl Night Lunch Wagon (1890): This food stand is believed to be the last horse-drawn lunch wagon in the nation, and serves coffee, pastries and other snacks to visitors
- Cotswald Cottage: Guests can enjoy an English tea with sweets served in a garden created by Clara Ford (Mr. Henry Ford)

Greenfield Village begs to be explored on foot, but the size of it can take a toll on the feet of some visitors. It is appropriate that a theme park made possible by the automobile industry has a variety of transportation choices to increase the fun of a day at the Village and give tired feet a rest. For an extra charge, visitors can travel around the Village using:

- Model T automobiles
- 1931 Ford Model AA buses
- Horse-drawn Omnibus shuttles
- The Weiser Railroad



Each of these transportation methods makes stops throughout the Village.

The Henry Ford is a remarkable institution. The Henry Ford Museum is a world-class facility that celebrates human ingenuity and creativity. Greenfield Village shows how that creativity was used in everyday life, transforming America from an agricultural nation to an industrial powerhouse while improving the lives of its citizens. A visit to this historic place, America's first true theme park, is a unique experience, one that is educational, enlightening, and most importantly, fun.

BRONNER'S FRANKENMUTH, MICHIGAN: totally a Christmas Wonderland!

18 Things You Didn't Know About Bronner's – The World's Largest Christmas Store
 Posted on December 11, 2013 by Pure Michigan
'Tis the season all year long at Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland, the World's Largest Christmas Store® in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Notice emphasis on Christ! Open 361 days of the year, Bronner's brings the warmth and wonder of the Christmas season to guests year round.



1. More than 350 decorated Christmas trees are beautifully displayed in Bronner's salesroom.
2. Decorations and gifts from 70 nations can be found at Bronner's.
3. Bronner's carries over 150 styles of nutcrackers.
4. Bronner's artists personalize over 100,000 ornaments annually. One of Bronner's ornament artists has personally handpainted nearly ½-million ornaments during her 25 years at Bronner's. Approximately 50% of the glass ornaments sold are Bronner's own designs.
5. If all the light sets sold in one year at Bronner's were stretched out in a continuous line, they would span approximately 530 miles.
6. Movie star John "the Duke" Wayne ordered a Santa suit from Bronner's by telephone on December 15, 1976.
7. Sports figures who have visited Bronner's include former University of Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler, Detroit Tigers' owner Tom Monaghan (who arrived at Bronner's in his Domino's Pizza helicopter!), former Tiger pitcher Milt Wilcox, former Tiger catcher Lance Parrish, former Tiger outfielder Willie Horton, race car driver Al Unser, Jr., "Mr. Hockey" Gordie Howe, and Detroit Redwing Sergei Fedorov.
8. Celebrities who have visited Bronner's recently include former Michigan Governor John Engler and First Lady Michelle with triplet daughters; former Michigan Governor James Blanchard; Olympic Gold Medalist Dorothy Hamill; vocalists Little Jimmie Dickins, Jim Nabors, Pat Boone, Marie Osmond, Anita Bryant, Andy Williams, the

Lennon Sisters, the Lettermen, Ted Nugent, the Ink Spots, Faith Hill, Twila Paris and sister Starla, and Ana Cani; television's Dave Coulier of "Full House"; First Lady Laura Bush; and actresses Polly Bergen and Cindy Williams.

9. Bronner's was the first recipient of the worldwide Golden Santa Claus Award in February, 1986, at the Nuremberg International Toy Fair in Germany.
10. Bronner's electric bill averages \$1,250.00 per day.
11. Beamer the Bronner Star was born in 1999, becoming Bronner's mascot.
12. Bronner's [online store](#) offers approximately 3,000 items for purchase.
13. The overall size of Bronner's building is 320,000 sq. ft. (approx. 7.35 acres or 5.5 football fields of space)
14. Approximately 100,000 outdoor Christmas lights illuminate Bronner's grounds every evening throughout the year.
15. Christmas Lane, Bronner's own thoroughfare, is 1/2-mile long.
16. Bronner's giant outdoor Santa towers 17 feet and the giant snowman is 15 feet tall.
17. The weekend after Thanksgiving is Bronner's busiest of the year with as many as 50,000 guests.
18. Over two million guests come to Bronner's annually.

MACKINAC ISLAND GRAND HOTEL:

Getting there from the ferry boat docks

Grand Hotel is a 15-20 minute walk from the boat docks. In style; however, Grand Hotel operates horse-drawn carriages between the docks and Grand Hotel. You will be part of a bygone era as you make your way via **horse and carriage** to the elegant hotel!

Weather

Mackinac Island enjoys a mild spring, temperate summer and crisp fall temperatures. Since the island is located in the middle of the Straits of Mackinac, weather can be unpredictable. Remember to pack layers and don't forget your walking shoes.

Facts – America's True Grand Hotel™

There are 386 rooms and no two are the same!

At 660 feet, **Grand Hotel's Front Porch is the world's largest**, and is visible as you approach the island from the Straits of Mackinac.

No motorized vehicles are allowed on Michigan's Mackinac Island. All transportation is provided by horse and carriage or bicycle.

Mackinac Island is accessible only by ferry boat or plane.

More than 130,000 overnight guests stay at Grand Hotel each season.

More than 1 million people visit Mackinac Island each year, but **the island has only 600 year-round residents**.

It **takes 500,000 gallons of water** to fill Grand Hotel's swimming pool, which was named for actress Esther Williams who starred in the 1947 movie ***This Time for Keeps***, shot at Grand Hotel.

The 1980 film ***Somewhere in Time***, starring Christopher Reeve, Jane Seymour and Christopher Plummer, was filmed on location at Grand Hotel.

There are **more than 500 horses** on Mackinac Island.

Five U.S. Presidents — Clinton, Bush, Ford, Kennedy, and Truman — have visited Grand Hotel.

Grand Hotel's **kitchen staff of more than 100 prepares** and serves as many as 4,000 meals per day.

Each season, more than 83,000 pounds of prime rib, 23,500 pounds of ham, 83,500 pounds of potatoes, 23,000 pounds of carrots, 14,000 pounds of strawberries, and 6,500 pounds of pecans are served to Grand Hotel's dining guests.

One ton of bulbs are planted in the fall, including 25,000 tulips and 15,000 daffodils.

More than 125,000 bedding plants (annuals) are used to create the many gardens on Grand Hotel grounds.

The Grand's famous Front Porch flowers include 2,500 geraniums-the hotel's trademark flower-in 260 planting boxes with seven tons of potting soil. More than 5,200 geraniums can be seen in all its flower beds combined.

More than 50,000 Grand Pecan Balls, the Hotel's most popular dessert, are served each season.

