

**Model T - I**

**Lead: In 1908 Henry Ford introduced his people's car. The Model T made the automobile part of everyday life for millions.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: "I believe that I have solved the problem of cheap as well as simple automobile construction." So boasted Henry Ford to reporters as he revealed his new car. It was the Ford Model N, predecessor to one of the most amazing consumer goods ever to made available to the mass market.**

**The Model N was the breakthrough toward which Henry Ford had been working for a decade. Thereto fore, low-priced automobiles had been little more horse buggies with a single cylinder engine slung under the seat or hung onto the back. Multi-cylinder cars were out of the question, far beyond the price range of the middle class family. Ford believed that if he could build a car that was serviceable, long-lasting and cost less than a thousand dollars he could transform the automobile from an amusement available only to the rich into a practical part of American family life.**

**Ford's accomplishment was made possible because of his effective use of vanadium steel. This alloy, according**

**to Professor James Flink, was lighter and easier to machine than the nickel steel it replaced. Henry Ford had found a cheap way to make a light and powerful car.**

**Despite its popularity, the Model N would never meet the needs of the vast majority of Americans. It was only a two-seater, with a boat tail rear deck which could not be modified with a rumble seat for two more passengers, but it was fast and reliable and inexpensive. It only whetted the appetite of the public for the what would come next. In 1908 Henry Ford finally brought out the "car for the great multitude" - the Model T. Yet, hardly before it went into mass**

**production, it was obsolete. Next time:  
the more he changed, the worse it got.**

**At the University of Richmond, this  
is Dan Roberts.**

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**Resources**

**Flink, James J. "Unplanned Obsolescence," *American Heritage of Invention and Technology* 12 (Number One, Summer 1996): 58-62.**