

Historical Marker - S590C - Ransom Eli Olds / Curved Dash Oldsmobile (Marker ID#:S590C)



Front - Title/Description

Ransom Eli Olds

Born in Geneva, Ohio, Ransom E. Olds came to Lansing in 1880. He worked in his father's machine and repair shop, where he experimented with small steam engines. In 1887 Olds drove, for a distance of one block, Lansing's first automobile, an experimental steam vehicle. He continued to work with steam, gasoline and electric power. Eventually, he produced a gasoline-powered vehicle that seated four persons and could do eighteen miles per hour on level ground. On August 21, 1897, Olds, Edward W. Sparrow, Eugene F. Cooley, Arthur C. Stebbins, Samuel L. Smith, Frank G. Clark, Fred M. Seibly, and Alfred Beamer formed the Olds Motor Vehicle Company, the forerunner of the Oldsmobile Division of General Motors. As general manager, Olds was authorized to "build one carriage in as nearly perfect a manner as possible." Four vehicles were produced that first year.

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 1987 **Erected Date:** 1987

Marker Location

Address: 920 Townsend Street

City: Lansing

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Ingham

Township: Lansing

Lat: 42.73181900 / **Long:** -84.54816300

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Curved Dash Oldsmobile

On a site southwest of here, production of the Curved Dash Oldsmobile Runabout began on December 16, 1901. The model was first produced in Detroit in 1900, but much of the assembly was shifted to Lansing after a fire destroyed the Detroit plant. The Curved Dash, built from 1900 to 1904, was the first car to carry the name Oldsmobile. With a sixty-six-inch wheelbase, it weighed about 650 pounds; it was powered by a one-cylinder, seven-horsepower engine and cost \$650. It was the first car built using a progressive assembly system. The company produced 425 vehicles in 1901, 2,500 in 1902, 4,000 in 1903 and 5,508 in 1904. For a time the Runabout was the best-selling model in the United States. In 1905 it inspired Gus