

## **Henry B. Joy – Biography**

Henry Bourne Joy was born in Detroit in 1864; his father was president of the Michigan Central Railroad and the first to enlist young Abe Lincoln in legal work and they became close friends. Henry graduated from Yale in 1892, married Helen Newberry and had a son and daughter. He spent his early years in the railroad business, and then during the Spanish American War, Henry served aboard the USS Yosemite as Chief Coxswain's Mate. In 1902, along with a group of Detroit investors, Henry organized the Packard Motor Car Company. He guided the company into becoming a world leader in luxury car manufacturing. Innovations were many, such as a modern factory facility, the V-12, and aviation engines. Eventually he became president in 1909, but stepped down in 1918 to accept a commission as Colonel in the US Army. After WWI, he resumed his position as chairman until 1926. Their family built a beautiful mansion on Lake Shore Drive and owned the peninsula property on the water, where Crescent Sail Yacht Club is currently located.

The Detroit area was abuzz with automotive and aviation industry growth. Henry had Packard purchase property along Anchor Bay in Mt Clemens, calling it Joy Aviation. Later to be named Selfridge Field, after Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge who had perished in the first fatal military airplane crash. Henry was looking to build engines for military aircraft and the location was perfect for being near both airplane factories and the lake (for bombing drills).

The condition of roadways could be rated poor to nonexistent in those days, and to sell cars, new roads would be needed. Modern roadways in the USA can be credited to the passion and energy of Henry Joy. The Lincoln Highway Association had prominent auto executives and legislative leaders pursuing the dream of paved roads across America. Henry became president of the association and had a clear vision of the effect of roads on future commerce and agriculture in the country.

Interestingly, Grosse Pointe has its own monument to the Joy family. On the corner of Moross Road and Grosse Pointe Boulevard – there is a pleasant park, and a set of “Joy Bells” in its own little tower. The 15 bells of this carillon were commissioned in 1929 by the Joy family from the Packard Foundry in the French Alps for their estate. According to folklore, Mrs. Joy would ring them to alert Henry to come in for dinner from his yacht at the boathouse.

Henry remained active in automotive, aviation, highway, political and other endeavors until his death in 1936.

Submitted by PC Nick Geisz