Impact Of The Automobile From 1900-1945 Essay, Research Paper

The impact of the automobile between 1900 through 1945 was immense. It paved the way for a future dependency on the automobile. To paint a better picture, imagine life without an automobile. Everyday life would be dull, cumbersome, and tedious. An individual?s mobility would be very limited. Basically, the life without an automobile could not be fathomed. The importance of the automobile is often taken for granite. Society may not know what appreciate the impact of the automobile and effects it has created. The impact of the automobile had both positive and negative effects on America between 1900 through 1945. Automobile provided an outlet for individuals and spread the freedom of travel among all classes of people. It also helped to introduce rural dwellers to the aspects of urban life and vice versa. One of the negative effects was that automobiles helped to put of big decline in the use of railroads. Over the course of the paper, I will try to expose the huge impact of the automobile an early twentieth century life.The image of a self-propelled vehicle dates back around the early thirteenth century. Europe is the birthplace of the automobile, but it was adopted by America. Roger Bacon had a vision of cars being made without animals so they can be at astonishing speeds and maneuverability . About three hundreds years later, Leonardo Da Vinci rejuvenate Bacon?s idea with hopes of creating a military vehicle. His idea was transformed into the modern day tank. The first step in making a self-propelled vehicle was taken by Nicholas Joseph Cugnot. He was an eighteenth century French artillery officer. ?In 1769 he built and ran a three-wheeled carriage mounting a steam engine of his own design, with the idea that it might be used for pulling guns?2. It was very clumsy vehicle that was shot into the air when it reached the top speed of three miles an hour. Cugnot?s vehicle provided almost no improvement of the horse. In the early years of the nineteenth century an American and British duo had began an automotive experiment. Richard Trevithick, a British engineer, and American genius, Oliver Evans created a workable but crude vehicle propelled by steam3. This early experiment was an improvement, but the railroads and stagecoach companies joined together. With this new combining of forces the new steam vehicle, the Orkuter Amphibolos, was brought down. Etienne Lenoir and Beau de Rochais designed the two and four cycle engine respectively in the last nineteenth century. Their engines were very coarse. Their main use was to provide power to small industrial plants4.Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler provided the European beginning of the automobile. They created vehicles that were the ancestors of modern gasoline powered engines. They used two different approaches, Daimler began with the motorcycle and Benz used the tricycle5. Each technique needed a component of the others approach. Daimler used the high-speed motor, but Benz used the spark ignition. It would help lead to the future development of the automobile6. ?At any rate, if some earlier but unproductive experiments are disregarded, the automobile era in the United States dates from September 21, 1893, when a motor carriage with a one-cylinder gasoline engine chugged noisily along the streets of Springfield, Massachusetts?7. The inventors were Charles and J. Frank Duryea. There were a huge number of early automobile pioneers. Ransom E. Olds and Alexander Winton formed a company to manufacture gasoline automobiles. Their company was named Oldsmobile and still exists today. James W. Packard was another pioneer. He bought a car designed by Winton and was dissatisfied8. Packard went to Cleveland to complain about the problem of the car to Winton. Packard was told by Winton to leave and make a better car for himself if he was unhappy9. Packard started his company, Packard Electric Company, which presented the H-slot gearshift. It was manufactured in ever car worldwide until the advent of the automatic transmission10. Henry Ford is another notable pioneer in the automobile industry. He helped the idea of the automobile superseding the horse to become commonplace in the minds of Americans. He used the factory system, mass production, and assembly line to front the automobile industry11. Henry Ford realized his dream of producing an automobile that was reasonably priced, reliable, and efficient with the introduction of the Model T.12 The Model T initiated a new era in personal transportation. It was easy to operate, maintain, and handle on rough roads, immediately became a huge success.13 Ford started his factory in Highland Park, Michigan and produced more than 300,000 in 1914.14 Ford methods of manufacturing cars drastically reduced the amount of human work that was needed to make cars.15 The success of Ford?s automobiles were based on their low prices, which kept falling, and the durability of his car?s design.16The impact of the automobile had many positive effects on the United States from 1900 to 1945. One of the early impacts of the automobile was it promoted the sport of auto racing. The designs of early automobiles were geared for racing. This was a logical purpose because racing provided great advertisement for the cars. Also, it was a way for the designers of the automobile to test their ideas.17The automobile had one of its greatest impacts on the industries that directly contributed to the motor vehicle. The fuel and tire industry shared the greatest natural impact of the automobile. The emergence of the automobile almost immediately revolutionized the petroleum industry.18 Before 1900, only a very small amount of petroleum was converted into gasoline. Basically, gasoline was regarded highly as an unattractive useless product. Gasoline was so unpopular that it was actually thrown away.19 With the arrival of the gasoline automobile, it helped to increase the amount of crude oil supply through the opening of new oil fields in Texas. Despite the expansion of the oil industry, it had trouble keeping up with the increasing number of automobile20. Without the advent of automobiles, the petroleum industry would have been in trouble, luckily the automobile helped to revive the petroleum industry.The rubber industry had a very comparable story to the petroleum industry. The automobile?s impact on the rubber industry changed its character. The rubber industry hit its peak in the early 19th century when Charles Goodyear began vulcanizing.21 Before automobiles, the rubber used clincher tires. Motor vehicles switched from using clincher tires to straight-sided wheels. The swap was due to patent complications for clincher tires. Also, the physical effort to replace the clincher was too great.22 The automobile led the rubber industry to discover better methods of making tires. Motor vehicles helped led to the invention of pneumatic tires for trucks.23The automobile became a sign of status for young men and ladies in the 1920s. The impact of the automobile on courtship and mating is an area that is frequently studied. The automobile produced a notion that men were almost expected to pick up a girl for a dance in a motor vehicle. The automobile was looked at a social essential for teenagers.24 The automobile became a necessity for courtship in the mid 1920s. Automobiles helped to replace the traditional date of visiting the mate in his/her parlor of porch. Motors vehicles posed a huge threat to parental control. Teenagers were free to travel and escape their home environment. Motor vehicles had a few negative effects on teenagers. High- speed joy riding posed a major problem to the police department. The use of alcohol contributed to this problem. Teens that were under the influence of alcohol often stole cars and caused serious accidents while at the wheel.25Courtship and mating in the automobile produced thousand of drive-in fast food stands and drive-in theaters. Royce Hailey?s Pig Stand, was one of the first of drive-in fast food stands to open. Hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks and milk shakes were served at the food stand to customers who ate in their cars. The food was carried out in trays, which produced ?tray girls?.27 Tray girls became one of the most popular attractions at the drive-in food stands. The drive-ins were low in cost and provided an outlet for courtship. The problem of drive-ins was that it is a seasonal industry and not open in the winters.28The automobile had an impact on the manufacturing of war type products. ?Automobile firms in addition to produces trucks, made shells, guns, recoil mechanisms, gun carriages, tractors, and aircraft engines.?29 Aircraft manufacturing was the least prosperous wartime operation of the automobile industry. The automobile industry did not take into consideration that aircraft could not be turned out in thousands like motor vehicles.30 Employment increased due to automobile factories to keep up with the demand of the automobile. The amount of wages was doubled in factories. Industries that were dependent on the automobile saw employment almost triple.31 Automobiles helped to increase the women?s role in society. The tradition role of a woman was limited to the house. Her life consisted of doing household chores and providing a relaxing environment for her husband. The automobile allowed women to escape the confines of the house. It changed women?s role from being producers of food and clothing into consumers of prepared food and ready-made clothing.32 Women were now able to do out-of-town shopping. The electric refrigerator permitted women to buy a week?s amount of food, instead of daily shopping.33 Road construction changed dramatically because of automobiles. Roads went from gravel and cobblestone to smooth hard surfaces of concrete or asphalt. Highway travel was allowed to travel at greater amounts of speed and safety. Old roads were rebuilt and new roads were added. Automobile designers produced faster cars because of the better roads.34 The improvement of roads produced an increase in amount of people that vacationed at nation parks. People were forced to stay in the parks for a long period of time. Before automobiles, horse drawn carriages were the main means of transportation in the national parks. The problem was that the roads in the parks were very crude and it was arduous to get around them. Congress helped to improve the roads and soon people flocked to the parks. ?The Nation Park?s population almost doubled from 1931 to 1932, Congress appropriated over $13 million specifically for road building and improvement in the national parks and monuments.?35 The automobile helped the development of the tourist infrastructure. Small-town hotels were brought in the American spotlight to satisfy the salesman that traveled from town to town. The growing number of automobile tourists increased the amount of business in stores. Service stations, garages, and repair shops were two of the industries that benefited from the increased amount of travel.36 Gasoline pumps began to sprout up all over the United States. Gasoline no longer had to go to the general store for gas or trust the neighborhood blacksmith for repairs.37The automobile had some negative effects on the United States. The railroad industry felt the effects of the automobile. Motor trucks began to cut into the business of the railroad?s freight trains. Automobiles posed more of a threat to passenger trains. Buses helped the decline of the passenger train. Private automobiles posed the largest threat. Trips, whether far or short, were originally taken by train. The family car took over the travel done by families. Motorists were free to be on their own schedule, cars were cheaper than trains, and railroads were subjected to state or federal regulations that cars were not.38 City transit and urban electric lines felt the impact of the automobile. Urban electric lines faded away first, followed by trolley systems. They began to be confined to larger cities and each subsidized one another.39Automobiles soon produced problems of congestion and parking. When families left their homes to visit relatives or go to church, their arrival back at their homes created long lines of cars. The lines often started and stopped, cars overheated or ran out of gas, making it hard to get back home.40 Many people approved the social impacts of the automobile, but some questioned them. People began to spend more time on the highways and not in church. This caused Americans to believe that family interests were weakening.41 The nation also saw an increase in crime resulting from the automobile because people began to steal them. ?The automobile was also accused of fostering moral laxity because it provided young people with an easy method of escaping parental supervision and at the same time a convenient place to indulge romantic inclinations.? Highway accidents increased the death toll causing people to blame to automobile.42I believe that the automobile truly revolutionized the past and present. It soon became the norm of everyday life in the United States. It enabled people to travel as they pleased. Motor vehicles enabled women to escape the house. Roads were redesigned. Automobiles helped improve the quality of everyone?s life. Business was thrown into a boom with the birth of the automobile. Teenagers were given freedom as a result of the automobile. Automobiles did had some negative effects such as congestion, highway accidents, the family structure weakened and crime increased. I believe that the positive effects of the automobile outweigh its downside. The automobile has become a way of life for people, allowing people to move freely and have a tremendous amount of freedom.