

The River Rouge Plant:

Standing Together to Alter the Automotive Industry

Renee Ruman
Junior Division
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“Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains.”

-Karl Marx, German Philosopher, 1818-1883¹

In 1935 a tired 41-year-old man arrived home exhausted with bloody feet and hardly any energy left to take care of his young family. His name was Valentine Ruman.² Valentine was one of the 100,000 workers at the Ford River Rouge Plant located in Dearborn, Michigan.³ Valentine, like many others, arrived to work fearing he would be fired for talking or even saying “hello” to another worker.⁴ Ford strongly believed that talking would decrease the productivity in his factories. Light shined for these men when the United Automobile Workers of America (UAW) was formed. Unions were there to protest against the habitual abuse of long taxing days Ford forced upon them. Since The Rouge was built, anger had overcome the plant. This led to a conflict due to poor working conditions. This conflict resulted in the workers organising and created the UAW. Through membership in the union, they reached a compromise of more power and sustainable working conditions. This paper addresses how the UAW greatly influenced the automotive industry. The UAW did this through a pivotal change in employee and employer relations during The Great Depression.

¹ “Karl Marx Quotes.” *BrainyQuote*, Xplore, www.brainyquote.com/quotes/karl_marx_109309.

² Loretta Ruman, Telephone Interview.

³ “Historical Insights The Ford River Rouge Plant.” *Ancestry*, Unknown, www.ancestry.com/contextux/historicalinsights/ford-river-rouge-plant-michigan.

⁴ Rosentreter, Roger L. *Michigan. a history of explorers, entrepreneurs, and everyday people*. University of Michigan Press, 2014, pp. 286.

This change happened because they resolved the conflict at Ford's River Rouge Plant.

Forging the Rouge

In 1915, Henry Ford purchased 2,000 acres of land alongside the Rouge River in Dearborn, Michigan. This is where Ford built the largest automotive manufacturing complex, the River Rouge Plant.⁵ Ford wanted the factory to have more order and efficiency than any other existing automobile plant.⁶ This was necessary when Ford created a process to get raw materials to come in while sending out finished vehicles at the same time. Without order, the plant would fail to manufacture automobiles as well as the failure to create thousands of anticipated jobs. Ford took on the challenge of building the largest automotive factory knowing the burden that would be placed on his employees.⁷

Ford's employees experienced excruciating working conditions at The Rouge, which occurred every day. The production chief, Charles Sorensen, when he saw men standing idle, he stated, "Go fire those guys."⁸ Ford's

⁵ "Ford River Rouge Complex." *SOM - Ford River Rouge Complex*, Unknown, www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29938_68915-54580--,00.html.

⁶ "Aerial View of Ford Rouge Plant, 1930." *The Henry Ford*, Unknown, <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/87230/#slide=gs-233089>.

⁷ "Henry Ford Gives \$10,000,000 in 1914 Profits to His Employees." *The Detroit Journal*, 5 Jan. 1914, p. 1.

⁸ Nevins, Allan. *Ford: expansion and challenge*. Scribner, 1957, pp. 281.

employees worked harder than they could imagine and still feared losing their jobs.

Indignant Toilers

Employees loathed the men Ford hired to listen, watch, and report back what was happening in each department of the plant.⁹ Harry Bennett, head of the personnel department, excelled at getting peculiar information causing the workers to be skeptic in how he obtained the news. Employees began getting discharged once Ford learned the information.

The Detroit Free Press hosted a party at a local hotel in Detroit. Mark Beltaire attended the party and when he went to the men's room he found Bennett on the floor seemingly unconscious and intoxicated. Later, Beltaire discovered that Bennett was not unconscious or intoxicated, but listening to conversations.¹⁰ The workers were uneasy thinking about what other lengths Bennett might go to overhear their conversations.

Afterwards, Rouge workers lashed out against Ford and his loyal employees. Several attempts were made to murder Bennett. One attempt was made as he drove home from The Rouge; a shotgun blast shattered his

⁹"The Great Depression-A Job at Ford's", Dir. Jon Else. Perf. Henry Ford (archive footage), Herbert Hoover (archive footage), Francis Immoberstag (niece of Henry and Clara Ford), Joe Morton (narrator), Gore Vidal. PBS Documentary. 1993. Documentary.

¹⁰ Bak, Richard Peter. *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003, pp. 154.

windshield.¹¹ The workers feared the longer Bennett stayed in charge, the smaller chance they would have a job.

Ford's Workers- Left Depressed

On, October 29, 1929, the stock market crashed leaving twenty-five percent of Americans unemployed. The working Americans had their wages cut.¹² Mr. Jones worked on Ford's assembly line at The Rouge, and recalls the foreman telling him the day he was employed “You miss one door, Mr. Jones... you’re fired.”¹³ He never missed affixing a door while working for Ford, but as a consequence, he staggered home every night. As the depression deepened workers grew fearful of losing their jobs due to the conditions.

Ford had hired a World War I veteran who claimed the work at the Rouge Complex was worse than being in the army. “I tell ye-ye’re badgered and victimized all the time.”¹⁴ Many of the workers had no choice but to work for Ford because he was the only factory owner able to fight the depression and keep his workers employed.

¹¹ Bak, Richard Peter. *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003, pp. 157.

¹² Wright, Gwen. “1930s High Society.” *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/1930s-high-society/.

¹³ Glazer, Joe, “Fight That Line.” *The UAW: Fifty Years in Song and Story*.

¹⁴ Streissguth, Thomas. *The roaring twenties: an eyewitness history*. Facts on File, 2001, pp. 272.

Ford had more power than his employees, and workers wanted better working conditions. The employees made a decision. Either they would deal with dehumanizing conditions or march under a communist party, who was the only group that would help them express their feelings and present their demands.¹⁵ Employees protested for medical benefits and safer working conditions.¹⁶ They decided to present their demands, and on March 7, 1932, five-thousand employees¹⁷ gathered at Fort Street Bridge planning to march to the River Rouge Plant.¹⁸ These were the first acts of standing together while presenting a grievance.

The Detroit Police escorted the marchers to Dearborn, but one problem remained, they never got permission from Dearborn's city council to march.¹⁹ Once they arrived in Dearborn, they marched to the plant's gates where three-dozen members of the Dearborn police department blocked the gate.²⁰ The marchers surged forward, and in response, the police threw tear gas canisters at the marchers.²¹ Retreating was not an

¹⁵ Grevatt, Martha. "The Ford Hunger March of 1932." *The Ford Hunger March of 1932*, Workers World, 25 Mar. 2009, 3:45 p.m., www.workers.org/2009/us/ford_hunger_march_0402/.

¹⁶ *All Out: Ford Hunger March, Monday, June 5th*. *All Out: Ford Hunger March, Monday, June 5th*, Ford Hunger March Committee, 1932.

¹⁷ *Public Investigation: Ford Massacre*, Workers Jury, 1932.

¹⁸ Historical Marker in Dearborn, Michigan at 10520 Fort Street. Erected in 1992, marker pays tribute to the five people who died while fighting for workers rights at the Ford Motor Company in 1932.

¹⁹ "Jobs with Justice honors Ford hunger marcher." *People's World*, Unknown, 6 Oct. 2016, www.peoplesworld.org/article/jobs-with-justice-honors-ford-hunger-marcher/.

²⁰ Stepan-Norris, Judith, and Maurice Zeitlin. *Talking union*. University of Illinois Press, 1996, pp. 11.

²¹ "Police Repel Rioters at Ford Plant." *The Daily Northwestern*, 9 Mar. 1932.

option for any of the protesters who were determined to get benefits, power, and safer working conditions.

The Dearborn Fire Department used fire hoses on the marchers. Protesters ignored the water and threw rocks at Ford's men behind the gates.²² The Rogues gates opened and a solitary car drove out. Harry Bennett stepped out of the automobile, after he stood up in front of the crowd the protesters threw rocks.²³

Bennett fell down unconscious as Dearborn police released a volley of gunfire into the crowd.²⁴ As the crowd scattered, Detroit police arrived at a horrific sight. Four dead bodies laid on the streets while 29 were left seriously wounded.²⁵ A fifth person died from his wounds several months after the incident.²⁶ This was the first time workers had stood together protesting for better working conditions.

After the incident, The New York Times stated, "Dearborn pavements were stained with blood."²⁷ Ford ignored the event and resisted the workers. An assistant prosecutor in the investigation stated "... I really wish they

²² "Four Killed, Bennett Wounded as Reds Battle Police in Riot at Ford Co. Plant." *The Detroit Free Press*, 8 Mar. 1932. p. 3.

²³ "Four Killed, Bennett Wounded as Reds Battle Police in Riot at Ford Co. Plant." *The Detroit Free Press*, 8 Mar. 1932, p. 3.

²⁴Bak, Richard Peter. *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003, pp. 202.

²⁵ "Four Killed, Bennett Wounded as Reds Battle Police in Riot at Ford Co. Plant." *The Detroit Free Press*, 8 Mar. 1932, p. Photo Page.

²⁶ *Memorial Services for Curtis Williams*, Communist Party U.S.A., August 20, 1932.

²⁷ The Creation of The Ford Empire-Henry and Edsel. Written by Richard Bak, on page 202.

killed a few more of those damned rioters.”²⁸ If more were killed the public would be more aware of the incident.

On March 12th, 1932, over 70,000 people marched to Woodmere Cemetery to honor the martyrs.²⁹ Since the protest on March 7th, the workers knew if they stayed together, they could change Ford’s vast company.

Standing up, by Sitting Down

One year later, on March 4th, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated president of the United States.³⁰ Roosevelt was aware of the turmoil between businesses and their employees and saw the problem from the employee’s view. On January 3rd, 1935, President Roosevelt passed the Labor Relations Act, giving employees the right to organize, strike, and bargain for benefits.³¹ Employees from auto companies all over the country took this opportunity by creating the UAW who bargained for workers rights.³² Employees were gaining power and the UAW started planning strikes for better working conditions.

²⁸ Cruden, Robert L. *The End of The Ford Myth. The End of The Ford Myth*, Union Labor, 1932.

²⁹ *Public Investigation: Ford Massacure*, Workers Jury, 1932.

³⁰ “Roosevelt Becomes President.” *Capital Journal*, 4 Mar. 1933.

³¹ *The Wagner or Labor Relations Act. The Wagner or Labor Relations Act*, Public No. 198 Seventy-Fourth Congress of the United States of America; at the First Session. Held at the city of Washington, January 3, 1935.

³² “UAW History.” *UAW*, Unknown, 13 Oct. 2015, uaw.org/solidarity-magazine/uaw-history/.

Nearly two years after the act was passed, the UAW challenged General Motors (GM). Workers were finally united as a forty-four-day strike was held against the company.³³ The employees had little chance against GM, but with persistence, it ended when GM signed a contract with the UAW for higher wages and preferable working conditions.³⁴ Ford's employees realized the UAW could help them rebel against Ford.

Chrysler and Ford stood firmly against the UAW whose strength and impact was growing. In three months, Chrysler was on strike. Employees discovered that power came in numbers and persistence. Workers were more aware of that when Chrysler signed a contract with the UAW.³⁵ Ford's Company was the last of the big three automobile manufacturers refusing to negotiate with the UAW. Ford wanted complete control over his company deciding to keep the UAW at bay.

Impenetrable Forces

In a LIFE magazine article, they thought, "...Vast River Rouge Plant is apparently impenetrable by any union."³⁶ Workers were committed to

³³ Hauben, Ronda. *Lest We Forget: In Tribute To The Pioneers Of The Great Flint Sit-down Strike*, Agenda Publications, 1987.

³⁴ History.com Staff. "Violence erupts at GM plant strike." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/violence-erupts-at-gm-plant-strike.

³⁵ "Chrysler Auto Strike Ends." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 Apr. 1937.

³⁶ "Detroit Faces its First Great Strike." *LIFE Magazine*. *Henry and Edsel Ford at Dearborn*, 18 Jan. 1937, p. 10.

taking over The Rouge through unionism. On May 26th, 1937, the Union decided to take the first actions against the Ford Motor Company. The UAW's president, Walter P. Reuther and Richard Frankensteen gained permission to hand out leaflets at The Rouge with other union organizers.³⁷ Trying to influence the people, they invited ten photographers to the scene while they handed out leaflets entitled, "Unionism, not Fordism".³⁸ Persuading the employees to join the union could cause Ford to back down.

Union workers passed out the leaflets atop the overpass above Miller Road near the main gate. A group of Ford's service men marched up to the men and said, "Get the hell off here, this is Ford property."³⁹ Two men grabbed Frankensteen and pulled his jacket over his head rendering his arms useless. He was punched in the head, kicked in the groin, and stomped on his stomach. They stood him up and knocked him back down.⁴⁰

Forty service men were beating up union members such as Robert Kanter, who was thrown over the overpass and landed thirty feet below beside the road.⁴¹ He suffered a broken back from the fall. Ford's men were

³⁷ Bak, Richard Peter. *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003, pp. 224-228.

³⁸ "U.A.W. Organizers Are Beaten and Thrown Off Ford Property; 80,000 Called Out in Steel Strike." *The Detroit Free Press*, 27 May 1937, pp. 1-Photo Page.

³⁹ Watts, Steven. *The people's tycoon Henry Ford and the American century*. Vintage, 2006, pp. 453.

⁴⁰ Chinery, Kristen. "Battle of the Overpass." *Walter P. Reuther Library*, Wayne State University, 19 May 2011, reuther.wayne.edu/node/7647.

⁴¹ King, Gilbert. "How the Ford Motor Company Won a Battle and Lost Ground." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 30 Apr. 2013, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-ford-motor-company-won-a-battle-and-lost-ground-45814533/.

ruthless against the people, but they stood together trying to change Ford's company.

Reuther was seized and then beaten by the service men. Soon after he was thrown down the concrete steps of the overpass. Union women were harassed and beaten leading to seven of them being hospitalized.⁴² One police officer pleaded to a serviceman, "You'll kill her..."⁴³

Desperate to keep the news to a minimum, Ford's deputies snatched the cameras and notebooks destroying the film and tearing their pages. Photographers and journalists ran trying to keep their photos and notes.⁴⁴ If only a few photos were to escape they would tell the true story of what happened. James Kilpatrick, a photographer ran to his car where he hid the photograph disks underneath the back seat.⁴⁵ When Ford's men demanded the plates, he gave them blanks in return. Most photos from the event were from this photographer showing the public that UAW members were defending their rights.

⁴² "Ford Men Beat and Rout Lewis Union Organizers; 80,000 Out In Steel Strike." *The New York Times*, 27 May 1937.

⁴³ Detroitnews. "The Battle of the Overpass - Michigan History - The Detroit News." *Michigan History*, Joyce Jenereaux, 21 June 2013, blogs.detroitnews.com/history/1997/08/06/the-battle-of-the-overpass/.

⁴⁴ King, Gilbert. "How the Ford Motor Company Won a Battle and Lost Ground." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 30 Apr. 2013, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-ford-motor-company-won-a-battle-and-lost-ground-45814533/.

⁴⁵ Loomis, Bill. "Walter Reuther was labor legend on a global scale." *Detroit News*, Joyce Jenereaux, 3 Sept. 2017, www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan-history/2017/09/02/walter-reuther-uaw-giant/105249350/.

Newspapers from all over the country displayed what happened at the plant telling both the union and Bennett's stories. For those who knew the union's side of the story, they grew skeptical of Bennett since he stated that no Ford service men were involved.⁴⁶ It was clear that Bennett did not want the news to unfold to the public. The evidence that was disclosed made the UAW grow stronger. Workers believed they could conquer Ford's River Rouge Plant through the UAW.

The Last Stand

For the next four years, Ford fought the UAW and their members, but the employees stood their ground against Ford. The union released propaganda trying to drag Ford down, but Ford did not budge. Ford fought back putting his quotes on their time cards such as, "If you go into a union, they have got you, but what have you got?"⁴⁷ Ford tried to convince employees not to join the UAW because he still wanted complete control over his company. Workers had faith in the UAW as tensions increased when six-thousand workers signed up for the union in one week.⁴⁸ Ford

⁴⁶ "Ford Blames Rouge Plant Riot on Newspapers and U.A.W. Plot to Hide Failure of Union Drive." *The Detroit Free Press*, 28 May 1937.

⁴⁷ "U.A.W. Charges Ford Violation of Labor Act." *The Stanford Daily*, 18 May 1937.

⁴⁸ Birch, Jan. "River Rouge: 1941." *Socialist Action*, 1 Feb. 2000, socialistaction.org/2000/02/01/river-rouge-1941/.

indirectly told workers he did not want the UAW in his company and fired the employees that were members of the union.

The UAW needed to bring attention to themselves and conducted a strike on March 13th against the firing of union members in The River Rouge Plant. Three-thousand sat down as Ford did nothing. Five days later, the number of union members doubled to protest until the company agreed to hire twelve union members back. Employees saw how the UAW could change Ford's company and decided to try once more on March 19th. When April came, Ford fired more union members.⁴⁹

In the steel rolling mills at the River Rouge Plant, Andy Dewar started a disagreement over working conditions. Soon he started yelling "Strike, Strike!" Other men joined in, and the news was spreading into other departments.⁵⁰ The UAW decided if employees wanted better working conditions they would need to stop people from entering the plant. Workers attacked the non-union members who wanted to get into the plant.⁵¹ They were desperate for power and better working conditions and harmed the people they worked beside.

America's labor workers waited to see how the strike would end. Ten days passed until Ford's wife Clara threatened to leave him unless he agreed

⁴⁹Birch, Jan. "River Rouge: 1941." *Socialist Action*, 1 Feb. 2000, socialistaction.org/2000/02/01/river-rouge-1941/.

⁵⁰"Henry Ford." *Entrepreneur*, 7 Oct. 2008, www.entrepreneur.com/article/197524.

⁵¹*The Picket Line*. Dearborn, Michigan: Picket Lines at The River Rouge Plant, 3 Apr. 1941.

to sign a contract with the UAW. Ford, not wanting to lose his wife agreed to sign the contract.⁵²

Shaking a Fist

The UAW had influenced the labor industry as people from all over the country claimed that if Ford could be taken down any company could. One newspaper stated, “River Rouge Was a Victory for ALL Labor”⁵³ The workers were filled with confidence because they knew the UAW had gained so much power to change the lives of everyone. If Ford workers gained more benefits, any other worker could do the same.

The UAW and the Ford River Rouge Plant influenced World War II when Ford’s Willow Run Bomber Plant went on strike stopping all production of B-24 bombers.⁵⁴ That newspaper said that the UAW at The Rouge influenced this strike. Later the UAW was the first union to fight for women's equal pay. Now the women in the automobile factories were earning similar wages to their male counterparts. The UAW was using their

⁵²History.com Staff. “Ford signs first contract with autoworkers’ union.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009,

www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ford-signs-first-contract-with-autoworkers-unio.

⁵³ “Labor Victories are Won on the Picket Lines!- That's the Lesson of the Ford Strike .” *Labor Action* , 21 Apr. 1941, p. 1.

⁵⁴ “Strike Cripples Willow Run.” *The Detroit Free Press*, 21 June 1943, pp. 1–2.

influence to change the labor industry. Employees were starting to be treated as real people.

The UAW protested against racial discrimination for their members during the Civil Rights Movement. Also, the UAW had gained retirement and healthcare benefits improving the worker's lives. The United Automobile Workers of America had done the impossible and influenced labor making it what it is today. Since the first Ford contract was signed with the UAW, 25 other agreements have been signed addressing healthcare, retirement, and other benefits.⁵⁵

A Long Climb to the Summit

Ford's employees did not feel as concerned with the working conditions prior to the UAW. The UAW not only changed Ford Motor Company but changed labor for the rest of the United States. Workers started a rebellion that was caused by anger from everyday abuse at the Ford River Rouge Plant. This caused employees to unionize creating the United Automobile Workers of America. The UAW stood strong over the years as hundreds were wounded, while they earned better working conditions and pay for thousands of employees. This conflict lasted for years changing labor and made the UAW the most significant union in the

⁵⁵ Pietro, Denn . "Ford signs first contract with UAW on June 20, 1941." *UAW*, Unknown, 23 June 2017, uaw.org/ford-signs-first-contract-uaw-june-20-1941/.

automobile industry. Now, Valentine Ruman could finally support his family in the way he needed to while holding a job at The River Rouge Plant. Valentine could come home from work without fear knowing he had more financial stability, better working conditions, and he would be able to converse with his fellow employees without getting fired.

Appendix I



This is an Aerial photograph of Ford's River Rouge Plant. The plant was located on the outskirts of Detroit in Dearborn.

[Aerial View of Ford Rouge Plant, 1930. 1930.]

Appendix II



This historical site was in memorial of the 5 martyrs at the River Rouge Plant. This marker tells the story of what happened at the Fort Street Bridge in Dearborn, Michigan.

[*Ford Hunger March Informational Historical Marker*. Affixed to the Fort Street Drawbridge Bridge Control House of the Fort Street Bridge over the River Rouge in southwest Detroit near Woodmere Cemetery.]

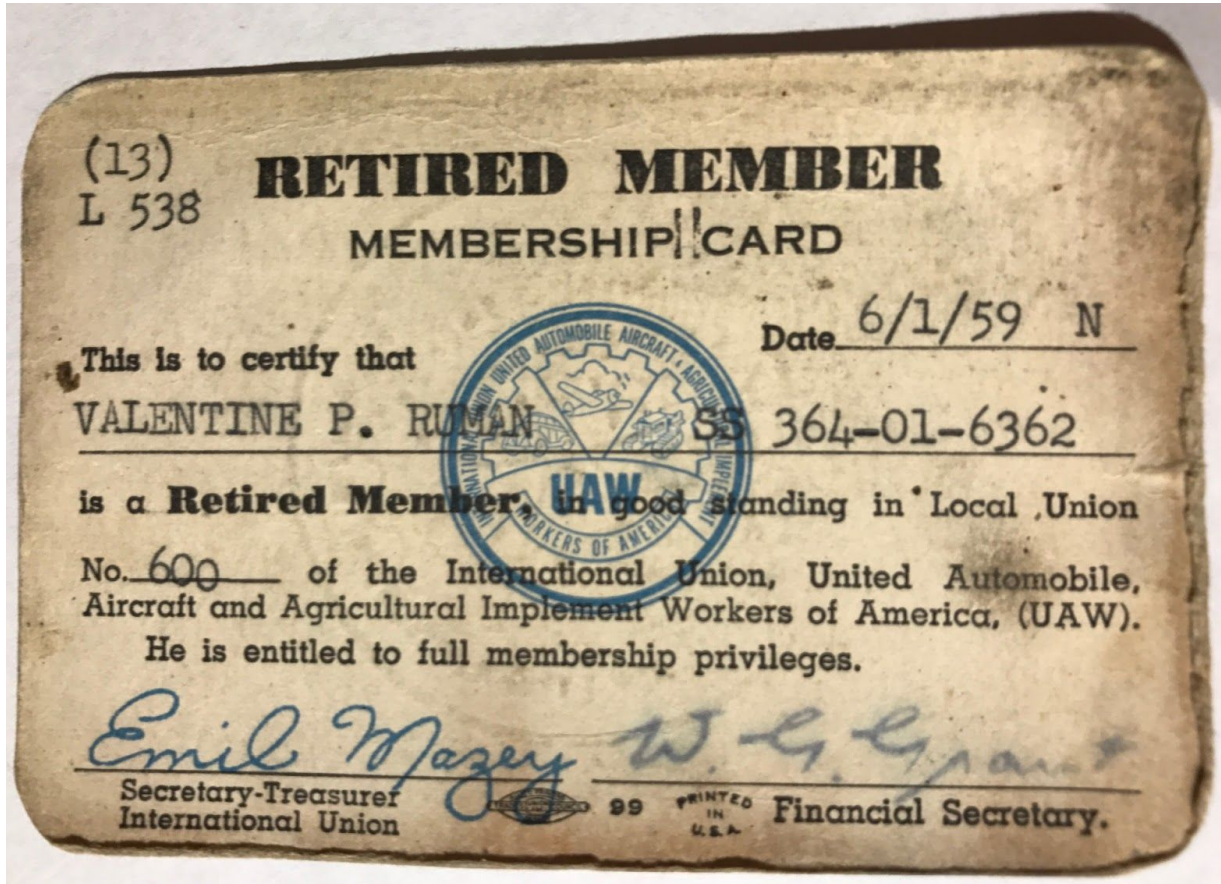
Appendix III



A photograph of Valentine P. Ruman (furthest to the right) who was an employee of the Ford Motor Company at the River Rouge Plant in Dearborn Michigan. He was also a proud member of the United Automobile Workers of America.

[Owned by Loretta Ruman.]

Appendix IV



This was Valentine Ruman's retired membership card of the UAW. The card was passed down to his grandson Mark Ruman who is the current owner.

[Retired Member: Membership Card. Oshkosh, Wisconsin.]

Appendix V



This was a standard pin that would be owned by a Ford Employee at the River Rouge Plant. The Letter on this pin represents the department the employee worked in. The number represented who you were in that department. This pin was Valentine's and was handed down to his grandson Mark Ruman.

[Ford River Rouge Plant Pin: X2264. Oshkosh, Wisconsin.]

Appendix VI

Ford Workers

UNIONISM NOT FORDISM

Now is the time to Organize!
The Wagner Bill is behind you!
Now get behind yourselves!

General Motors Workers, Chrysler Workers, Briggs Workers have won higher wages and better working conditions. 300,000 automobile workers are marching forward under the banner of the United Automobile Workers Union.

JOIN NOW IN THE MARCH AND WIN:

Higher Wages and Better Working Conditions
Stop Speed-up by Union Supervision
6 Hour Day, 8 Dollars Minimum Pay
Job Security thru Seniority Rights
End the Ford Service System
Union Recognition

Organize and be Recognized - JOIN NOW!

Union Headquarters } Michigan Avenue at Addison
for Ford Workers: } Vernor Highway West, and Lawndale

Sign up at Union Headquarters for Ford Workers or at any office of the United Automobile Workers

1324 Clay at Russell	8944 Jos. Campau at Playfair
2441 Milwaukee at Chene	11440 Charlevoix at Gladwin
11725 Oakland at Tuxedo	1343 East Ferry at Russell
4044 Leuschner at Dwyer	3814—35th Street at Michigan
11640 East Jefferson	2730 Maybury Grand at Michigan
10904 Mack at Lemay	4715 Hastings Street
77 Victor at John R.	Room 509 Hofmann Bldg.

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United Automobile Workers of America

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33

This is a photograph of the flyers the union members were handing out during The Battle of The Overpass. They were used to convince the employees at The Rouge River Plant to join the UAW.

[UAW Organizing, Flyer, Battle of the Overpass. Detroit, Michigan, 1937.]

Appendix VII



(Left to right) Robert Kanter, Walter P. Reuther (UAW President), Richard Frankenstein, and J.J. Kennedy pose for the press atop the passenger overpass as Ford's service men walk toward them. Shortly after this photograph was taken the Ford's service men brutally attacked these union employees. This event would be called The Battle of the Overpass.

[Kilpatrick, James. *Abor-Strike: Ford Motor Company: Walter Reuther fifth from the left: Richard Frankenstein sixth from the left.* 26 May 1937.]

Appendix VIII



This photograph shows Walter P. Reuther (UAW President) on the left talking with his colleague Richard Frankensteen. Frankensteen is on the right with blood on his face and shirt after the beating him and Walter Reuther sustained from the Ford's service men.

[*UAW Organizing, Violence, Reuther, Frankensteen*. Detroit, Michigan, 1987.]

Appendix IX



This was an award-winning photograph that captured the violence that went on during the River Rouge Plant strike. In this photograph, there is a man standing in the back on the left holding a stick and wearing a union hat. These men were all employees of the Ford River Rouge Plant, and if any fellow employee dared to cross the picket line, they would be beaten.

[*The Picket Line*. Dearborn, Michigan: Picket Lines at The River Rouge Plant, 3 Apr. 1941.]

Appendix X



This Photograph is a picture of Harry Bennett signing the first contract between Ford Motor Company and the United Automobile Workers of America. This contract ended the strike at The River Rouge Plant giving the workers benefits, better working conditions, and more financial stability.

[*Contract Signing, Ford Strike. Detroit, Michigan , 1941.*]

Appendix XI



This photograph captures the moment of Ford workers celebrating the signing of the contract with the UAW. The employees got benefits as well as better working conditions after the contract was signed.

[Ford Signs First Contract With UAW On June 20, 1941. Dearborn, Michigan.]

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

All Out: Ford Hunger March, Monday, June 5th. All Out: Ford Hunger March, Monday, June 5th, Ford Hunger March Committee, 1932.

This flyer was for the unemployed and employed workers at The Ford Motor Company influencing the workers and their families to march. I used this flyer to help me see all 14 demands they marched for. I also used this flyer to see how desperately the people wanted these demands to be met to help improve their lives.

“Chrysler Auto Strike Ends.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 Apr. 1937.

This newspaper explains the ending of the first strike on a large automobile company. This company was General Motors and their Flint, Michigan plant. This helped me understand how Ford was not going to give into the UAW; neither was Chrysler. Knowing this information helped shape my argument.

Contract Signing, Ford Strike. Detroit, Michigan , 1941.

This photograph was taken as Harry Bennett was signing the contract with the UAW. This photograph led me to the understanding how important this contract was. As well as, knowing how many people had to be present for the signing of the contract.

Cruden, Robert L. *The End of The Ford Myth. The End of The Ford Myth*, Union Labor, 1932.

This pamphlet explains why the Ford Hunger March was conducted. Also, it explains what happened during the event happened. The opinion of the Americans were also affected after the event happened. This helped me understand the reasons Ford’s workers took the first sections of standing together against Ford and why they persisted through till the end.

“Detroit Faces it’s First Great Strike.” *LIFE Magazine. Henry and Edsel Ford at Dearborn*, 18 Jan. 1937, p. 10.

This magazine main article was about how Ford was not negotiating with the UAW. This helped me understand why Ford did not want the union in his company. I also learned

how this affected the workers. I learned what the rest of the economy thought would happen with the Ford River Rouge Plant.

“Ford Blames Rouge Plant Riot on Newspapers and U.A.W. Plot to Hide Failure of Union Drive.” *The Detroit Free Press*, 28 May 1937.

This newspaper told the view of Harry Bennett and how he claimed none of his service men were involved in the fighting. I realized how desperate Harry Bennett was trying to keep this information to a minimum by lying to the press.

“Ford Men Beat and Rout Lewis Union Organizers; 80,000 Out In Steel Strike.” *The New York Times*, 27 May 1937.

This newspaper went in depth of the casualties at The Battle of The Overpass as well as the beating the union men and women took. Since I knew how many people were severely injured and what men and women were involved this helped me understand how important the event was.

Ford River Rouge Plant Pin: X2264. Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

After looking at this artifact in person this has helped me to see and partially experience what Valentine Ruman had to do every morning to get into The Rouge. This has also helped me understand the vast size of the plant by looking at the identification number and letter.

Ford Signs First Contract With UAW On June 20, 1941. Dearborn, Michigan.

This photograph captures the excitement of the Ford employees at The River Rouge Plant. This shows how happy these men were to get better benefits and be treated fairly unlike before. I now understand from seeing this photo how the effects the UAW contract with Ford Motor Company had on its employees.

“Four Killed, Bennett Wounded as Reds Battle Police in Riot at Ford Co. Plant.” *The Detroit Free Press*, 8 Mar. 1932.

This newspaper gave the views of many different people at the massacre. It also contains many photos and the details of who was injured and how badly. This had helped me analyze what had happened through the multiple perspectives of the marchers and lead me to realize how appalling these events turned out to be.

Glazer, Joe, "Fight That Line." *The UAW: Fifty Years in Song and Story*.

This song recording was written by a man who was alive during the events at The River Rouge Plant and decided to help fight for the unions with catchy songs. This helped me understand that it was not just automobile workers fight but everyday people.

Hauben, Ronda. *Lest We Forget: In Tribute To The Pioneers Of The Great Flint Sit-down Strike*, Agenda Publications, 1987.

This article was written about the Flint, Michigan sit-down. This was the first sit-down strike at an automotive manufacturing company. This has helped me understand what happened during the first sit-down strike and why this was not the most important automotive sit-down strike.

Kilpatrick, James. *Abor-Strike: Ford Motor Company: Walter Reuther fifth from the left: Richard Frankenstein sixth from the left*. 26 May 1937.

This photograph taken by James Kilpatrick helped me visually see the Ford's service men coming toward the union workers before they brutally attacked them.

"Labor Victories are Won on the Picket Lines!- That's the Lesson of the Ford Strike." *Labor Action*, 21 Apr. 1941, p. 1.

This newspaper was for the labor workers telling what major events that were happening. This newspaper contained a large article about the contract that was signed with the UAW and how it affects the other workers in the workforce. This helped me understand how the strike on The River Rouge Plant did not just affect the Ford workers but the whole workforce.

Loretta Ruman, Telephone Interview.

Loretta Ruman is the youngest child of Valentine Ruman. She experienced the Great Depression first hand and saw what her father was like after a days work at Ford's River Rouge Plant. She was also the owner of several photographs of her father. Talking to Loretta helped me create my essay by hearing her emotions and her own words about what it was like seeing her father after one day of work at The River Rouge Plant. She also expressed how grateful her father was when they formed the UAW and his experience with the union.

Memorial Services for Curtis Williams, Communist Party U.S.A., August 20, 1932.

This flyer held the details of what was planned for the funeral of the fifth person killed in the riot at the River Rouge Plant. While using this source, I have learned that some of the injuries did not turn fatal until long after the incident. This caused great pain and suffering to the unfortunate enough to get wounded.

The Picket Line. Dearborn, Michigan: Picket Lines at The River Rouge Plant, 3 Apr. 1941.

In this award-winning photograph you can see a group of union members wearing their caps beating another worker at the picket lines. This photograph has helped me from my essay showing that the UAW members at Ford's River Rouge Plant did not want fellow workers and this shows how badly they really wanted that and helped me understand the full beating and how desperate they were.

"Police Repel Rioters at Ford Plant." *The Daily Northwestern*, 9 Mar. 1932.

This Wisconsin newspaper contained an article about the Ford Hunger March and what happened in Dearborn. This article has helped me understand what changed the march into a riot and how the riot influenced casualties on the protestors.

Public Investigation: Ford Massacre. *Public Investigation: Ford Massacure*, Workers Jury, 1932.

This flyer of the public investigation of the Ford Hunger March described the charges as well as the aftermath of the riot. This has helped me get a better picture of how this event was handled and how it affected the workers at the plant.

Retired Member: Membership Card. Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

This was Valentine Ruman's retired membership card for the union. After looking at this I now understand how powerful the union got after the first strike at the River Rouge Plant.

"Roosevelt Becomes President." *Capital Journal*, 4 Mar. 1933.

This newspaper was about the inauguration of President Roosevelt. This helped me understand when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected and when the Labor Relations Act was published.

"Strike Cripples Willow Run." *The Detroit Free Press*, 21 June 1943, pp. 1-2.

This newspaper was about the sit-down strike at the Ford Willow Run Plant and compared it to the strike at The Ford River Rouge Plant. This helped me understand how influential the River Rouge Plant really was.

“U.A.W. Charges Ford Violation of Labor Act.” *The Stanford Daily*, 18 May 1937.

This magazine had an article about the battle of the overpass and helped me understand what information was being printed not just for the ordinary working man but by a top college for their students to read.

“U.A.W. Organizers Are Beaten and Thrown Off Ford Property; 80,000 Called Out in Steel Strike.” *The Detroit Free Press*, 27 May 1937, pp. 1-Photo Page.

This newspaper released by The Detroit Free Press told what happened at the River Rouge Plant during The Battle of The Overpass. This has helped me understand how much the Ford's service men destroyed and what evidence survived and was handed to the newspapers.

UAW Organizing, Flyer, Battle of the Overpass. Detroit, Michigan, 1937.

This flyer was used to persuade The River Rouge Plant workers to join the UAW. Seeing this flyer led me to understanding what the workers saw and how this may influence them to join the United Automobile Workers of America.

UAW Organizing, Violence, Reuther, Frankenstein. Detroit, Michigan, 1937.

This photograph of Walter P. Reuther and Richard Frankenstein let me see the damage Ford's service men did to these union workers. This photo also shows how tired and run down Richard Frankenstein looks with the blood on his shirt and face.

The Wagner or Labor Relations Act. The Wagner or Labor Relations Act, Public No. 198 Seventy-Fourth Congress of the United States of America; at the First Session. Held in the city of Washington, January 3, 1935.

This act lets labor workers organize, strike, and gain benefits in a company. This helped me analyze the events that were subsequent after the act was passed and how it played a role the automobile companies signing the contract with the UAW.

Secondary Sources:

“Aerial View of Ford Rouge Plant, 1930.” *The Henry Ford, Unknown*,
<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/87230/#slide=gs-233089> .

This website states the order and efficiency of the plant and other factories of its time. It contained photos helping me to understand the colossal size of the plant and why this efficiency was necessary.

Bak, Richard Peter. *Henry and Edsel: The Creation of the Ford Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

This book is about Henry Ford's life as a child and till he died. This book told the struggles Ford had taken to make his company have the highest wages and lowest prices. Reading a book about the history of Henry Ford helped me understand all the hardships Ford had gone through with his son who worked behind the scenes.

Birch, Jan. “River Rouge: 1941.” *Socialist Action*, 1 Feb. 2000,
socialistaction.org/2000/02/01/river-rouge-1941/.

This website tells the story of African Americans working in Ford's' River Rouge Plant. It also elaborates how the union affected these workers giving them better benefits and more respect in his company. This has helped me understand how the union affected people of all ethnicities and helped me understand the member count of the UAW and what caused the first strike at the plant.

Chinery, Kristen. “Battle of the Overpass.” *Walter P. Reuther Library*, Wayne State University, 19 May 2011, reuther.wayne.edu/node/7647.

This website was in memory of Walter P. Reuther the president of the United Automobile Workers of America. This website tells the story of the union through photographs, pamphlets, and articles. This has helped me visually see what the UAW members went through what helped me significantly to stress about the working conditions in Fords company.

Detroitnews. "The Battle of the Overpass - Michigan History - The Detroit News."
Michigan History, Joyce Jenereaux, 21 June 2013,
blogs.detroitnews.com/history/1997/08/06/the-battle-of-the-overpass/.

This article explained the 1937 General Motor strike and how that influenced the UAW to hand out leaflets at gate number 4 of the River Rouge Plant. This helped me understand how the GM strike influenced the Battle of The Overpass.

"Ford River Rouge Complex." *SOM - Ford River Rouge Complex*, Unknown,
www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29938_68915-54580--,00.html.

This article is about the structure of the River Rouge Plant. Elaborating on the different complexes in the plant, and square footage. Since I learned the architecture of the plant it has helped me understand how many people were involved in the plants strikes.

"The Great Depression-A Job at Ford's", Dir. Jon Else. Perf. Henry Ford (archive footage), Herbert Hoover (archive footage), Francis Immoberstag (niece of Henry and Clara Ford), Joe Morton (narrator), Gore Vidal. PBS Documentary. 1993. Documentary.

This documentary was about the great depression and how it affected Henry Ford's River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Michigan. This influenced my essay because most of the conflict happened during The Great Depression and let me see with footage how badly the Ford employees were affected.

Grevatt, Martha. "The Ford Hunger March of 1932." *The Ford Hunger March of 1932*, Workers World, 25 Mar. 2009, 3:45 p.m.,
www.workers.org/2009/us/ford_hunger_march_0402/.

This article talks about The Ford Hunger March how it started and what happened during and after the march. This lead me to realize how the Ford Hunger March was one of the most important parts of the conflict because it started a chain reaction leading to the creation of the UAW.

"Henry Ford." *Entrepreneur*, 7 Oct. 2008, www.entrepreneur.com/article/197524 .

This article was about Ford founding the Ford Motor Company and how the 1941 River Rouge Plant strike began and how the disagreement was settled. This website contributed to my essay because it gave an in-depth look at what happened at the Ford River Rouge Plant.

“Henry Ford Gives \$10,000,000 in 1914 Profits to His Employees.” *The Detroit Journal*, 5 Jan. 1914, p. 1.

This newspaper released in 1914 was about the unheard of five-dollar-day wage. This helped me understand how Ford would convince people to work for him with a high wage while putting an enormous burden on his employees.

“Historical Insights The Ford River Rouge Plant.” *Ancestry*, Unknown, www.ancestry.com/contextux/historicalinsights/ford-river-rouge-plant-michigan.

In this brief article on the River Rouge Plant summarizes what the plant was and how it affected where people were from and where they originated from before coming to Dearborn. This website is accompanied by photographs within the factory. This has helped me understand how badly people wanted a higher pay that they were willing to travel from other states just to work in one of Ford’s plants.

Historical Marker in Dearborn, Michigan at 10520 Fort Street. Erected in 1992, marker pays tribute to the five people who died while fighting for workers rights at the Ford Motor Company in 1932.

This historical marker gave tribute to the men who died in the Ford Hunger March. It also gave a brief description of what the march was for and the casualties that were inflicted on the marchers. This has helped me write my paper because I have learned that this was an important event because the Michigan Department of Natural Resources decided to put this up. It has also helped me understand what it was like when they gathered at the Fort Street Bridge.

History.com Staff. “Ford signs first contract with autoworkers’ union.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ford-signs-first-contract-with-autoworkers-unio.

This article was about Ford agreeing to negotiate with the UAW and the steps his son Edsel took trying to convince him what was unsuccessful. This has helped me understand how almost nothing was going to convince Henry of signing the contract with the UAW.

History.com Staff. “Violence erupts at GM plant strike.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/violence-erupts-at-gm-plant-strike.

This was a brief article about the General Motors sit-down strike. This helped me prove why this strike was less important for the automotive industry and helped me understand how it affected Ford and his company.

“Jobs with Justice honors Ford hunger marcher.” *People's World*, Unknown, 6 Oct. 2016, www.peoplesworld.org/article/jobs-with-justice-honors-ford-hunger-marcher/.

This site paid tribute to a River Rouge Employee named Dave Moore. Dave described what happened at the Ford River Rouge Plant in 1932 at the riot. Reading the first-hand perspective helped me realize what all the workers thought of Ford. Dave also participated in all the riots and strikes.

“Karl Marx Quotes.” *BrainyQuote*, Xplore, www.brainyquote.com/quotes/karl_marx_109309.

This website states one of Karl Marx’s quotes and general information about him. Knowing when Karl Marx lived helped me understand his view of working rights.

King, Gilbert. “How the Ford Motor Company Won a Battle and Lost Ground.” *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 30 Apr. 2013, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-ford-motor-company-won-a-battle-and-lost-ground-45814533/.

This website explained how Walter Reuther, Richard Frankensteen, and other union members were severely beaten. This has helped me write and explain the beating in my essay, and has also helped me understand how severe the beating was.

Loomis, Bill. “Walter Reuther was labor legend on a global scale.” *Detroit News*, Joyce Jenereaux, 3 Sept. 2017, www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan-history/2017/09/02/walter-reuther-uaw-giant/105249350/.

This article tells the history of Walter P. Reuther and how he became the president of the UAW. The article says what major events happened when he was president of the UAW and how he did. Knowing Walter Reuther's life it helped me understand how Reuther was able to conquer Ford's vast River Rouge Plant.

Nevins, Allan. *Ford: expansion and challenge*. Scribner, 1957, pp. 281.

This book tells the story of Ford Motor Company from 1915 to 1933. How he created an automobile affordable for everyone and got complete control over his company. Knowing Ford's goal helped me understand why he treated all his workers so poorly and helped me stage my essay against him.

Pietro, Denn. "Ford signs first contract with UAW on June 20, 1941." *UAW*, Unknown, 23 June 2017, uaw.org/ford-signs-first-contract-uaw-june-20-1941/.

This website has helped me because it explained the events that set off Ford's wife Clara to convince her husband to sign the contract with the UAW. This helped me understand what happened in the words of the UAW.

Rosentreter, Roger L. *Michigan. a history of explorers, entrepreneurs, and everyday people*. University of Michigan Press, 2014.

This book goes into the history of the state Michigan before it was owned by the United States of America. It tells about the first people who lived here opening fur trades and lead to the entrepreneurs who helped create the businesses that shaped the major cities. Knowing a brief history on Henry Ford helped me see the major events that happened and not all the small details. This helped me shape my essay by including the most vital points.

Stepan-Norris, Judith, and Maurice Zeitlin. *Talking union*. University of Illinois Press, 1996.

This book took the first-hand accounts from the men and women who worked at the River Rouge Plant. This helped me understand the people who experienced these events what they went through and has helped me shape my essay by arguing their working conditions in the way they saw Ford and his company.

Streissguth, Thomas. *The roaring twenties: an eyewitness history*. Facts on File, 2001.

This book is about the historical events that happened during the twenties. This includes the stock market crash leading to The Great Depression. Knowing what happened in the stock market crash helped me understand how Ford's company was impacted and how he responded.

Stepan-Norris, Judith, and Maurice Zeitlin. *Talking union*. University of Illinois Press, 1996.

This book took the first-hand accounts from the men and women who worked at the River Rouge Plant. This helped me understand the people who experienced these events

what they went through and has helped me shape my essay by arguing their working conditions in the way they saw Ford and his company.

“UAW History.” *UAW*, Unknown, 13 Oct. 2015, uaw.org/solidarity-magazine/uaw-history/.

This website tells the history of the UAW since it was founded and to the current information happening every day. This has helped me understand what major events happened concerning the UAW awhile trying to unionize the Ford Motor Company.

Watts, Steven. *The people's tycoon Henry Ford and the American century*. Vintage, 2006.

This book was about Henry Ford's life from a child to his death. It told the story of the unions and helped me understand why Henry Ford had his view of the plant and helped me understand why workers did not like his conditions and what he thought.

Wright, Gwen. “1930s High Society.” *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/1930s-high-society/.

This article was about the start of The Great Depression and how it affected Americans and their companies. Knowing how the depression affected so many companies I can see more of the patterns in how it affects the labor industry.