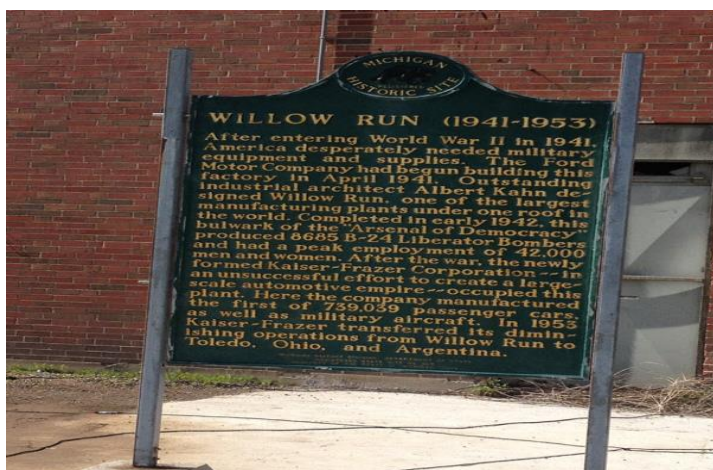


Historical Marker - Willow Run (1941-1953) / Willow Run (1953-present) (Marker ID#:S509)



Front - Title/Description

Willow Run (1941-1953)

After entering World War II in 1941, America desperately needed military equipment and supplies. The Ford Motor Company had begun building this industrial architect Albert Kahn designed Willow Run, one of the largest manufacturing plants under one roof in the world. Completed in early 1942, this bulwark of the "Arsenal of Democracy" produced 8685 B-24 Liberator Bombers and had a peak employment of 42,000 men and women. After the war, the newly formed Kaiser-Frazer Corporation -- in an unsuccessful effort to create a large scale automotive empire -- occupied this plant. Here the company manufactured the first of 739,039 passenger cars, as well as military aircraft. In 1953 Kaiser-Frazer transferred its diminishing operations from Willow Run to Toledo, Ohio, and Argentina.

Significant Date:

Two World Wars and the Depression (1915-1945)

Registry Year: 1978 ***Erected Date:*** 1978

Marker Location

Address:

City: Ypsilanti Township

State: MI ***ZipCode:***

County: Washtenaw

Township: Ypsilanti

Lat: 42.24134000 / ***Long:*** -83.55755300

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Willow Run (1953-present)

"Willow Run" initially referred to the small stream running through this area. The name then identified the bomber factory, airport, and community which sprung up around the wartime industry. Now this Willow Run plant is the General Motors Hydra-matic Division, makers of automatic transmissions. First based in Detroit, this Division moved to Livonia where fire destroyed its facilities on August 12, 1953. That September General Motors transferred the Hydra-matic operations to Willow Run. Twelve weeks after the fire, transmissions again rolled off the totally retooled and rearranged assembly line -- an amazing feat of industrial efficiency. This factory has known both war and peace. Continuing to make transmissions, the plant also manufactured military hardware