[Template:More footnotes](/wiki/Template:More_footnotes" \o "Template:More footnotes) [Template:Infobox company](/wiki/Template:Infobox_company) [thumb|right|The first logo](/wiki/File:Oldsmobile_logo.jpg) **Oldsmobile** was a brand of American [automobiles](/wiki/Automobiles) produced for most of its existence by [General Motors](/wiki/General_Motors). Olds Motor Vehicle Co. was founded by [Ransom E. Olds](/wiki/Ransom_E._Olds) in 1897. In its 107-year history, it produced 35.2 million cars, including at least 14 million built at its [Lansing, Michigan](/wiki/Lansing,_Michigan) factory. When it was phased out in 2004, Oldsmobile was the oldest surviving American automobile [marque](/wiki/Marque), and one of the oldest in the world, after [Daimler](/wiki/Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft), [Peugeot](/wiki/Peugeot) and [Tatra](/wiki/Tatra_(company)). Though it was closed in 2004, it still remains an active trademark of the General Motors Corporation. The closing of the Oldsmobile division presaged a larger consolidation of GM brands and discontinuation of models during the company's 2009 [bankruptcy reorganization](/wiki/General_Motors_Chapter_11_reorganization).

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Early history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumb|left|Ransom Eli Olds, the founder and namesake of Oldsmobile.](/wiki/Image:Olds2.jpg)

Oldsmobiles were first manufactured by the Olds Motor Vehicle Co. in [Lansing, Michigan](/wiki/Lansing,_Michigan), a company founded by [Ransom E. Olds](/wiki/Ransom_E._Olds) in 1897. In 1901, the company produced 425 cars, making it the first high-volume gasoline-powered automobile manufacturer. (Electric car manufacturers such as [Columbia Electric](/wiki/Columbia_Electric) and steam powered car manufacturers such as [Locomobile](/wiki/Locomobile_Company_of_America) had higher volumes a few years earlier). Oldsmobile became the top selling car company in the United States for a few years around 1903-4. Ransom Olds left the company in 1904 because of a dispute and formed the [REO Motor Car Company](/wiki/REO_Motor_Car_Company). The last [Oldsmobile Curved Dash](/wiki/Oldsmobile_Curved_Dash) was made in 1907. [General Motors](/wiki/General_Motors_Corporation) purchased the company in 1908.

The 1901 to 1904 [Oldsmobile Curved Dash](/wiki/Oldsmobile_Curved_Dash) was [the first mass-produced car](/wiki/List_of_automotive_superlatives),[[1]](#cite_note-1) made from the first automotive assembly line, an invention that is often miscredited to [Henry Ford](/wiki/Henry_Ford) and the [Ford Motor Company](/wiki/Ford_Motor_Company). (Ford was the first to manufacture cars on a *moving* assembly line.) After Olds merged Olds Motor Vehicle Co. with the Olds Gas Engine Works in 1899, it was renamed Olds Motor Works and moved to a new plant in Detroit, located at the corner of East Jefferson Avenue and [MacArthur Bridge](/wiki/MacArthur_Bridge_(Detroit)).[[2]](#cite_note-2) By March 1901, the company had a whole line of models ready for mass production. However, a mistake by a worker caused the factory to catch fire, and it burned to the ground, with all of the prototypes destroyed. The only car that survived the fire was a Curved Dash prototype, which was wheeled out of the factory by two workers while escaping the fire. A new factory was built, and production of the Curved Dash commenced.

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Officially, the cars were called "Olds automobiles," but were colloquially referred to as "Oldsmobiles." It was this moniker, as applied especially to the Curved Dash Olds, that was popularized in the lyrics and title of the 1905 hit song "[In My Merry Oldsmobile](/wiki/In_My_Merry_Oldsmobile)".

The 1910 Limited Touring was a high point for the company. Riding atop 42-inch wheels, and equipped with factory "white" tires, the Limited was the prestige model in Oldsmobile's two model lineup. The Limited retailed for US$4,600, an amount greater than the purchase of a new, no-frills three bedroom house. Buyers received goatskin upholstery, a 60 hp (45 kW) 707 [CID](/wiki/Cubic_inch#Engine_displacement) (11.6 L) [straight-six](/wiki/Straight-six) engine, Bosch Magneto starter, running boards and room for five. Options included a speedometer, clock, and a full glass windshield. A limousine version was priced at $5,800. While Oldsmobile only sold 725 Limiteds in its three years of production, the car is best remembered for winning a race against the famed [20th Century Limited](/wiki/20th_Century_Limited) train, an event immortalized in the painting *Setting the Pace* by William Hardner Foster. In 1926, the Oldsmobile Six came in five body styles, and ushered in a new GM bodystyle platform called the "[GM B platform](/wiki/GM_B_platform)", shared with [Buick](/wiki/Buick) products.[[3]](#cite_note-3)