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THE
PEOPLE'S TYCOON

HENRY FORD
AND THE AMERICAN CENTURY

STEVEN WATTS

Author of THE MAGIC KINGDOM: WALT DISNEY AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

"The implicit claim of Watts's admirable book is almost inarguable—
that it's impossible to understand twentieth-century America
without knowing the story of Henry Ford."

—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW



"FORD HAS HAD MANY BIOGRAPHERS. . . .
NONE, HOWEVER, COMES CLOSE TO STEVEN WATTS. . . .
HE BRILLIANTLY REVEALS THE NATURE OF FORD'S GENIUS."

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How a Michigan farm boy became the richest man in America is a classic, almost mythic tale, but never before has Henry Ford's outsized genius been brought to life so vividly as it is in this engaging and superbly researched biography.

The *real* Henry Ford was a tangle of contradictions. He set off the consumer revolution by producing a car affordable to the masses, all the while lamenting the moral toll exacted by consumerism. He believed in giving his workers a living wage, though he was entirely opposed to union labor. He had a warm and loving relationship with his wife, but sired a son with another woman. A rabid anti-Semite, he nonetheless embraced African American workers in the era of Jim Crow.

Uncovering the man behind the myth, situating his achievements and their attendant controversies firmly within the context of early twentieth-century America, Watts has given us a comprehensive, illuminating, and fascinating biography of one of America's first mass-culture celebrities.

"Steven Watts attempts the most integrated understanding to date of Ford's enormous influence and varied appeal. . . . The fascinating result may change the way Henry Ford is remembered."

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

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