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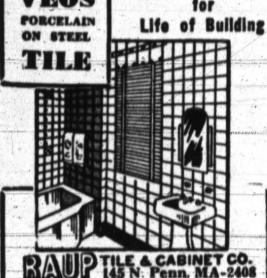
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Former Ford Partner Sues for \$251 Million Over Tractor Device

Largest Civil Court Action Demands Damages For Irish Inventor; Henry II Denies Claim

By DAVID C. WHITNEY, United Press Staff Correspondent
NEW YORK, Jan. 9.—The "partnership" that the late Henry Ford and Irish Inventor Harry Ferguson started with a handshake 10 years ago, wound up in the courts today with Mr. Ferguson suing for \$251,100,000 damages.

Mr. Ferguson, described as Henry Ford's "only partner," charged the company had unlawfully copied his tractor and a hydraulic system of hitching farm implements to tractors.

Henry Ford II, the motor magnate's grandson, immediately countered that the company lost \$25 million in its dealings with the inventor while Mr. Ferguson became a multi-millionaire.

Mr. Ferguson filed suit in Federal District Court against the Ford company, three subsidiaries and eight individuals. His lawyers said it was one of the largest civil suits ever begun.

He charged that after "19 years of unceasing work" in a garage in Ireland he had invented a hydraulic system for hooking implements to tractors so that tractor and implement operate as a single unit.

At Henry Ford's suggestion, Mr. Ferguson brought the tractor and the attachments he had invented to Michigan, where he entered into an agreement that was "never reduced to writing," the suit alleged. In 1939, according to Mr. Ferguson, the Ford Co. began making the tractor and sold it until June, 1947, as the "Ford tractor—Ferguson system." However, the suit said, all rights to the inventions were retained by the Ferguson Co.

Denied by Henry Ford II

Henry Ford II, president of the Ford Co. and one of the eight individuals named in the suit, said "the complaint is full of untruths."

The mere suggestion that there has been a "conspiracy" or "unfair competition" in this situation is ridiculous," Mr. Ford said. "The blunt truth about this relationship is that it made Mr. Ferguson a multi-millionaire and cost Ford Motor Co. \$25 million in the process."

Mr. Ferguson's lawyers handed out to the press a text of the suit, publicity material explaining the invention of the late Henry Ford and Mr. Ferguson smiling at each other across a table upon which was a model of a tractor.

The elder Mr. Ford became acquainted with Mr. Ferguson in 1920, the suit stated, but it was not until 1938 that the Irish inventor came to this country to assist in the development of the farm equipment.

The two never signed an agreement, the plaintiff's lawyers admitted. But quoted in this connection, a Ford patent attorney arguing a case before the United States District Court for Eastern Michigan in 1928:

Broke in 1946

"There is no power on earth, this side of the Supreme Court of the United States, which would make Henry Ford sign a license agreement or pay a royalty."

Mr. Ford and Mr. Ferguson broke relations in November, 1946, although production of the tractors was continued until June, 1947, the suit alleged.

The suit charged the defendants with forming a conspiracy before November, 1946, to:

ONE: Copy the Ferguson system tractors and line of implements and seize the inventions.

TWO: Compel implement manufacturers to sever their connections with the Ferguson company and destroy the Ferguson company's sources of supply of instruments.

THREE: Take over in its entirety the distributor-dealer organization built by the Ferguson company.

FOUR: Impose upon motor dealers the conditions that they not deal in tractors or implements sold by the Ferguson company.

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