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Did you know?

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Section 8:
Did you know?

…electric cars were already around in the 19th century?

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Not only were electrically powered cars already available by the end of the 19th century, they were also quite popular (1, 2, & 3). In the early 20th century, for example, Thomas Edison and Henry Ford cooperated on a project to produce affordable electric cars on a large scale, with the former firmly believing that they would become the mode of transport of the future (4). So why haven't we been using them for the past hundred years? Some would say it's due to a lack of scientific advances in the development of batteries, while others point towards the discovery of oil deposits in Texas, which made its competitor the gasoline engine much more affordable.

References:

1. [author unknown], "The popularity of electric cars", Science 14;336 (1899), p. 34

2. [author unknown], "An improved truck for electric cars", Science 15;372 (1890), p. 183

3. The Horseless Age, April 5 1899 - September 27 1899 compendium, http://www.carsandracingstuff.com/library/h/horselessage1899b.pdf

4. Strohl, Dan. "Ford, Edison and the cheap EV that almost was", http://www.wired.com/autopia/2010/06/henry-ford-thomas-edison-ev/