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# Automobile popularity results in demolition of livery

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# Automobile popularity results in demolition of livery

By Wendy Richter  
For the Siftings

One hundred years ago, the automobile was becoming increasingly popular. As of 1903, some fifty Arkansans owned vehicles. In fact, a Hot Springs man drove to Arkadelphia that year "on his automobile," creating quite a stir here. It was the first car that most Arkadelphians had ever seen. Then, C.C. Henderson of the city purchased an automobile in 1908, and the local paper remarked that "now our horses will have to take lessons in acrobatic performance." But, a revolution in transportation had begun. By 1910, about twenty-five Arkadelphians owned automobiles. Horses, wagons, pedestrians, and cars competed for space on the streets. As more and more autos appeared, however, businesses began to change as well.

Indicative of such developments, in the early part of 1917 the Wilson livery stable located at Fifth and Main was being torn down, to be replaced by an automobile dealership. The Arkadelphia Southern Standard newspaper February 22, 1917, edition reported the story this way: "The old livery stable at the corner of 5th and Main streets is being torn down, in accordance with an order made by the city council several months ago. While this is not one of the old landmarks of the town, the building has been there since the earliest recollection of the younger generation, and has always been used as a livery stable.

"It was built nearly thirty years ago by Joe Wilson, who for a number of



IMAGE COURTESY OF CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The J. S. Wilson Livery circa 1900, located at the corner of Fifth and Main in Arkadelphia.

years had his livery stable there. Later it was the Sloan livery stable for several years, and since then has passed to several different owners.

"The property was recently bought by John W. Allen, who will erect a fine brick building as a home for the Ford automobile. The building will be 50 x

136 feet, and will have a plate glass front and a tiled floor in the front part for the Ford showrooms, and in the rear will be a ladies' restroom and a garage for tourists. The building now occupied by Allen & Allen will be used as an automobile repair shop only. The new building will cost about \$7,000."

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum ([www.clarkecountyhistory.org](http://www.clarkecountyhistory.org) or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library ([www.obu.edu/archives](http://www.obu.edu/archives) or 245.5332).