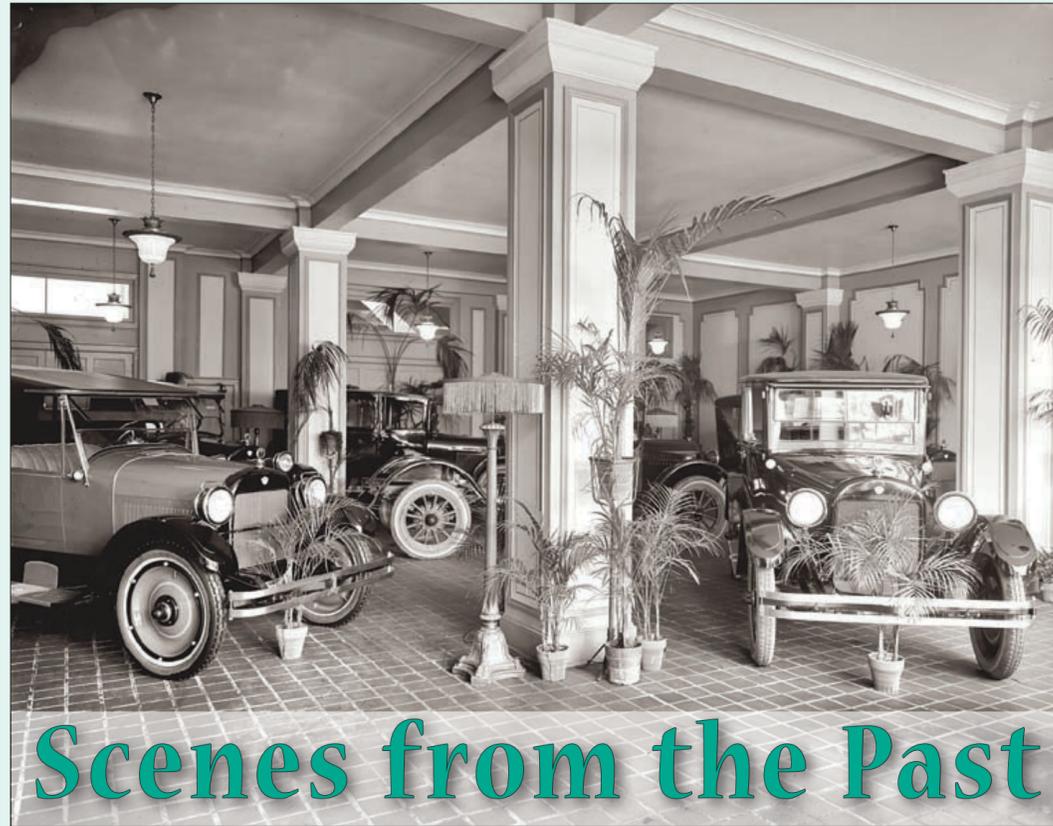


photos—Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.



The interior of the Joseph B Trew Motor Company is seen here, located near P Street at 1509-1511 14th Street.

The first “horseless” vehicle arrived in Washington, DC to much fanfare in April of 1897, and during the next three decades, both the streetscape and several major commercial corridors such as 14th Street would change rapidly into an automobile-centric business strip. The transformation got off to a slow start, however, as the early “gasoline buggies” often broke down and required hours of tinkering to ensure their mobility.

Bystanders to these impromptu street repairs would often call out, “Get a Horse,” as many were unsure how the vehicles would transform into reliable transportation.

By 1929, however, there were over 135,000 automobiles registered to Washington residents, a fraction of what is registered on the street today (utilizing the same amount of space), but an impressive growth nonetheless. Just 30 years prior, a journey from

Washington to Baltimore was something to talk about for weeks, and was frequently mentioned in the local newspapers. Travel was difficult, as early models either had to find fresh water for their boilers every 20 miles or so, or a place to recharge batteries every 18 miles or so. Unfortunately, the early and successful use of batteries was discarded in favor of new and improving gasoline engines.

Automobile manufacturers were aplenty in 1898, with hundreds competing in a new market for customers. In March of 1898, Rudolph Jose opened the first automobile dealership in Washington at 1614 14th Street to distribute the Kensington electric, manufactured in Buffalo, New York. That showroom set the stage for older buildings to be converted and new ones built along the 14th Street corridor from N to U Street and beyond.

Incredibly, by 1901, the auto business in the city was so great that Washington’s first automobile show was held at the old Convention Hall to highlight the dozen or so models available for local purchase that year. Of course, it wasn’t long until somebody suggested an auto race, which took place on the half mile dirt track at the Brightwood Driving Park in 1906.

The sale of automobiles also spurred the need for myriad parts and

supplies companies that quickly filled in the smaller shops and former houses that lined 14th Street. The influx of cars and new drivers also created a multitude of crashes and confusion at the city’s many intersections where the previous accustomed speed was that of a trotting horse.

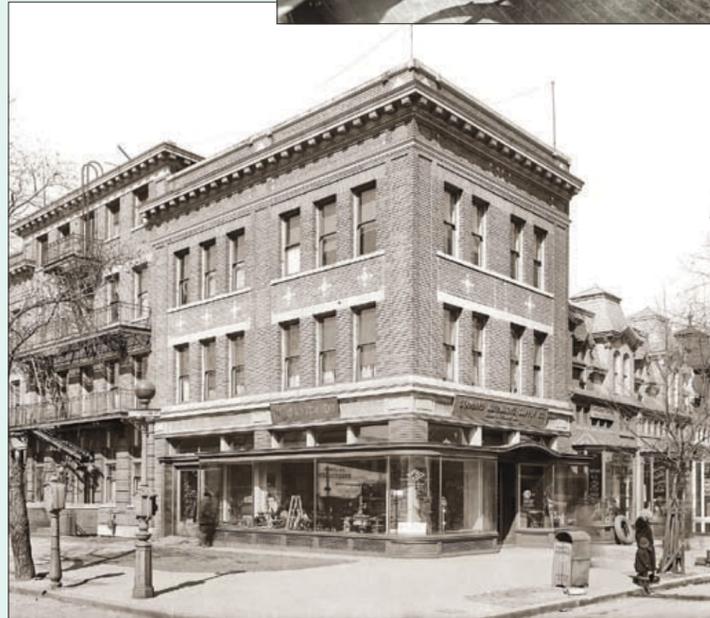
As just one example, the Hudson apartment building was built beginning in the fall of 1909 at an estimated cost of \$25,000 on the northwest corner of 14th and S Streets. It was designed by the Alfred B. Mullet architectural firm, and built by the Boryer & Smith contracting company. The building was owned by M.W. Goddard, and was built to accommodate just four apartments, with an auto supply store on the lower floor. It is known to current city residents as — until very recently — the long-time



Above, interior view of the Standard Auto Supply Company store.

The Hudson apartment building at 14th and S Streets was built in 1909, and housed an automobile parts store in the ground floor, at left.

Below, this automobile accident took place on October 7, 1922 at the intersection of 12th and S Streets, just one of numerous accidents taking place as residents adjusted to tens of thousands of cars registered in the city in the prior two decades. 12th Street looking north and the 12th Street YMCA can be seen in the background.



Many today are subject to conversions once again, this time into condominiums, furniture stores, and restaurant use.

—Paul Kelsey Williams
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The R.L. Taylor and Herbert Smith Ford dealership was built in 1919 on the southwest corner of 14th and T Streets. With 65 employees, the company switched allegiance and began selling Chevrolets in 1926.

site of the Whitman-Walker clinic. (See, “Large, Mixed-Use 14th Street Project’s Design, Size Questioned for Former Whitman-Walker Site,” *InTowner*, January 2009, page 1.)

The Standard Automotive Supply Company (SASCO) was located in the ground floor of the Hudson apartment building and was managed by Frank Stewart. Its main entrance was on 14th Street. Next door, at No. 1802, the French Mansard-styled building built in the 1870s housed a new and used tire store; at No. 1804, a sponge, chamois, and brush store; and at No. at 1806 was a tire and whitewall specialist. Like many of the parts and tires stores, the building had a more prestigious history in the decades prior; this location in particular had housed the Joseph Richards & Company, importers of wine and fine groceries.

As commercial trends continued to evolve and the automobile companies moved out of the city to large lots in the suburbs, the former showrooms were converted into everything from apartments to churches.

