On November 3, 1903, the first automobile parade in Florida was a feature of the Gala-week carnival, there being 26 machines of various makes, types, and styles in line; at that time 32 automobiles were owned in Jacksonville, and the fact was highly advertised to stress the progressiveness of the city. The city then passed a speed-limit ordinance and the first arrest for exceeding the limit of six miles an hour in the down-town section was on April 30, 1904, when a prominent business man was hauled into court. The next step was the organization of the first local automobile club on March 16, 1905, known as the Jacksonville Automobile and Motor Boat Club, with H. A. McEachern, president; Charles A. Clark and Fred E. Gilbert, vice-presidents; Herbert Race, secretary-treasurer. In the fall of 1905 the number of automobiles owned in Jacksonville had increased to 166, and again this fact became the subject for advertisement.

The automobile races at Atlantic Beach in April, 1906, aroused enthusiastic interest in automobiles generally, and a pronounced impetus to their popularity as a pleasure vehicle followed the completion of the hard road to the beach in 1910; in 1911, a checklist showed 1120 machines owned in Jacksonville.

March 6, 1916, Jacksonville’s first automobile show opened, with a display of 29 different makes, ranging in price from the Cadillac, 7-passenger, standard, at $2085, to the Saxon roadster at $395, f.o.b. factory. The show was of great interest and a success in every way.

Up to America’s entrance into the World war, the automobile was considered more or less a luxury, to be enjoyed by the well-to-do. With the opening of the Government shipyards here, where wages beyond the dream of former years were paid, the working man, who had hitherto ridden his bicycle or taken the street car, in many instances now drove to his job in his own automobile. After the war there was a partial recession, due to economic causes, but this was only temporary. Within the last three years automobile traffic conditions have grown to be a serious matter, with dangerous smash-ups occurring almost daily, and fatal accidents of such frequency as to receive hardly more than passing comment from the general public.