



1907

12,000 passenger cars are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.



The Motor Vehicle Act, requiring motorists to register with the Secretary of State's office, becomes law. For a one-time \$2 fee per vehicle, a motorist receives a circular aluminum seal with a registration number to affix to the vehicle, known as a dashboard disc. It is the motorist's responsibility to furnish license plates. From July 1, 1907, to June 30, 1909, Illinois registers 20,224 automobiles.

Sidney S. Gorham of LaGrange is issued license plate number 1, and Henry W. Austin of Oak Park is issued license plate number 2.

To satisfy the demand for low numbers, plates with one letter and a number up to 20 are issued. Numbers A1 and A2 are issued to Robert D. Clarke of Peoria.

1908

18,500 passenger cars are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.



Due to the 1907 Motor Vehicle Act, all motorists must file a description of a vehicle with the Secretary of State within ten days after ownership of the vehicle. The information includes vehicle make, factory number, style and engine power. The information is stored in a wheel book. The first ten years of the wheel book, except 1911, are currently housed in the Illinois document collection of the Illinois State Library.

1909



25,000 passenger cars are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The one-time vehicle registration fee is changed to an annual fee. An aluminum seal is issued annually. Motorists are required to provide license plates for their vehicles.

Vehicles are re-registered. The numbers assigned are only numeric.

1910



27,500 passenger cars are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The 47th Illinois General Assembly appropriates \$35,000 for the purchase and sale of automobile plates and aluminum seals. An additional \$5,000 is appropriated for the salary and expenses required to implement the chauffeur law, including the purchase of approximately 15,000 chauffeur badges.

An Automobile Department, consisting of four employees, is established within the office of the Secretary of State.

1911



38,269 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The Secretary of State's office creates an Automobile Department, which registers the state's 38,269 vehicles and collects \$105,344 in fees.

The General Assembly directs the Secretary of State to supply and deliver two numbered license plates for each vehicle and one numbered plate for each licensed motor bicycle. The plates are to change color combinations every year and the abbreviated name "ILL" is to appear on the plates.

Aluminum seals continue to be issued. The number matches that of the plates.

Sidney S. Gorham of LaGrange is issued license plate number 1, and Henry W. Austin of Oak Park is issued license plate number 2. They had also been issued these numbers in 1907.

For the first time, motorcycles are required to be registered.

The Illinois Chauffeur Law is amended to require mechanics and chauffeurs to pay a \$5 registration fee and a \$3 annual fee to drive. Chauffeurs are issued a paper driver's license consisting of personal information about the driver and his picture. The license matches each year's license plate color.

1912



68,000 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The front Illinois license plate is perforated, much like a screen, so air can flow through it and cool the car's radiator. The rear plate is solid.



For the first time, dealer license plates are issued.

Records for the number of plates made in 1912 have not been found.

1913

94,600 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The front plate in 1913 is unique. It has no background and is white. The areas around the numbers are cut out and held in place by a steel border. The rear plate has white letters on a blue background. This is the only time when the front and rear plates are two different colors.



Greenduck Co. of Chicago, "Metalcrafters in Metal," receives a contract to make the first 70,000 passenger plates. Printed on the back of the rear plates are instructions for mounting the plate and the manufacturer's name.

In May, a second contract is awarded to the S. G. Adams Stamp and Badge Company of St. Louis. It makes plates beginning with number 70,001. The specifications are the same, "except to be of superior materials and workmanship." The cost is 45 cents per set of plates. This is the first contract of its kind that has been located, although license plates have been made since 1911.

1914

131,100 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.



It is thought that six-digit plates would be too large. After 99,999 is passed, plates with H, K, P, and R prefixes are issued.

Dealer license plates have DEALER as a prefix.

Front plates have slots between the numerals, while rear plates do not. License plates have these features through 1918.

S. G. Adams Stamp and Badge Company of St. Louis, Missouri receives a contract to manufacture all the registration materials. The unit prices are: automobile and dealer plates, 40 cents per set; motorcycle plates, 12 cents; aluminum seals (dashboard discs), 5 cents; chauffeur badges, 20 cents.

1915

180,800 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

Plates have no more than five characters. After 99,999, passenger plates are issued with prefix letters H, K, P, R, T, U, X, Y, and Z.



S.G. Adams Company of St. Louis again receives the contract for making Illinois license plates. However, shortly before the 1915 plates are due to go on sale, an inventory of the delivered plates reveals that 92,550 automobile and 15,000 motorcycle plates have been painted the wrong colors. The Secretary of State's office renegotiates the contract with S. G. Adams and all the plates provided by S. G. Adams, both repainted and new, are sold to the state for 25 cents per set, down from the original order of 34 cents per set.

Illinois registers more automobiles than Germany, France, Canada and Russia combined.

Illinois is one of only seven states to register more than 100,000 vehicles.

1916

248,400 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

All passenger plates have numbers only. Six-digit plates appear for the first time.

Charles W. Shonk Co. of Maywood, Illinois receives the contract for the production of license plates. The company charges 16 cents per set. License plates for 1917 and 1918 are also made by the company.



1917

340,300 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

This is the last year the state issues aluminum registration disks. The disks were first issued in 1907, but the state now prefers to use license plates as the means to register vehicles.



1918

389,700 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The last front license plate with slots is made for the state. Front plates had been made in this manner to allow airflow into the engine to cool a vehicle's radiator vehicles.

Illinois voters approve the first bond issue (\$60 million) for the construction of a statewide system of hard roads.



1919

478,400 passenger vehicles are registered with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The General Assembly votes to divide vehicles into first and second-class divisions, effective in 1920. First-division vehicles are defined as those used for carrying not more than seven people. Second-division vehicles are defined as those used for pulling or carrying freight or carrying more than seven people.

Grimm Stamp and Badge Co. of St. Louis, Missouri makes the license plates.

