

Apperson Automobiles – History and Models

History of Apperson Automobiles

Apperson Brothers Automobile Company was founded in Kokomo, Indiana in 1901 by brothers Edgar and Elmer Apperson. The brothers had previously worked with Elwood Haynes, helping to build one of America's first gasoline-powered cars (the Haynes-Apperson) in the 1890s. In 1901, they split from Haynes and launched their own brand, the Apperson.

Apperson quickly gained a reputation for well-built, powerful vehicles, often marketed for their speed and luxury. The company was among the early adopters of features like: Electric lighting, Four-wheel brakes and high-horsepower engines.

Key Developments and Milestones

The Jack Rabbit (1907–1914)

In 1907, Apperson introduced its most famous line was the Jack Rabbit. Marketed as “the fastest thing on wheels,” the Jack Rabbit was known for its speed and aggressive styling. It became a symbol of performance motoring in the early 20th century.

Later Models and Peak Years (1910s–1920s)

Apperson continued developing larger and more luxurious vehicles, including 6- and 8-cylinder cars. During World War I, they built military vehicles and maintained a strong civilian lineup. In the 1920s, Apperson offered advanced features like V-type radiators and streamlined bodies.

Decline (Late 1920s)

- Like many independent automakers, Apperson struggled to compete with mass-production giants like Ford and GM.
- High production costs and a limited dealer network hurt sales.
- The company ceased operations in **1926** after 25 years of production.

Notable Apperson Models

Model	Years Produced	Key Features
Apperson Touring Car	1901–1906	Early open touring cars with 2- and 4-cylinder engines.
Jack Rabbit	1907–1914	4-cylinder engines, high speed, sleek lines; early performance car.
Roadplane	1913–1915	Advanced 6-cylinder car with aviation-inspired styling.
8-88 (Eight-Eighty-Eight)	1916–1923	Straight-8 engine; emphasized performance and style.
Silver-Apperson	1924–1926	Final model series; upscale sedans and roadsters.

Technological Contributions

One of the first U.S. automakers to push branding based on speed and sportiness. Early adopter of 6-cylinder and straight-8 engines. Use of aviation design elements (notably in the Roadplane) to promote advanced engineering.

Legacy

Although Apperson did not survive the 1920s, it is remembered as one of the pioneering American automakers. Their cars were fast, stylish, and technically ahead of their time. Surviving Apperson vehicles are rare and highly collectible, often seen in museums and vintage car rallies.