

Gaston Motor Company 1924

James E. Gaston Sr. started Gaston Auto Livery in 1914 and the business quickly expanded. By December 1916 he was selling various makes of cars as a sub-dealer for L. G. Adams in Mobile. In August of 1923, Gaston Motor Company was awarded a direct franchise and became an authorized Ford dealer when it sold 64 vehicles, including trucks and tractors. In 1924 needing a bigger showroom, James E. Gaston Sr. started construction of this building on 12 North Section Street. The Fairhope Courier reported that the new showroom was "undoubtedly one of the most attractive fronts in the county and does credit to the builders, Mr. M. Dyson and assistants and to the enterprise of Mr. Gaston. The additional room 30x40 was greatly needed by Mr. Gaston for display of the new cars he handles, his accessories and repair parts." The showroom window was the first plate glass window in Fairhope.

James E. Gaston, Sr.

James E. Gaston Sr. (1890-1966) was the son of Fairhope founder E.B. Gaston. In addition to being President of Gaston Motors for decades, he was very active in community organizations and government. James E. Gaston Sr. was a long time Fairhope City Councilman who served on the Finance and Street Committee. He was a member of the county commission for 16 years, elected to several terms as Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, and held a seat on the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club.

In 1936 the National Ford Dealers organization honored James E. Gaston at their national convention. Henry Ford personally presented him with a 1937 Ford.

During the 50th Anniversary of Gaston Motor Company in 1964, James E. Gaston Jr., who had taken over as President of the company, praised his father for always adhering to his motto of "Service First".

Structural Description

Gaston Motor Company, 12 North Section Street, c. 1924, altered. One-story automotive sales building, now a retail store: stuccoed on the storefront level, with vented metal screen above to parapet; streamlined corner, deep metal framed plate glass show windows. Aluminum-and-glass entry near ell where building abuts the side of its neighbor to the east. Always a significant corner location in Fairhope, it was for many years the show room with adjacent sales lot of the Gaston Motor Company's Ford dealership and built adjacent to Gaston Auto Livery Garage, a business that dated from 1914.