

# Donation of the Month

## City of Rogers License Plate

1977.637.2, 1922 City of Rogers license plate with apple graphic  
Donor: M.E. Love



Every year we stand in line for hours it seems at the state revenue office waiting to pay for a new registration sticker for our license plate. Every car, motorcycle, RV and trailer allowed on the road receives a license plate with a unique set of numbers. Today we are lucky to only replace the sticker; years ago one received a whole new plate. While none of us relish the thought of paying for that small sticker, without them there would be no revenue for road repairs or a way to track your car if it was stolen.

License plates have been around almost as long as the car. In 1903 Massachusetts became the first state to manufacture license plates. These earliest plates were made of leather, wood or porcelain. The first plates in Arkansas date to 1910 and are small metal disks which mounted to the dashboard. Within a few years they were changed to the rectangular shape we are all familiar with; however, the size was different state to state. Finally, in the 1950s the size was standardized to a 12x6 rectangle.

Most states opted for a simple color scheme, such as Arkansas white and red plates. Other states also opted for an iconic color scheme such as Michigan's blue and white or Delaware's dark blue and yellow. However, today many states have changed their color schemes to even include background graphics. In 2006 Arkansas started issuing the current plate with the diamond graphic. Putting an individual stamp on the plates started in Idaho when in 1928 they started manufacturing plates with a graphic of the potato. It wasn't just states making their mark, for a few short years cities in Arkansas issued their own plates. Rogers issued this plate with the apple graphic throughout the 1920s and when the cities identity changed to chickens the apple graphic was replaced by a chicken. Graphics became very popular and by 1931 Pennsylvania manufactured the first custom, vanity or personalized license plate. Today, we find all types of vanity plates with custom sayings or graphics.

These relatively small aluminum rectangles on our cars tend to slip our minds until the renewal notice comes from the State office; however, they are vital to keeping our roads in shape and safe. Without a license plate the police would have no way of tracking your car if someone stole it; nor would he have anyway of knowing if you owned the car. We take the freedom, provided by the car, for granted until something goes wrong. Only then and possibly yearly when we pay for those small stickers do we remember why we paid for that 12x6 piece of aluminum adorning our car's bumper.

"License Plates of the World", World License Plates, featured on <http://www.worldlicenseplates.com/>

"License Plate History", License Plates TV, featured on <http://www.licenseplates.tv/history.html>