



# Sankofa Archives

Did You Know? Tidbits #6

## “Horseless Carriage”

We have all heard of Henry Ford, but how many of us have heard of John Alston?

John Alston of North Carolina invented the first “horseless carriage” or car in December of 1898. This car’s engine was propelled by condensed air, which was more powerful than steam power and which also proved to be inexpensive to operate. As for its running capability, those who saw and tested it said that it could run steadily for one month. According to an 1898 article in the newspaper *Daily Concord Standard* titled “Wonderful Invention” from 1898, “when the machinery is put in motion, it will keep going for an indefinite time. He ran it steadily at one time for a month.”

### References:

[Painter, Tom, and Roger E. Kammerer. 2006. \*Forgotten tales of North Carolina\*. Charleston, SC: History Press, p.19.](#)

[“Wonderful Invention,” \*Daily Concord Standard\*, N.C. Thursday, Dec 1, 1898 \[DigitalNC: North Carolina Newspapers\]](#)