

A Little Car Wash History

The first car wash business was opened in Detroit in 1914, and was called the “Automated Laundry”. Cars were pushed manually through a tunnel, within which workers soaped, rinsed, and dried the vehicle being cleaned. Each worker had a specific task, which gave the wash an assembly-line feel.

In 1940, the first “automated” conveyor-style car wash was opened in Hollywood, California. A winch system was used to pull the car being washed through the cleaning tunnel. Workers were still present in the tunnel to soap, rinse, and dry the car. In 1946, Thomas Simpson brought new technology to the car wash industry through the introduction of a semiautomatic car washing system that included a conveyor belt for moving vehicles through the wash, an overhead sprinkler for washing vehicles, and a 50 HP air blower for drying the car. Just five years later, the Anderson brothers opened the first hands-free automatic car wash in Seattle, Washington. This car wash used machines to do all of the work.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, more car washes appeared with the addition of this new automated technology. Other inventions, such as recirculating water systems, soft cloth friction washing, and wrap-around brushes, also came about during this time.

Car washes continue to evolve to this day to meet the needs of different customers. Various car wash options are available, from self-serve to full-service washes, to meet the specific demands and price points of different customers. Today’s car washes are becoming more environmentally-friendly with the introduction of milder soaps, less water and energy to operate, and water recycling systems that allow up to 95% of used wash water to be reused. It’s likely that the car washes will be unrecognizable in 50 years. [<https://aquabio.co/uncategorized/blog/car-wash-history-from-simple-beginnings-to-modern-day-features/#:~:text=The%20first%20car%20wash%20business,wash%20an%20assembly%20line%20feeling,car%20wash%20business,wash%20an%20assembly%20line%20feeling>]

