

first car wreck in the state when Schaffer ran the thing into a tree and nearly knocked the canopy off of it. On Saturday July 7, Schaffer's auto added yet another first to its growing list by suffering Mississippi's initial blow out. The whole wheel had to be removed and shipped to New Orleans by rail for a new tire to be placed on it.

The next day, according to the *Biloxi Herald*, carriage drivers flooded the beach road

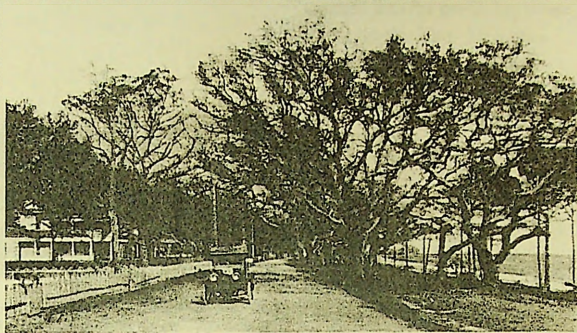
and allowed, "Many who were out taking an airing would have been afraid to come out had the machine been on the streets, as their horses might take fright and run away." Their fear was not unfounded.

On July 23, the auto was back. As it approached a milk wagon of the Gulf Coast Dairy, the horse pulling the wagon panicked and turned the wagon over while the car was still 60 feet away.

Equine fright prompted a law allowing that "any citizen riding or driving a restive horse" could stop any automobile "upon putting up his hand." In fact the coming of the automobile spawned a whole new body of law and jurisprudence extending from the local to the national level. Biloxi first set the speed limit for an automobile in the corporate limits at eight miles per hour. Gulfport declared it unlawful to operate an automobile after nightfall "unless same be lighted with suitable lamps or lanterns."

Government at all levels would have to deal with the construction of suitable roads for the new vehicles. In late 1900, Biloxi began paving its main thoroughfares with brick. Shortly after that, mass transit arrived. The city opened a motor bus line from the depot to the canning factories at a fare of five cents each way. In summer 1901, the editor of the *Biloxi Herald* began agitating for the construction of an electric trolley line from Henderson Point to Point Cadet parallel to the beach road for which he had never stopped agitating.

On July 30, 1901, the Biloxi City Council accepted from the builder a mile-long wooden drawbridge across Back Bay Biloxi to D'Iberville. Hailed as the Mississippi Coast's first modern toll bridge for vehicular traffic, the span passed a supreme test on August 15 when the 1901 Hurricane roared ashore. As the storm raged, Jim Swetman's *Jennie Dorsey* broke loose,



An automobile travels the Old Spanish Trail (U.S. Highway 90), through Long Beach circa 1915. Mississippi's first automobile appeared in Biloxi in 1900 heralding the greatest transportation revolution in Mississippi history. Photo courtesy of the Jon Richard Lewis Postcard Collection.