

Mississippi Coast towns west of Ocean Springs experienced northeast winds and escaped with only a light pounding from the sea. The powerful right front quadrant of the July Storm clipped Pascagoula and then slammed into Mobile.

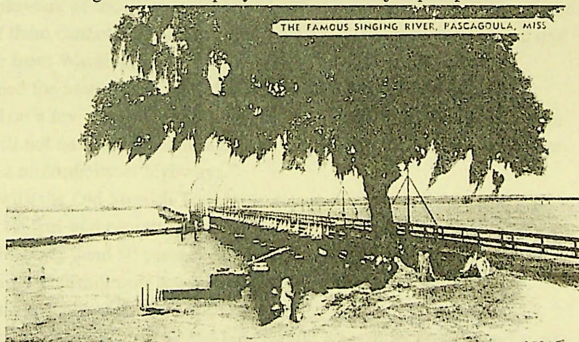
The July Storm, though it did far more damage to the inland forests and crops of south Mississippi than to the Coast, once more pointed out the need for a seawall. Harrison County Board of Supervisors President Icham Reeves, speaking eight days after the July Storm, flatly stated that the county should not expend any great amount of money on paving the beach drive until the seawall was started. According to *Daily Herald* historical writer Ray Thompson in an article written in December 1960, the "contracts had even been let [for the seawall] when it was discovered that the legislative act was illegal." Until the legal problems could be overcome the seawall could not be built.

Harrison County work crews finished grading and shelling the front beach road in January 1917, and Coast towns began laying Warrenite asphalt on their streets and beachfronts. In early 1917, with the seawall in legal limbo, Harrison County began to explore the possibility of dredging a wide sloping sand beach to protect the road.

On April 6, 1917, the winds of war swept over the Coast as the United States declared war on Germany and the Central Powers. The Mississippi Gulf Coast put roadbuilding on hold. Work stopped on the Centennial Highway north of Gulfport as the crews rushed to the colors. Gulfport signed the Mississippi Centennial Exposition grounds over to the U. S. Navy for a training station.

Harrison County did attempt to dredge a sloping sand beach but abandoned the effort in December 1917 six months after it began. The company hired to do the job pumped in some sand near Long Beach but had great difficulty getting it to stay in place.

The ferry-embankment-trestle connection between Pascagoula and Gautier went into service in March 1918. At that point a car could be driven from Mobile to Ocean Springs thence north to D'Iberville where the D'Iberville wooden bridge led south into Biloxi. From there a driver could take the Harrison County front



*The West Pascagoula River trestle bridge looking east from Gautier towards Pascagoula. The Jackson County Supervisors first built a bridge at this site in 1918. The steel super structure is not a draw, but rather a girder span over the navigation channel for small boats. The navigation channel is also defined by the wooden jetty visible at left. Larger boats used the East Pascagoula River. As to the steel girder span, Betty Rodgers of the Jackson County Archives said, "The supervisors sometimes reused such steel spans in other bridges when they were no longer needed on an original bridge." Photo courtesy of the Jon Richard Lewis Postcard Collection.*