

August 2003



Dear Reader:

When Mississippi Transportation Commissioner Wayne Brown first expressed an interest in seeing the Mississippi Department of Transportation develop a written history of the East Pascagoula River Bridge, I immediately agreed. The accurate recording of our major transportation achievements is a worthy pursuit. Not only does the preservation of our history help us to understand why we are the way we are, it can also, if we are attentive, improve our future endeavors.

For Commissioner Brown, there was an obvious choice of who should write this history - Charles L. Sullivan, archivist and historian for Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Perkinstan campus. When contacted and advised as to the nature of the project, Mr. Sullivan immediately agreed stating that he would "love to tell this story" not only of the new high-rise bridge and the other bridges and ferries that preceded it, but also of all the major bridges on the highway between Mobile and New Orleans.

After 25 years of research in south Mississippi, Charles Sullivan has found that the first East Pascagoula River Bridge built in 1928 provided the last link in the Mobile to New Orleans section of a transcontinental highway called the "Old Spanish Trail," which is now known as U.S. Highway 90. The replacement bridges, the first built in 1954 and then the new bridge of today, continue to be bigger and better structures and thus are able to handle increased traffic, which directly impacts our quality of life for the better.

The MDOT staff and I thank not only Mr. Sullivan for his concise yet thorough history, but also the Board of Trustees and Dr. Willis Lott, president of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, for the use of its archives and their archivist in making this publication possible.

Armed with the ability to look back to our past, we are able to maintain a direct course for the future of Mississippi's transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry L. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Larry L. "Butch" Brown
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Transportation