

3-15-2017

Transportation advancements bring regulation

Wendy Bradley Richter

Arkansas State Archives, wendy.richter@arkansas.gov

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/articles>



Part of the [Public History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Richter, Wendy Bradley, "Transportation advancements bring regulation" (2017). *Articles*. 190.
<https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/articles/190>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

Transportation advancements bring regulations

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

In the early twentieth century, a transportation revolution was underway: automobiles were becoming commonplace on the roads.

In 1903, a Hot Springs man drove to Arkadelphia "on his automobile," and just a few years later, by 1910, about twenty-five Arkadelphians owned cars.

However, the transition to the more modern mode of travel took time. For a number of years, horses, wagons, pedestrians, and cars, all occupied the streets of Arkadelphia. With the presence of such a wide variety of vehicles, issues were bound to arise as they all began to share the streets and drivers wrestled with new rules of the road.

Early on, the motorized vehicles traveling the streets were indeed a novelty. When a local citizen bought a car, news of the purchase often made the local newspaper. Even riding in a car might be noted: "Through the kindness of our auto owners, the students of both colleges, especially the young ladies, enjoyed joy rides on Thursday and Friday last

week. Thursday the cars were decorated with Henderson-Brown colors, Friday with Ouachita colors. They paraded around town."

In 1913, an out-of-state car received attention in the paper as well: "An automobile bearing California license No. 43979 passed through Arkadelphia enroute from California to North Carolina."

New regulations became necessary to maintain safety and order, so in 1909 the Arkadelphia City Council placed a speed limit on automobiles: "No person shall ride or drive any automobile or motor cycle on any street or alley within the fire limits of the city faster than 10 mph. No person shall ride or drive any automobile or motor cycle on any street or alley outside the fire limits of this city faster than 15 mph, provided in turning all corners . . . no faster than 10 mph."

A year later the Council reduced the speed limit to eight miles per hour and specified that motor vehicles have a horn or whistle, with drivers to "blow or whistle at the distance of at least 100 feet from each street crossing and continue to blow or whistle until the crossing is past."



IMAGE COURTESY OF CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The wagon lot in downtown Arkadelphia, with cars, trucks, horses, wagons, and pedestrians.

Then, in 1916, the Council passed ordinances requiring driving on the right side of the street and for drivers to hold out a hand to show direction when turning a corner. It was forbidden to "make turns except at crossings." Arkadelphia's Mayor, W. H. Allison, made this announcement, warning

citizens of the consequences of violations: "Notice is hereby given to auto owners that the city traffic ordinance will be rigidly enforced, and that the new city marshal, Carl Thompson, will arrest all drivers who violate the law either as to speeding, honking, or driving to the right."

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clark-countyhistory.org or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245.5332).