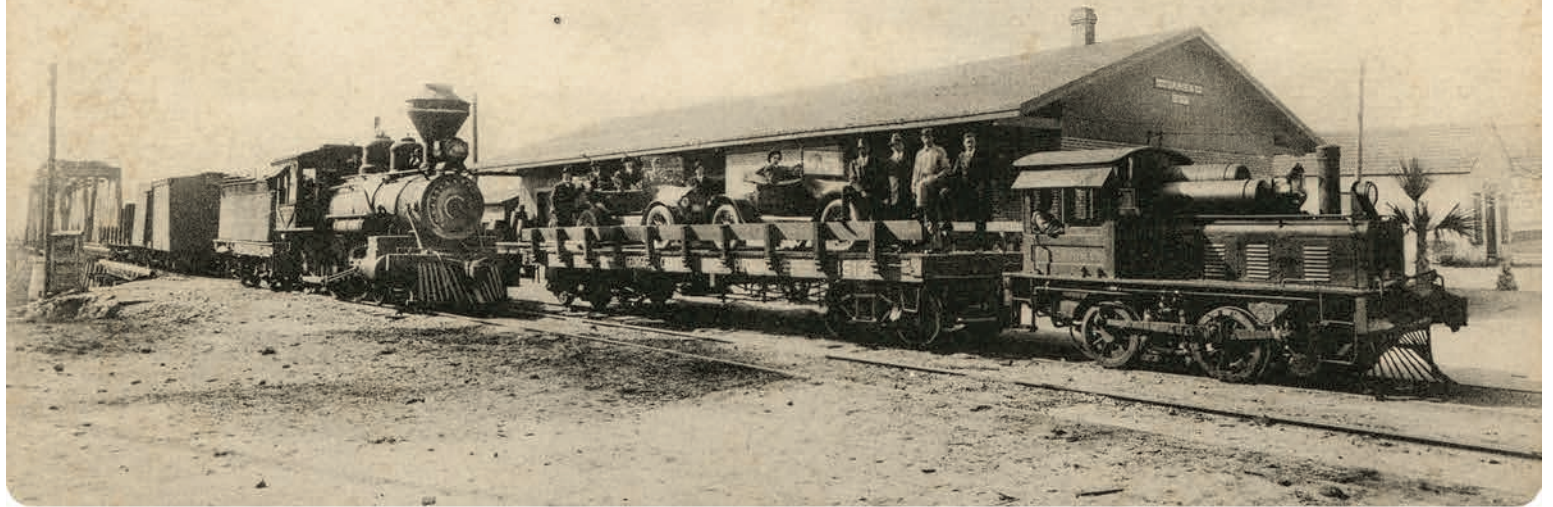


"Coming off the Bridge," Altamaha Delta Transfer. Dixie Highway.



Trains and Automobiles: A Reflection on Early 20th Century Travel

This summer, vacationers are flocking to the Golden Isles via air and interstate. While today's travelers might think nothing of a long weekend trip to our beaches from Savannah or even Atlanta, it's interesting to reflect on how difficult those same journeys would have been a hundred years ago. A "Reflection" by prominent attorney and Georgia legislator Charles Gowen, preserved in the Coastal Georgia Historical Society archives, describes the various travel experiences.

After the turn of the 20th century, an efficient way to travel from Atlanta to Brunswick was on a Southern Railway overnight train carrying "Car 51." This Pullman, or sleeping car was equipped with twelve upper and lower berths, a ladies' lounge, and a gentlemen's smoking

lounge. With Car 51 attached, the Kansas City Special departed Atlanta at 10 p.m. bound for Jacksonville, Florida. When the train reached Jesup, Car 51 was transferred to a local train, arriving in Brunswick at 7:30 a.m. the next morning. At that time, according to Gowen, a trip by car from Atlanta could take "at best a matter of days. High water on the Altamaha and the Ocmulgee might make it impassable."

Trips to Brunswick from Savannah or Jacksonville by rail involved taking a Seaboard train to Thalmann in northwest Glynn County, then connecting with an Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic train. While the schedules were arranged for efficiency, trains were often delayed, causing long waits between transfers.

Travel by car presented different challenges. Before World War I, a trip from Savannah to

Brunswick involved putting one's car on a ferry at Darien to cross the waterways to the south. In 1914, the Georgia Coast & Piedmont Railroad, which had been built to transport timber from the interior of the state, extended its line by 18 miles to Brunswick. An automobile could then be transported by flat rail car from Darien for a charge of \$5. To reach Brunswick from Jacksonville, one had to take an unpaved road and use ferries.

Over the next two decades, paved highways, bridge construction, and even the advent of passenger air service forever transformed travel to Coastal Georgia.

This month's image from the Society's archives shows a postcard featuring a Georgia Coast & Piedmont train at Darien, loaded with cars for the trip across the Altamaha River Delta.