

## **SECTION A**

### **DRIVIN' THE DIXIE: AUTOMOBILE TOURISM IN THE SOUTH**

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#### **BACKGROUND, THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT**

During this country's settlement period, road development tended to be haphazard and sporadic and did not produce a cohesive network of roads. Most roads were crude trails that followed Indian paths or were built by settlers or land companies interested in promoting development. The Federal government constructed or improved a small number of interstate road projects such as the Natchez Trace from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee, built in 1801-1803 and the National Road from Cumberland, Maryland, to Vandalia, Illinois, built between 1811 and 1818. However, during this period, with the exception of "post roads" which were specifically mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, the Federal government did not sponsor extensive road improvements, in part, because many people questioned the constitutionality of the Federal government building roads. Generally speaking, many people who opposed a strong central government also opposed the government building large road projects because they feared that it might erode local rights (Stilgoe 1982:131). Southerners especially feared that a strong central government would eventually threaten slavery (Preston 1991:19).

From the 1830s until the 1850s, numerous private individuals or companies built toll roads or turnpikes for profit throughout the country, which represented most of the large-scale road construction during this period. However, turnpikes became increasingly unpopular throughout the nineteenth century, especially after the 1850s. This dissatisfaction resulted, in large part, as a result of the development of a cohesive network of rail lines that dominated the field of internal improvements from the 1850s until the 1880s when renewed interest in roads emerged. During this period, there was little emphasis on developing a system or network of roads. This was especially true in the South during Reconstruction. In general, by the late nineteenth century, the country's roads were in deplorable condition (Figure A-1).

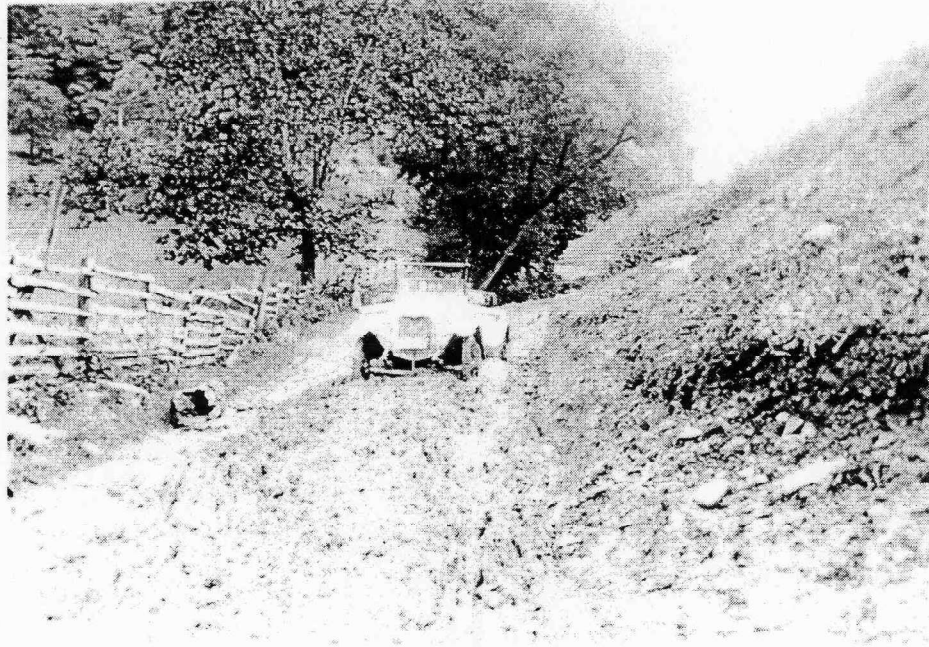


Figure A-1: Dixie Highway Association Scout Car, circa 1915  
(Courtesy Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, Chattanooga Automobile Collection)

Therefore, by the late 1800s, the timing was right for the emergence of a national movement that focused on the improvement of road conditions, first at a local level and later as a national program of transportation corridors. This effort, the Good Roads Movement, spanned the 1880 to 1925 period. As the most significant development affecting highway and bridge construction in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, this movement laid the groundwork that has determined the future of road development throughout the twentieth century.

Supporters of the Good Roads Movement included diverse groups with different motivations such as bicyclists, farmers, railroad companies, automobile manufacturers and industrialists, and hotel owners. The success of the Good Roads Movement resulted in better roads that encouraged people to buy automobiles, which, in turn, created a demand for even greater improvements and highlighted the inadequacy of the country's road system. It quickly became clear that local governments and private entrepreneurs could not provide an adequate road network for the country in the emerging automobile age.

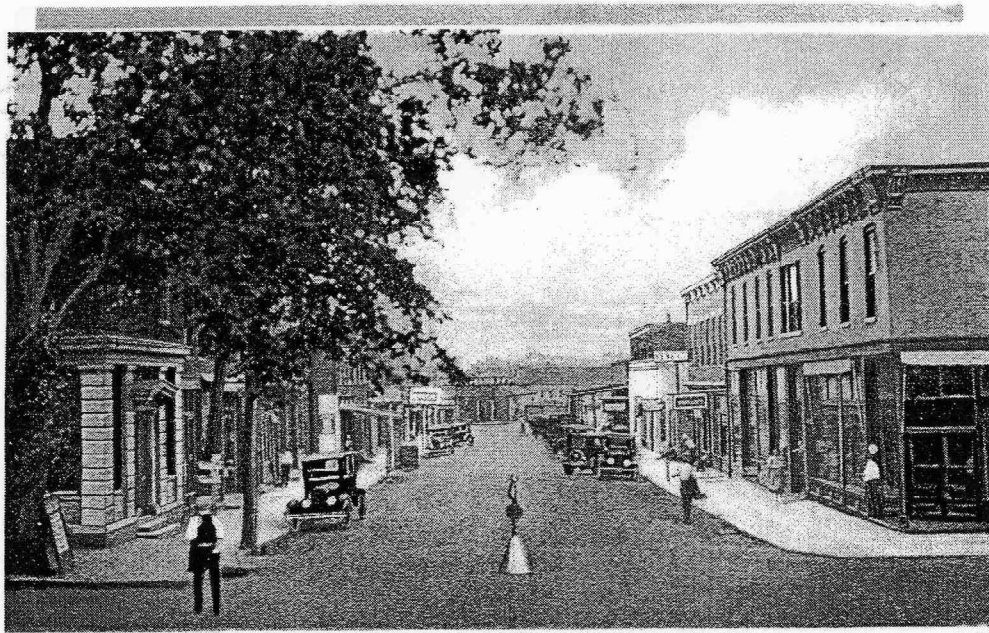
Inevitably, motorists turned to the Federal government for help. However, the constitutionality of the Federal government's involvement in general road construction remained an issue until the mid-1910s. The Supreme Court partially allayed these concerns in 1907 when, in *Wilson vs. Shaw*, the court unanimously declared that the power to construct national highways was essential to the regulation of interstate commerce, a power allocated to the Federal government under the Constitution (Hilles 1958:172). Even so, as President Woodrow Wilson debated signing the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, the first broad act to create a Federal highway program, he was supportive of the program but "gloomy" about the law's constitutionality. With World War I looming, President Wilson became convinced that the need for better roads for national defense made road construction by the Federal government clearly constitutional and, his doubts resolved, signed the act (Pope 1976:68-69). This proved to be the last serious debate over the constitutionality of the principle of the Federal government's involvement in general road construction.

From this time forward, the Federal government slowly became the key player in the Good Roads Movement, "Driven by the movement, rather than leading it, the government of necessity took charge" (Paxson 1946:238). Even then, although supporters of good roads could agree on the principles of the need for road improvements and the appropriateness of Federal funding, they could not agree on the type of roads to be built. As a result, in the early twentieth century, the Good Roads Movement splintered into two factions: those who supported localized farm-to-market roads and those who supported interconnecting highway corridors in the form of transcontinental or interstate routes.

Farmers and railroad interests tended to support localized farm to market (or "farm-to-depot") roads in the form of a network of local roads that provided access from all points of the county to the county seat or to railroad stations (Figure A-2). This type of road network, characterized as "roads radiating out from the county seat like spokes from the hub of a wheel" (Macpherson 1969:195), was the typical approach to road construction by many rural county governments in the late nineteenth century. Several Congressmen, led by Representative Dorsey Shackelford of Missouri who was Chairman of the House Committee on Roads, supported this approach and opposed interstate routes. Representative Shackelford characterized the argument as an economic or class difference pitting the rich automobile touring class against the working class who needed local roads for their livelihood. Representative Shackelford also doubted the economic benefits of interstate highways saying that it was "an idle dream to imagine that auto trucks and automobiles will take the place of railways in the long distance movement of freight or passengers" (Hilles 1958:109). Although the idea of long-distance transportation systems would come to dominate the Federal government's road program after the passage of the Federal Highway

Act of 1921, the initial Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, co-sponsored by Shackelford, supported farm-to-market roads.

The second faction supported highway corridors that crossed the country or linked regions, namely transcontinental or interstate routes. This group initially tended to be composed of people directly or indirectly involved in the automobile industry such as automobile manufacturers or companies that produced materials for automobiles. It also included hotel and restaurant owners who benefited from tourism. The tourism industry formed the core of many of these transcontinental associations, and in effect, the histories of these two movements are closely linked.



MAIN STREET AND DIXIE HIGHWAY SOUTH, ELIZABETHTOWN HARDIN COUNTY, KY.

111479

Figure A-2: Postcard scene of the Dixie Highway in its role as a farm-to-market road in Elizabethtown, Kentucky

As early as 1892, supporters of the Good Roads Movement had proposed the development of transcontinental routes, but little widespread support for this concept existed until the turn of the century. In 1908, Representative Burke Cochran of New York introduced the first Congressional bill that requested Federal funding for the construction of a transcontinental highway. A similar bill was introduced in 1911 (Hilles 1958:107). This shift in emphasis around 1908

resulted in large part from the accessibility of automobiles which for the first time made longer trips possible for larger numbers of people (Preston 1991:38). The automobile had first appeared in the early 1890s, and after Henry Ford perfected the technique of mass production in the early 1900s, the automobile evolved from being primarily a plaything for the rich into being a necessity and a way of life for most people. In 1895 only four motor vehicles were registered in the country but by 1900 the figure had jumped to 8,000; by 1910 to 468,000; by 1920 to 8 million; and by 1930 to 23 million (Fricker 1989:7; Liebs 1985:20).

During the 1910s, as automobiles became a part of the lives of the middle class rather than just the rich, people began to support longer and more cohesive networks of roads such as transcontinental routes. Eventually, in the South, the Good Roads Movement, which had begun as a movement in support of local farm-to-market roads, changed its emphasis to focus primarily on long-distance highways such as the transcontinental and other interstate routes (Preston 1991:41). By the mid-1920s, twelve widely known interstate highways entered the South. The two most traveled were the Bankhead Highway through the Atlantic coastal states and the Dixie Highway along a more Midwestern route through the states of Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida (Preston 1991:129). As historian Howard Preston writes, these highways brought great changes to the South:

The formation of regional highway associations, like the Dixie Highway Association and the Lee Highway Association, promoting well-defined, clearly marked routes leading into the South from other parts of the nation opened the region for the first time to the outside world. These routes gave the South the accessibility it never before had....

[Between the Civil War and World War I,] the numerous writers, artists, and illustrators who depicted Florida as a recreational haven did not directly change it or the South. What did bring about change was the actual throng of automobile tourists attracted by the region's greater accessibility, which highway progressivism (associations vs. local) had made possible. As motorists drove through the South on their way to Florida, their annual assault on paradise also had a lasting and revolutionary cultural impact on the region and its people. Once southerners found automobile tourism to be of great economic importance, the South lost some of its regional distinctiveness and...began to conform to more national cultural standards (Preston 1991:109, 127).

Local leaders considered these interstate highways a boon to local development, mostly due to the anticipated increase in tourism, and actively sought to have their county selected to be on the interstate routes. A noteworthy example of one such businessman was John Lovell, manager of the Hotel Patten in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Lovell was a leader and officer in the Chattanooga Automobile Club, the Dixie Highway Association, and the Lee Highway Association. Through Lovell, the Hotel Patten became the national headquarters of the Dixie Highway Association, and was so noted on the association's letterhead. The hotel was the site of many of its quarterly and annual meetings as well as the weekly meetings of the Chattanooga Automobile Club. Lovell used his influence to see to it "that every highway intersected in front of the Hotel Patten" and, as proof of this, he saw to it that signs outside the hotel marked seven different highways which converged at that point (Figure A-3) (*Chattanooga Times* 1976:D-1).



Figure A-3: Postcard Hotel Patten.

Note the emphasis on its accessibility to major highways and the slogan, "Where the Highways Meet"

For example, at a January 1917 meeting of the Chattanooga Automobile Club, members discussed the importance of opening the Dixie Highway in time for the 1917-1918 tourism season in these terms: "10,000 or more cars could reasonably be expected to make the trip from the North to Florida during the coming fall and winter season if the association is able to announce in advance that the Dixie Highway is ready for through travel to Florida." The members estimated that if only 5,000 cars came through Chattanooga and spent two nights in the city it would generate local revenues of \$100,000 (Chattanooga Automobile Club Minutes [Chattanooga Minutes] 25 January 1917).

Many businessmen and community leaders had little loyalty to a particular highway association. Due to the intense competition for interstate highways, if passed over by one association, local businessmen in a city frequently turned to another association or created one of their own. Consequently, a plethora of these interstate highway promotional organizations flourished between 1915 and 1925, and by 1926 over 600 such organizations existed (Kolwyck 1976:11).

The named highway, as a promotional tool if not as a reality, caught the imagination of communities.... Communities which were by-passed, or which lay in other regions, were inspired to promote highways of their own. In quick time the American map was crisscrossed in defiance of topography and in response to local interest or local vanity. A Dixie Highway, from the strait at Mackinaw [sic] to Miami, made its appearance, with a headquarters, an association, scout cars, and agents (Paxson 1946:241-242).

## **FORMATION OF THE DIXIE HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION**

Formed in 1915, the Dixie Highway Association quickly became one of the most influential interstate organizations in the South. Throughout its existence, the Dixie Highway Association worked in tandem with the Chattanooga Automobile Club. The minutes of the weekly meetings of the Chattanooga Club provide insight into the financial and moral support provided to the Dixie Highway Association that is not revealed in the Dixie's more formal minutes.

Much of the early impetus for a north-south route is credited to Carl Fisher who is often called "the Father of the Dixie Highway." An Indiana native, Fisher developed real estate holdings in Miami Beach, Florida, in the 1910s in what was then little more than an isolated swamp on the southeast tip of the state (Figure A-4). Under Fisher's guidance, Miami Beach became a thriving community of dozens of hotels, golf courses, polo fields, and office buildings. Fisher himself

built four hotels in Miami Beach: the King Cole, the Flamingo, the Nautilus, and the Lincoln.

October, 1921

the DIXIE HIGHWAY

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*“Land of the Seminoles”*

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Beckons You to Motor Down  
the Dixie Highway to

**Miami Beach, Florida**

**Florida's Finest and Best Loved Resort**

The Wonder Spot by the Gulf Stream—Cooled by the  
Breeze of the Seven Seas.

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MIAMI BEACH is a Superb Autumn and Winter  
Resort. Right on the Atlantic Ocean and His-  
toric Gulf Stream—60 miles south of Palm Beach.

A region World-Famed for its delightful Year-  
Round Climate.—Everything Worthwhile in the Great  
Outdoor—Golf, Tennis, Sailing; Bathing, Motor Boating,  
and Fishing in Enchanted Creeks and Lagoons.—  
Riding, Driving or Cycling over smooth oiled coral-  
rock roadways.—Dancing in Magnificent Casinos.—  
Ten Thousand Acres of Picturesque Tropical Scenery.  
A Resort which Offers Every Form of Comfort and  
Recreation.

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There is no better way to rest, to recuperate or once  
more find the dazzling beauties of the world than to take  
a trip to this Sunny Land of South Florida, the Most  
Satisfying Trip in America.

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**Buy a Winter Home at Miami Beach, Florida**

Figure A-4: Advertisement in *The Dixie Highway* for Miami Beach that “Beckons you to Motor Down the Dixie Highway”



However, Fisher knew that an interstate highway from the North to the South through the Midwest was essential to the promotion of Florida and the success of his development, and he convinced Good Roads enthusiast William Gilbreath of Indiana to publicly promote such a highway. In November 1914 Gilbreath attended the fourth annual American Road Congress in Atlanta and presented the idea of the "Cotton Belt Route." Over the next four months, Gilbreath traveled in Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky promoting the route. By the spring of 1915, the men had dropped the name Cotton Belt Route for the "Dixie Highway." However, the group's letterhead featured a bale of cotton. (Figure A-5).

In the spring of 1915 thirteen men "realizing the necessity for placing in the field an organization for the aggressive pushing of this great National project" each pledged \$1,000 to become Founders of the Dixie Highway. These men were Thomas Taggart and Carl G. Fisher of Indiana; George N. Harris of Ohio; C. E. James, Richard Hardy, T. R. Preston, John A. Patten, C. H. Huston, and Colonel A. M. Shook of Tennessee; Coleman du Pont, A. Y. Gowen, Charles Homer, and W. S. Speed. This "membership carries with it life membership in the Dixie Highway Association and exemption for all further dues and assessments" (Dixie Highway Association Minutes [Dixie Minutes] 1915:0).

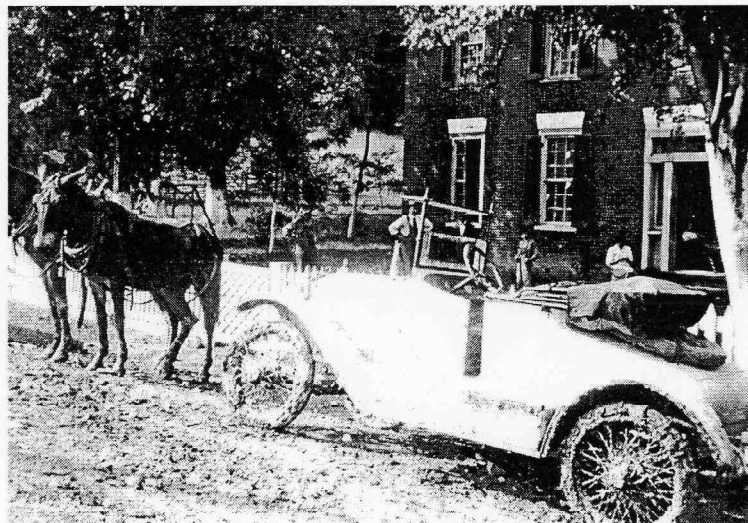


Figure A-5: Photograph of Dixie Highway Association Car after a mule team has pulled it from the mud (Courtesy Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, Chattanooga Automobile Collection). The sign on the door contains the logo of the cotton bale and notes that it is the Dixie Highway Association Scout Car.

Based on this commitment to "defray the expense of a permanent organization, secure surveys, maps, plans, etc.," Chattanooga businessman C. E. James asked Governor Samuel Ralston of Indiana to convene an organization meeting. Governor Ralston agreed and arranged for a meeting, called the Governors Convention, to be held in Chattanooga on 3 April 1915 for the purpose of forming an association to promote the new road, by then officially termed the Dixie Highway (Dixie Minutes 1915:1; Preston 1991:54). Over 5,000 people attended this meeting, including the governor of each state through which the road was proposed to pass, except the governors of Ohio and Florida who sent personal representatives with the authority to act for them (Dixie Minutes 1925:186). These men adopted a resolution creating an organization "for the purpose of constructing a permanent highway from a point on the Lincoln Highway, near Chicago, Ill. via Chattanooga, Tenn., to Miami, Fla" (Dixie Minutes 1915:1). The group adopted a resolution that "the governors of the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida... [would] appoint two impartial representatives from their respective states as Directors of the said Dixie Highway Association, who, with the seven incorporators of the association shall constitute its first Board of Directors" (Dixie Minutes 1915:1).

The first Directors of the Dixie Highway Association were Richard J. Finnegan of Chicago, Illinois; William W. Marr of Springfield, Illinois (Secretary); Carl G. Fisher of Indianapolis, Indiana; Thomas Taggart of French Lick, Indiana; Harry L. Gordon of Cincinnati, Ohio; George W. Harris of Cincinnati, Ohio; Harry B. Hanger of Richmond, Kentucky; Claude B. Mercer, Hardinsburg, Kentucky; Colonel A. M. Shook of Nashville, Tennessee; Michael M. Allison of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Clark Howell of Atlanta, Georgia (Chairman); W. T. Anderson of Macon, Georgia; S. A. Belcher of Miami, Florida; and G. A. Saxon of Tallahassee, Florida (Dixie Minutes 1915:3,5).

The directors met in Chattanooga in May 1915 to formulate a permanent organization with officers and by-laws. At this meeting, the directors approved by-laws that designated Chattanooga as the site of the principal office of the association, which it remained throughout the existence of the association (Dixie Minutes 1915:14). At different times, the Hotel Patten and the First National Bank Building in downtown Chattanooga served as headquarters (J. Newcomb 1925). The directors voted to maintain a full-time executive secretary and to publish a 24-to-48 page monthly magazine entitled *The Dixie Highway*, financed by advertising (Kolwyck 1976:5).

The group elected C. E. James of Chattanooga as the first president, however, he resigned three weeks later over a routing dispute (Dixie Minutes 1915:21; Ochs 1962:2). The directors then elected Judge M. M. Allison of Chattanooga president, a position he held until the association ceased active operation in 1927. Allison was a lawyer and judge from Chattanooga who tirelessly participated in local activities and who was known for his civic and social conscience. He was an energetic, forceful man who was strikingly handsome with great social charm (Ochs 1962:4). His personality was important because Allison seems to have been "the glue" that held the association together and who drove and persuaded people to achieve the ends of the Dixie Highway Association.

The original vice-presidents were H. L. Gordon of Ohio, Thomas Taggart of Indiana, W. T. Anderson of Georgia, G. W. Saxon of Florida, H. B. Hanger of Kentucky, and R. J. Finnegan of Illinois. The association also elected W. R. Long, who was then president of the Chattanooga Automobile Club as secretary-treasurer, a position he retained until 1927 (Dixie Minutes 1915:20; Ochs 1962:1). Other staff included W. S. Gilbreath of Indianapolis, who was the field secretary at a salary of \$300 per month; T. E. Grafton of Rome, Georgia, as assistant to Mr. Allison at a salary of \$200 per month; and V. D. L. Robinson of Chattanooga as assistant secretary at a salary of \$150 per month (Dixie Minutes 1915:23).

### **CHOOSING THE ROUTE OF THE DIXIE HIGHWAY**

The location of the route was a primary source of contention throughout the history of the Dixie Highway Association. Carl Fisher played a pivotal role in the routing process. Fisher had been an early leader in the Lincoln Highway Association, but after differences with Henry Joy, the group's president, Fisher gradually withdrew from active participation in that organization. One key difference between the two men involved routing requirements. Joy envisioned a direct highway from one point to another with as little deviation as possible. Fisher's philosophy was that in selecting a route, the ideals of directness and efficiency had to be balanced with maintaining proximity to large towns and scenic attractions on the route and on the degree of local support (Hokanson 1988:12).

In what was termed a "stormy" meeting in Chattanooga in May 1915, the directors met to select specific routes in each state (Ochs 1962:2). Delegations from different parts of each state, beginning in Florida and moving northward, made presentations within a rigidly defined time frame extolling the virtues of

their route (Dixie Minutes 1915:6-7). The following account describes this meeting:

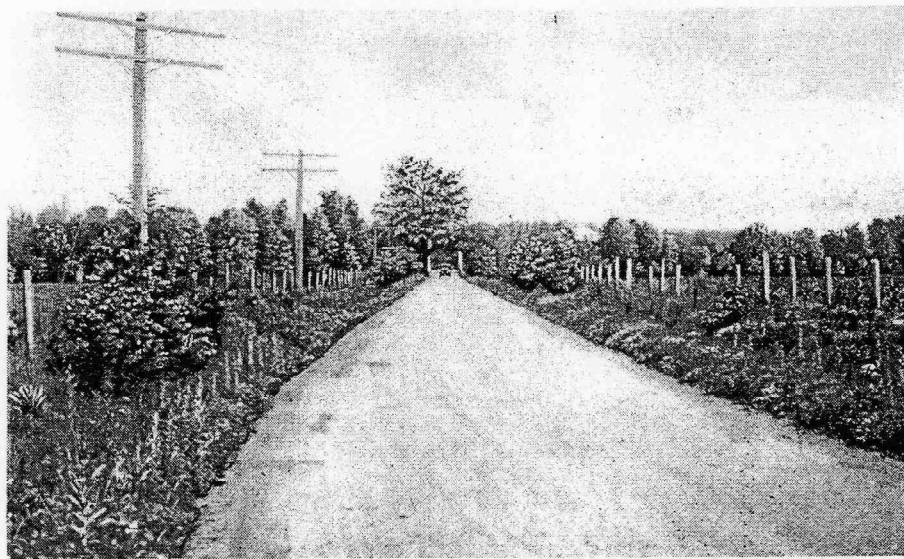
Business leaders and politicians from over one hundred communities throughout Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida converged on the Tennessee city and waged a propaganda war later referred to as the "Second Battle of Chattanooga." Counties that for years had procrastinated in the improvement of their roads were presented at this meeting as progressive, forward-looking communities with magnificent public road systems....So eager were southerners to have their town or county on the Dixie Highway map that, when a delegate rose from his seat at the Chattanooga meeting to proclaim the merits of his community, representatives from rival communities hurled insults and taunting criticisms at him (Preston 1991:54-55).

Carl Fisher quickly clashed with Georgian Clark Howell over the routing approach on the Dixie Highway, specifically, over the timing of the selection of the route. Fisher wanted a specific route designated which he believed would be beneficial to his Miami Beach development (Figure A-6). Howell wanted to postpone a decision until after the counties had built a section of the road from



Figure A-6: Advertisement in *The Dixie Highway* for The Flamingo, one of Carl Fisher's hotels in Miami Beach (March 1921)

which the association could choose the best route. After a five-hour meeting, Howell and Fisher emerged from the meeting room of the Hamilton County Courthouse to make the startling announcement that the Dixie Highway would not be one continuous road as was the vast majority of the other interstate routes (Preston 1991:56-57). Rather, the directors agreed to have two north-south routes totaling over 4,000 miles between the Lincoln Highway near Chicago and Miami: the Western Division and Eastern Division (Dixie Minutes 1915:9, 14). [Note: Currently, the interstate route from Sault Sainte Marie to Miami is about 1,850 miles.] The Western Division ran through Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Tallahassee (Figure A-7). The Eastern Division ran through Detroit, Dayton, Cincinnati, Lexington, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Savannah, and Jacksonville. The two routes merged to form a common alignment in Chattanooga and in the Atlanta area.



SCENE ON DIXIE HIGHWAY SOUTHEAST OF SHELBYVILLE, TENN.

Figure A-7: Postcard of Dixie Highway near Shelbyville, Tennessee, on the Western Division

Occasionally, the minutes of the Dixie Highway Association provide detailed information about the route but not typically. The association designated "the high points only of the Dixie Highway." The two directors from the specific state selected the actual alignment between these cities. If they could not agree, a third person acted as arbiter, and a two-thirds vote ruled (Dixie Minutes 1915:11). The minutes include virtually none of these debates or specific routing discussions.

The Dixie Highway Association also approved the concept of separate Dixie Highway Branches which connected the two routes of the Dixie Highway or connected the Dixie Highway with other roads (Dixie Minutes 1915:8). Dixie Highway Branches connecting the Eastern and Western Divisions were located between Indianapolis and Dayton and between Macon and St. Augustine. The association also supported the designation of side roads to special attractions as "detour" routes. For instance, the association designated an official Dixie Highway Detour between Asheville and Hendersonville via Chimney Rock in North Carolina due to the "scenic attractions" of Chimney Rock which deserved "special consideration." The association also approved the detour designation for a twenty-four mile scenic tour around "the lake near Charlevoix" in Michigan (Dixie Minutes 1919:68-69).

At the May 1915 meeting the directors also decided to add a northern loop to Mackinac, Michigan, to connect the Eastern and Western Divisions (Dixie Minutes 1915:11). In May 1917 the Dixie Highway Association provisionally extended the northern terminus to Sault Sainte Marie on the Canadian border (Dixie Minutes 1917:51). The directors officially approved this terminus in September 1921 (Dixie Minutes 1921:85-86).

A group of seventy-five representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia attended the May 1918 meeting of the Board of Directors to request the association to consider another route on the Dixie Highway. The board suspended the regular order of business to hear their proposal concerning an alternate route from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Waynesboro, Georgia. Speakers for the group included Colonel W. A. Smith of Hendersonville, North Carolina; Wallace B. Pierce of Augusta, Georgia; N. Buckner, Secretary of the Board of Trade of Asheville, North Carolina; D. H. Winslow the state engineer of maintenance for the state of North Carolina; and R. N. Broadwater of Edgefield, South Carolina. The group stated that they were united "as to the routing from Knoxville, Tenn., to Greeneville, S. C., but would request the Board to decide between the Greenwood-Edgefield and the Abbeville-McCormick routings from Greeneville to Augusta" (Dixie Minutes 1918:58). The group presented general arguments and gave an account of the historical attractions along the route. The group also supplied a detailed report on present road conditions in each county

as well as written guarantees for the completion of the highway and its maintenance. The group guaranteed that if designated as the Dixie Highway, the route would be completed as "an all year road" by 1 June 1919 and that every county would provide permanent maintenance. The group also promised payment of at least \$5,000 within four months as a sign of their willingness to bear their share of expenses for maintaining the Dixie Highway Association.

Consequently, the board unanimously approved the designation of a third major route called the Carolina Division through East Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (Dixie Minutes 1918:57-58). The Carolina Division began in Knoxville and passed through Dandridge, Newport, Asheville, Greeneville, Greenwood, and Augusta before tying back into the Eastern Division route at Waynesboro, Georgia (Figure A-8).

These additional sections of the Dixie Highway brought the total length to over 5,700 miles (*The Dixie Highway* May 1924:3,11). Collectively, these routes passed through about 200 counties in eleven states: 35 counties in Michigan, 5 counties in Illinois, 21 counties in Indiana, 10 counties in Ohio, 19 counties in Kentucky, 1 county in Virginia, 20 counties in Tennessee, 3 counties in North Carolina, 6 counties in South Carolina, 48 counties in Georgia, and 30 counties in Florida. However, it should be noted that the route varied so the actual number of counties fluctuated.

The route of the Dixie Highway reflected the views of Fisher who served on the Dixie Highway Association's Route Committee with Allison, Hanger, and Marr (Dixie Minutes 1915:3). As Drake Hokanson points out, the Dixie Highway was a "wandering peavine" that contained

several braided branches that began in northern Michigan and at Chicago, amid the grand homes of the very people [Fisher] hoped to draw south. The tendrils wound their way south and east through Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, and finally ended at Fisher's door in Miami....The Dixie placed little value on directness, and with multiple routes it was diffuse, dilute, and subject to all manner of political pressures (Hokanson 1988:21).



Figure A-8:  
Map of the Dixie Highway  
(The Dixie Highway October 1921)



Political considerations included the necessity of obtaining local support. The minutes of the Dixie Highway Association do not explicitly state that routing priority was given to central locations through counties and through county seats to gain local support, but such practical considerations can be inferred. Prior to the availability of Federal money, county governments were entirely responsible for building and maintaining the route, and even after Federal aid became available, the county had to provide a match. Local support was essential, and a central route through a county helped to generate interest and support. For example, the route of the Dixie Highway in Tennessee runs through twenty counties, and of these, the route has a central location running through the county seat in sixteen counties and through a large town in one other county.

As previously noted, numerous highway associations existed across the country, and individuals often served within multiple associations. Although the routes overlapped, the associations apparently tried not to alienate other groups intentionally. The minutes of the Dixie Highway Association record an agreement with the Old Spanish Trail that illustrates these conflicts. Mr. H. B. Ayers of Texas attended a meeting of the board in 1922 and called attention

to the fact that the link of the Dixie Highway between Jacksonville and Tallahassee had been for many years, designated as a part of the Old Spanish Trail. Mr. Ayers requested that the Dixie Highway revoke the designation of this link as a part of the Dixie Highway and cede the same to the Old Spanish Trail Association. It was finally conceded that the Old Spanish Trail held superior title and upon motion the designation of this link was revoked. Thereupon Mr. Ayers stated that in consideration of the action of the Board of Directors in revoking this link between Jacksonville and Tallahassee, the Old Spanish Trail would wave claim to that part of the Dixie Highway between Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Fla (Dixie Minutes 1922:107).

The Dixie Highway Association had a Committee on Road Specifications originally composed of Carl Fisher and W. W. Marr (Dixie Minutes 1915:20). The association allowed for variations in the roads from county to county but stipulated that roads must meet certain specifications or lose the Dixie Highway designation (Dixie Minutes 1915:22).

This policy of revoking the designation if the counties did not improve their roads to a certain agreed upon level within a reasonable time contributed to on-going controversies about the route. The desire by towns and cities to be located on a major interstate route coupled with the ever-changing but often poor road conditions on the designated route exacerbated competition for the Dixie

Highway. Controversies over routing alignments are found throughout the Dixie Highway minutes in the following years, and rival factions often attended the meetings of the Dixie Highway Association seeking changes in the Dixie Highway route.

For instance, due to poor road conditions in Georgia, the association revoked the Dixie Highway designation on the original Atlanta to Macon route through Indian Springs in July 1916 (Dixie Minutes 1916:36-37). The association frequently threatened local communities that they would lose the route if road conditions were not improved shortly. Local groups lobbied to have the Dixie Highway rerouted from the original Springfield (Tennessee)-Bowling Green (Kentucky) alignment through Russellville to a different alignment through Franklin, Kentucky (Dixie Minutes 1924:124-125, 152). The minutes do not indicate that the effort was successful, but upon the creation of the numbered U.S. highway system, the coveted U.S. 31W designation was given to the more direct route through Franklin. In May 1923 the Dixie Highway Association reversed its policy of designating sections based on verbal commitments and began requiring that new sections must be completed before the association would officially designate them as part of the Dixie Highway (Dixie Minutes 1923:115). Figure A-9 shows sections of the Dixie Highway in Kentucky.

Eventually, the task of completing such a diverse road with multiple and redundant corridors proved impractical. In 1922, the association agreed to concentrate its work on only one line and expend their efforts on it until finished. Only then would the association work on the other line and branches (Dixie Minutes 1922:103-104).

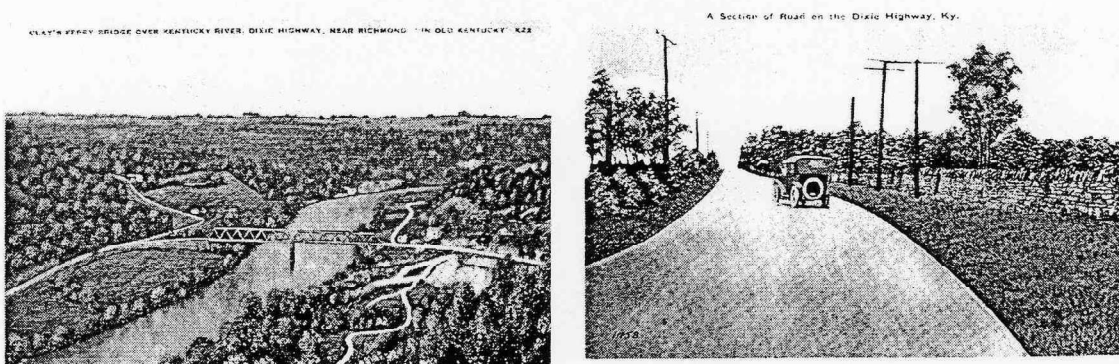


Figure A-9: Postcards of the Dixie Highway in Kentucky

## PROMOTION OF THE DIXIE HIGHWAY

Selecting the route of the Dixie Highway, though controversial and difficult, was only the first step for the Dixie Highway Association. It also faced the enormous task of trying to build a 5,700-mile road through about two hundred counties in eleven states--and in 1915 virtually no Federal money was available for road construction. The Federal aid acts in 1916 and 1921 provided limited funding but still required a fifty percent local or state match. Therefore, throughout the existence of the association, much of its efforts focused on acquiring funds, either through private donations, or from cities or counties, the state, or the Federal government.

Due to the complex funding process, President Allison "spent most of his time as fund-raiser and lobbyist for the highway. On more than one occasion he became so infuriated by state legislatures' failure to appropriate the funds necessary to build sections of the route that he threatened to resign" (Preston 1991:60). Although the minutes of the Dixie Highway Association do not indicate this frustration, the minutes of the Chattanooga Automobile Club do. In 1919 Allison considered resigning after the defeat of a \$50 million road bond, but the association members convinced him to remain (Chattanooga Minutes 10 April 1919). From January to May of 1921, the minutes of the Chattanooga Automobile Club contain discussions concerning the strong possibility that should Judge Allison retire as president of the Dixie Highway Association, the headquarters would be moved from Chattanooga to the home of the next president. In an effort to avoid such a development, members of the Chattanooga Automobile Club tried to find another Chattanooga to accept the position of president but instead finally managed to convince Judge Allison to remain in that capacity (Chattanooga Minutes 10 February, 7, 14 April, 26 May 1921).

Raising money and encouraging local construction efforts required promotional efforts. Events were elaborate and planned to be as conspicuous as possible. For example, immediately after the formation of the Dixie Highway Association in April 1915, the City of Miami announced plans to hold a celebration on the Fourth of July to commemorate the creation of the Dixie Highway. The Board of Directors approved and sanctioned the celebration as the official commemoration celebration of the creation of the Dixie Highway (Dixie Minutes 1915:12). Figure A-10 shows a photograph from the Chattanooga Automobile Collection of opening ceremonies of a bridge in Kentucky.

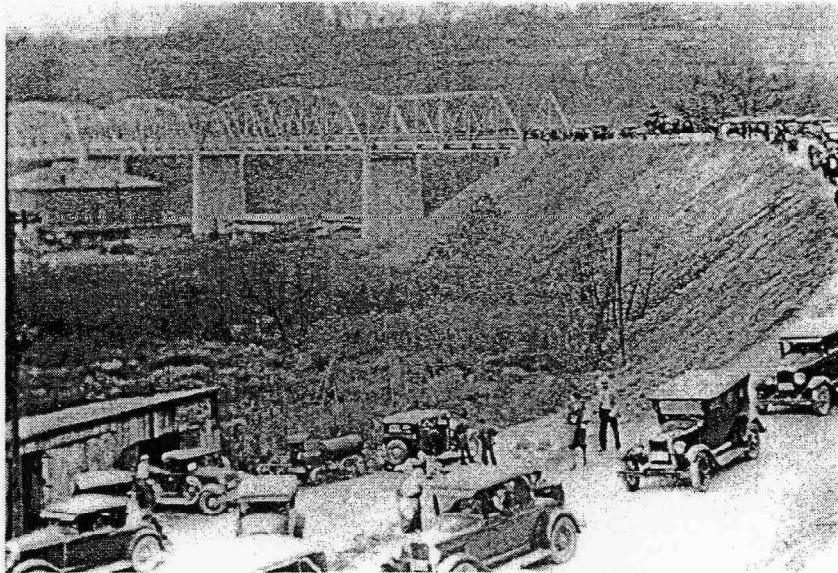


Figure A-10: Ceremonies for opening of Burnside Bridge, Pulaski County, Kentucky, (Courtesy Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, Chattanooga Automobile Collection). This bridge was located along the Cincinnati-Lookout Mountain Air Line Highway, later designated as U.S. 27. In 1921 the Chattanooga Automobile Club organized the Cincinnati-Lookout Mountain Air Line Highway Association, also called the Dixie Air Line Highway. This route was one hundred miles shorter than the Western Division of the Dixie Highway, and its supporters approached the Dixie Highway Association in 1921 to request that the route be designated as part of the Dixie Highway, but the highway association refused (Chattanooga Minutes 21 September 1921; Dixie Minutes 1921:90). The inundation of Lake Cumberland in 1950 flooded the town of Burnside.

Beginning in 1915, the association published a monthly magazine 24-to-48 pages long, roughly 10-by-12 inches in size, titled *The Dixie Highway*, financed by advertising (Kolwyck 1976:5). The front covers often featured color graphics. Each issue contained articles about the Dixie Highway and about general road issues, for example, articles about other roads such as the Lee Highway or about overnight camping facilities or road conditions. Ads a few inches in size or full page ads described resources along the Dixie Highway. A representative full page ad is one for the Hotel Gibson in Cincinnati, the "Official Cincinnati Terminus of the Dixie Highway, Figure A-11 (*The Dixie Highway February 1924:22*). Beginning in 1925, advertising was insufficient to pay for publication of the magazine, but the association did not formally discontinue publication until September 1926 (Dixie Minutes 1926:193-194, 196).

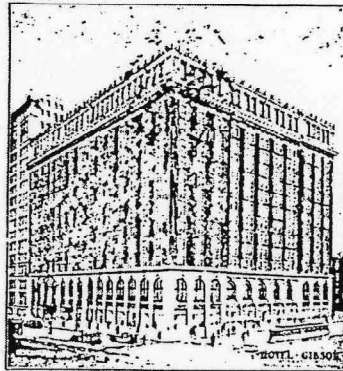


CINCINNATI'S  
**HOTEL GIBSON**

ONE THOUSAND ROOMS

Moderate Prices

-----  
**THE FLORENTINE DINING ROOM**  
Pronounced by Experts to be the Finest Room in America



POPULAR PRICE RESTAURANT  
Open Always

-----  
Official Cincinnati Terminus of the  
Dixie Highway

Figure A-11: Advertisement in *The Dixie Highway* for the Hotel Gibson in Cincinnati, "the official Cincinnati Terminus of the Dixie Highway" (February 1924:22)

Many states had local chapters of the Dixie Highway Association, for instance, the Louisville to Nashville Division (Dixie Minutes 1916:42). By 1924, twelve Dixie Highway chapters existed and seven more were in the process of being organized (Dixie Minutes 1924:149-150). The Dixie Highway Association also sent letters to seventy-four Rotary Clubs along the Dixie Highway, and forty of these clubs pledged "hearty cooperation," which included the publication of a special Rotary Club issue of *The Dixie Highway* magazine (Dixie Minutes 1924:126).

Publicizing the Dixie Highway required familiarizing people with the route, and maps were essential. At the October 1915 meeting of the Board of Directors, Carl Fisher noted this issue and proposed to give "Rand-McNally and all other manufacturers of accredited maps" an authorized map of the highway as soon as possible (Dixie Minutes 1915:28). In July 1916 the association announced the publication of its first complete official map (Dixie Minutes 1916:37), and in May 1917 met with a representative from a map company to discuss publishing a "strip map" of the Dixie Highway (Dixie Minutes 1917:53). Figure A-12 contains a section of a circa 1950s strip map of the Dixie Highway. *The Dixie Highway* contained both national and more detailed local maps of the route and sometimes detailed information about sections of the road. For instance, the October 1921 issue contained a detailed log for what was then, in the opinion of the Chattanooga Automobile Club, the best route between Nashville and Chattanooga giving log miles and local landmarks as reference points. With the exceptions of detours through Smyrna and Lynchburg due to road construction, the route is that of the Dixie Highway. Beginning at Log Mile 38.2 (from Nashville), a sample reads:

MURFREESBORO--Turn left around Court House. Turn right and follow straight macadam pike to Shelbyville. 39.3 Cross R. R. 40.0--Pass Fair Grounds and race track on right. 41.2--Iron bridge. 47.3--Pass church on right. 49.0--Pass church on right. 51.6--Cross roads. Straight ahead. Pass store on right (*The Dixie Highway* October 1921:18-23).

The association's members often arranged well-publicized tours of the Dixie Highway route to inspect it as well as to promote it. This account tells of a 1915 tour:

On October 24, 1915, five months after he became president, Judge Allison arrived in Miami with his little motorcade after a 1,700-mile trip over the intended Dixie Highway Route from Chicago. It took 16 days....

YOUR FREE STRIP MAP

# DIXIE

*highway*

U. S.  
25

U. S.  
25W

U. S.  
411

U. S.  
19

NORTH or SOUTH . . . YOUR FAVORITE ROUTE TO  
FLORIDA or the GREAT SMOKIES

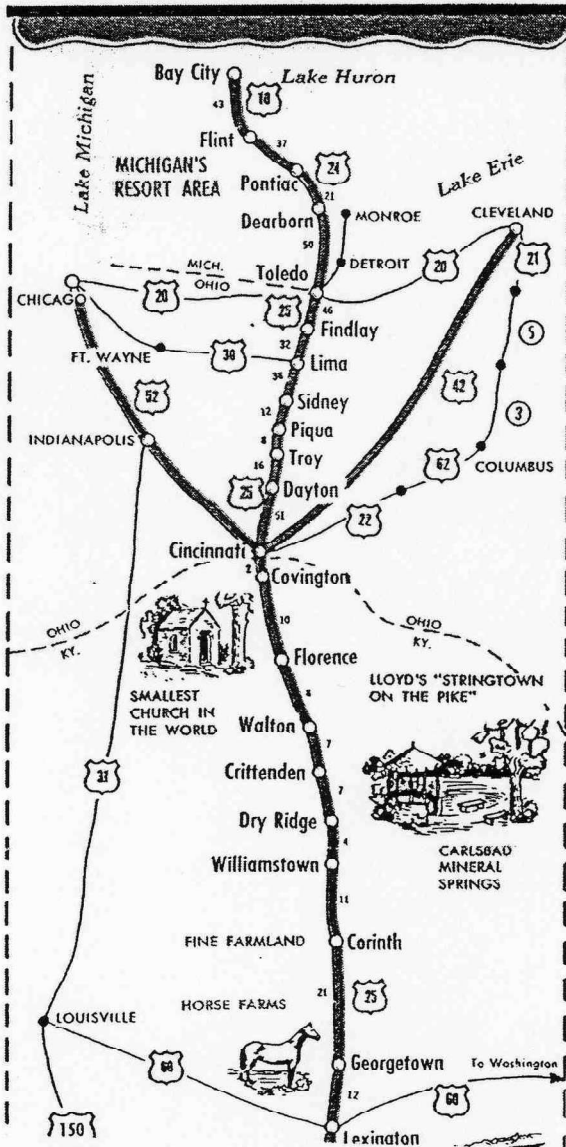


Figure A-12  
Circa 1950s Strip Map  
of the  
Dixie Highway

On one of the Tennessee mountain stretches, as the Judge said later, his car, with Carl Fisher also in it, slid helplessly in the slime, careened toward a steep cliff and hung there, half over. Fisher went for a rope. Judge Allison tied it to a tree and pulled mightily while Fisher gunned the throttle and finally it pulled back.

They made it to Florida.

And Mrs. Allison was along, the only woman to make the whole trip.

In Miami, a newspaper woman wrote that, on going to Mrs. Allison's hotel for an interview, she expected to find the Chattanooga prostrate with exhaustion. Mrs. A. had gone on an auto ride to the beach! The reporter wrote: "I began to understand the tremendous power and enthusiasm this first woman tourist on the Dixie Highway possesses" (Ochs 1962:6-7).

The group organized many other tours and motorcades, often in conjunction with the opening of a portion of the road or a bridge (see Figure A-13). In spite of difficult road conditions, for a week-long tour between Cincinnati and Jacksonville in October 1916, the group procured a band to accompany them for the entire trip (Dixie Minutes 1916:35). The Tamiami Trail, which lay between Tampa and Miami, overlapped the Dixie Highway between Fort Myers and Miami, and the Dixie Highway Association helped sponsor elaborate dedication ceremonies in March 1924 when this road, which included a one and one-half mile long bridge over the Caloosahatchee River at Fort Myers, and the West Coast Highway opened. The celebration included two cumulative motorcades as well as eight major and nine minor road meetings along the route of the motorcades (*The Dixie Highway* February 1924:5).

In May 1925, with substantial portions of the road built, the Dixie Highway Association staged an elaborate Jubilee Motorcade in honor of its tenth anniversary. The Jubilee Motorcade, a combination of celebration of past achievements and promotion of unfinished business, drove from Sault Sainte Marie to Miami (Dixie Minutes 1925:179). Each state participated in the motorcade and staged various celebrations to which the *New York Times* gave detailed coverage.



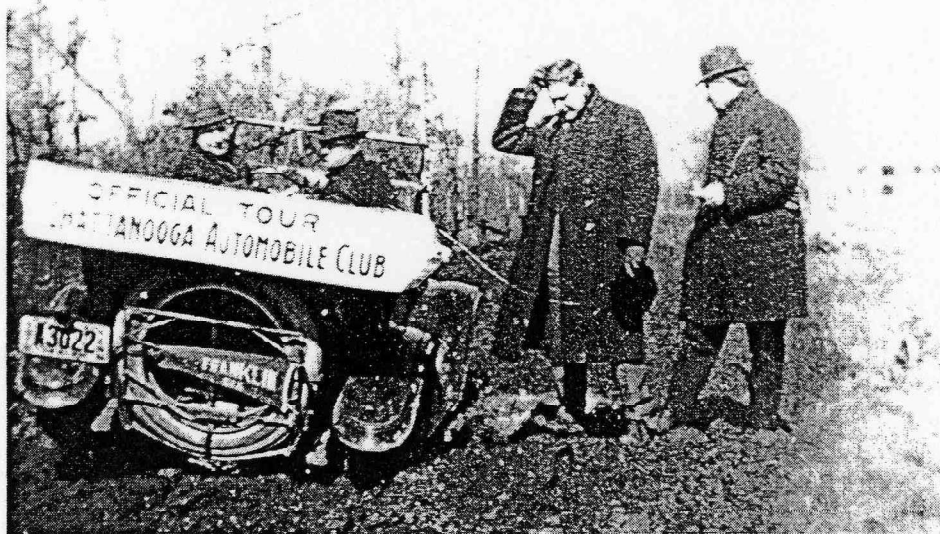


Figure A-13: Photograph of a Chattanooga Automobile Club Car mired in the mud on an "Official Tour" (Courtesy Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, Chattanooga Automobile Collection)

Coverage by the *New York Times* may seem surprising until one remembers that Adolph Ochs, owner and publisher of the *New York Times* and owner of the *Chattanooga Times*, was a businessman from Chattanooga whose extended family continued to live in Chattanooga. Ochs and his brother Milton, who lived in Chattanooga, were actively involved in the highway association movement. Adolph Ochs maintained close ties to Chattanooga and contributed to many local civic interests. For example, Ochs had been instrumental in the 1890s creation of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park and had played a pivotal role in the transfer of Cravens Terrace and Lookout Point (**on tour #2**) to the park. His efforts in the 1920s and 1930s led to the donation of an additional 2,700 acres to the park in 1935 after his death. In an effort to increase tourism in Chattanooga in the Lookout Mountain area, Hamilton County needed to repair the St. Elmo Turnpike (**on tour #2**), off the Dixie Highway, and Ochs advanced the county \$150,000 for the project, which was being built in conjunction with efforts to construct the Lookout Mountain Scenic Highway. After the county completed repairs to the turnpike in 1931, the county named the road in honor of Ochs and his brother Milton. Ochs stipulated that the \$150,000 advance be repaid to the Chattanooga Mountain Park Association. The 1940s visitors center (**on tour #2**) at Point Park on Lookout Mountain is named for Ochs.

Although women actively worked in the Good Roads Movement, most automobile clubs excluded them from direct membership. During this period, gender-segregated women's automobile clubs existed in California, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The American Automobile Association allowed women as members by the 1910s, but the Automobile Club of America did not allow women as members until 1914 and then continued to deny them voting privileges and a share of equity in club property (Scharff 1991:70). There are many images in print of the Flapper in her convertible and many automobile sales promotions included women. However, driving "in the 1920s, must thus be seen as a male-dominated activity, just as access to motorcars and ability to drive them appear to have been the privileges of a minority of women" (Scharff 1991:117).

The Dixie Highway Association also supported a gender segregated policy, sponsoring the formation of Women's Auxiliary Clubs in each state under the National Dixie Highway Auxiliary. Apparently the first of these was formed in Macon, Georgia, in 1916 (Dixie Minutes 1916:31, 1924:121).

Even so, the formation of these clubs clearly indicate that many women actively participated in the Good Roads Movement. An example is Josephine Anderson Pearson of Gallatin, Tennessee. Pearson was an ardent opponent of women's suffrage and served as president from 1916 to 1920 of the Tennessee State Association Opposed to Woman's Suffrage and as president in 1920 of the Southern Woman's League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Yet, Pearson was strongly committed to good roads as a means to free women "from isolation and mud! We women are worse than slaves, considering everything that the negroes were before the Civil War--slaves to the indifference of their men-folks...." (Preston 1991:17). Many women also supported the Good Roads Movement because better access to schools was seen as a component of education reform, another cornerstone of the Progressive movement. In Tennessee, interested citizens formed the Tennessee Good Roads Association in January 1922. The association had a separate Women's Division, which by 1924 had a chapter in most of Tennessee's counties. Women sponsored luncheons to promote bond issues to fund the state highway system in 1923 in Nashville and Knoxville which, respectively, 550 and 400 women attended. They lobbied for support at county court meetings, entered parades, sponsored essay contests in the school systems, and had "Good Road" booths at fairs (*Tennessee Highways* March 1924:9).

Even World War I, during which time many counties ceased road and bridge construction due to shortages in materials, did not prevent the Dixie Highway Association and other highway associations from promoting their routes. Rather, the associations used the war to illustrate the need for better roads for the transportation of troops and materials throughout the country and stressed that their routes were essential for national defense. The minutes of the Chattanooga Automobile Club contain repeated references to the importance of their road projects to the war effort. For example, on 7 June 1917 the minutes note the need for the marking of both the Dalton and Rome routes of the Dixie Highway between Chattanooga and Atlanta because they connected military camps (Chattanooga Minutes 7 June 1917).

The minutes of the Dixie Highway Association also stress the importance of completing the highway as part of the war effort. For instance, Kentucky did not allocate any of its 1917 Federal aid to the Dixie Highway until the association lobbied for the money "advising [the state highway commissioner] of the greater military importance of the completion of the Dixie Highway" after which he diverted a portion of the Federal funds to the Dixie Highway (Dixie Minutes 1917:48; see also 1918:60-61). The March 1918 cover of the monthly magazine *The Dixie Highway* graphically stressed that the Dixie Highway was "A National Necessity," and the issue included a full page editorial cartoon showing supply trucks on the Dixie Highway while a smiling Uncle Sam stood nearby stating, "The 'DIXIE' is my right hand man" (Figure A-14).

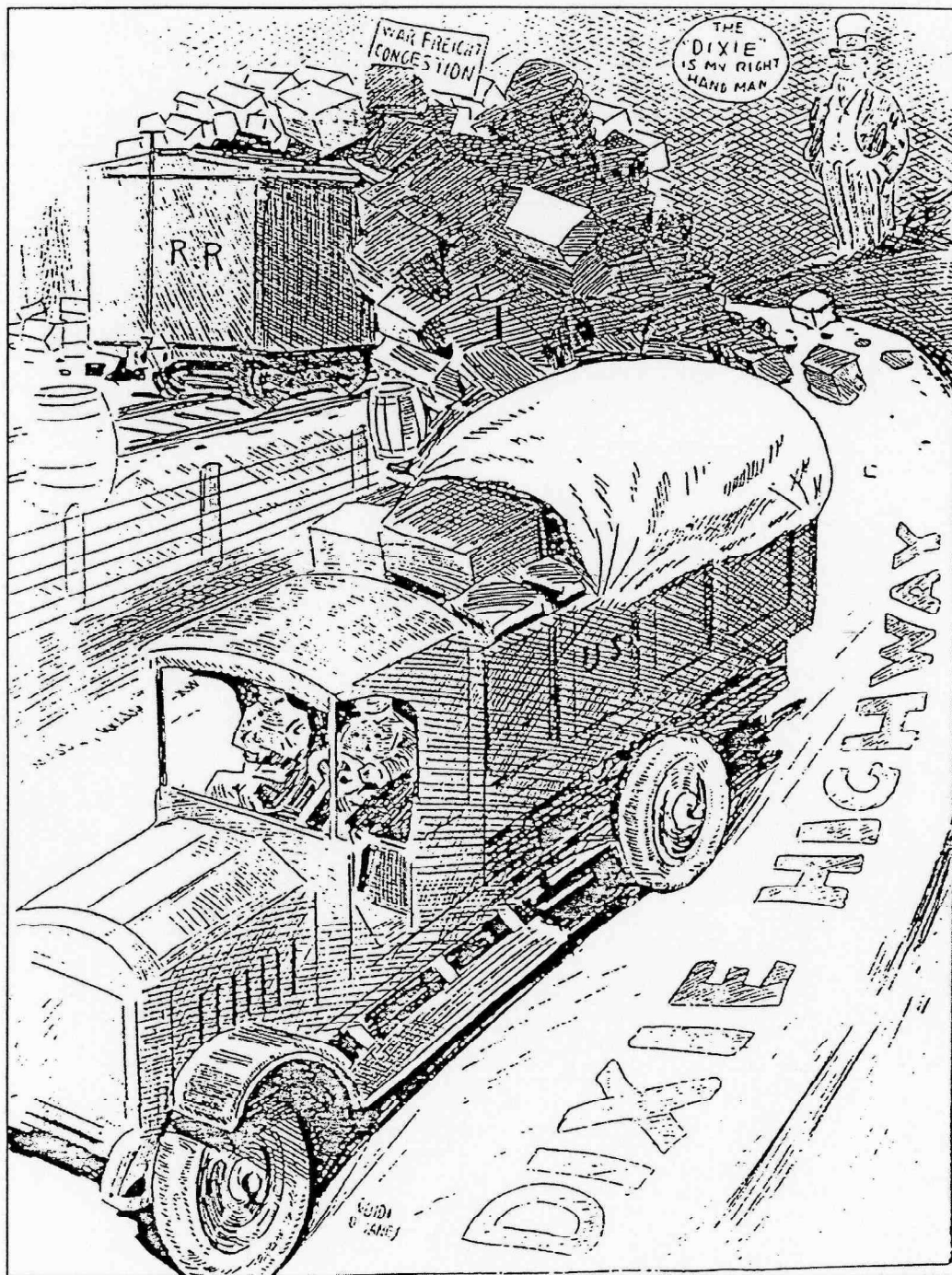


Figure A-14: Editorial cartoon in *The Dixie Highway* emphasizing the necessity of the Dixie Highway for the war effort (March 1918)

## **TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The symbiotic relationship between the tourism industry and the highway associations resulted in automobile associations promoting the development of tourist sites as a way to increase the perceived need for better roads. During the early twentieth century period, no national parks existed east of the Mississippi River (with the exception of the national military parks under the War Department), and civic leaders lobbied extensively for the Federal government to designate national parks in the East. For instance, the Chattanooga Automobile Club initially urged the development of a national park in Polk County (which was not on the Dixie Highway) along the Ocoee River Gorge (the site of white water activities of the 1996 Summer Olympics). If successful it would have resulted in both better roads and income from tourism.

Rather than dilute the efforts of the highway associations in the region, the Chattanooga Automobile Club stopped pursuing the Polk County site in the 1920s and joined forces with other groups, which included the Dixie Highway Association, to promote the development of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky as a national park. The Mammoth Cave was located along the Western Division of the Dixie Highway, present day U.S. 31W, and the Dixie Highway Association strongly supported its development as a national park and assigned a special committee to work on the matter (Dixie Minutes 1924:122-123, 167).

Caves, such as Mammoth Cave off the Dixie Highway in Cave City, Kentucky, were popular tourist sites in the early twentieth century. The topography of the southern mountains features rugged terrain with many bluffs and caverns, and thousands of caves riddled the South. Before modern heating and air conditioning and before large arenas provided year-round enclosed meeting places, caves appealed to people as temperate havens for weddings, church meetings, and restaurants. In Tennessee alone, over thirty caves charged admission for tours. These include the Craighead Caverns (now the Lost Sea Cave) off the Lee Highway in Monroe County, Wonder Cave on U.S. 41 near Monteagle, Crystal Caverns on the Dixie Highway in Hamilton County, Cudjos Cave on the Dixie Highway at Cumberland Gap (Figure A-15), and Ruby Falls off the Dixie and Lee Highways in Chattanooga.

At least eight caves in Tennessee held dances, four of which were commercial. These included Big Band dances in the Ruskin Cave near Dickson, the country music events in the Dunbar Cave near Clarksville, the Craighead Caverns (Lost Sea Cave) near Madisonville, and square dances in the Black Cat Club near Murfreesboro. These were far from casual uses: owners erected wooden or concrete dance floors, and the Black Cat Club contained a restaurant in the cave. The Ruskin Cave had bleachers seating 3,000 people that surrounded the

dance floor. Commercial uses of caves flourished from the 1890s to the World War II period due to automobile travel that greatly facilitated the mobility of those in rural areas (Toplovich 1983). However, after World War II, the popularity of these caves for dances and most commercial uses generally declined. Mammoth Cave, Ruby Falls, and smaller caves continue to operate tours for tourists but are the exception rather than the rule.

Cudjos Cave Entrance and Souvenir Shop, Tenn.—Va.—Ky.

519

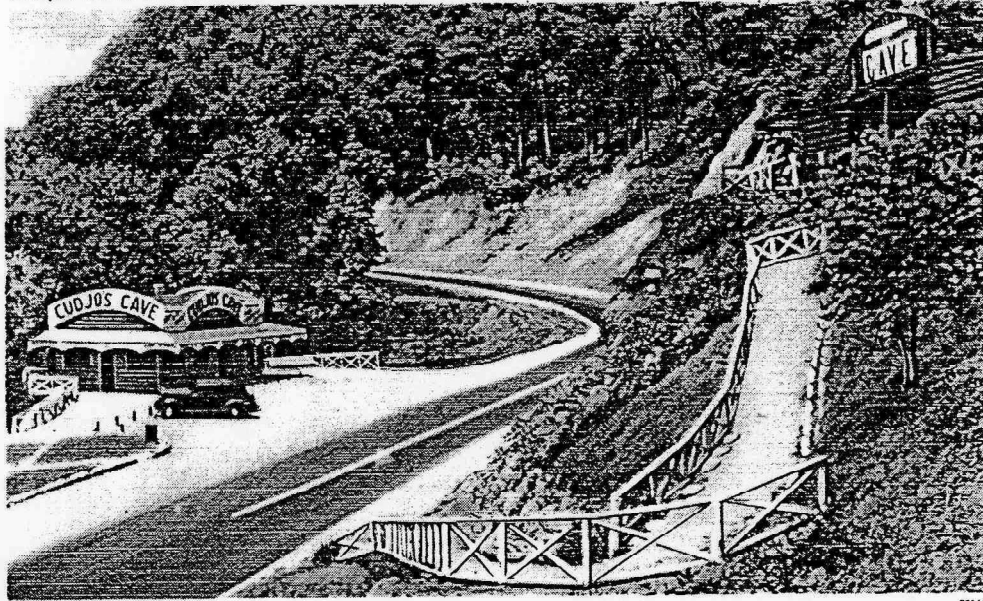
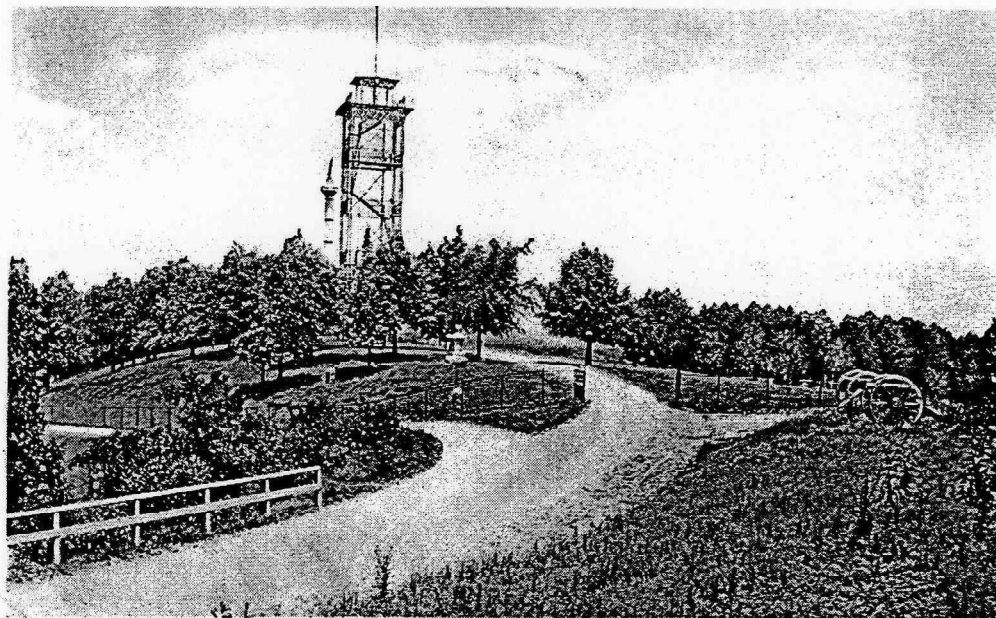


Figure A-15: Postcard Cudjos Cave Entrance and Souvenir Shop near Cumberland Gap and Middlesboro. The cave entrance, with a very short section of the Dixie Highway, is in Virginia within the Cumberland Gap National Park. The National Park Service has recently bypassed and eradicated this section of the Dixie Highway and plans to restore the area to its appearance during the Wilderness Road era.

In Chattanooga, the Dixie Highway provided access to local tourist sites such as the 1895 Incline Railway, the world's steepest incline peaking at a 73 percent grade, Ruby Falls (opened in 1929), and Rock City (opened in 1932). The Dixie Highway passed through the core area of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park (Figure A-16), formed in 1895 as the country's first national military park, and provided access to its discontinuous sections. Scores of local businesses, whose owners repeatedly formed the core of highway associations across the country, reaped the rewards of the highway through sales of tickets, memorabilia, accommodations, food, and associated items.



GEN. BRAGG'S HEADQUARTERS ON MISSIONARY RIDGE, CHATTANOOGA, TENN. "ALONG THE DIXIE HIGHWAY."

Figure A-16: Postcard of Civil War tourist attractions along the Dixie Highway, dated 1916

Businesses that catered to the tourist or highway user abounded along the route. Small country stores, for example the Smith Store in Una south of Nashville, flourished along the Dixie Highway and provided food, supplies, and gasoline. These general businesses later faced competition from more specialized businesses such as diners. Diners had their origins in wagons selling food in urban settings that dated from the nineteenth century which evolved into the diner as we know it by the 1920s. These streamlined cars offered a cheap "alternative to both the limited fare of the hot dog or hamburger stand and the full-menu Main Street restaurant" and they flourished until the 1950s (Liebs 1985:219-221). A well-preserved example of an Art Moderne diner on the Dixie Highway is the 1949 Roy's Grill in Rossville, Georgia (**on tour #1**) (Figure A-17).

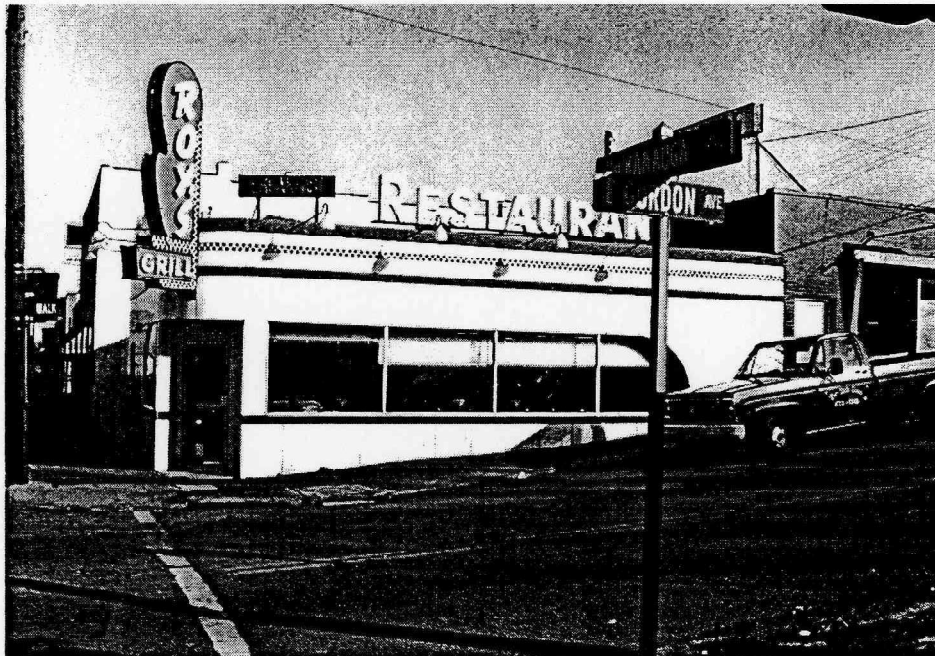


Figure A-17: Roy's Grill, built in 1949 in Rossville, Georgia, on the Dixie Highway

Motorists needed gasoline and other services related to their automobiles. Although gasoline was initially sold from curbside facilities or sheds, more specialized businesses such as service stations quickly developed to accommodate the motorist. Initially, these businesses utilized a form reminiscent of a basic "house," a rectangular structure first with a freestanding pump, and later with a projecting canopy that contained the pump, and eventually a service bay addition on the side. After this, more modern forms such as an oblong or a rectangular box form with a freestanding pump or a canopy with pump appeared (Jakle 1978:520-542). Even though many service stations used a common form, service stations represented a new business concept without clear architectural precedents. Consequently, petroleum companies and local builders tried to apply a creative exterior that would attract motorists. Eventually, service stations became one of the most common building types to develop along highway corridors, and an enormous variety of stations existed from Michigan to Florida along the Dixie Highway (Figure A-18).



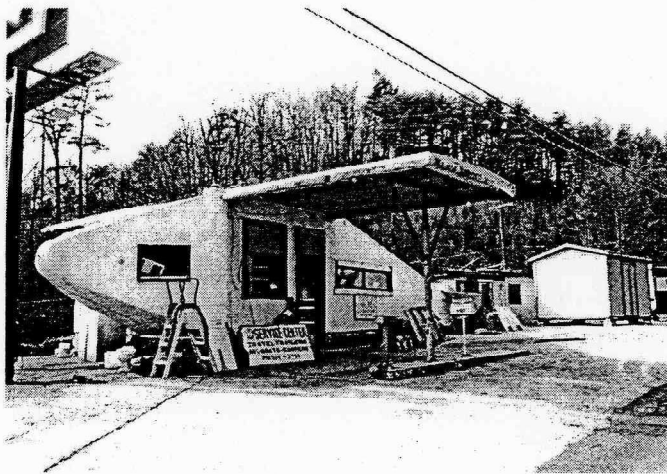
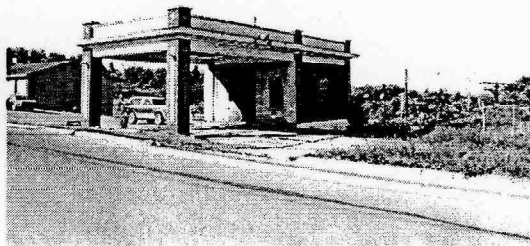
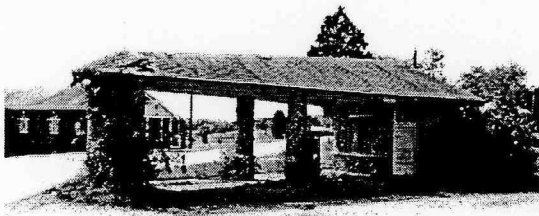


Figure A-18: Service Stations along the Dixie Highway  
Pure Oil Service Station, State Route 293, Cartersville, Georgia  
Service Station, Spanish Eclectic Style, U.S. 25W, Jellico, Tennessee  
Stone Service Station, Triangular Shaped, U.S. 70, Loudon County, Tennessee  
Service Station, Renaissance Revival Style, Old U.S. 25E, Tazewell, Tennessee  
Airplane Service Station, U.S. 25W, Knoxville, Tennessee