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FROM INDIAN TRAILS TO EXPRESSWAYS AND BEYOND

the story of transportation in
Georgia

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Office of the Georgia Depart-
ment of Transportation

Slide 1 (DOT LOGO)

Slide 2 The history of transportation in Georgia is the story of people on the move. It begins with the Indian who followed rivers and game trails to travel from place to place.

Slide 3 Then came the European with his oxcart and wagon, which widened and compacted these paths into primitive roads.

Slide 4 But it would take over two hundred years before these oxcart roads became expressways, the most efficient road system ever devised to move people and their goods over land.

Slide 5 (Title slide) ^{This} "From Indian Trails to Expressways and Beyond", is the story of that change. It is the story of people who had visions of what this state, Georgia could become, and they had the know how to achieve this dream through transportation.

Slide 6 In 1733 Gen. James Oglethorpe selected a spot about 10-miles upriver from the Atlantic Ocean for the site of his first city in the new colony.

Slide 7 One of Oglethorpe's earliest actions, that of laying out the streets of Savannah, was transportation related.

Slide 8 One of the purposes for establishing the colony of Georgia, other than to offer a refuge for debtors, was to provide a defense buffer between the northern English colonies and Spanish Florida. Consequently Oglethorpe built a chain of forts, one of which was of the current site of Darien.

Slide 9 In order to move his troops from one location to another, the General needed

Slide 10 Who could better find the best route, than the Indians. Oglethorpe relied on his ally and friend, Tomochichi to help him lay-out the first defense highway in

Slide 11 By 1735, Augusta had been established as a fort site and to benefit from the flourishing trade between the Indians and the Carolina Colonies. This trade, by the mid 1730's, saw over a million animal pelts exchanged for guns and ammunition.

Slide 12 Where trails crossed, trading center flourished. Here, you can see the sites of present day centers of commerce areas by looking at the places where the trails converge. The Indians had their own version of the "fall-line freeway" that became so important. Later Milledgeville, Macon and Columbus would be situated on it.

Slide 13 By 1755 a network of roads crossed the eastern seaboard. However, they primarily ran north and south, with a few thoroughfares going east and west.

Slide 14 It was in 1755 that the first road law was passed in the British colony of Georgia. Called the Statutory Method, it required all males between the ages of 16 and 60 to work on the roads in their areas at least 12 days out of the year.

Slide 15 By the eve of the American Revolution, the western push had begun as settlers moved inland to acquire rich farm lands.

Slide 16 As the plantation era opened up new lands for farming, a haphazard highway network sprang up. Many were simply like this "tobacco road" where hogshed rollers had a path to the nearest loading dock, for farm goods to be shipped by water to the nearest market.

Slide 17 Water travel was the cheapest method of moving goods as the nineteenth century opened. The "fall-line freeway" the Indians used became increasingly important as goods were shipped to these points marked by a solid circle. Commercial centers sprang up at the heads of the navigable rivers shown by an anchor symbol.

Barges of the period probably needed no more than two feet of draught to float. In 1790 the State commissioned a survey to find the best way of connecting central Georgia with the Atlantic Coast, and the Tennessee-Ohio-Mississippi-River system. They selected a route that was still valid 150 years later.

Slide 19 However, the steam engine and the railroad came into existence at this time and would be the cheapest way to move people and goods.

Slide 20 With the railroads, transportation in Georgia took a giant step. The period of 1830 through 1861 was a time of railroad building and turnpike construction.

Slide 21 One of the first rail lines to operate in the U.S. ran between Augusta and Charleston in 1833. Georgia leaders had quickly seen the benefits of this type of travel even though it was still crude. With state help rail lines increased. The ~~Augusta to Athens line was opened in 1847, Madison to Atlanta opened in 1848, Macon to Atlanta opened in 1846 and the Atlanta to Chattanooga line opened in 1851.~~

Slide 22 In an effort to improve the roads in the State during this period, the Georgia Legislature chartered turnpike corporations. ~~However, the statutory method of road building still remained in effect.~~

Slide 23 Turnpike corporations earned returns on their investments by charging tolls at selected points. Poles or "pikes" blocked the road until the fee was duly paid, hence the name turnpike.

Slide 24 In 1829 the Georgia legislature purchased slaves to build roads. However, dissatisfaction arose almost immediately since most of the work was done around the cities and the rural roads were neglected.

Slide 25 After the War Between the States, road building declined, as the lawmakers ceased to charter turnpike corporations and new road construction relied on the Statutory Method. This means of road building saw more play than work accomplished.

Slide 26 Beginning in the early 1890's a new form of transportation arrived on the scene. This form the bicycle, would start a movement that would eventually pave the way for our present highway system.

Slide 27 This effort, spearheaded by the bicyclists in the 1890's, became the Good Roads Movement that rolled into the second decade of the 20th. century. In Georgia, a rural mail carrier, Fred White formed the first Good Roads Club in the state in 1906.

Slide 28 In 1889 Henry Nadig drove his gasoline powered horseless-carriage down the streets of Allentown Pennsylvania, ~~although Frank Duryea gets most of the credit for inventing the automobile in 1892.~~

Slide 29 Two years after Nadig clattered down those Pennsylvania streets, Georgia took a big step toward financing road construction. The General Assembly authorized county officials to collect two mills on the dollar for road building purposes...

Slide 30 ... and to collect a commutation tax of 50 cents a day for every male subject to road duty. This act also permitted the officials to purchase mules, buy road equipment, and pay wages for road work.

Slide 31 In 1908 the state legislature authorized cities and counties to use convict labor to build roads and other public facilities. Also, this year saw the first bit of road paving done as the U. S. Department of Public Roads paved an eighth of mile road in Piedmont Park as a demonstration project.

Slide 32 Good Roads campaigners used many techniques to capture public attention. Some of them were giant tours, laid out like giant rallies covering several states. One of the earliest was the Glidder Tour of 1911.

Slide 33 Sponsored by the two Atlanta papers and the Glidder paint family. This tour which traveled from New York to Jacksonville, Florida had several prominent people in it. ~~One was Gov. Hoke Smith, his wife and daughter.~~ ~~Also the Atlanta~~ ~~and four cars in the tour.~~

Slide 34 The good roads on this tour were described as being like hard corduroy but were considered smooth as bowling alleys and billiard tables when con-

pared to the really bad roads. Women participated. One, Miss Roberta Marks of Athens, drove her car in a "slam-bang, spectacular fashion showing her big gray car no mercy on the rough roads" one account said.

Slide 35 Another tour which drew considerable attraction was the Dixie Highway Caravan, which went from Chicago, Illinois to Miami, Florida. This traffic flow from north to south would be the predominant pattern for the state. This was a change from the east-west movement that dominated travel during the early 1800's.

Slide 36 This 1915 Dixie Highway Tour, one of several, caused quite a celebration in Georgia, with Gov. Harris welcoming the tourists, and treating them to an old fashion southern barbecue. This same year Ga. legislators passed the Motor Fuel Tax Act, which would have a far reaching effect.

Slide 37 The year before, in 1914, an historic meeting occurred in Atlanta. This meeting was the beginning of what later became the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. ~~Ironically, Georgia was one among the fourteen states that sent representatives.~~

Slide 38 It would take an act of Congress, the Federal Aid to Highways Act of 1916, before Georgia would have a state highway commission. In August 1916, the General Assembly, meeting in an extraordinary session created the commission and named W.E. Beel, second from the right, as one member. Later he became the first State Highway Engineer.

Slide 39 Although the General Assembly only appropriated \$10,000 for the new commission's first year of operation, by the end of the first full year of operation in 1919, the State Highway Department constructed 170 miles of pavement, 673 miles of sand roads, 34 miles of graded roads and 20 bridges.

Slide 40 For the next 20 years the Department's primary goal was to get Georgian's out of the mud.

Slide 41 By 1920, Georgia was fourth in the nation to avail itself of federal funds. The state highway consisted of 4,800 miles of roads connecting county seat to county seat. This system, was then thought to be the solution to the transportation problem.

Slide 42 The basic machinery for getting the state out of the mud was in operation by 1924. That year the General Assembly amended the Motor Fuel Tax Act of 1921 to read three cents, instead of the one cent to be collected from the distributors of motor fuel.

Slide 43 Originally, the one cent went to the state's general fund to be used at the Legislators' discretion. However, the 1924 amendment set aside a third of the tax to be used as a special fund by the highway department, to match federal funds for highways.

Slide 44 Another third of this motor fuel tax went to cancelling the deficit in the state treasury, incurred in discounting the bonds of state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad. The other-third was distributed to counties to use exclusively for public works work.

Slide 45 Early 20th century automobile travelers needed a rugged, and adventurous spirit to travel on these roads. Detailed state road maps were non-existent. Guides, published by the department told motorists to turn left at a church, travel 3.4 miles to a fork, take the left fork travel four miles to a store, and so forth.

Slide 46 Needless to say even with these directions and landmarks, it was easy to get lost. A highway numbering system was developed by the American Association of Highway Officials, and adopted nationally in 1927. Early direction signs were minimal but then, the top speed was 35 miles and hour.

Slide 47 Georgia, one of the first states to use the numbering system, was an early pioneer in highway safety using reflective glass beads to mark the signs. The Federal Highway System roads had been designated in 1921.

Slide 48 Another early traffic and safety concern was railroad crossings. Georgia began a campaign in the late 1920's to place special warning signs with flashing lights at selected railroad crossings.

Slide 49 In 1927 the Georgia's citizens voted to build roads on a pay-as-you-go basis. The motor fuel tax was six cents, with the highway department receiving four cents, county highways receiving one cent and Public School Equalization funds getting the remaining cent.

Slide 50 The Taylor-Neill Act gave the state the right to designate "state-aid" roads in 1929. By this time state-highways totaled 7,090 miles.

Slide 51 Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic in 1927, and of this feat presaged Georgia role in air transportation. ~~A historical note: Lindbergh bought his first plane on an airfield near Waycross.~~

Slide 52 Atlanta, by 1930 already had an airfield. First named Candler Field it would grow into the Nation's second busiest airport, and be called Hartsfield International.

Slide 53 Curiously, this International airport began as an automobile race track.

Slide 54 A 1928 law allowed federal participation in beautifying the highways. Georgia began taking advantage of this law by creating roadside parks in 1930.

Slide 55 In order to properly care for the steadily increasing mileage, the maintenance department reorganized to include a bituminous division, whose sole function was to repair and resurface the existing asphaltic highways.

Slide 56 One of the department's early priorities was replacing old bridges and building new ones. Many of these projects and other highway construction work were financed in part by the Work Projects Administration (WPA) to help pull the country out of the Depression.

Slide 57 Between 1939 and 1942 the WPA helped Georgia construct 2,084 miles of primary, secondary and post roads, and 300 bridges for a total of \$14.4 million. ~~Ordinarily,~~ ^{The} ~~the state would have borne the entire cost of these projects.~~ WPA financed 45% percent of these new roads.

Slide 58 At the end of the third decade a department historian wrote, "Georgia is definitely out of the mud," with four trunk line highways running north and south, and four going east and west, completely paved.

Slide 59 Material research has long been a concern of the Department. It was one of the first to use reflective striping on the centerline and road edge when the Traffic and Safety Division was created in 1940. By the end of the year this division had done 2,500 miles of roads.

Slide 60 The war years, 1941 through 1945, saw only essential road work done. "Critical materials emerged from the text and treaties and became a reality." ~~Concrete sealants, asphalt and cork expansion joints filler, galvanized metal to cover pitings, copper wire flags, aluminum paint and humpap for concrete curing all became unobtainable.~~

Slide 61 Reinforcing steel became available only with a high priority rating. ~~The~~ ~~summer~~ ~~mail~~, through ~~the~~ ~~coast~~, achieved a prominence ~~unheard of~~. Pine lumber, with which Georgia's forest abounded, became available only upon the approval of the War Council.

Slide 62 During this time the Department assisted the war effort by lending its facilities for traffic surveys and vehicle inventories. ~~The~~ ~~War~~ ~~Department~~ ~~has~~ ~~established~~ 19 of the state's 37 urban areas as a basis for urban highway ~~and~~ ~~improvements~~.

Slide 63 The 1944 federal act also established the idea of a national defense and interstate highway system, and in 1947 this system was selected. In 1948, Georgia began building its Atlanta Expressway System.

Slide 64 Conceived in 1947, interstate construction began in 1957. It would prove to be one of the most mammoth engineering tasks of all ages, and has been compared to building the Pyramids of Egypt. Georgia elected to build its urban interstates first, primarily because the right-of-way was cheaper to acquire. This proved to be a wise move in ^{later} recent years.

Slide 65 In 1950, the Department's planning division began long range biennial road improvement plans. If the period from 1920 to 1945 could be called the Formative Years, then the Period 1945 to 1960 can be called the Boom Years.

Slide 66 The fifteen year period between 1945 and 1960 saw an accelerated building program. People were tired of being told they were out of the mud. They wanted some concrete evidence.

Slide 67 As a result, the voters decided to break away from the pay-as-you-go building program, and the General Assembly in the 50's created three authorities which could float bonds to finance road building.

Slide 68 Continuing its policy of taking advantage of the latest technology, the Department acquired a plane in 1952 to take aerial photos for mapping and other purposes. Georgia was one of the earliest departments to do this. ~~Also at this time, the Highway Department began making road resistance tests.~~

Slide 69 Upon entering the sixth decade, the Department found itself making remarkable progress on its Interstate. Gov. Ernest Vandiver unveiled the first I-75 sign in DeKalb County in 1959, but it would be 19 years before this original system was completed.

Slide 70 The early 1960's saw an emphasis on comprehensive planning. The 1962 Federal Aid to Highways Act required a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation plan for urban areas of 50 thousand or more population - Georgia, and how urban areas so defined.

Slide 71 About the mid 1950's a new phrase entered the American vocabulary: "quality of life". People were less inclined to donate land for highway right-of-way than they were in the early Fifties.

Slide 72 With the ~~greater~~ emphasis on aesthetics and safety, the department found itself doing more in ~~the~~ highway environment. For example in 1963, the first of the interstate rest areas were opened.

Slide 73 The years 1960 through 1970 can be called the Years of Challenge and Change. The Department met the challenge. It listened to the people, held public hearings, and became active in preserving the environment, while providing transportation facilities.

Slide 74 In 1967 the U.S. Department of Transportation was created, five years later the Georgia Department of Transportation was formed.

Slide 75 Transportation facilities have come a long way. By 1978 the state's original interstate system was complete. Highways had come a long way from the days of Indian trails and oxcart roads.

Slide 76, 77, 78, 79 Now the DOT is also looking for ways to improve other modes of transportation such as public transit in Georgia's urban and rural areas.

Slide 80 It still takes care of the 18,343 miles of the state highway system that by ~~cost~~ ^{more than \$1.2} billion to build, but it also inventories railroad facilities to ensure that Georgia will have a well balanced transportation system...

Slide 81 A system that incorporates air transportation, because some 40 million passengers flew on commercial flights in Georgia by 1979.

Slide 82 Today, with a new focus on industrial and agricultural expansion and energy efficiency, Georgia's waterways will be, once again, gaining importance.

Slide 83 Transportation in Georgia is reaching its Mature Years, and just beginning to realize its potential to aid the state's growth and prosperity. With continued public support, transportation will go beyond expressways, and serve the people as it has in the past.

Slide 84 (DOT LOGO) The degree to which we are able to serve the people of Georgia in the future is in doubt because of severe cuts in federal aid to transportation, and continuing shortfalls in state motor fuel tax collections. Your support is crucial to the continued progress of your state!