

# Horses had close encounters with cars on city streets

Not long after the newfangled automobile started appearing on the streets of Bloomington, it was pretty obvious that coexistence would not be easy. In 1923, a couple of local men discovered that through firsthand experience.

The *Bloomington Evening World* of Feb. 9, 1923, informed its readers that one of them had had a very bad day. The article began, "Damage amounting to \$600 was done to a new Mitchell touring car of H.H. Allen, the well-known undertaker, this morning, when two teams of horses ran away."

James Nichols was driving a team of horses on North Walnut Street. In fact, he was unloading coal, when his horses were suddenly "spooked" by something and hurtled down Walnut Street at "a lively clip."

Another team of horses belonging to the Nash & Hupp Coal Company was making its way across the intersection at Kirkwood Avenue. They, too, were frightened, and tossed their driver, Paris May, out into the street and went headlong after the Nichols team.

Continued the *Evening World*, "The Nash



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

& Hupp horses, minus the driver ... came down Walnut Street, and the tongue of the wagon struck the rear end of the Mitchell auto parked in front of the Allen & Allen funeral home. One of the horses reared up, and his hoofs came down on the top of the auto, making a complete wreck of it."

When he had the leisure to contemplate his damaged auto, Allen reckoned that the damage was worth around \$600. Added the newspaper, "The car will have to have a new body and top."

There wasn't any doubt in the mind of William M. Graham that the automobile was here to stay. In March of 1923, he announced that he would be building the Graham Motor & Sales Company on the spot where the old College Avenue Methodist Church stood at Third and College. The \$86,000 building was

to be constructed by the Swartz Construction Company of Bedford.

Commented the *Evening World*, "There will be 41,160 feet of floor space, and the company will have its own tracks from which shipments of cars will be unloaded directly into the west end of the building. ... The front will be all plate glass for show window space, which will extend 56 feet on Third Street and 20 feet on the south side."

The newspaper added that the company at its other location had done \$750,000 worth of business in the previous year. The officers, in addition to Graham, were William Brown, vice president and general manager; Harry Hurt, secretary and treasurer, and Paul Brown, sales manager.

Graham wasn't the only enterprising Bloomington resident to see the value of the automobile. Lynn Lewis, proprietor of the Nash agency, paraded his new models around town. The *Evening World* of March 3 noted that the cars attracted a lot of attention.

"Included in the parade were two Nash touring cars, a four and six cylinder, two fine sedans, a two and six, one sport roadster, with

disc wheels and new model body that was greatly admired by the ladies. One 5-passenger carriage model, and a four-door coupe completed the showing of the latest models of the Nash new line."

Meanwhile, there were still horses in town. The *Evening World* of March 12 described what happened to another man: "In an old-fashioned run-a-way accident Saturday, Harley Johnson, West Eleventh Street, was thrown from his buggy and severely injured. Johnson's horse started to run on West Eleventh and crossed College Avenue at a lively clip, after hurling Johnson out."

After clopping through the yard of Nax Lade at the corner of Walnut and Eleventh, it returned to the street. "It dashed down Walnut and crashed into a Dodge coupe of C.C. Farmer parked along the curb. One end of the gas tank was torn out, allowing all the gasoline to escape."

Farmer's car was badly damaged, the buggy was torn to pieces, but the horse was all right. "The horse was finally found on East Eighth Street near Dunn with nothing on but its bridle."

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