

**Michigan Every Day**  
**By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly**

*Sept. 2, 1902*  
*First traffic fatality*

Before highways stretched across Michigan and cars crowded its cities, the automobile recorded its first official fatality in the state.

The fatal accident did not play out in the familiar scenario often seen now involving speed and a car crashing into another or a tree. Rather, the accident could be viewed as a collision between two eras.

George W. Bissell, a wealthy lumberman, was driving his horse and buggy on the morning of Sept. 2, 1902. An automobile, traveling at a fast clip for the period, passed by and either crashed into Bissell's carriage or came close enough to spook the horses, causing them to jump. Bissell's buggy lost a wheel and turned over where he struck his head on Brooklyn Street in Detroit. The 81-year-old did not survive.