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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Properties Associated with U.S. Highway 66, from Chicago to Santa Monica, 1926 to 1985

B. Associated Historic Contexts

1.	Development of U.S. Highway 66, 1926-1956	E-26
2.	Commercial Enterprise on U.S. Highway 66, 1926-1985	E-42; 60; 76
3.	U.S. Highway 66 as Migratory Route, 1929-1945	E-46
4.	U.S. Highway 66 in Wartime, 1941-1945	E-68
5.	Recreation and Tourism on U.S. Highway 66, 1946-1985	E-74
6.	Route 66, a Highway Transformed, 1956-1985	E-89

C. Form Prepared by

Name/title	Michael Cassity/Thomason and Associates/National Park Service staff, prepared for				
Organization	Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program			Date	August 27, 2011
Street & Number	1100 Old Santa Fe Trail			Telephone	505-988-6701
City or Town	Santa Fe	State	NM	Zip Code	87501
E-mail	IM_Rt66@nps.gov				

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

(_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert L Mattes Deputy FPO NPS 3/22/2012

Signature and title of certifying official | Date

National Park Service

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper
For

4/4/2012
Date of Action

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Multiple
State

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for application to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts

Summary

United States Highway 66, popularly known as "Route 66," is significant to American history as an important transportation corridor connecting the Midwest and California. Given its widely known history and popular appeal, it serves to represent the country's experience of the automobile and the open road. As stated in the 1994 National Park Service special resource study, "Not only does Route 66 underscore the importance of the automobile as technological achievement, but, perhaps equally important to the American psyche, it symbolized unprecedented freedom and mobility for every citizen who could afford to own and operate a car." This effect played out in popular music, literature, and movies during its period of significance, and continues in both the preservation and mythmaking of the highway. As a fact and cultural symbol, Route 66 is important to American identity.

Properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the context for U.S. 66 will in most instances meet the requirements of Criterion A (association with "events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history") or of Criterion C (architectural or engineering design significance) or of both Criterion A and C. Some properties, such as those which have deteriorated significantly, so that only archeological resources are left or which were in their origins were ephemeral in nature, may also be eligible under Criterion D for their information potential. There may also be individual properties that are also eligible because of their association with significant individuals, in which case they would qualify under Criterion B.

The period of significance for properties associated with U.S. Highway 66 extends from 1926 to 1985. The beginning date of 1926 reflects the original designation of a series of roads across America as United States Highway 66. By the late 1950s, the construction of the nation's interstate system resulted in the decline in traffic on U.S. 66 and its overall significance as a major transportation artery. However, the construction of businesses along Route 66 continued into the 1980s until the last link of the interstate system bypassing the highway was completed. There are a number of properties along these sections of Route 66 built during this period which may meet Criteria Consideration G for their exceptional significance within the past fifty years.

The majority of eligible properties will be significant in the areas of Architecture, Commerce, Engineering, Transportation, and Archeology. Properties significant in Architecture may be notable examples of particular architectural styles or reflect innovative or vernacular designs oriented towards automobile culture. Commercial properties are significant as they reflect the growth and development of automobile-oriented businesses along the highway. Properties may also be significant in Engineering and Transportation, such as those which reflect innovations in bridge or highway design, and overall improvements and advances in highway planning. Archeological properties may provide information about any of these additional areas of significance. From these areas of significance are a number of identified property types associated with the construction, evolution and significance of U.S. 66. These property types are: Highway and Road-Related Structures, Road Bridges, Gasoline/Service Stations, Garages/Dealerships, Diners/Cafes/Restaurants, Hotels/Campgrounds/Tourist Courts/Motels, Recreational/Travel Stops/Destinations, Roadside Parks/Picnic Areas, Road Support/Maintenance/Law Enforcement, and Districts. This context statement includes a discussion of these property types and the registration requirements they must meet in order to meet National Register criteria.

Introduction

Route 66 holds a complex and rich history that goes beyond any chronicle of pavement and account of the road itself. As an artery of transportation, as an agent of social transformation, and as a remnant of America's past that stretches across

two-thirds of the continent, Highway 66, and the buildings and resources associated with it, slice across the continent and through the history of the nation. Like a road-cut or drilling core sample, Route 66 reveals the process of historical change that transformed the lives of people and communities—and the nation—from the time that the highway was first officially designated in November 1926 until the highway was officially deleted from the National Highway System in 1985.

While all roads, by their nature, link different points to each other to facilitate movement between them, the nature of the connections made by U.S. Highway 66, and the dynamics stimulated by those connections, hold a significance that is critical to understanding the shaping of modern America. In this regard it would be possible to compare the highway to other transportation routes, like the Oregon-California Trail, the Lincoln Highway, or even the railroads that crossed the nation in the late nineteenth century. But more valuable is the consideration of the highway for what it reveals about how those transportation systems operated to unleash powerful forces of change, and what the consequences of those changes have been—and still are. Over the years Route 66 emerged as a symbol in American popular culture, not only as a focus of great nostalgia and romance but also as a source of inspiration for television entertainment, movies, literature, graphic art and merchandising.

Route 66 as it crossed the nation—both in time and space—shows how one highway could both be a product of cultural and social change and also generate additional changes wherever it touched, and still more changes when it faded from the scene. In this way the national economic, social, and political forces that shaped the history of the road, and the patterns of history into which the highway fits, can be explored. Those patterns are generally associated with specific themes and topics, such as transportation, migration, ethnicity, gender-differentials, Depression-era work-relief, World War II, tourism, economic growth, the evolution of automobile travel and trucking, and the vast area of popular and commercial culture. This context endeavors to inquire into these areas which hold important implications for the understanding of American history.

The context additionally seeks to connect these issues together into a coherent framework that captures the broad pattern of change along Route 66—a framework associated with the concept of modernity. Modernity is a model of historical change that is more commonly drawn upon than articulated, more commonly assumed than explored. Many of the features of modernity, in fact, are so obvious that they are taken as given, as if they somehow are inevitable and pre-ordained. Those features include the varied but related innovations familiar to modern society such as the impersonalization of relationships, the erosion of traditional or parochial loyalties and identities, the rise of more cosmopolitan identities, the specialization and synchronization of economic activities, and overall the growth of a national social structure that embodies a transfer of social, political, and economic authority from local to central levels which can coordinate massive activities in a presumably rational manner. Not that modernity explains, or even adequately describes, the pattern of change, for it clearly does not since many individuals, businesses, and communities actively resisted the process of change underway. In fact, much of the story of Route 66 is the story of life at the local level, sometimes being overtaken, overwhelmed, and overrun by the engines of economic and social change at the national level, and then how people dealt with those changes.1

Even a cursory glance at businesses and communities alongside Route 66 reveals this process in the demise of mom-and-pop businesses, the rise of chains, the loss of individuality in business structure and appearance, the increasing emphasis on integrating the local into a national framework. The irony, of course, is that originally Highway 66 held forth the promise of liberation from isolation, emancipation from social and economic barriers, and release from limited choices

[1] See a similar discussion of the process of modernization, and the resistance to it, in the context of railroad growth and the proliferation of institutions associated with that growth in a small town in the 1880s in Michael Cassity, "Modernization and Social Crisis: The Knights of Labor and a Midwest Community 1885-1886," *Journal of American History*, 66 (June 1979), 41-61.

people along the route sometimes found in their lives.2 But by the end of the period, when it was being replaced by the interstate highway system, the choices were perhaps more limited, and the culture of sameness pervaded the landscape. As English-American author Christopher Hitchens reflected after driving Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles in 2002: "You hear a lot about the standardization of America, the sameness and the drabness of the brand names and the roadside clutter, but you have to be exposed to thousands of miles of it to see how obliterating the process really is."3 The history of Route 66 is in important ways a window onto the past to interpret how the fundamentals of modern social organization emerged, and through an examination of the roadside environment, the observer can trace the transformation of the American highway and its landscape.

In this aspect, it is possible to use local developments to illuminate national trends, and national patterns to illuminate local events. By interpreting the events and institutions related to Highway 66 as microcosms, as particular elements that shed light on the whole, the connection can be made and the context gives meaning to what might otherwise be viewed as insignificant or isolated events. The alternative is to apply a national framework to a local context, a practice commonly exercised, but which does an injustice to both the local and the national experiences. Richard Strout, writing as T.R.B. in The New Republic in 1956, was perhaps being hyperbolic when he declared that "The most American thing in America is US Route 66."4 Despite the hyperbole, the enhanced importance of the highway is unmistakable.

BEFORE ROUTE 66

Although Route 66 had its official beginning in 1926 when the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads launched a numbered highway system, this highway had already been used in its components, as parts of local, state, and national road networks. Extending from Chicago to Los Angeles, the new highway went through eight states and was not completely paved until more than a decade after its designation. Many of the merchants in the small and large towns through which the highway passed looked to the road to bring much-needed outside revenues into their often isolated communities. As a result, the highway was actively promoted in its early years, especially as it offered, as its promoters claimed, a more weather-friendly alternative to the northerly east-west highways.

As the highway became busier with traffic, the roadbed was improved and the infrastructure of support businesses lining its right of way expanded. Those developments stimulated a dynamic spiral in which better roads and roadside businesses (especially those providing fuel, lodging, and food) made travel more attractive, more people traveled the road, stimulating additional growth.

As the Depression worked its baleful effects on the nation, it produced an ironic consequence along Route 66, as the migration of destitute people fleeing from the privation of their former homes produced an increased volume of business along the highway, providing commercial opportunities for a multitude of low-capital, mom-and-pop businesses. The buildings constructed for these businesses reflected the general independence of the enterprise, including a general absence of standardization and a decentralized economic structure.

World War II generated both a decline in civilian traffic, especially tourism and may have stimulated local economies along the highway where military and defense production installations were located. The war also brought diminished highway maintenance and hard times for the businesses that had depended on the traffic passing by their front

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[2] This statement gives U.S Highway 66 potentially more power as transformative force than it actually ever possessed.

[3] Christopher Hitchens, "The Ballad of Route 66," *Vanity Fair* (November 2002), 182.

[4] T.R.B., "Washington Wire," *The New Republic*, 135 (August 6, 1956), 2.

doors. These circumstances, in turn, meant that when the war ended, the surge in traffic was all the more dramatic; and that traffic increased in the new era of prosperity. As traffic increased, once again the small businesses along the highway prospered, and the icon of Route 66 of Okies in the 1930s was transformed to a symbol of freedom and enjoyment; the bleak image of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* faded, and the upbeat sounds of Bobby Troup's and Nat "King" Cole's "get your kicks on Route 66" took over.

The history of Route 66 is filled with ironies from start to finish. Just as hard times in the nation had produced a modest level of prosperity for many of the operators of gas stations and tourist courts along 66 during the Depression, the traffic on the highway in the decade after World War II sent Route 66 experience in a new and unanticipated direction.

The crowding of the nation's highways, with Highway 66 an exemplary case, meant not the improvement of the highway, but its replacement with the Interstate highway system, written into law in 1956. By 1984, when the last section of U.S 66 was bypassed by an Interstate highway, many of the businesses were forced to either close or move to a location near an Interstate interchange. Yet again the ironies of highway emerged. In the de-designation of U.S. 66, the highway gained a new appeal, and each year, once again, large numbers of not only Americans but people from around the world, who identify with the highway and America's past, drive the 2,400 miles of roadway making up what is now called Route 66.

Crossing the Continent: Roads and Trails before U.S. 66

The Visionary Road to National Unity

In 1808 Thomas Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin made a grand proposal for the U.S. government to build a road that would extend from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, Virginia. This was an idea Gallatin had been pressing for years. In fact, an earlier version of his plan was approved by a U.S. Senate committee in 1802 said that stated such a road would:

> . . . . make the crooked ways straight, and the rough ways smooth, ... will, in effect, remove the intervening mountains; and, by facilitating the intercourse of our western brethren with those on the Atlantic, substantially unite them in interest . . . .

Regional historian Timothy Crumrin quotes the originators as saying it would be the "cement of the union."[5] This was a bold vision for a country that was just crossing the Appalachian Mountains. The vision influencing the construction of the Cumberland Road, or, as it became better known, the National Road, was a vision of unity and connectedness, of weaving together remote communities into a single fabric of communication, commerce, and social concord.

The key project in a program of what was called "internal improvements," the National Road met delays caused by budget shortfalls, political opposition from sections (like New England which already had enough roads) left out of the benefits of its traffic, and the slow construction methods of the technology of the day. Although President James Madison endorsed a plan for construction of this and other roads, he vetoed appropriations for it in 1817 on constitutional grounds; James Monroe likewise vetoed a measure to place toll gates on the Cumberland Road, because of his own opposition to federal funding of internal improvements.[6] Yet, the obstacles to its expansion notwithstanding, the National Road was

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5 Timothy Crumrin, "Road through the Wilderness: The Making of the National Road," http://www.connerprairie.org/historyonline/ntlroad.html.

6 George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1951), 19.

completed to Wheeling, Virginia (later, West Virginia), and then extended beyond that point into the more distant interior of the continent. By 1839 it was macadamized as far as Columbus, Ohio, but the "pavement" after that was intermittent.[7] The road was more than a strip of paving materials, though, and its accompanying structures proved integral to traffic and sometimes remain as important historic features:

> The bridges came in a wide variety of styles and types and were made of stone, wood, iron, and later, steel. They were the wonder of their day and bridgebuilding did much to advance engineering knowledge in America before the Civil War.[8]

In some respects the turnpikes of the antebellum years have been adjudged failures. Their financing wound up being largely private and they seldom made a profitable return to their investors. And because they charged a toll, the main users were the traveling public rather than freight operators who shied away from paying the tolls, either by taking alternative free roads or devising surreptitious ways around the tollbooths. But some of the roads, like the National Road, left a clear mark on the physical and cultural landscape of the nation. After the road reached Wheeling and then Columbus, Ohio, it continued west, across Indiana and finally at mid-century it reached Vandalia, Illinois. For a variety of reasons, at that point, as George Rogers Taylor explains,

> Then for more than half a century it suffered neglect until, with the coming of the automobile, it became a part of National Highway No. 40. Its sturdily constructed stone bridges, though built for oxcarts and stagecoaches, safely supported the motor-driven traffic of the gasoline age. And its remaining taverns, which had in the dull days of the latter nineteenth century become commercial hotels, country stores, or private residences, came to life again as taverns, inns, and "tourist homes."[9]

The significance of the National Road—its historical importance—lay much deeper than the physical remains that it bequeathed to future generations, a paved surface connecting points A and B, even if A and B were progressively farther apart. In addition to enhancing commerce at both ends of the road, it brought business to the intermediate points as well. Soon a variety of commercial institutions arose alongside the road offered a multitude of services to the traveling public; inns and taverns increased in number, providing also commercial opportunities for people perhaps a generation removed from the agricultural pursuits of their neighbors.

Moreover the technology involved was significant; macadamized roads had not been conceived at the time of the beginning of construction, but soon the macadam standard was written into the construction requirements. (Because the concept and materials evolved over the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth century, macadam can suggest a variety of paving techniques, but it generally refers to the use of three separate layers of rock, progressively finer as the layers rise, and often included a crowning of the pavement to facilitate water run-off; later, the roads would still be "macadamized" when they included a tar—*tarmac*—or asphalt sealant.) Wooden plank roads were also employed as a less expensive alternative to the macadam pavement.

And bridge construction similarly evolved, although the stone pier and wood superstructure dominated before the rise of the railroad required different materials and technologies. Ironically, while connecting point A with point B, it

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7 Crumrin, "Road through the Wilderness."

8 *Ibid.*

9 Taylor, *Transportation Revolution*, 22.

separated socially both of those points from locales closer to them that lacked the convenient transportation system that they now had.

Finally, in yet one more of the ironies that would ever be associated with transportation development, the traffic along the National Road stimulated the construction of other roads, both as feeder routes and as alternate arteries, and more broadly stimulated the demands of commerce for improved systems that ultimately would supplant the road itself. In this case, the alternate forms of transportation, not so much in direct competition with the National Road, and even in some ways abetting it and placing additional pressure on it for carrying greater traffic, were the burgeoning canals and railroads.

It should be noted that for all the talk of binding together a nation, bringing its disparate parts into a single fabric, and drawing communities closer to each with the lifeblood of transportation, the transportation system probably drove them further apart as it created a process that divided those who benefited from the roads from those who did not. Before the Civil War brought this division to a crisis, some elements of the basic pattern of road building in the nation had already been set.

Across the Continent

Perhaps the greatest challenge of nineteenth-century transportation had to do with the question of connecting the beckoning lands of the Southwest and the West Coast with the states and territories of the East. Aside from the questions of foreign relations this raised, and aside from the fact that there were peoples already settled on the West Coast and in the hinterland in between, the pressures for expansion of the nation's borders and political and economic infrastructures increased with the result that significant new trails, or in reality, roads, began to reach beyond the civilized parts of the nation. In both cases, roads served as devices for the exercise of economic, cultural, and political suzerainty and collided with the territorial claims of Spain, Mexico, and Great Britain, on the one hand, and the occupancy and traditions of Native Americans, few of whom were enthusiastic about the American commercial and cultural emissaries they met, on the other. Several significant points become evident at this early stage of expansion of the road network of the United States, and the leading lesson may be that commerce could have not just a liberating effect on local economies and cultures, but even a transformative one, and even at that be perceived as a highly volatile, warlike action.

Santa Fe Trail

Although Americans had ventured into the Spanish province of New Mexico as trappers and traders, they did so against the weight of provincial authorities and sometimes suffered the loss of their freedom or their goods as a consequence. It was only in 1821, after Mexico proclaimed its independence from Spain that trade opened between Santa Fe and the United States. Immediately afterwards a regular and thriving commerce ensued between Missouri merchants who loaded caravans of wagons with manufactured goods to ply the market of Santa Fe. They hauled their merchandise over what became known as the Santa Fe Trail, which in reality became a substantial road and one that was subject to revision in its routes and alignments. The initial path traversed Kansas and across the corner of what is now Colorado before crossing Raton Pass and moving on to Santa Fe, but subsequent efforts to create a better road routed it more directly, and avoiding the steep terrain of the mountains, across the Cimarron Desert separating the Arkansas River and the Cimarron River in Kansas. After that, the travelers could make a choice in the path to follow, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

The U.S. government in the late 1820s helped the effort, and for while provided military protection for the caravans. An enormously successful trade at first, the commerce did remove the isolation that had hung over northern New Mexico, 1,700 miles removed from the Mexican capital, and it provided employment locally. When more traders entered the Santa Fe market with more caravans from outside, the additional competition on the trail and in the market

sometimes reduced individual profits. This would be a continuing legacy of transportation there.

But the road to Santa Fe, which continued well beyond the peace following the Mexican War when the territory was absorbed into the United States, was much more than just a road between Missouri and Santa Fe. As Susan Calafate Boyle demonstrates in her study of the Hispanos and the Santa Fe trade, the rise in commerce brought by the Santa Fe Trail effectively introduced Santa Fe to the world wide market. The Santa Fe merchants, by virtue of this road, were now better connected to the markets of Europe as well as the United States. And local merchants, especially the *ricos*, by the end of the 1830s became integrated into the national market, venturing, as Dr. Boyle chronicles, to New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh for business "became part of a widespread commercial network."[10]

Moreover, American traders quickly tapped into a new market as they proceeded south using long-established roads like the Camino Real de Tierra Adendro which had already served as a primary artery for two centuries connecting the interior with the northern entrepots. Yearly caravans also started heading west toward the prized California trade following the Old Spanish Trail that went in a roundabout way north into central Utah area before heading southwest across the future states of Nevada and Arizona and then across the Mojave Desert en route to Los Angeles. After the Mexican War, this route was supplanted by other routes to the south that were more direct.

If the Santa Fe Trail created, directly and indirectly, a southern route to California, then the Oregon Trail, more accurately known as the Oregon-California Trail, offered a northern alternative as part of the expanding transportation network of the United States. As with its southern counterpart, this road also followed trails that had been used by Native Americans but which were marked and used more by trappers and traders. Where the Santa Fe Trail had an official starting point that moved progressively westward at the Missouri communities of Franklin, Boonville, Arrow Rock, Independence, and Westport, respectively, and then, by various accounts, even into Kansas, the eastern terminus of the Oregon Trail usually was considered either Independence, Missouri or Council Bluffs, Iowa, depending on the point of personal origin.

In either case the road followed the Platte River until the junction of the North and South Platte Rivers and then followed the North Platte into modern Wyoming as far as modern Casper. Topography clearly dictated the path of this road as it followed the rivers, picking up the Sweetwater River after the North Platte and then crossing the continental divide at South Pass. On the west slope of the Rocky Mountains, however, the road began to divide, or even splinter, into a variety of routes that could take the traveler, again with still more choices known as cutoffs, to California, Utah, Washington, or Oregon. As the trail, or road, splayed out like the fingers of a hand, it etched the contours of a new artery of communication that linked the East and West.

Oregon Trail

Yet, like the Santa Fe Trail, what is important about the Oregon Trail is much less where it went than what its consequences were. For the Oregon Trail was more than a road to Oregon. It was also a road to California and a road to Utah. It was a road that carried families to dreams of farming independence and abundance in the fertile valleys of the Willamette River. It was a road that carried miners and business people to their hopes of striking it rich in California. For Mormons it was a road of flight from persecution on their way to their new Zion in Utah. Except for its earliest years, the Oregon Trail was barely related to the popular image of lonely, isolated settlers seeking day-by-day the path through the wilderness. In the two decades of the 1840s and 1850s more than a quarter of a million emigrants traveled to California

[10] Susan Calafate Boyle, *Commerciantes, Arrieros, y Peones: The Hispanos and the Santa Fe Trade* (n.p.: Southwest Cultural Resources Center, 1994), 65. A more accessible version of this study is also available as *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants on the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 57.

and Oregon. The number of people who traveled this road on their way to Utah in the same period brings the total to more than a third of a million emigrants, and some knowledgeable estimates suggest as many as a half-million people, with multiples of that in livestock. Plus, the traffic was two-way with some people traveling from west to east.

This volume of traffic becomes important when one realizes that the thread of burgeoning traffic created a corridor of business establishments. As John D. Unruh points out in his study of this road, "by 1850 the river-crossing, postal, and repair services available from the trailside entrepreneurs were so commonplace that they were no longer viewed as traveling luxuries; like food, outfitting supplies, draft animals, and information they had come to be regarded as necessities."[11] By the end of that decade, in fact, Unruh says, "rarely did the emigrant travel more than twenty-five or thirty miles without encountering at least one habitation. Usually there were more."[12] The growth of businesses along the road makes clear that, far from being a simple set of ruts, the Oregon Trail actually became a highway with the support institutions that can easily be associated with modern travel. Commercially operated ferries and bridges, trading posts and blacksmith shops, livery sales, and other related businesses began to pepper the path of the trail.

There were even trading establishments that could be confused with tourist spots because of their conscious efforts to attract travelers with the appeal of the exotic and the weird. At Independence Rock in Wyoming, one entrepreneur advertised his operation by appealing to the curious, with his grizzly bear there for the viewing and so did others. And these trading posts, blacksmith shops, and other businesses had to be supplied with goods, and the freight traffic necessary for that supply increased the volume and size of traffic on the road. Very quickly it becomes obvious that this was not a trail; it was a road, a highway, even a superhighway for its time.[13]

In addition, this steady stream of traffic, moving in vast numbers at about the same time of the year, meant a significant challenge to the economies, cultures and domains of the native inhabitants of the region. The massive intrusion into their territories disrupted traditional food sources. Plus, there were always the countless opportunities for misunderstanding and tension that derived from different cultures and different perspectives on day-to-day life. In some years a group of people the size (and more) of any city that has ever existed in Wyoming passed through land that these tribes had occupied; this tended to bolster the confidence of the whites who invaded this land and to increase the apprehensions of those indigenous peoples who considered it their home. Within that set of circumstances the relations between whites and Indians moved in a very short period from cooperation and mutual assistance to distrust, tension, and conflict. The legacy of the Oregon Trail in the matter of contact between natives and whites is immense and is filled with tragedy and far reaching consequences. Put another way, once this major thoroughfare passed through, life would never afterwards be the same as it had been before.

In all this, the United States government, as historian John D. Unruh made clear, was an active agent, surveying the road, protecting traffic, licensing trade with Indians, and generally promoting and encouraging commerce and the development of "civilization" in the area along the trail. Confirming the road to Oregon as a powerful and purposeful institution of social and economic change, this was also the path that the mail system followed, carrying the postal packets on a stage coach and then that the Pony Express followed in its eighteen month career (1860-1861), only to be replaced in 1861 by a telegraph system that operated by a thin wire strung on poles alongside the trail. The expansion of the transportation system facilitated a revolution in technology in communications.

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[11] John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 267.

[12] *Ibid.*, 298.

[13] *Ibid*, 299.

The Oregon Trail may be evidence confirming the observation by Lewis Mumford that road development is ironic in that it produces an effect opposite of what is often intended. Instead of alleviating traffic, Mumford suggested, roads do not actually solve transportation problems but create them, that new roads attract more traffic, and create new demands that the new roads themselves cannot satisfy, thus pushing further the cycle of change.[14]

Certainly this was the case of the Oregon Trail and would be true of later transportation arteries as well. As additional roads left the main road to Oregon or California, going both north and south from the main trunk connecting to the gold fields in Montana and Colorado, for example, yet more roads began to be constructed that would replace the Oregon Trail.

Overland Trail

One of the most successful of these roads was the one that became known as the Overland Trail—in another bit of irony taking the name that had originally defined the Oregon Trail and distinguished it from the route by sea. This road, though, was named after the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Co., the private company that secured the mail contract and then shifted the stage route so that it would leave the Oregon Trail and go to Denver and then traverse the southern part of what is now Wyoming on the way to Salt Lake. The U.S. government also preferred that route. While there was no official designation of highways, the government preference was decisive: the telegraph line was moved south to the Overland route in 1862 and soon afterwards dismantled some of the forts that had been built along the Oregon Trail. The increased traffic on the Oregon Trail had undermined the trail itself and a replacement was created and by 1867 the Oregon Trail was largely abandoned in its central sections.

The Railroad Influence

The cycle was quickly repeated when the railroad survey followed the Overland Trail and the construction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads, linking into a single transcontinental transportation route in 1869 and replaced the roads that had spawned the forces that led to its construction. And this too was but a beginning. The staggering growth in the number of miles of rails placed on the ground between the Civil War and 1890—a rate of about ten percent a year for more than thirty years—and the volume of freight carried by rail in that period actually conceals some of the larger significance of railroad construction. In those years more railroads extended their steel tendrils across the plains and mountains connecting the West Coast and the states of the East and in the process they connected not only the terminal points but the interior as well.

They brought transportation—and commerce—to areas that without a railroad could have had very little or no commercial existence. Old cities became large and new cities boomed; unlike earlier forms of transportation that connected existing points, the railroad took vitality with it and new towns emerged along its path in a way that seemed to defy the conventions of settlement as they had been understood for ages. Where the railroad went, life went. By the same token, the railroad often appeared as a death force to the communities where the railroad did not pass, the communities without a siding, the communities who did not pay for the bonds that the railroad asked for, the luckless communities separated from the railroad by another town. The commerce in those communities followed a new logic and gravitated toward the railroad, in one way or another, and the communities near enough to feel the effect of the railroad, but not close enough to benefit from it, withered in a pattern that would become common in the transportation history of the nation.

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[14] See Lewis Mumford, *The Highway and the City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964).

The railroad also represented not just the technology of the future but the social force of the future in ways that went beyond its impact on local economies. Business was now not only greater in terms of investment and volume of trade, but it was also national in scope and businesses that literally reached across the country provided a key ingredient for a complex, sophisticated system of economic organization and marketing capacity. The isolation, whether beloved or cursed, was fading, even in the interior of the sparsely settled West.

Across the northern plains from Omaha to San Francisco, following the route of the Oregon-California Trail, and then of the Overland Trail, and their variations, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific etched a path and brought new towns to life with names like Cheyenne and Laramie and Rock Springs. The Southern Pacific did the same reaching eastward with towns in the Mojave Desert like Amboy, Barstow, and Goffs, and the Colorado River crossing near Needles. The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad in the 1880s reached across northern Arizona connecting towns like Hackberry and Peach Springs and Williams and Flagstaff and New Mexico communities like Gallup, Laguna, Los Lunas, and Albuquerque. When the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad in the 1870s extended its lines westward from the Missouri River across Kansas to Pueblo, Colorado, the rails generally followed the Santa Fe Trail and moved directly to the town of La Junta, Colorado. When the Santa Fe Railroad purchased the Atlantic and Pacific in 1880 it acquired a line that went from St. Louis on a diagonal to the town of Vinita in Indian Territory on one end and across Arizona and New Mexico on the other. In 1883 the expansion of the line in the west reached Needles, California, at which point it connected with the Southern Pacific. By 1885, after purchasing the Atlantic and Pacific and negotiating an arrangement with the Southern Pacific, the Santa Fe Railroad could boast a continuous connection between St. Louis and the Pacific Ocean.

Once again, it is important to note, the change was not just a matter of building a faster means of transportation to the West Coast, nor of just connecting the communities at either end and along the line to the opportunities associated with the world of communication and commerce, for this process held far reaching implications as it forced people into a society defined by and governed by the priorities of market capitalism, an adjustment unpalatable to many and even repugnant or hostile to a good number. Increasingly class divisions replaced sectional divisions as the fulcrum of tension within American society, but even so, the West, and especially the Southwest, appeared, with special and distinct glances to the South, as the section of the nation left behind, or at least left beside the road to the future.

The Road Builders

As dramatic as the expansion of the railroads was, one further consequence was concealed in the process: although the railroads tended to replace the wagon roads whose paths they followed, they placed additional pressure on the other roads that would connect distant places to the railroads. Plus, the United States was becoming increasingly an urban nation although it would only be 1920 when a majority of the population lived in towns of more than 2,500. That meant that roads were also being used as a form of recreation for the new city dwelling middle class. By the end of the century the pressure for better roads came not from the farmers but from an often forgotten group of promoters of change, the bicycle riders of the nation.

Hardly conspicuous as far as the world of interest group politics is usually concerned, these people became well-organized and articulate advocates of improving the roads of the United States so that they would be able to ride their bicycles pleasantly and safely. The obstacle was both political and economic, not to mention traditional. The prevailing system of road maintenance called upon the inhabitants to devote a certain number of days in labor to scrape the road, fill the holes, and clear the path of obstacles, and any alternative to this system would necessarily involve a tax to pay for materials and labor. To that tax, the agricultural community was almost solidly opposed in state after state. As one commentator on a publication by the League of American Wheelmen directed at the farmers noted,

> The farming community, as a body, is conservative to the verge of bigotry, and may be reckoned

> on to oppose, tooth and nail, any attempt to improve its condition that might be associated in the bucolic mind with a higher tax rate. This has been the universal experience in the past, and in our opinion will continue to be the experience of the future. With few isolated exceptions, the only advances in the condition of the highways throughout the States have proceeded from the large cities and towns as centers, where the settlement of the suburban country for ten or twenty miles about, by an intelligent and progressive population from the cities, has taken place, and from whom the spirit of improvement has emanated. The American farmer, if left to his own devices, would, a century hence, be found contentedly working out his road tax, to save a few dollars in cash, by shoveling a few feet of dirt on the roadway, as his fathers have done before him.[15]

While that reviewer's urbane judgment of the rural population may have been severe, it was also common. And while it often mistook an opposition to a larger process of social change in which life was becoming less personal and more standardized and regimented, and authority further removed from individuals for a simplistic opposition to higher taxes, it also accurately identified the chasm in American society separating those who wanted improved roads, who happened to live in the city, and those who resisted, who happened to live in the countryside where the roads would go.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, business interests aligned with commercial agricultural operations (as distinct from the large mass of small and subsistence farmers) and formed private organizations which pressed forward their agenda of road construction and improvement. In virtually each state (and territory) these organizations lobbied from the courthouse to the state house for the better roads in what has become known as the "Good Roads" movement.[16]

Of course, the key feature that added speed and power to the movement was doing the same on the roads of the nation as the automobile made the improved road that much more of an imperative. The achievements of the Good Roads movement were many, and public funds at the state and county level began to trickle—and later pour—into road building programs.

But there was a structural change too as states began to create special departments to oversee that construction and manage the maintenance of the roads in their jurisdictions. Even though very few of these roads were hard surfaced to accommodate the growing number of automobiles, the attention that roads were receiving increased virtually everywhere in the nation.

Rise of the Auto Clubs

One of the byproducts of the Good Roads Movement was an encouragement for more private road promotional organizations, and these organizations, or clubs, often regional, began to multiply in the 1910s as each one promoted a specific route dear to the hearts and plans of its organizers. Characteristically, these groups would solicit community support for their roads through organization membership and lobby the state and county governments to improve the designated routes. The associations proved remarkably successful, at least in their own organizational aspirations; their abilities to secure support for their favorite routes, however, varied widely.

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[15] Review of *The Gospel of Good Roads* in *The Manufacturer and Builder*, October 1891, p. 238.

[16] See, for example, William P. Corbett, "Men, Mud and Mules: The Good Roads Movement in Oklahoma, 1900-1910," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 58 (Summer 1980), 133-149 and Paul S. Sutter, "Paved with Good Intentions: Good Roads, the Automobile, and the Rhetoric of Rural Improvement in the *Kansas Farmer*, 1890-1914," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, 18 (Winter 1995-1996), 284-299.

Highway historian Richard Weingroff estimates that by the mid-1920s these organizations had named more than two-hundred fifty such routes, although sometimes these routes overlapped and sometimes shifted their course as rivalries with other groups caused competition.[17] Sometimes these organizations promoted single routes from one population center to another. Sometimes they created veritable webs of roads in a region. Occasionally they aspired to connect one coast to the other. In some instances they were able to give the impression that their road was indeed an official transportation artery, even though they were private and the U.S. did not have such a system of official roads.

The theory of operation actually made sense, even though at times it was subject to less than honorable application and even if its results were uneven in the extreme. The private association would raise funds and sometimes secure volunteer assistance in improving a stretch of road that local citizens, usually businesses, saw as valuable in their own commercial success. They would improve the road and make it an attractive route to travel, complete with the colorful markers on posts and barns and rock, with their own distinct logos and emblems. They would then advertise the presence of the road to outsiders and locals alike in hopes that greater traffic would encourage yet additional resources for improving the road. And so the cycle would go, with each advance in improvement bringing increased traffic, and each surge in traffic bringing additional improvement. In a not-very-subtle way, this was a reliance on the free market to provide for a highway system for the nation.

National Old Trails Road

Several of these roads and supporting associations are especially significant to U.S. 66. One of the oldest of these organizations, and roads, was the National Old Trails Road. Based upon the original National Road that stretched west from Washington, D.C. to Illinois, the road went across Missouri generally following the path of the Santa Fe Trail, continuing with the trail across Kansas and the branch that went through southeastern Colorado into New Mexico on its way to Santa Fe. From there it followed the path of the Santa Fe Railroad west—or as at least one description fallaciously termed it, "the old Padres Trail, followed by the San Franciscan Fathers bent on carrying the gospel to the Pueblo Indians and Navajos of New Mexico and Arizona."[18] The road was not new, and in parts it was ancient. Its modern fathers and mothers included several organizations that emerged as its sponsors. The National Old Trails Road Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association, created in 1911 and later renamed the National Old Trails Association, appears to have been a product of the efforts of the Missouri Old Trails Association and the Santa Fe Old Trails Association which sought to promote the road through the center of that state that had been followed by western bound emigrants and traders in the nineteenth century, and since those trails connected to the southwest, the road would be national, rather than the jurisdiction of a single state.

Moreover, the organization in some of its earliest statements endorsed the plan of the Daughters of the American Revolution who wanted to identify the road with red, white, and blue markers on its side, but originally they planned multiple branches that would follow various pioneer trails, including the Oregon Trail, although the organization subsequently focused on the Santa Fe Trail and related trails.19 The National Old Trails Association determined the final route of the road that would reach into the Southwest. The Automobile Club of Southern California began an active campaign to mark the road, even well beyond its home territory to help out members and also to facilitate travelers to the San Francisco Panama–Pacific International Exposition of 1915.

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[17] Richard Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System," *AASHTO Quarterly* (Spring 1997); published on the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/numbers.cfm

[18] A. L. Westgard, "Motor Routes to the California Expositions," *Motor Magazine*, March 1915; published on the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/westgard.cfm

[19] Richard F. Weingroff, "The National Old Trails Road," published on the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/trails.cfm

The National Old Trails Road, from St. Louis to Los Angeles, was often a meager path, but it had institutional support and increasing visibility in the national press. Drawing upon its own efforts and successful in mobilizing public funding in the various states through which it passed, by 1914 around two million dollars had been spent on its improvement.

In 1915, A. L. Westgard, vice president of the National Highways Association pronounced the Old Trails Road, "takes first place" among the possible routes across the nation available for motorists to go to the San Francisco Panama Pacific International Exposition. The connection to the past was visible, and Westgard pointed out that "many old parallel wagons ruts [are] still to be plainly seen, . . . Along the Santa Fe trail may be seen at frequent intervals stone monuments erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution." But the road on many occasions left much to be desired.

There were the spectacular moments, as Westgard cautioned prospective travelers, such as the one on the steep descent from Santa Fe to Albuquerque known as La Bajada, which had formed part of the Camino Real de Tierra Adendro. At La Bajada, the traveler would stop suddenly and spend "a half-hour in admiring contemplation from the rim of La Bajada Hill." There, the motorist would encounter "three or four turns [that] are so sharp that with a long wheelbase he will be compelled to back up to make it. Though the road is good, one had better go slow and use extreme caution, with the hand on the brake, because a couple of the sharpest turns, where he may probably have to back up, simply lead into nothing more substantial than atmosphere, and mighty thin atmosphere at that, should the car refuse to stop at the exact spot on an inch ruler where it is necessary to manipulate for the turn."[20]

More generally, Westgard commented, "there is no paved road on the route west of Kansas City before reaching within a day's ride of the Pacific Coast, except short stretches near the larger towns, the improvements being confined to grading the natural soil and building bridges and culverts." When crossing the Colorado River at Topock, Arizona, "one pays the railroad three dollars and a half toll to cross the planked ties of its bridge." Traveling the National Old Trails Road, the "best" in the land, would be at the least an adventure. There was one saving grace to the road for the less adventure-inclined. The Harvey system of hotels along the railroad provided reliable accommodations in New Mexico at Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and Gallup, and in Arizona at Holbrook, Winslow, Grand Canyon, Williams, Ash Fork, Seligman, and Kingman, and at Needles and Barstow, California.

Ozark Trails

Another road association, one with great ambitions, but on a regional scale, was the Ozark Trails Association which stretched its network from southern Missouri and northern Arkansas through Oklahoma and Texas into New Mexico. And this organization reflects the local enthusiasm for road building, or at least the enthusiasm in some parts for the vision it promised. Founded by W. H. "Coin" Harvey, in years past a novelist of some fame and an economist of somewhat less repute, and now a promoter of good roads, the Ozark Trails Association's roads were designed in some form to make it possible for travelers in the region to have easier access to Harvey's resort in Monte Ne, Arkansas; the people in the communities to be served by that road, however, had their own aspirations and Harvey pitched the road to them. At one meeting in Chandler, Oklahoma in 1915, for example, the local enthusiasts hoped to connect their county to Oklahoma City to the southwest and Tulsa and Sapulpa to the northeast. The local promoters held forth a vision of the future that included good roads at the center, and Coin Harvey called them "the primary principles of civilization, the symbol of abundance, the spirit of progress." The local newspaper interpreted this vision so:

> The plan of the Ozark Association is to promote a system of good roads connecting the four states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Imagine, if you can,

[20] Westgard, "Motor Routes to the California Expositions."

> what it will mean to be connected with such towns as Oklahoma City, Sapulpa, Tulsa, Springfield, Wichita, Kansas City, Emporia, St. Louis, and the summer resorts of Missouri and Arkansas by even a good dirt road. Much of this road in Missouri and Arkansas is the finest road possible to build, and if we can have the road through our towns along the Frisco from Sapulpa to Oklahoma City designated as the trail, it will be but the beginning of a permanent road to last perhaps as long as the Appian Way. . . . Farms all along the route will rapidly increase in value, tributary roads will be built to the main line, and everybody will be happy to walk or drive along such a road.[21]

Cities and towns competed to have the road go through their own communities, but even then they discovered that "Coin" Harvey was sanctioning multiple routes so that the system was more of a web or network than it was a single line of traffic; in this way he was able to disappoint not only those who did not get the road but also those who did, but gradually a road system began to emerge with citizens literally "building culverts, some driving teams, some plowing, some blowing stumps, and removing rock, some grading and some shoveling," and pressing their counties to provide bridges both in hopes of securing Ozark Trails designation and to improve the road afterwards.[22] The association then provided signs, in this case often even obelisks such as the one in Stroud, Oklahoma that was described thus:

> The new trail now being built from Drumright, south to Stroud, on west to the R. R. Green corner, thence south to Prague will be of great benefit to the traveling public. The pyramid [marking the road] is twenty-one feet high and the foundation is five feet below the surface and is set on solid rock. It will be painted three coats of white, and equipped with five electric lights. Then the painter for the Ozark Trails Association will come through and paint the whole structure of white enamel with green trimmings and place the proper inscription on it. . . . The lights will be kept burning all night.[23]

Nan Marie Lawler, who has studied the Ozark Trails and their markers, has noted the location of these obelisks, called "pyramids" by the organization that erected them, and surviving trail guides sometimes picture them. Those guides also identify the routes that travelers should take and what to expect on their way. Again, in Oklahoma, one such description would indicate the pattern: While some of the landmarks have changed, the road segments following the section lines can still be traced. It would use a base mileage figure with which travelers would calculate not just how far they went, but where to turn the corner, usually at an intersection with a section line road.

60.0 Four corners, red gin on left, turn left across R.R.

60.4 Four corners, turn right with phone line.

61.3 Four corners, turn left away from R.R.

61.8 Four corners, turn left.

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[21] "The Ozark Trail Meeting," Stroud *Democrat*, April 30, 1915.

[22] "Citizens Worked Roads Tuesday," Stroud [Oklahoma] *Democrat*, May 14, 1915.

[23] Stroud *Messenger*, May 1, 1920, typescript located in Notebook in Stroud City Library. Additional information about the standard appearance of the obelisk can be found in Nan Marie Lawler, "The Ozark Trails Association," M.A. Thesis, University of Arkansas, 1991, 47: "The OTA used a white background with a green 'OT' in the middle and a green stripe at top and bottom." See also specification for such an obelisk printed in the Sulphur [Oklahoma] *Democrat*, September 29, 1921. The top light was red and the other four lights were positioned to light the markings on each side; the lights were a new feature on the markers in 1919 or 1920. Lawler, "The Ozark Trails Association," 53-54.

63.8 Three corners, turn left [eastern terminus of this road section]
65.2 Cross bridge and R.R. [western terminus of this road section]

By the late 1910s the Ozark Trails network provided the dominant pattern of roads in southwestern Missouri and northeastern Oklahoma, although it continued beyond Oklahoma City in the western part of the state too, and in the Texas panhandle and eastern New Mexico it established an important network of roads that would become the basis of Highway 66.

Such was the status of highways in the nation at the time of the much anticipated and heralded San Francisco exposition that would bring thousands of motorists flocking across the country that the country's foremost advocate of taking that trip, A. L. Westgard of the National Highways Association wrote in *Motor Magazine* that the prospective motorists should "remove from his heart all fear of danger, insurmountable obstacles or serious discomforts." But Westgard quickly acknowledged that the roads were not like "park boulevards" and that there remains "a chance to rough it to some extent, but it is my belief that a month's [!] living out of doors, the ever changing scenery, besides acquiring a knowledge of our vast country, obtainable no other way, will add sufficient zest to the trip to forget and forgive any minor discomforts encountered."[24]

Two points are clear in the consideration of the role of the privately sponsored and named highways of the 1910s. One is that the identification and naming of a route to some degree reflected the general quality of the road, both in terms of condition and in regard to routing. The second point, though, is that such designation actually generated more pressure and resource allocation for improvement of the route than it already possessed. More than an indication of the progress that had been made in developing the nation's highways, these efforts are best viewed as statements—by different parts of society—of how much attention the roads of the nation needed.

The State and Federal Governments as Road Builder

During the decade following the halcyon year of 1915, which was probably more anticlimactic than it was demonstrative of a dramatic revolution in transportation the improvements in the nation's highway system followed two paths, one involving material improvement to those roads and the other moving in a political direction. Generally the politics preceded the improvement.

While regional organizations, like the Ozark Trails chapters, tended to focus their efforts on county and state roads in their areas, and did so with sometimes impressive results, the organizations showed their lobbying prowess effectively at the national level. In both efforts another organization added professional, and official, weight to their efforts. The creation of the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) in December 1914 brought the new state highway departments into the discussion. The AASHO, the National Old Trails Highway Association, and other groups had different goals, constituencies, and priorities, but they shared at least one common interest: the desirability of federally financed highway construction.

There was some sentiment in Congress for such assistance and some gestures in that direction had been made, as, for example, with the establishment of Rural Free Delivery in the Post Office at the turn of the century which required passable roads and vested the federal government with a specific interest in seeing that the roads were improved. With the growth of the Good Roads movement the discussion increased and the pressure of organizations like the road associations and the AASHO facilitated passage of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916.

[24] Westgard, "Motor Routes to the California Expositions."

It is important to note that some quarters were opposed to federal aid to highway development. In Albany, New York, for example, the *Knickerbocker Press* labeled the proposal pork-barrel politics that would punish the states that had taken it upon themselves to build roads and reward those who did not. Moreover, the paper charged, "we may expect within a few years a Federal highway bill which will carry hundreds of millions out of the efficient and independent communities into the backward regions."[25] The New York *Evening Post* argued that the states would have to learn how to build good roads and pointed to the fact that "fifteen states in 1914 did not spend a cent on roads."[26]

The advocates for the measure, however, painted a rosy picture of the future for the areas some had dismissed as backward. The Washington D.C. *Herald*, for example, predicted that the government would now "become a powerful agent in lifting the countryside, from Cape Henry to the Golden Gate, out of the mud and dust, giving the farmers access to markets, the children better roads to school, and the farmers' wives a measure of social life with neighbors from whom bad roads now isolate them in a life of drab monotony."[27] The elimination of isolation on the farm and in the small town became a familiar leitmotiv in the campaign for federally financed highways.

Federal Aid Road Act of 1916

The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 was a compromise, and also an indication that not everyone favored federal assistance to road construction. Populous states with substantial highways (and short distances) remained skeptical of such a program. The South, which had almost always been left out of transportation development programs, also was critical. As Richard Weingroff points out, the other states, those who would benefit from such assistance, thought the aid too paltry to them and too generous to those states which did not need it.[28] The compromise measure, signed into law in July 1916, did provide for the first time a systematic program of assistance to the states for the construction of roads, required that states organize a highway agency to receive funding, required them to submit plans to the Bureau of Public Roads in the Department of Agriculture for approval, and forbade the states from charging tolls or fees for the use of the federally funded roads.[29] The federal government would pay up to fifty percent of construction costs, up to a limit of ten thousand dollars per mile. Modest though it was, clearly a corner had been turned.

The initial appropriation under the 1916 law was but five million dollars (out of a projected seventy-five million over a five year period), but more ominous was the timing since the United States was on the verge of entering World War I. While road construction thereby failed to take off, there were notable exceptions, as with the construction of the important bridge crossing the Colorado River at Topock, Arizona. This splendid arch bridge with its suspended deck was actually built by Office of Indian Affairs, with help from both Arizona and California, and enabled traffic on the National Old Trails Road, later U.S. 66, to cross at that point near Needles, California. On the other hand, traffic on the various roads increased because of the wartime mobilization and the amount of freight haulage especially increased; a combination which placed greater pressure on government at all levels to provide better roads.

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[25] Albany *Knickerbocker Press* quoted in *Literary Digest*, July 29, 1916, 236.

[26] New York *Evening Post*, quoted in quoted in *Literary Digest*, July 29, 1916, 236.

[27] Washington Herald, quoted in quoted in Literary Digest, July 29, 1916, 236.

[28] Richard Weingroff, "Federal Aid Road Act of 1916: Building the Foundation," published on the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96summer/p96su2.cfm

[29] The provision requiring states to create a highway department likely revolutionized road building in the country since, according to one magazine, "As recently as 1916 a score of important States did not have State highway departments." Newton Fuessle, "Pulling Main Street out of the Mud," *The Outlook*, 131 (August 16, 1922), 641.

This was an important development for two reasons. One was that the war demonstrated that the railroads were insufficient by themselves to carry the nation's freight, and the other was that freight required better roads than motorists did. The roads had to be able to withstand substantially greater weight loads, plus, where A. L. Westgard had in 1915 cautioned travelers on the National Old Trails Road to travel only in "June, July, August, September, and October," limiting travel to one third of the year would not suffice for commercial traffic. The potential of the transportation system, and the limits of the system, were both coming into focus at the same moment.

This circumstance led to an important inquiry into the actual state of the roads, and of one road in particular. In 1919, Lieutenant Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower led two truck companies, a medical unit, a repair unit, and an engineer unit on an expedition over the Lincoln Highway. The report that Eisenhower submitted after the several-month long journey had implications that reached well beyond that one road. If the Lincoln Highway were the most improved route, which it probably was, Eisenhower's conclusion that "Extended trips by trucks through the middle western part of the United States are impracticable until roads are improved, and then only a light truck should be used on long hauls," was even more damning of the rest at least once the vehicles got outside the sections of the East where roads were developed and the parts of California that had paved roads.[30]

It needs to be remembered, however, that Eisenhower and the Army applied a standard to the roads that exceeded the purpose for which they were built; they were not intended to haul heavy trucks, so this was a ratcheting up not only of the politics of road construction but of the standards, costs, and implications of the system too. With this report, the pressure for additional construction and improvement of the nation's highways system (informal and unofficial though it was) not only gained strength but took a different twist that tied the roads less to tourism than to truck traffic, even though the tourists would be quicker to take advantage of such improvements.

1921 Federal Aid Act

The 1921 Federal Aid Act revised the 1916 system and changed the formula so that the basic requirement now was that only seven per cent of a state's roads would qualify for federal assistance (thus hopefully assuring state financing of other roads) and requiring that three-sevenths of these Federal Aid Roads (as they were known) be "interstate in character." This was an important new dimension and one that went to the heart of the efforts of the larger road associations like the Lincoln Highway Association and the National Old Trails Road Association.

To these groups it was critical that resources used for roads be directed especially to those routes that connected with roads in other states, so that the funds would go toward a network of roads rather than just to building more roads in a disconnected array, however sensible that might appear from a farm-to-market or urban/suburban transit scheme, or even given political and economic considerations within a state. The priority should go to those roads that together formed a grid, a system of roads for the nation.

The organization of that network, however, remained outside the halls of government and in the hands of the states and the private associations that were promoting their own roads. Although the Bureau of Public Roads designated between 1921 and 1923 the roads included in the federal aid system, this still was not a coherent pattern of highways purposely planned—for better or worse.

The act, moreover, stimulated enormous growth in highway construction. Highway historian Richard Weingroff calls the 1920s a golden age for road construction, noting that in one year, 1922, three times as much roadway had been

[30] LTC Dwight Eisenhower to Chief of Motor Transport Corps, "Report on Trans-Continental Trip" November 3, 1919, published online at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/convoy.cfm

improved than had been achieved in the years since the 1916 law was passed.[31]

Legislation in 1921 underscored and deepened the pattern that would shape the future as the federal money went beyond fifty percent and the requirement of interstate coordination was made more compelling by the necessity of designating up to seven per cent of its state non-urban road mileage as primary roads, thus requiring a prioritization of roads to receive aid.[32]

By the 1920s, there was a new impetus to highway expansion in the United States. One obscure change, in fact, that revealed the broader process at work, was the expanding role of the petroleum industry in the nation, and that industry became an effective partner of the automobile manufacturer and the road builders in urging the construction of roads. Historians of the gasoline station in America, John Jakle and Keith Sculle observed in their history of gasoline stations that "gasoline consumption soared from 25% of the petroleum market in 1909 to 85 percent only ten years later," and this statistic reflected social organization as much as it did commerce.[33] The new market for petroleum products was less that of the family lighting a lamp at dusk than it was the traveler in the automobile. One implication of that statistic, moreover, was that the isolation of the family in the countryside who used coal oil for illumination would soon erode as the small villages came into closer relationship to what was known in the interior as the "electric light towns."

The new construction moved in several directions at once. One aspect of the Federal Aid system was that the Bureau of Public Roads was working with the state highway departments to determine which roads to be built. That meant that, ironically, the private organizations had been dealt a blow with the success of the new funding. The associations were no longer in a position to chart the routes to be improved, not to mention to receive and disburse the funds for such road building. One other signal development was that the increase in public roads, far from meeting the demand placed on them by increased motor travel, actually stimulated further demand. In addition, even as early as 1922 it was clear that the Bureau of Public Roads was working on a master plan of what the new highway system would look like, some kind of a grid of roads, connected in a network, that would replace the individually promoted roads. These factors were both clear to most people, although in the last instance, there remained the tendency of the road associations to believe that a new system would integrate their own outstanding, exceptional, road into it and that it would be the other lesser highways that would be replaced.

Two other factors, however, were hotly denied by the proponents of road building. One was that the new roads for automobiles and trucks presented a challenge to the railroads. This, in fact, was a claim that opponents had used for a good while to resist public funding of a road system. Thomas MacDonald, the U.S. Commissioner of Public Roads who was moving with vigor and vision in this road construction initiative, tried to put that charge to rest and told one magazine that the roads would augment the railroads, not compete with them. "The railways as freight movers," the magazine dutifully reported, "are essentially long-haul carriers of such commodities as grain, live stock, and coal, while motor trucks cannot hope to figure in the long-haul movement of these products, but are primarily useful in the local gathering and distribution of dairy products, merchandise, and the relief of rail congestion at the terminals." Similarly with the heavy impact of the trucks on the roads themselves, MacDonald countered that "if trucks are properly built, loaded, and operated they do not menace the roads" and that the roads would be not be damaged by truck traffic so long as the roads themselves are properly maintained.[34]

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[31] Richard F. Weingroff, "From 1916 to 1939: The Federal-State Partnership at Work," published on the Federal Highway Administration Infrastructure website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/96summer/p96su7.cfm

[32] John B. Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 89.

[33] Jakle and Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*, 50.

[34] Fuessle, "Pulling Main Street out of the Mud," 643.

The expansion of the nation's highway system through the mid-1920s was still dominated by the private associations even though more roads were being added each year and construction was overwhelmingly publicly financed. One result of this expansion was that the possibility of transcontinental motor travel was coming nearer to reality for the average automobile owner (who was still far more affluent than the average citizen). Arthur Cobb, Jr., the manager of the Blue Book Touring Club, encouraged more people to undertake such a journey, noting only the limitation that "you have sufficient leisure at your disposal."[35] With an average of 150 to 200 miles a day, leisure time was indeed a requirement. There was another limitation, too, that Cobb reported in passing:

> Unfortunately a great deal of confusion and in some cases deliberate misrepresentation exists. In many cases even nationally known highways coincide for a distance, tending to confuse the tourist who attempts to follow the markers; and in other cases, owing to sectional disputes or road construction, the exact routing is uncertain, the officials of the highways themselves not being able to give a straight answer to questions about the routing. The highway officials are in many cases not answerable, as these conditions sometimes arise from causes beyond their control.[36]

In other words, the condition of the road surface aside, from the perspective of the long-distance traveler, the road system was a mess in its organization. This seems to have been the standard assessment. In 1925, John F. Mixer, the secretary of the Automobile Touring Club of America, reported in *Motor Life* that some of the roads, especially in the Middle West,

> We have numerous instances of motorists calling at our office for information, who state they started on their long journey without first making extended inquires they merely purchased a map of the United States with the main routes shown, picked out a trip that looked the shortest, and followed a marked highway. They encountered so many detours and so much trouble that they decided to secure some reliable information before proceeding farther on their cross-country trip.[37]

The private associations were in trouble from several directions. The federal government was not only involved in the planning of the roads, but also in the financing of the roads, a situation which increasingly left out the road associations. The results of the private organizations' efforts, further, became more and more evident as an uncoordinated tangle of roadways in the nation. Plus, the associations themselves were falling into bad repute. Engineers led the charge on this front. Consider the remarks of the *Engineering News-Record*, clearly an advocate of road construction, in 1922:

> Legitimate highway-improvement financing is making such heavy demands upon the public's pocketbook that a diversion of private funds into other channels than construction and maintenance of routes economically justified constitutes a menace to the good-roads movement. The public has made such a ready response to calls for money that the good-roads slogan has been seized upon by scores of road-boosting organizations as a means of supplying "easy money" to the promoters who head these bodies. At the present time there are somewhat more than 200 of these organizations which select highway routes for their boosting operations, give them a fine-sounding name, like the "Yankee-Doodle Highway," and then proceed to go out for money. Some of the funds may be used for legitimate purposes of highway promotion, but the chances are that a large portion does no other good than to fatten the pockets of the professional

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[35] "Four Great Highways from Sea to Sea," *The Literary Digest*, May 26, 1923, 61.

[36] *Ibid.*, 61-2.

[37] Mixer quoted in *The Literary Digest*, April 25, 1925, 65-66.

> road-boosters. The danger in the situation is that the public, once victimized by one of these booster organizations, will withhold funds from legitimate highway-development projects.[38]

Moreover, while there were four main roads that crossed the continent—the Lincoln Highway (New York to San Francisco), the Yellowstone Trail (Boston to Seattle, or sometimes described as Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon), the National Old Trails Road (Washington to Los Angeles), and the Old Spanish Trail (Jacksonville, Florida to San Diego)—there still was not a good way to go. Two of them even could not be traveled reliably during most of the year.

The prevailing advice was to travel the Lincoln Highway from June 1 to the middle of October, but even so, "its reputation is suffering severely from conditions in Nevada and western Utah." The Yellowstone Trail was similarly limited to the summer and early autumn. Thus, for the traveler who planned to cross the continent Cobb advised that only the National Old Trails Road and the Old Spanish Trail were usually open year-round, and "of these two the National Road is by far the better." The National Old Trails Road, moreover, held a scenic potential that the others did not because it went through the Petrified Forest and provided access to the Grand Canyon. Apparently, the Lincoln Highway, much touted though it was and labeled by some "the longest road in the world," was in decline and the National Old Trails Road was in ascendancy.

The greatest challenge to the private road associations, however, was but the fulfillment of the general goal they had espoused, a system of national roads for better travel, but at the hands of the federal government. In 1924 the AASHO called upon the federal government to select and identify "transcontinental and interstate routes" in the nation and called for an end to naming roads by associations which had even become a peril: "Resolved: That we hereby warn the citizens of this nation to investigate carefully the responsibility of trails organizers and demand convincing evidence insuring proper expenditure of funds before contributing to or otherwise supporting such agencies."[39] In 1925 Secretary of Agriculture Howard M. Gore appointed a "Joint Board on Interstate Highways," chaired by Thomas MacDonald and made up of nineteen representatives from state highway commissions.

Uniform Numbering of Highways

The board began meeting in April 1925 and early on decided to reject not only the names given to highways, preferring numbers instead, but also declined to invite or hear the representatives of the named highway associations for fear of showing preference to one or another association and route and of then having to receive all of them out of fairness. A multitude of issues arose, some of them easy to settle, some a little more contentious, and some were left to committees to resolve. After a series of meetings in the various districts of the nation, a tentative map had been developed that showed the various highways to be included in the new U.S. system and the primary issue left was simply that of numbering the roads. For that purpose a group known as the Committee of Five was given the responsibility to develop a system and report back to the main Joint Board. Largely the inspiration of E. W. James in the Bureau of Public Roads, the Committee assigned numbers, odd and even to indicate the general direction of travel, to the roads on the proposed map. The draft map remained tentative and comments—and protests—poured in from states that felt slighted in some way by the plan, and quickly the planned system increased in miles by fifty percent to accommodate some of the concerns.

Finally, in November 1925 the Bureau of Public Roads indicated that it was on the verge of completing a plan of organizing the nation's highways, an effort that had required extensive collaboration between the bureau and the state highway departments. The nation's press generally greeted this development with enthusiasm: "At last the touring

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[38] "Pro- and Anti-Road Campaigns," *The Literary Digest*, April 8, 1922, 27-28.

[39] Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System."

motorist may experience a peace of mind which to him will be a glimpse into the millennium. Roads, 75,000 miles of them, simply designated and uniformly marked, making travel safe and divesting it of directional complications and entanglements—this is the prospect that is to become a reality. . . . the Department of Agriculture is about to announce a gigantic system of "U.S." highways. Never before has such a project been undertaken; never before has similar effort been made to simplify motor travel."[40] So said *The Outlook*, and in that sentiment the magazine was joined by others.

The key to the new development was not the provision of federal funding for road construction; that was already in place. Instead the key was the selection and identification of main arteries of travel, each designated for its entire length by a single number, those numbers arranged in a pattern with even-numbered roads going east and west and odd numbered roads traveling north and south; the numbers would progress sequentially with the lowest numbers in the north and west and the highest numbered routes in the south and east. Main routes that traveled across the continent, or nearly so, would end in "0." An organized grid was about to emerge. Moreover, standard signs would be placed on the standardized road patterns using the U.S. government six-pointed shield to indicate that they were U.S. highways, although the top section of the sign would indicate the state, and other road signs would be made uniform, and "counterfeit" signs used for advertising would be banned.

With this development, clearly another corner had been turned in the road to a national highway system; all that remained were a few details that had to be worked out. Those details, however, proved to be more than incidental and it would be another year before agreement would be reached. One problem was that the private road associations balked at the proposal.

The Lincoln Highway Association, in particular, saw the implications of the proposed system and in retrospect they had good reason for anxiety. As historian Drake Hokanson notes, "The new federal highway system was a near-fatal blow to the Lincoln Highway and a death knell for all the other named highways of the country. Not only was the Lincoln broken up into several numbered roads, but the officials had ruled that all markers and signs for named highways would have to come down."[41] Henry Joy, once again president of the Lincoln Highway Association, wrote that "My thought is to send the president, his cabinet and all members of Congress a copy of the Lincoln Highway Proclamation and along with it a printed slip saying: 'The Lincoln Highway, a memorial to the martyred Lincoln, now known by the grace of God and the authority of the Government of the United States as Federal Route 1, Federal Route 30, Federal Route 30N, Federal Route 30S, Federal Route 530, Federal Route 40 and Federal Route 50.'"[42]

Other highways also protested, usually through the state governments, but it was clear that the new system was close to being launched. The arguments presented in favor of keeping the old named roads had more to do with the romance of the roads than with their efficiency or equity in serving the traveling public, and in that perception their comments revealed a chasm in the way the proponents of the differing road systems viewed the purpose of the highways and, in fact, the way they viewed the purpose of life. When the road known as The Old Oregon Trail was to be replaced with a two-digit number indicating its status as part of the U.S. highway system, Richard Weingroff quotes the Portland, Oregon, *Journal*: "only a meaningless number, a hard, cold, metallic number, like the figures in a cash register or on a bank ledger, is used to designate the greatest migration in history."[43] Even the Lincoln Highway Association, by February

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[40] "Safeguards for the Motorist," *The Outlook*, 141 (November 25, 1925), 464.

[41] Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, revised edition, 1999).

108.

[42] *Ibid.*, 109.

[43] Weingroff, "From Names to Numbers: The Origins of the U.S. Numbered Highway System."

1926, recognized its own preference for a single number marking its path as "only a sentimental consideration."[44]

Origin of Highway Number "66"

There was one particularly delicate problem that took two forms. U.S. Highway 60 on the proposed map extended southwest from Chicago through St. Louis and Tulsa to Los Angeles, an aberration from the otherwise consistent pattern of separate east-west and north-south roads; this proposed Highway 60 was a diagonal for a good portion of its route. The other aspect of this was that the governor of Kentucky correctly noted that Kentucky was the only state in the huge Mississippi Valley that had no main east-west highway, a highway ending in "0."

The governor of Kentucky, William J. Fields, pressed his concern with the Bureau of Public Roads and also with AASHO's executive committee. Kentucky rejected one proposed solution which would leave U.S. 60 untouched but would make the highway through Kentucky 62. When that failed, the Bureau of Public Roads and AASHO agreed to simply switch the numbers 62 (which had gone through Kentucky) and 60 (the Chicago to Los Angeles road). This, however, generated a new storm since two of the members of the Committee of Five who had settled on the numbers were from Oklahoma and Missouri and were directly impacted by the change. They too wanted a continuous highway—from Chicago to Los Angeles—with a number that ended in zero. The Committee of Five representatives from Oklahoma and Missouri, Cyrus Avery and B. H. Piepmeier, had other ideas. They insisted on retention of the U.S. 60 designation for the highway that ran through their states.

Little is known about Piepmeier, who served as Chief Engineer of the Missouri State Highway Commission from 1922 to 1927, the second to serve in that position which was essentially the director of the agency. In 1927 he left government service and went to work in private business.

Cyrus M. Avery of Tulsa, Oklahoma, on the other hand, was and remained well known along the highway that he was trying to get through his hometown. Avery had been active in real estate, in oil development, in farming, and in promoting commerce, especially that associated with road travel, and had built in 1919 The Old English Inn and Service Station next to his farm on the far reaches of Tulsa's eastern outskirts, later to have a tourist camp with twenty-five cabins, a restaurant, and a service station—a huge and imposing operation for its time.[45] His vision of the future impelled him into public activity to promote the construction of more and better roads. Thus around 1916 – 1917, according to Susan Croce Kelly, Avery

> was a director of a local booster organization known as the Tulsa Commercial Club and a director of the Tulsa Automobile Club, among other civic endeavors. He worked closely with a new Road Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, which was organized to raise separate funds to support the building and maintaining of roads in eastern Oklahoma. Avery and his Chamber of Commerce associates were instrumental in the formation of Coin Harvey's Ozark Trails Association, which encouraged the maintaining and marking of a highway from Springfield, Missouri, through Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Amarillo, Texas.[46]

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[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Susan Croce Kelly, and Quinta Scott, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 36.

[46] *Ibid.*, 11-12.

About the same time that he promoted the Ozark Trails, he also "helped organize" the Albert Pike Highway Association with its Colorado destination. Moreover, he was able to attract the Ozark Trails Association to Tulsa for its annual meeting in 1919 and was elected vice president of the group.[47]

An indefatigable organizer, promoter, and entrepreneur, Avery served not only on local committees, but in 1921 was elected President of the Associated Highways of America, a confederation of highway organizations not to be confused with AASHO.[48] In 1924 Avery was named to the Oklahoma Highway Commission, and soon became chairman. Moreover, in 1925, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Howard Gore appointed Avery to serve on a joint board associated with the Agriculture Department's Bureau of Public Roads to, as Avery said, "lay out and designate an interstate highway system for all of the United States." Subsequently Avery chaired the Committee of Five to number the roads so designated.[49]

When Piepmeier and Avery protested the loss of the Highway 60 designation, they protested vigorously and loudly. Piepmeier noted that Missouri had already printed signs and maps with U.S. 60 marked on it as it made its way from St. Louis to the southwest corner of the state. Back and forth the discussions—and demands and angry telegrams—went and finally Kentucky was able to claim the route of U.S. 60; as an alternative to the designation of the Chicago–Los Angeles route as U.S. 62, the Oklahoma Chief Highway

John M. Page, according to Richard Weingroff, "noticed that the number '66' had not been assigned to any route. Avery and Piepmeier immediately sent a telegram to Chief MacDonald: 'We prefer sixty six to sixty-two.'" Other issues continued to nag the agency, but finally, on November 11, 1926, AASHO accepted the new system of numbered highways, including the new highway 66 which was different not only because of its number but because of its diagonal path and because of its limited span from Chicago to Los Angeles, not coast-to-coast. Oklahoma officially accepted the system a few days later and Route 66 was born, at least on paper.

So the villages and towns and cities along this unimproved corridor would be now connected not just by ambitious private organizations proclaiming a road and encouraging local governments to maintain it, but by a road sponsored by the United States government, connected to commercial and population centers in other states along the same traffic route, and also by a vision of the future that promised to end the isolation, the loneliness, the distance from markets, the lack of access to social opportunity, and a vision that promised to bring people closer together. After more than a century of proposals, plans, and building, the United States finally had a public highway system.

DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. HIGHWAY, 1926-1956

The designation of U.S. Highway 66 in 1926 did not suddenly open the gates of transportation enabling eager travelers to hop onto a highway and make a quick trip between Chicago and Los Angeles. The announcement of the road's course, number, and termini, moreover, did not generate particular excitement for communities along its path with an awareness that they were now connected to the rest of the world in ways that could change their lives; the realities of the road's impact came later. For that matter, it did not even mean that there was a paved road to travel.

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[47] *Ibid.*, 7, 12.

[48] Ruth Sigler Avery, "Cyrus Stevens Avery," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XLV (Spring 1967), 87.

[49] Jim Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66* (Arcadia, Oklahoma: Ghost Town Press, 2001), 2; Oklahoma Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission for the Years 1925 to 1926, Inclusive*, 8.

When Highway 66 was officially designated in November 1926, and when news of the route became generally public in the spring of 1927, the new highway simply followed roads that already existed, roads that were sometimes part of the private road association networks, and sometimes roads that existed on paper as much as they did on the ground. Pavement covered only a fraction of the road—by some calculations as much as one fourth, though that is probably too large. The alignments that the roads took usually reflected local needs more than they did the convenience of the interstate traveler. Although U.S. 66 was a highway that drew upon significant advantages from the past, at its beginning in 1927, it was little more than a highway in name only; it was, in many ways, just a beginning.

It was the beginning, however, of much more than a roadway. In its earliest years some elements of the social transformation that the new road initiated were beginning to be seen. While the roadway appeared to offer the promise of the erosion of isolation, and while the highway quickly became associated with the speed and convenience of transcontinental travel to those who could afford the phenomenon of automobile tourism, those impacted by the road in the small towns sometimes experienced the change in less salutary ways. The advent of Highway 66 brought not only excitement and enthusiasm in some quarters, but uneasiness and distress in others.

The Route across the Country

One of the distinguishing elements of U.S. 66 from the very start, it seems, was a prevailing conception that traffic flowed mainly from east to west. Drawing upon popular conceptions of history and the unofficial national mythology rooted in the frontier, people who knew full well that all highways carried traffic in two directions suspended their reason and conjured images of automobiles following the traces of emigrants in covered wagons to the West, even though those ox-drawn wagons had also gone both directions. In truth, of course, there was some merit in that conception since the concentrations of population in the nation were east of the Mississippi River and therefore the chances were greater that more would go west than east, at least initially.

Illinois

Following that geographic orientation, it is possible, by starting at Lake Michigan and working southwest and westward along Highway 66, to identify a baseline for understanding the highway. That baseline is social and historical as much as it is geographic, though, since the road would undergo a profound evolution in the coming decades. This is important because just as the fabled road was constantly changing over time, it was also dramatically different in the different states and communities it crossed and connected. Just as traveling the highway in 1927 contrasted sharply with traveling the same road three decades later, so too did traveling Highway 66 in Illinois differ from driving it in Oklahoma or Arizona. In fact, the sensitive motorist could possibly have discerned a pattern of change in the road, and along the road, that suggested the different histories of the sections traversed, and, if exceptionally perceptive, that person could have mentally transferred some of the issues from a section more developed to a section that was less so.

The most developed, and thereby also the best, and also paved, portions of U.S. 66 were those in the older states at each end and in some of the sections adjacent to the large cities along its path. Thus Illinois, where the highway began, represented some of the most advanced routing and paving of the road. With more than seven million citizens, and the state having been admitted to the union more than a hundred years before Route 66 came into existence, Illinois had already developed the towns and transportation routes that served its citizens and U.S. 66 would probably play less of a role in shaping the state than it would in those places farther west that had been settled and organized by whites more recently.

Unlike the early travelers on the Lincoln Highway who would ceremoniously dip their wheels in the Atlantic Ocean before heading to the Pacific, where they would repeat the ritual in a token wedding of the waters, the first Highway 66

travelers did not perform that ritual, but they could have, substituting Lake Michigan for the Atlantic.

Beginning in Chicago at the intersection of Jackson Boulevard and Michigan Avenue at Grant Park, near Lake Michigan, Route 66 followed the urban roads that were part of what was known as the Pontiac Trail. State Route 4, or even more properly State Bond Issue 4, or just SBI 4, as it was also and more commonly termed, was paved all the way to St. Louis, making Illinois the first state to have complete paving for its section of the highway. It was still narrow, with two narrow lanes, sometimes traveling a narrow corridor of trees like a country avenue and some of it even used bricks that had been laid before it became a federal highway.

Not far outside Chicago, at first at Joliet and then at Plainfield, Highway 66 portentously crossed its celebrated forebear, the Lincoln Highway, now labeled the far more prosaic U.S. Highway 30 in this area, and from the very beginning of the numbered road's history provided an alternative to those travelers headed west who might prefer a route that was open more of the year. Often the road south simply followed the railroad which had established a basic route that the highways used. The streams and rivers already had bridges by the time the road was called Route 66. In this area, it is fair to say, Highway 66 did not pioneer a new thoroughfare of commerce, but it would soon pull away traffic from the others that had preceded it.

Not long after leaving the cluster of towns near Chicago, the motorist would soon work a clear path among the gentle hills and through a series of coal mining towns, beginning near Joliet and gaining at Braidwood and Godley and continuing until near Pontiac, towns that were often but a shadow of their former activity from the turn of the century mining boom. From there the road left northern Illinois and then crossed the Till Plains of the state, the vast, relatively flat and fertile land that produced the state's corn belt, where transportation was easy and where farming communities lined up along the highway, or more accurately where Route 66 made it appear that they were in a line. The highway, like the Pontiac Trail before it, connected Chicago with the state capital in Springfield, after having passed through the college towns of Normal/Bloomington. After Springfield the highway continued south, skirting another coalfield, more substantial than that in the north, and then plunging through it to Edwardsville. From Edwardsville, on the fringes of the St. Louis metropolitan area, the highway continued south and west until it encountered the Mississippi River.

Missouri

Initially, the highway went directly into St. Louis by way of Granite City and the McKinley Bridge, but in 1929 two brothers named Scott built an alternate bridge to the north just below the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi. The mile-long Chain of Rocks Bridge was one of the most spectacular built-features of the early road, not only because of its length but because the bridge actually turned at an angle to the north on the west side. The bridge owners also charged a toll, so it would only be 1935 before the 66 Highway officially turned to go over the huge bridge and it would do so as a free bridge. At St. Louis, too, the new Highway 66 crossed another of the main private east-west roads, the National Old Trails Road, or, as it had become known under the new dispensation, U.S. Highway 40.

Once on the Missouri side of the river, the road followed what was known as the Old Wire Road connecting St. Louis with Springfield, Missouri, in the southwest corner of the state, on the edge of the Ozarks. This road even predated the private association roads, having followed the telegraph before the Civil War and before that it had been a regular route sometimes referred to as the Osage Trail or Kickapoo Trail.[50] Subsequently the Southern Pacific Railroad—then the St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad—followed the same general path. In 1941, the WPA guide to Missouri described the road's origins thus:

[50] Becky L. Snider, Debbie Sheals, and others, "Route 66 in Missouri, Survey and National Register Project," January 14, 2003.

> US 66, principal highway between Chicago and the Southwest, crosses Missouri diagonally from the Mississippi at St. Louis to the high plains southwest of Springfield. As it cuts through the Ozarks, the highway follows approximately the route of a stage line established by the United States Government two decades before the Civil War. During the war, the road was an important military thoroughfare, traveled by the Federal commands of Frémont, Phelps, and Bliss, and by the Confederate troops of Price, Bains, Hindman, Parsons, and Slack. The Federal Government at that time put in a telegraph line along the road with stations at St. Louis, Rolla, Lebanon, Marshfield, Springfield, and Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the route was known as the Old Wire Road. The Confederates frequently cut the wires. After the war, the government took down the wires, leaving the poles gray and gaunt along the roadside. The country is generally rough to rolling, with slightly more than half the area in hardwood forests.[51]

Like many other states, Missouri engaged in little road construction in the final third of the nineteenth century, but began to pick up the effort with the Good Roads movement. In 1921, with encouragement by the federal government's new highway aid laws, Missouri embarked on a major effort to construct roads, including the road that ran from St. Louis to Springfield. The condition of the road that year is evident from a magazine article cited by the authors of the Missouri Route 66 Context statement in which the journal of the AAA Club of Missouri counseled motorists that "From St. Louis to St. Clair the roads are very good . . . . Between St. Clair and Rolla the roads are largely of dirt, which present the usual difficulties in wet weather. It is inadvisable to attempt the Rolla trip unless you have first secured from the Automobile Club the latest information concerning the condition of the stretch between St. Clair and the terminus."[52] In 1922 that road became State Highway 14.

Extending beyond Springfield westward to Joplin, the stretch between those two cities actually had one of the first sections of concrete pavement on this route in the state outside the major cities. Indeed, state Route 66 aficionados are quick to note that the meeting of the Oklahoma and Missouri highway officials—Cyrus Avery and B. H. Piepmeier—at which the number 66 was agreed upon as an alternative to 60—took place in Springfield on this newly paved road.[53] Missouri forged ahead with its efforts after the designation of Route 66 and the entire span of the highway in the state was paved by 1931, the third state to claim that distinction and six years ahead of neighboring Oklahoma which opened its final stretch of Route 66 pavement less than twenty miles from the Missouri border and less than that from the Kansas line.

Although the terrain in Missouri as the road went beyond Springfield opened into a rolling plain, the section of highway from St. Clair and Bourbon near St. Louis to Springfield, as it went through the Ozarks, could be adventuresome for the traveler. The Ozarks were often heavily wooded with second growth pine and also thick brush so that sometimes the hills were foreboding in their darkness and depth and sparse human population, and the terrain proved often sharp, rocky, and filled with obstacles, the combination making sometimes the earth close in on the road as if the highway were a tunnel.

Tiff (barite) mining, vineyards for the production of wine, and logging had been major industries, although the logging had faded as a result of overcutting and depletion of the pine forests (hence now the second growth forests) and

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[51] *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State*, compiled by the workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Missouri (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), 405.

[52] Snider and Sheals, and others, "Route 66 in Missouri, Survey and National Register Project."

[53] See, for example, James R. Powell, "The Birthplace of Route 66," and Arthur Krim, "First Numbering of Route 66 Discovered in Missouri," in C. H. Skip Curtis, ed., *Birthplace of Route 66: Springfield, Mo.* (Springfield, Missouri: Curtis Enterprises, 2001), 11-15, 16-17.

the tiff mining had left a human scar, trachoma, prominent in the area. This was not a prosperous area, although occasional patches of farming areas dotted the landscape.

Despite some gestures in the direction of recreational development of the area, especially for St. Louis urbanites, access was not easy. A map of the road in the area resembles not so much a road as a river with writhing twists and turns as it followed the contours of the earth, often in sight of the Frisco Railroad that preceded it. Even with the highway going through, the Ozarks continued to protect and isolate the people who had lived in the hollows and hills from the outside world for several generations and that isolation of the "hill people" remained powerful. As late as 1941 the WPA guide could talk about the culture of Waynesville as something of an oddity in the modern world. The town, the guide reported,

> has a leisurely atmosphere, unmarred by the smoke of industry and the impatient panting of trains, and but little jarred by farmers' Saturday visits or meetings of the county court. Hill people buy their blue denim and flour, their coffee, salt, and sugar with unhurried deliberation. Between purchases they talk. All are called by first names, except the very old. They receive the title of "uncle" or "aunt," and are always referred to by both given name and surname, as "Uncle Jim Corbin."[54]

This was, however, changing and the new road would increase that change. A study of the Missouri Ozarks by a sociologist in Springfield found that in the 1930s the "archaic rural American culture, protected until recently by relative isolation, is rapidly giving ground before the impact of urban civilization introduced by the automobile and improved highway, the newspaper, the radio, and other agencies."[55]

Kansas

After traversing more of the Ozarks, linking the small communities together with a ribbon of road soon to be turned into concrete, the highway emerged into open prairie at Springfield, and then moved toward the zinc and lead mining district near Joplin and the Kansas border. Route 66 made a jog through the southeast corner of Kansas—Cherokee County—for a total of thirteen miles before heading straight south into Oklahoma, following a road constructed in 1923 by the county and linking the communities of Galena, Riverton, and Baxter Springs.

A continuation of the lead and zinc mining area, this followed the Ozark Trails, as indicated by a 1918 logbook the Ozark Trails Association published. Because of the zinc mines in the area, the county actually had prospered and the mining was at its peak in the World War I period and early 1920s, so the roads were hard surfaced by the time U.S. Highway 66 came through; the fundamental component in the roads, however, was the contaminated chat from the mines.

One of the more remarkable features along this brief road was the beautiful Brush Creek Bridge built in 1923. That bridge, a graceful structure technically termed a Concrete Marsh Through Arch with 10 verticals, is often referred to simply as a rainbow bridge because of the graceful curve of the arch. After passing through the town of Baxter Springs, the road continued deeper into the mining district, but in Oklahoma.

When the highway left Kansas and Missouri behind, it entered into a different part of the nation. Three of the four

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[54] *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State, 417.*

[55] Walter O. Cralle, "Social Change and Isolation in the Ozark Mountain Region of Missouri," *American Journal of Sociology*, 41 (January 1936), 435.

states to follow had been admitted to the union within two decades of the designation of the highway—Oklahoma in 1907, New Mexico and Arizona in 1912—so the political, economic, and social infrastructure was, if not more malleable, then less anchored than in the more established states previously traversed by the highway. The three states and the highway through them would, in some sense, develop together over the next several decades. If conditions in the Texas panhandle could be seen to follow a different course from the more southerly parts of the state—and there is reasonable argument for that case—then the development metaphor held all the way from the Kansas and Missouri borders all the way to California.

Oklahoma

Route 66 in Oklahoma was made up generally of an Ozark Trails route from Baxter Springs to Oklahoma City and the Postal Highway from Oklahoma City west. These were well established roads, and obviously part of larger systems, but they were also, alas, lacking in development more than in any other state. The Oklahoma Highway Commission report for 1926 counted the miles of roads in the state. More than three thousand miles of official state routes were dirt or "improved dirt," two thousand of them lacking any such "improvement." Nine hundred seventy-five miles were gravel. Fewer than 640 miles of roads—less than twelve percent of the total 5500 miles in the state system—were concrete, asphalt on concrete, or rock asphalt on concrete.[56] Oklahoma had more miles of railroad than it did of roads, even dirt roads, in the state system.[57] Less than one fourth of Highway 66 in Oklahoma was paved when the road achieved official designation. The state did have highway patrolmen, but that referred not to an officer of the law traveling the roads to apprehend speeders or reckless drivers, but to the maintenance of the roads:

> The organization of the department is simple and direct. There is a minimum of "overhead." The basis of our system is the patrolman. All the state highways are divided into sections or patrols. These sections vary in length from seven miles to twelve and fourteen miles each according to the type of road, the nature of the soil, extent or volume of traffic and the type of equipment used. On all dirt roads and nearly all gravel roads the patrolman employed furnishes four horses, a wagon and some small tools such as shovels, picks, etc. He is paid on a daily basis and works every day in the year except Sundays. On paved roads and on some gravel roads the patrols are lengthened to from twenty to thirty miles each and the patrolman is furnished a light inexpensive truck and given two helpers. As nearly all the maintenance on paved roads is hand work we have dispensed with steady team hire.[58]

In November 1927, a year after the creation of U.S. 66, one state newspaper that offered weekly reports on the conditions of roads, described its condition thus:

> Entering the state at Miami on U.S. highway No. 66, you have gravel or pavement to the town of

[56] Oklahoma Highway Commission, Report of the State Highway Commission for the Years 1925 to 1926 Inclusive (Oklahoma City: 1927), 168.

[57] The Oklahoma Agriculture Department, in a brochure distributed in 1926 to attract farmers to the state, noted that "Oklahoma is traversed in every direction and through every county by more than 6,000 miles of railroads. A night's ride carries one from Oklahoma to St. Louis on the north, or to the Gulf on the south. There is corresponding fast freight service to these and other big markets." It also went on to acknowledge about roads, though, as optimistically as possible, that "The state is building highways to connect the larger markets and county seat towns just as other states are doing." T. M. Jeffords, Oklahoma; Its Unparalleled Growth, The Present Status and the Basis for Future Development (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture, [1927]), page 11 of the unpaginated brochure.

[58] Oklahoma Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission for the Years 1925 to 1926 inclusive*, 167.

> Bristow, passing through Afton, Vinita, Claremore, Tulsa, Sapulpa, and intermediate points. Traffic to Oklahoma City should route from Tulsa to Oilton over state highway No. 1, as the highway from Bristow to Arcadia is under construction and very rough. From Oilton, highway 11 should be followed through Drumright, Cushing and Guthrie. The road from Drumright to Guthrie is dirt and is rough, much of it being under construction. The road from Tulsa to Bristow is good. Paved through Oklahoma City to Yukon in Canadian County; from El Reno, Calumet, Geary, Bridgeport, Weatherford, Clinton, Elk City, Sayre, Erick, Texola and west to Amarillo well-maintained dirt road. There is a ten mile detour between Yukon and El Reno, and some sand. [59]

Route 66 had miles to go, in every sense, before it could be objectively regarded as a significant highway in Oklahoma.

That news account about the road was not an encouraging report, but it only told part of the story. The Ozark Trails system represented a network of roads of sorts, the main advantage of which was that it connected multiple towns and villages together in a web instead of channeling traffic through one particular route, overburdening that route, and underserving the communities not touched. The roads they promoted, therefore, were not intended to be long-distance.

The prevailing system in Oklahoma was the use of the grid of roads that followed section lines. That meant that in some instances the roads went for miles and miles almost perfectly straight; at other times, however, when the road needed to follow a course different from those section lines it would follow a zigzag pattern, stair-stepping across the countryside instead of proceeding at an angle and cutting across the sections. Highway 66, after it entered the state in the northeast corner, followed a route southwest to Tulsa and then farther to the southwest to Oklahoma City. There were exceptions where the road deviated from the section lines, usually when it followed the railroad grade, but that zigzag pattern entailed many a 90-degree turn at the section corners, thus slowing down the traffic and creating a hazard at each intersection. The name Deadman's Corner seems to have been applied to more than one such corner.

Moreover, some roads that were paved were only technically so. South of Miami a stretch of the road had been paved in 1922 was paved beautifully with concrete and with concrete curbing on each side with asphalt then applied on top of the concrete to the level of the curbs. This pavement, however, not only zigzagged in the characteristic fashion of the early roads, but it also was only nine feet wide. It was a one-lane road. The expectation was simply that with vehicles moving at thirty or forty miles per hour, there was always time for cars that met to each pull to the side but still have two wheels on the pavement.

Across the northeast corner of Oklahoma, the highway generated hopes wherever it went. In the small towns and large metropolises alike, gasoline filling stations positioned themselves to attract traffic, the corners where the traffic slowed to turn being one of the prime locations. In other instances, though, the road clearly was routed to go past the commercial establishments already there.

When Highway 66 went into Tulsa, for example, the route took several unexpected turns. Westbound Route 66 travelers entered the area by first heading south on 193rd East Avenue. They then went west on Eleventh, to Mingo Road, north to Admiral, then west again to Lewis, and south to Second, where the route again turned west. By making this circuitous loop, highway planners appear to have made a conscious diversion to serve that community's business district. [60] One might also note that on its way downtown, at the corner of Admiral and Mingo, the road made a sharp turn, and

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[59] *Daily Oklahoman*, November 6, 1927.

[60] See the alignment of Route 66 in Kathy Anderson, Jim Ross, and Gary Ray Howell, Oklahoma Route 66 Association, *Oklahoma Route 66 Roadbed Documentation Project (1926-1970): A Survey of Roadbed and Integral Structures* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma SHPO, 2002), Map 17.

passed the service station and tourist camp owned by Cyrus Avery.

The topography of Oklahoma is such that if one were to draw a north–south line through Oklahoma City, the state would be divided into two roughly equal parts, that to the east being hilly and wooded, with the part west of that line opening up and climbing onto the high plains. That meant that Highway 66 would follow an increasingly straight line as it worked its way toward the Texas panhandle. Generally this portion of the highway followed the old Postal Road which ran through Oklahoma from Fort Smith, Arkansas in the east to Amarillo in Texas and beyond, much of which followed the old Beale Wagon Road; with a more arid climate, the population thinned out and the towns along the highway were farther apart. By the time the traveler had gone westward along the dusty road from Yukon to Texola, and the Texas border, there could be no doubt that this was a different world, not only from the east, but from Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas, and, for that matter, from eastern Oklahoma too. Although the new highway snaked its way through a few towns large enough to have a substantial business district, such as in El Reno, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, increasingly the highway would make a straight line through the middle of town, exactly along the main street.

As the traveler continued west, the hot wind in the summer, the clouds of dust blowing across the plains, and the broad prairie and wide open skies signaled a new horizon, that of the Llano Estacado—the vast, short-grassed plains on which a breakdown could have serious consequences and travel could seem eternal, both in their positive and negative connotations.

Texas

With the Texas–Oklahoma border defined precisely by the one hundredth meridian, this was also the beginning of the arid country that had historically represented a challenge to pioneers and other travelers. As sheep ranching gave way to cattle ranching in the Texas panhandle in the early twentieth century, both of which had displaced the bison and the Native Americans who made their living with the bison, and as late as 1940, the WPA guide for Texas could comment without great exaggeration that "The population of the region is predominantly native-born white. Since settlement is comparatively new, any 25-year resident is considered an old-timer."[61]

More than years in residence, though, what separated the old timers from the new arrivals was the way they made their livings. In the 1920s the oil industry emerged as the dominant economic force and turned Amarillo into a corporate center for the region. At the same time, farms in the region became larger and more mechanized in operation. Thus fewer farmers and farm laborers were needed. Agriculture, however, was sufficiently profitable in the aggregate in the 1920s that one analyst proudly remarked in 1932: ". . . the large scale system of agriculture now in vogue on the High Plains is producing and maintaining a thriving civilization with a newness and color all its own."[62] With agriculture booming, but especially because of the oil activity, and the industry it in turn generated, another history notes that "in the 1920s the Panhandle led Texas in the development of highways."[63] And U.S. 66 was the stellar road in that development. Even so, and as something of a commentary on the relative isolation of the panhandle from the rest of the state, the official, but informal, history of the Texas Department of Transportation fails to mention Route 66.[64]

From Shamrock, Alanreed, and Groom in the east to Adrian, Landergin, and Wildorado in the west, the towns

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[61] *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State*, compiled by the Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Texas (New York: Hastings House, 1940), 490.

[62] J. S. Gibson, "Agriculture of the Southern High Plains," *Economic Geography*, 8 (1932), 245-261.

[63] "Panhandle," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ryp01

[64] Hilton Hagan, *An Informal History of the Texas Department of Transportation* (n.p.: Texas Department of Transportation, 1991).

were small, with a population seldom above five hundred except for Amarillo, and Amarillo prospered because of the boom of the twenties. The others, though, were marked mainly by grain elevators and gas stations and a general store to serve the needs of the farming community that stretched out for miles to the sparsely settled lands beyond the town itself.

New Mexico

Not long after entering New Mexico, the westbound traveler on the newly designated Highway 66, still traveling on largely unpaved roads, would experience several changes indicating how far he or she had driven. The names of the towns were in a different language, with a mix of predominantly Spanish expression—San Jon, Cuervo, Santa Rosa—and an occasional Native American reference—like Tucumcari—and the Anglo names shrank into the minority (and some of those, like Endee and Bard, derived from the exotic language of cattle brands), and the people who lived in the towns and countryside often had a darker skin than the generally white highway travelers. These towns, strung along the railroad (itself only coming through at the turn of the century) previously, were now strung along Route 66 as it climbed the bluffs and mesas to the piñon-dotted highlands of central New Mexico.

In fact, from Amarillo westward to Las Vegas, New Mexico, U.S. 66 followed, once again, one of the routes marked by the Ozark Trails Association. When the highway turned north, generally following the Pecos River toward Las Vegas, New Mexico, it crossed through open and rolling hills with but the sparsest of human habitation, until it joined the National Old Trails Road outside Las Vegas at Romeroville. Winding its way through the mountains, the road, very little of which had a hard surface, followed the route not only of the National Old Trails Road but also of the Santa Fe Trail, and the Santa Fe Railroad which had used the same passes for their traverse of the region.[65]

While connections with the state capitals were not obligatory, they added important anchors for the highway even when, as in New Mexico, it meant going through mountains; besides, the highly romanticized Santa Fe was a welcome stop on the long highway. In addition to the usual array of small businesses that could supply the traveler's needs, Santa Fe also marked the beginning of a new feature along the road all the way to California.

The Fred Harvey company had built along the railroad a series of large hotels near the depots that had served the traveling public on the rails. In the late 1920s the Harvey Houses would accommodate the highway travelers too. Located in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Gallup, Winslow, Williams, Seligman, and Needles, this chain of hotels and eating houses provided another resource for the travelers on the new highway, just as it had for years on the road's predecessors, yet each one was distinct, reflected local architectural and cultural patterns, and provided a different kind of base—and daily destination—for the traveler. But in Albuquerque, along Highway 66—Fourth Street—as motel historians John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers note, were "virtually all of Albuquerque's tourist camps" in the 1920s.[66] The automobile traveler more commonly stayed away from the large hotels, even from the Fred Harvey hotels.

When U.S. 66 departed Santa Fe to the south, it once again followed an ancient road (El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro), and also the National Old Trails Highway. The road soon descended La Bajada, a sometimes harrowing experience, and on through the Big Cut on its way to Albuquerque. To shore up the road on the precipice of La Bajada, the state had added a second set of retaining walls by 1926, but the passage down the road still was breathtaking and intimidating, and it gave cause for deliberation on the descent. In 1925 a tourist court emerged at the bottom of the hill and

[65] Historian David Kammer has noted that of the original 506 miles of Route 66 in New Mexico, 28 miles were concrete "and seven were scheduled to receive a concrete surface." Kammer, "The Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico," (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1992), 45.

[66] John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 291.

that provided relief for those who successfully descended the escarpment as well as haven for those anticipating its ascent the next day.[67]

When U.S. 66 reached Albuquerque, it went through the city from north to south and finally turned west again at the town of Los Lunas. The road proceeded generally westward from this point. By the time the westbound traveler had arrived at the pueblo of Laguna, it was clear that the highway had completed a huge "S" curve since heading north near Santa Rosa toward Las Vegas. This perception was noted by both travelers and highway planners and it would eventually lead to considerations of alternate routes.

The road followed the Santa Fe Railroad westward and made a course that, after leaving the linear oasis of the Rio Grande valley, etched a path through red rocks and mountain peaks, with Mt. Taylor on the north and the Acoma pueblo on the south, with small villages, or just clusters of houses and an occasional filling station, at irregular intervals. After passing through Grants the road crossed the symbolic and major threshold of the continental divide, before leaving the state just beyond the railroad and mining town of Gallup, on the southern periphery of the Navajo reservation. The road entered the reservation when it crossed into Arizona.

Arizona

Consistent with the pattern in both New Mexico and Oklahoma, very little of the original U.S. Highway 66 in Arizona was paved in 1926. The road crossed the state following the route of the railroad, which itself often followed the path of the old Beale Wagon Road. In 1857 Lieutenant Edward F. Beale crossed Arizona with a caravan of camels. The next year he reported to Congress that the path he took "will eventually be the greatest emigrant road to California," and the following year he claimed that the road was the "shortest, best timbered, best graded, best watered and certainly in point of grade better than any other line between the two oceans with which I am acquainted."[68]

Perhaps the travelers on the highway, when it first became known as U.S. 66, would have questioned Beale's sunny assessment of the road; the magazine *Arizona Highways* in the late 1920s described one highway segment, located between Williams and Flagstaff, as "18 miles of narrow, crooked, poorly surfaced road which is particularly dangerous in dry weather due to ravelling and innumerable potholes;" while near the small community of Valentine, the road was "narrow and rough with sharp turns."[69] With piñon–juniper punctuating the sandstone and weathered rocks to the east and west of Flagstaff, and thick pine forests in the town's immediate vicinity, the road's main attraction was not its speedy and smooth driving, but the spectacular scenery. In addition, the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest offered an early sample of sensational attractions to come, and with the Grand Canyon, a convenient sidetrip north from Flagstaff or Williams.

One of the most harrowing drives on Highway 66 could be found west of Kingman. The Beale road actually went to the southwest from Kingman to the Colorado River, and then to Needles. But the existence of gold mines high in the Black Mountains meant also the existence of a major road that climbed the steep grade to Sitgreaves Pass. Given the gravity-fed fuel system of some of the automobiles of the time, backing up the precipice was often a necessity. Perhaps

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[67] National Register of Historic Places nomination for "The Route 66 and National Old Trails Road Historic District at La Bajada," nomination document on file in the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

[68] Beale quoted in Velma Rudd Hoffman, "Lt. Beale and the Camel Caravans through Arizona," *Arizona Highways*, 33 (October 1957), 8.

[69] *Arizona Highways* quoted in "Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona," multiple property submission to the National Register of Historic Places, 1989, E-4.

the only drive worse than going up the hill was coming down. When the traveler made it to the Colorado River and was able to cross the bridge at Topock, already ten years old by the time the highway was designated, one counted the successes that day not in the number of miles driven but in the number of narrow escapes from disaster. In that short drive, the elevation dropped from 3,550 feet to less than 500 feet.

California

Highway 66 in California proved, like the road in Illinois, something of an anomaly in that it already had a well-developed highway system in comparison to the other states, at least as the stretch that became 66 reached east from Los Angeles to Barstow and Daggett; beyond there, however, it would be years before the road between Daggett and Kingman would be paved. Twelve years after the highway was designated, the WPA Guide for the state commented on the topography it crossed in California:

West of the green banks of the Colorado River, US 66 traverses the arid Mojave Desert, a bleak plateau furrowed by scores of untillable valleys, shimmering in the fierce sunlight. The road mounts and dips in and out of these sinks, unrelieved in their desolation except after rare rains, when a thorny mantle of delicate-hued vegetation blazes into flower. Ahead rises the blue bulk of the San Gabriel Mountains. The highway runs steadily toward them, between hills of jumbled beauty, passing through widely spaced "towns" -- mere groups of tourist cabins about gas stations and lunch rooms -- to the desert city of Barstow.[70]

The Mojave Desert, as that description suggests, formed the dominant feature of the region and called upon all the resourcefulness of the 1926-1927 traveler in assuring enough water and fuel; and in surviving the summer heat, in terms of both human and automobile endurance. In some of the towns, like Daggett and Barstow, where turn-of-the-century mining activity had faded, the new highway may have promised a new beginning as more and more travelers made their way across the road that was a part of the new U.S. highway system.

Beyond Barstow the difficult travel resumed, but increasingly the road converged with more, and older, travel routes than that of the Santa Fe Railway, which it had been following. The Old Spanish Trail, the corridor used by Mexican traders and subsequently developed by Mormon expansion in the late nineteenth century (from Salt Lake to San Bernardino), and a spider web of local roads actually provided an appearance of urbanization, especially once the traveler started the descent toward the Pacific on the west slope of Cajon Pass. Once the road passed through San Bernardino with its orchard and fruit packing plants, memories of the desert crossing were submerged beneath images of paradise.

The towns—such as Rialto, Fontana, Upland, Pomona, Azusa, Arcadia, and Pasadena—were now closer together, reflecting the prosperity and ease of transportation in the Los Angeles area. In the more sparsely populated states in the mountain west, the highway had been a bold innovation, and it had a channeling effect on local social and economic forces and institutions. But as the highway approached downtown Los Angeles, its initial terminus, it was just one of many avenues available—just as it had been at its start in Chicago. In future years, when the route was extended to within a few blocks of the Santa Monica pier, one would be able to compare the Pacific Ocean to the waters of Lake Michigan. During their 2,400-mile sojourn, Route 66 travelers had journeyed through the heart of a nation in the midst of social upheaval, from rural to urban, from traditional to modern, and from local to national in its orientation. U.S. Highway 66, in fact, would provide not just an observation platform for this process of social change, but it would also provide an engine for generating those changes.

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[70] *California: A Guide to the Golden State*, compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of California (New York: Hastings House, 1939).

The Promise of the Future

While Highway 66 at its beginning represented the culmination of powerful road building forces at work for over a century in the nation, it even more importantly rested on a vision of the future. Its alignment and its pavement held serious deficiencies and the commercial infrastructure along its path was sorely limited, but its potential seemed infinite. One national writer described the future a few months before the creation of Route 66, as he remarked on how much had been accomplished in road construction: "The end is not yet—not by many more miles of highway, the last more perfect than its predecessor—not by tens of thousands of miles of gleaming roads which will, in the not distant future, pierce hamlets now sleeping beside dust-laden, rut-ridden lanes, will push through mountain passes now somnolent, and echoing only the tumble of stream or the hoot of owl, will connect fertile lands with prosperous markets, will tie the whole of the nation in one strong and indissoluble chain of transportation facilities."[71] It was a grand future of society that seemed to be at hand, one that still promised to unify the nation by improving road access, thereby echoing the dreams of roadbuilders from Albert Gallatin to the National Old Trails Road Association.

Promoting the New Highway

Highway 66 advocates gained sustenance from a new association that resembled the old road clubs that promoted travel. The U.S. Highway 66 Association sprang into being almost from the start. In February 1927 promoters of the highway—businesspeople along the road—convened in Tulsa for an organizational meeting in much the same spirit as their predecessors with the Ozark Trails Association and other road booster organizations and created the new body. The inspiration for the organization appears to have derived from the example of the private road associations: Cyrus Avery and John T. Woodruff had both been active in leadership roles in the Ozark Trails Association.

As early as the summer of 1926, before the highway plan had been finalized, Woodruff and Avery met in Springfield, Missouri, and agreed to bring together businesses interested in promoting the new highway. These two men then invited chambers of commerce along Highway 66 to an initial meeting in Tulsa in February 1927 where the Highway 66 Association was organized. In response, businesses and chambers sent representatives from many points. It is notable that neither Illinois nor California sent representatives, perhaps neither one anticipating the gains to their existing system from additional commerce from places like Oklahoma and Texas. Arizona also did not send anyone.

Woodruff was chosen the leader of the group and the organization met again in May in Springfield and in June in Amarillo, followed by Albuquerque a few months later. This schedule is instructive as it reveals that an important part of the mission, the first priority, of the organization was to increase awareness of the highway and its potential in the communities served by the road and thereby to drum up enthusiasm for its future. After Woodruff served two terms as president of the group, Cyrus Avery stepped into the position and the headquarters for the group was located with Avery in Tulsa.

But this was not just the alter ego of the Ozark Trails or any other group. The members of the Highway 66 Association saw themselves on a grander mission than the earlier clubs which, in most cases, had sought to generate support in various communities for the road. At its first meeting Avery persuaded the group to call the road "The Main Street of America," a name that merged the positive connotations of small-town life with national bonds and linkages, truly an inspired motto that glossed over both the highway's potential to divide people and the possible losses entailed with the new road with a veneer of unity that suggested the possibility of holding onto small town values and identities at the same

[71] William Ullman, "Enormous Roads Program Still Is Ahead of Country: Highways Are Injecting Life into America," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 22, 1926. Ullman was a prominent travel writer whose work appeared nationally.

time as claiming the advantages of national commerce.[72] The group had other objectives as well and embarked on a campaign for paving the road in those many miles where it lacked a hard surface and also on a promotional venture to make travelers across the country aware of the presumably unparalleled advantages of taking Highway 66.

The promotional effort took a novel turn almost at the outset. In 1928, the organization raised the profile of the new road when it conceived the idea of a business promoter—some would say huckster—to publicize a road race from Los Angeles to New York, by way of U.S. 66 to Chicago. But this road race would, perhaps appropriately given the condition of the roads, be a footrace, not an automobile race. More than two hundred runners entered the race and it did indeed garner national attention and publicity, much of it favorable. The race was organized by C. C. Pyle, who was widely known as "Cash and Carry" Pyle), a professional promoter of athletes and kindred celebrities. The race, popularly called the "Bunion Derby," featured not only the runners but a substantial retinue of announcers and reporters who wired progress of the race to their newspapers and brought the highway into the spotlight. In fact, when the racing group reached the small towns of Highway 66 it was truly an unprecedented event for many of them.

In April 1928 the group approached Bristow, Oklahoma, for example, and there the local newspaper announced that, "Bristow expects to entertain thousands of visitors upon the occasion of the arrival of the party here, it being undoubtedly the greatest athletic event of a marathon nature in the world's history."[73] At Sapulpa, Oklahoma, not far from Bristow, the local press described the phenomenon: "Moving toward Sapulpa along the path of the 'Main Street of America,' there is a footrace of unusual proportions." Although the original number of entrants in the race had dwindled to eighty-two runners, there was also the promotional and service infrastructure. The Sapulpa reporters itemized what would hit Sapulpa around 10:00 a.m. on Monday, April 16, 1928: "There are 125 cars and trucks with the caravan, including hospital and dining cars. A broadcasting outfit and receiving sets are a part of the equipment. A carnival show and other concessions are a part of the caravan." Businesses opened their doors for the crowd and the schools closed theirs to allow the students to participate in this event hardly imaginable a few years before.[74] The race linked the people along the road not just to the next town, but to the world.

Moreover, the winner of the race was nineteen-year old Andy Payne from Foyil, Oklahoma, a village through which Highway 66 passed. Payne's victory may have augured well for the road, for Oklahoma, and for his village, given the symbolism of the new developments associated with the race and the road. And, indeed, there was a certain poetry to his achievement. A young man of Cherokee ancestry living in a small town that was representative of the many isolated villages now linked by the highway, and who had seldom traveled beyond his own town and maybe not outside his state, not only completed the race but triumphed in a coast-to-coast enterprise put together by a promoter who promised the world to the villagers and the merchants who eagerly sought some kind of connection to the larger world. Payne used the prize money to pay off the mortgage on his parents' home—a dream to which many people could relate—which cemented his image as a hero.

The parable perhaps continues since the race, instead of stopping in Chicago, continued to New York and offered potentially the impression that the highway actually went from coast to coast. The race generated a high attrition rate; running across the Mojave Desert, across Arizona and New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle had exhausted a majority of the runners. And it had financial problems aplenty. There was some question whether Payne would be able to collect the promised prize of twenty-five thousand dollars, and by the time the race reached New Jersey, Pyle was referred to in at

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[72] Kelly and Scott, *Route 66*, 24; Jim Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66* (Arcadia, Oklahoma: Ghost Town Press, 2001), 1.

[73] "Pyle's Runners to Arrive Here on Next Sunday," Bristow *Record*, April 12, 1928.

[74] "Sapulpa on Main Street Highway Number Sixty-six," [Creek] *County Democrat News*, April 12, 1928; "Transcontinental Races Have Passed Oklahoma," [Creek] *County Democrat News*, April 19, 1928.

least one newspaper in that state as "the demon promoter," with some accounts reporting him losing forty-thousand dollars.[75] Pyle eventually paid the prize, Payne paid off the mortgage, and the public heard all about Highway 66. But another footrace the following year, which did not attract same level of attention as the first, was the final such venture.[76] The race served its purpose, but in the future the fate of the road would be shaped more by fundamental social pressures rather than by special planned events.

The promotional efforts continued, and while with less hullabaloo than the footrace, Route 66 advertising was by no means entirely conventional. Some of the promotion involved distributing literature encouraging travel on the road, making the road more widely known and fostering a national image for the highway.

But more significant, and more in keeping with the association of the highway with a national audience, the Highway 66 Association also advertised in the nation's periodical press. Mass market advertising was new in the 1920s and its practitioners were a new breed of marketers who sought ways to draw upon social science research and pop psychology to target, and capture, audiences. In 1932, even though this was hardly a propitious time to encourage people to spend their money on vacations, the U.S. Highway 66 Association paid for an ad in the *Saturday Evening Post* encouraging travelers to the Olympics in Los Angeles that summer to use 66 to get there. Highway 66 was, the ad said, "One of America's few great diagonal highways," and was "the shortest, best and most scenic route" from Chicago to Los Angeles. The part of the nation it traversed included, "the historic and romantic west, the land of limitless panorama and the home of ageless antiquity," and the road was "a high speed carry-all" to those exotic destinations. Even acknowledging that it wasn't paved all the way was turned into a positive by comparison: "You stay on pavement longest going west. You get on pavement first going east." The highway was "NOW READY" and calling to the motorist. The motorist answered. According to Susan Croce Kelly, "Within a week of publication, the Route 66 Association office, in Tulsa, received more than seven hundred of the ad's cut-out-and-send-in coupons from people seeking more information."[77]

What is most revealing about this advertising, however, is that it carried a different message from the promotional efforts undertaken in the towns where U.S. 66 formed the Main Street. In those towns the promise was that of hordes of motorists stopping to use local facilities and bring in money from the outside, and also the promise of connections to the outside world that transcended the local social islands where energies were focused inward and where tradition ruled. In the national market the promise was vastly different: Highway 66 beckoned for its ease and speed of transportation, not the opportunity to stop and learn from these intriguing pockets of distinct cultures and not the elimination of their isolation, and certainly not a pluralistic cultural, economic, and social interaction. The implicit contradiction in these two messages would never be successfully reconciled. Route 66 would ever be a two-way street.

How successful such promotional efforts may have been in terms of actual traffic generated is difficult to say. On the other hand while there were not turnstiles on the highway, at least one state counted the traffic volume carried on the road. At a point one mile east of the town of Chelsea in the northeastern quadrant of Oklahoma, for instance, the official census of traffic (a daily average taken at multiple times in the fall) showed an increase from 547 vehicles in 1926 to 1,338 in 1930; a point a mile north of the state capitol in Oklahoma City saw an increase in the same period from 3,362 to 7,365; traffic over the South Canadian River bridge at Bridgeport climbed from 428 to 1,072; and at the border on the Texas panhandle, traffic went from 384 vehicles to 849 in that four year period. Equally important is the percentage of "foreign traffic" (automobiles entering with out-of-state license plates) recorded; percentages that hovered above ten percent for

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[75] Hudson, New Jersey, *Dispatch*, May 28, 1928.

[76] See the brief summary of this race in Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66*, 45-48.

[77] Croce Kelly and Scott, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People*, 37.

the metropolitan areas but over twenty, and even thirty percent in the smaller villages where local traffic was minimal.[78]

These figures may be fairly reflective of patterns both to the east and west of Oklahoma where long-range linkages were new, but in states like Illinois and California the road traffic doubtless expanded in a much less dramatic fashion in these early years; they already had a substantial volume. Some states, such as California operated agricultural inspection stations near the border of the adjoining state. Here, among other data, the number of "foreign" cars entering California was recorded. The agricultural inspection station for U.S. 66 at Daggett saw the lowest counts of traffic of the three "all-weather" highways (U.S. 66, U.S. 60/70 and U.S. 80) from the 1930s through the early 1950s.[79]

Many of the "foreign" cars potentially represented long-distance, cross-country travel; an opportunity still largely restricted to those who could afford the automobile and who had the time and financial resources to embark upon such an adventure. Most Americans, it is fair to say, did not make plans to go to Los Angeles to watch the Olympic Games of 1932. Even as the automobile came within reach of more people in the 1920s, the tourist was the person, in the words of historian Earl Pomeroy, who "continued to be (as he continued to be still later) of more than average wealth and income."[80] Yet that definition of the demographics of travel was consistent with the aspirations of the promoters; they sought not just travelers, but travelers with money to spend in their stores and towns.

There is a tendency to give too much attention and, therefore a bias, toward the experience of the cross-country tourist and the businesses that catered to them. For many, U.S. 66 was no more than a local road of everyday travel, whether across a county, or simply across town. Highway 66, in many instances was laid over an existing state or local route that already functioned as a major transportation arterial or commercial spine for a community. In this sense, its early moniker, "The Main Street of America," is not too far of an exaggeration. In some communities, such as Grants, New Mexico, it was the only commercial arterial in town. There it served its citizenry in daily and mundane errands to the bank, grocery store, barber shop, filling station.

Highway 66 in larger cities often worked within a system of local roads and state highways, carrying thousands of commuters and facilitating regional trade and commerce. Such was the case in greater Los Angles, where separate sections of U.S. 66 following Santa Monica, Colorado, and Foothill boulevards served local communities along the alignments and at the same time fed into Los Angeles County's larger transportation network. Thus businesses along these arterials benefited mostly from local and regional traffic. Even businesses that are thought to be exclusively for tourists, often served a dual use, benefiting the local population with goods, services, entertainment and, of course, employment.

Evolution of the Road

What is more clear than the exact volume of traffic traveling the road are the twin products of that increased traffic, phenomena that escalated in a cycle of almost mutually assured enhancement as traffic and road improvement engaged in a reciprocal dynamic, a *pas de deux* on the highway. The more traffic there was on the roads, the more those roads

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[78] Oklahoma Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission for the Years 1919-1930 Inclusive*, (Oklahoma City, 1930), 165-166. Of course near state borders, the "foreign" traffic increased disproportionately, even above fifty percent, because of the nearby, but out-of-state, traffic.

[79] California Department of Agriculture, "Automobiles Inspected at Border Stations 1924-1964." These statistics and similar data that may exist for other states are important for understanding the long-distance use and traffic patterns of U.S. 66 and placing these in a comparative context with other highways.

[80] Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), 129.

would become candidates for paving. The better the roads, the more attractive they would be for outside travelers. The greater the traffic, the more business would grow along the roadside. It is impossible to say exactly which force carried the greater weight and both contributed to the other in a symbiotic relationship, but it is possible to identify not only an increase in traffic but also the consequent increase in pavement and increase in highway-associated business. It was not, perhaps, possible at that time to identify the final result of this process.

As an extension of the building activity of the early 1920s, the campaign to pave Route 66 increased in intensity with visible results almost immediately. An energetic campaign for pavement coincided with Highway 66 Association meetings and communities and businesses were encouraged to contribute money, to lobby county and state officials, and even to volunteer their own labor in improving the roadbed. Often the towns would hold grand parties when a section between two towns was completed. In Rolla, Missouri, where the last section of pavement in the route across the state was completed in 1931, the local newspaper described the celebration in terms usually reserved for presidential or gubernatorial inaugurations:

> One of the biggest events organized by the U.S. 66 Association was a celebration to commemorate the completion of Route 66 in Missouri. The event headquarters was the newly completed Hotel Edwin Long and the celebration included a parade through Rolla. More than 8,000 people turned out to hear the bands, watch the floats and automobiles go by, and hear speeches from dignitaries including Missouri Governor Henry Caulfield.[81]

In Oklahoma the enthusiasm was palpable. When paving proposals and bond issues were discussed for the highway between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, local supporters in Bristow declared the plan splendid because it "will give Creek county motorists a paved road to Oklahoma City, and because of the importance of having the 'Main Street of America' national highway No. 66 run through the cities on its present routing between Tulsa and Oklahoma City." And it would not just be local traffic or people on their way to Tulsa and Oklahoma City: "It is said that more than 5,000 cars daily will pass through Oklahoma during the tourist season, all following the 'Main Street of America.'"[82] When the road between those two cities was completed soon afterwards, Cyrus Avery himself planned to host the celebration, an occasion that underscored "bring[ing] the two towns closer together."[83]

In New Mexico, many of Highway 66's original road segments never were paved, but those parts that received the heaviest traffic were subsequently either paved or replaced by pavement, such as the bypass of the La Bajada section with a new paved alignment several miles to the east in 1932. In Arizona, Teri A. Cleeland observed that "The outmoded 1920s roadway had to be rebuilt . . . ." Cleeland, in a penetrating conceptualization of the process, describes a course in which the road evolved from one that coexisted with the landscape, to a road that dominated it.[84] The highway, the very roadbed itself, was beginning to evolve, to change, and with that change, the world around it changed.

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[81] "8000 Attend Highway 66 Celebration Sunday Completion of Concrete Slab on Highway 66 across Missouri," Rolla *Herald*, March 19, 1931, quoted in Snider and Sheals, "Route 66 in Missouri," 23.

[82] "Lincoln County Casts Big Vote for Road Bonds," Bristow *Record*, March 31, 1927.

[83] "Tulsa Takes Lead for Highway Fete," Tulsa *Daily World*, September 6, 1927.

[84] Teri A. Cleeland, "Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona," E-5.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES ON U.S. HIGHWAY 66, 1926-85 (Part 1)

The highway came to dominate not only the physical landscape but the social and commercial landscapes as well. As the road evolved, so too did business along the highway. As traffic increased, so too did business. That, after all, had been part of the forecast offered by promoters of Highway 66. The institutions that provided lodging and fuel especially reflected this trend. Much more adapted to the new mobility of travelers and requiring less formal and public interaction with hotel staff, tent camps and cabin camps on the outskirts of towns increased while hotels in the business centers declined. The store that had sold gasoline on the side was replaced by a new filling station where customers purchased gasoline for their cars as the primary business activity. That activity became modified and enhanced, as the filling station became a service station, a place where repairs and maintenance and the purchase of tires, batteries, and accessories became a significant portion of the business. And restaurants sometimes became cafes, places where short orders were prepared, quick meals for people on the move. Moreover, automobile dealerships took their place alongside the other retail establishments.

The small towns and the larger cities alike began to throb with a new rhythm of commerce. The dynamic was that the more business they took in, the more they generated. It was as if a new force had been unleashed in the hinterland, and that force began to transform the communities along the road. The key element here is that this was not just quantitative, but also *qualitative*; it was not just an increase in business, but a transformation of business.

Lodging

This increased traffic generated new institutions and patterns of relationships. One clear need was simply for a place to stay for the night, and the short distances traveled at a time underscored that need. When the usual daily range of travel nationally was about 200 miles in 1925 and 250 in 1930, the figure was lower for states where fewer miles of highway were paved. The national response to that need was the auto camp. Indeed, the car tourists became known as "auto-campers" than as anything else, although they also sometimes derogatively called "tin-can tourists."

Writer James Agee made the following observation about roadside camping in the early 1920s: "At night you could, in say 1922, see their campfires for miles, a flickering fringe to the trunk roads which led out of the Middle West into California, down into Florida."[85] In that year, four years before U.S. 66 was designated, one map showed 129 auto-camps in Illinois, 57 in Missouri, 105 in Kansas, 54 in Oklahoma, 86 in Texas, 14 in New Mexico, 14 in Arizona, and 168 in California.[86] These numbers were slightly lower than those in the states along the Lincoln Highway, which was reaching its pinnacle usage, but substantially higher than other areas, like the South, and, for that matter, the urban East.

These campgrounds often had free facilities—generally fireplaces, some form of lighting, sometimes showers, various degrees of sanitary facilities, and a place to pitch a tent. But as time went on, the campgrounds increased in number. As one Oklahoma reporter noted: "First one town and then another added rest houses and comfort stations to their camp sites, while others went still further and installed such things as completely equipped kitchenettes, laundries with electric washing machines and irons, tent floors, electric lights, gas for cooking and lighting, filling stations, supply stores, and even free touring information bureaus."[87] The impetus behind the free camp is not hard to find. As Agee said,

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[85] James, Agee, "The Great American Roadside," *Fortune*, 10 (September 1934), 56.

[86] "Municipal Auto Camps," Bartlesville *Morning Examiner*, July 2, 1922. The map only indicated the total number in the states and did not indicate further their distribution.

[87] "Municipal Auto Camps," Bartlesville *Morning Examiner*, July 2, 1922.

"The automobile camp became a cash crop."[88] One newspaper correspondent who studied this new feature of roadside life noticed that "farmers go through camps with eggs, butter, milk and vegetables. The campers buy, for they must eat. It is a show that seems likely to have a long run."[89]

That public show, however, led to another, more privately motivated and benefited feature. In Tulsa, for example, the local press reported that "In addition to municipally owned camps, practically every Oklahoma town has what is known as 'pay camps' where for a small sum, generally 25 or 50 cents a night, tourists may find camping facilities and accommodations. Tulsa has a number of such camps, all widely used during the summer months."[90] One of those was a camp that belonged to Cyrus Avery, a camp that had cabins instead of camp sites, but that included a common cooking facility. In this transitional period, Avery's "cabin camp" required customers to furnish their own linens as well as their own utensils.[91] One of the most famous camps was Camp Joy in Lebanon, Missouri, built after Emis and Lois Spears counted the cars going past a particular point, leading to their purchase of a square block to build a tourist camp.[92] The emergence of new businesses made it clear that change was in the air, even at this early point in the history of Highway 66.

A number of historic resources along U.S. 66 reflect this early surge of roadside business activity even though they sometimes appear to be far away from the commonly recognized alignments of the highway. The tourist camps tended to be upgraded as they provided more services and as cabins soon replaced tents. As a result, these early lodging opportunities were quickly modified or dismantled. Occasionally a sign remains indicating the location of a campground, and seldom more than that. But the campgrounds still speak to the historical issues and evoke something of the spirit of optimism that prevailed when townspeople opened their doors—or, more exactly, greeted their campers.

The vision of the future that was so ardently embraced by the roadside merchants, however, was but one part of Highway 66. Beneath the buoyant atmosphere surrounding the new pavement and the new connections that was public, were other sentiments that revealed anxiety about changes. In Illinois, though less dramatically affected by the new highway's designation because of its existing highway system, the greater emphasis on statewide and interstate road generated celebration, but it also gave cause for concern. As Dorothy R. L. Seratt and Terri Ryburn-Lamont carefully note in their discussion of historic and architectural resources in Illinois, in the early years of Highway 66, "some people feared that cross-state highways, while they were good for garages and motels and gas stations that lined the route, might weaken the other businesses in town."[93] This account goes on to suggest a deeper level of apprehension for those communities: ". . . an uneasiness existed over whether the roadway might ultimately undermine small towns' economic independence." That uneasiness would persist in one form or another for good reason.

In Missouri, paving activity proceeded boldly on the new highway, but it also had implications for the towns along the path. In Rolla, for example, as the pavement was being completed between that city and St. Louis in 1929, the local newspaper advised the community to pave its business streets in the city or else "lose many dollars from the tourists who

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[88] Agee, "The Great American Roadside," 56.

[89] Anderson, "'Tin-Can Tourists' Celebrate Their Season."

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] Kelly and Scott, *Route 66,* 36. See also the discussion in John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 15: "Private entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to profit by upgrading facilities, often through the provisioning of rental cabins, and so the cabin court was born."

[92] Scott and Kelly, *Route 66,* 42-43.

[93] Dorothy R. L. Seratt and Terri Ryburn-Lamont, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through Illinois," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1997, E-18.

come through Rolla, otherwise they will stay on the highway and pass us by."[94] The economic and social ripples generated by the paving of Route 66 were just beginning.

The benefits of the new highway for those who lived near it were not evenly dispensed; the new pavement and construction on the road underscored the inequity. The communities that benefited materially from this increased commerce, from the trade in fuel, food, and lodging and other goods stimulated by this traffic, included probably all of those served by the route. But at the same time that the road generated changes often associated with commercial development—even if they did disrupt old relationships—the dependence on the traffic revealed a less obvious element of the new order. It was clear to all the traffic brought pavement and the pavement in turn brought more traffic. But as state and federal officials moved to pave the road, they also often changed its course. The road in some areas had often followed the section lines, sometimes following them straight as an arrow for miles, but at other times the road winded and curved sharply at the section corners, making sharp turns across the countryside. The highway engineers, with their penchant for wider roads and smoother curves and straighter lines, saw those deviations as impediments to travel and the small towns that the jogs and bends served began to be left behind. For them, business not only did not increase, but it often followed the road elsewhere.

This other side of the traffic-commerce dynamic can be observed in Oklahoma. The Ozark Trails had passed through the town of Wellston, northeast of Oklahoma City. When Highway 66 was designated, it traveled through the middle of Wellston as it did in so many other towns. Instead of waiting for the state to pave the road, the people of Lincoln County voted on a paving bond; the measure received broad support at the polls. Their road, however, was almost a mile north of the designated main alignment of U.S. 66, presenting a less desirable route to highway officials. The state highway commission initially rejected the county-sponsored proposal to build the highway through the center of Wellston. A new commission later approved the plan, but then the Bureau of Public Roads objected. In 1933, after years of negotiation and litigation, the town road was finally paved. The statewide newspaper reported the final resolution, at least in part:

> Highway 66 which, since 1927, has been a bone of contention as to whether the road should run through Wellston or miss the town less than a half-mile, now runs right through the town, which is just what the folk of Lincoln county voted for six years ago. These folk tied up the state highway department every time a move was made to build the road without bending through Wellston. Justice finally prevailed, the road is built, all signs guide the tourists through the middle of town, and everybody is happy, and to give everybody a chance to let loose and cheer about it was the reason for the day's celebration.[95]

What the newspaper did not report, however, was that at the same time the road was constructed through Wellston, the alternate route south of town, completely bypassing the community, was also constructed as the Bureau of Public Roads would not accept a deviation from the straight path of travel. The bureau's preferred route thus became the mainline of U.S. 66, with the road through Wellston, an alternate route.

For at least a generation after this, the community of Wellston, which lost a substantial amount of the traffic that it not only expected, harbored angry feelings toward the state and the federal governments, feelings that they maintained grew out of being double-crossed.[96] If there was any doubt previously about the different fates of communities who were

[94] "Commence Paving 66," Rolla *Herald*, June 13 1929, quoted in Snider and Sheals, "Route 66 in Missouri," 21.

[95] "Wellston Takes Day Off to Celebrate over New Road," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 4, 1932.

[96] National Register Nomination for Captain Creek Bridge, Lincoln County, 2004, in files of Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City.

on the highway and able to serve it and be served by it, and those who were bypassed by it, there could be none after the Wellston experience.

It is often characterized that a realignment of U.S. 66 resulted in immediate economic ruin to traveler-related businesses on the bypassed section, if not the community itself.[97] This sentiment gains additional weight when characterizing businesses and communities later bypassed by the interstates. While the overall truth of this generalization seems self-evident, there are few instances where actual data, other than anecdotal testimonies from bypassed business owners, is presented to document the impact. While it is seemingly obvious that a loss of vehicular traffic, due to a change in alignment, could negatively affect highway-reliant businesses, the same cannot be applied with a broad brush to an entire community. Many factors beyond highway traffic and its related commerce contribute to a community's economy and prosperity.

In addition to the direct commercial implications—positive and negative—for the communities along the highway, there were the indirect consequences that some noticed earlier. Again, Oklahoma provides an example, possibly because of the dramatic shift that the new road entailed in this mostly at the time rural state. From its very beginnings, the new road system generated new social and economic relationships that replaced old patterns. Access to markets previously beyond reach sometimes meant the local trading center declined and the farmer carried goods to more distant markets. In 1929, Jennings J. Rhyne, a sociology professor at the University of Oklahoma, noticed the change in the Oklahoma countryside:

> Everywhere there is evidence of the lessening importance of the village trading center in the economic and social life of the farmer. Formerly when roads were few and very poor and the farmer had to depend upon the wagon and mules to transport his commodities and farm products, it was distinctly to his advantage to do his marketing at the closest point available. Thus the village trading center which acted as a middle man in the transport of good [sic] to larger centers assumed an importance unquestioned by the rural farmer. To-day it has to a large extent lost that importance. The farmer comes to see the advantage of transporting his goods to a larger trading center and one more adequately equipped for handling goods. This transition from village trading center to the county seat or another larger and nearby town or city has been facilitated by improved road systems which give rise to the substitution of cars and trucks for the wagon and which also facilitates transportation by wagon when that method is used.[98]

This change, however, was not just restricted to matters economic. The disintegration of culturally self-sufficient communities, made possible by the combined forces of automobiles and radio, even penetrated spiritual life according to Rhyne:

> There is no doubt that the country church is losing membership to the town and city church through the advent of the good roads and the automobile. . . . It is no longer necessary for the farmer to go to a church to hear a sermon. He can sit comfortably in his home and hear over his radio a sermon of a noted divine in a distant city which is far better prepared and more capably

[97] This generalization, has led to an "abandonment paradigm," which paints all bypassing as deleterious local businesses. As such, the highway abandonment paradigm tends isolate one event—vehicular highway improvement—without looking at the bigger, long-term impact of transportation to a community. In this view, early highway commerce is privileged, not taking into account how it may have in itself negatively impacted earlier businesses reliant on animal-driven or railroad transportation. The bias equally does not take into account how highway realignments, and later, interstates could positively impact other areas of a community.

[98] Jennings J. Rhyne, *Social and Community Problems of Oklahoma* (Guthrie: Co-operative Publishing Co., 1929), 76-77.

> delivered than that being preached by the pastor at the little neighborhood church. . . . The increased mobility of rural population and the consequent tendency toward the breakdown of neighborhood and community life is having a telling effect on the country church. Increased facilities for transportation along with the desire to travel is taking many a farmer away from the church on Sunday who formerly went to church dutifully.[99]

For better or worse, the advent of the new mobility not only presented new opportunities and possibilities, opened new doors, and broadened the distances by which people might travel in the course of making their living and healing their souls, but it also more fundamentally restructured the social relationships of the village and countryside. Moreover, those social relationships would continue to be restructured by the forces unleashed by that mobility.

U.S. HIGHWAY 66 as MIGRATORY ROUTE, 1929-1945

Within a few years of the creation of U.S. Highway 66 the nation plunged into an economic depression that became the benchmark for economic privation in the twentieth century and that would reshape much of American society. It would also leave its mark on the new highway. The Depression generated vast contradictions, cultural and economic, in the use and construction activities associated with the highway. At the same time that the hardships of Depression led to travel on the road by people moving to better opportunities; that traffic ironically often made possible the emergence of small businesses alongside the highway hoping to gain a toehold in the economy as part of the burgeoning automobile-related service sector.

Moreover, because so many people were seeking work, the initiation of federal work-relief programs spawned a focused effort to improve the nation's infrastructure, including roads. In addition, Route 66—more so than other long-distance, east-west highways—became embedded in the nation's psyche, as it carried not only a continuous stream of traffic but also the cultural icons of hard times and despair. Beneath the veneer of the Depression, subtle changes were also underway as tourists discovered the Southwest via Route 66 and as an inchoate trucking industry began to edge out the railroads as the preeminent light freight carriers of the nation; with both of these developments impacting the businesses and communities lining the highway between Los Angeles and Chicago.

"A Stream of Distressed Humanity"

When the nation officially entered a period of economic decline following the stock market crash of October 1929, a significant portion of the country's residents were already in tightened circumstances, and some had been suffering for years from the same hardships that were just beginning to settle upon the rest of the country. This was true especially for the rural parts of the nation where agricultural pursuits characterized the economic and social callings of the people, and, as it happened, much of the area traversed and served by Highway 66 was farming and ranching country, albeit punctuated by urban centers. Since around 1923, the rural sectors of the United States had been afflicted by a persistently deepening agricultural depression as a downward trend in crop prices intersected with an upward trend in costs.

The cost of loans taken out in more prosperous years, when expansion had seemed not only opportune but essential, and the cost of machinery to work the larger holdings also mortgaged, were now costs that had to be paid in times when income declined. The combination of increased costs and diminished income worked powerfully against the

[99] Rhyne, *Social and Community Problems of Oklahoma*, 99.

tillers of the soil who worked the land of others or who owned small parcels. The 1929 the annual per capita income of people living on farms was roughly a third of what their urban counterparts were receiving.[100] In this way the farmers were compressed in a vise of economic pressure that pushed them elsewhere seeking opportunities not just for a brighter future, but for a future in which they and their families could at least survive.

The people cast off from the farms either flocked to the cities in search of relief, or wandered the roads looking for a job or even a rumor of a job. As early as 1922 one observer driving west from Chicago ventured through the huge midcontinent oil field of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. As he journeyed through Oklahoma he noted that traveler there "sees red-faced men who wear no collars; he sees women who wear boudoir-caps in automobiles . . . ," but noted one feature with a poignant sense of tragedy: "Our farmers are drifters. 'These are the people who are to be seen along any of the main highways, in rickety prairie schooners, traveling—God knows where . . . . The hardest thing is to see the children,—poor little beings,—under-nourished mentally and physically, their mouths drawn in the hard firm lines that tell a terrible story.'" [101]

The Dust Bowl was not an inverted oasis with desert surrounded by verdant pasture and farming country. [102] The Dust Bowl was both a real phenomenon in a particular place, but more than that it was a symbol, a metaphor for a much broader area that had suffered devastation and where its people were desperately looking for hope itself. If there is any distortion or misapprehension in its use as a description of a broader process, it is by way of suggesting that the hordes of migrants on the road were there because of natural disaster not because of human forces. Highway 66 both traversed and drew from that wide area of agricultural despair in the 1920s and 1930s, providing a ready conduit for those seeking employment in the Southwest and California.

With the new system of highways people would roam farther and farther seeking employment, not just taking the fruits of their labor to market, but their labor itself to market. And the rise of a second-hand market in automobiles contributed dramatically to what is often viewed as the democratization of the travel experience; even people down on their luck were drawing upon the automobile to meet their needs. The automobile, at the beginning of the decade, largely the province of the well-to-do, by the end of the 1920s was available to many.

The contours of migration from the land include the dynamics of weather and climate, an unabated pattern of soil erosion, the matrix of class and property, and the dream of better circumstances elsewhere. The hopes focused on either jobs in the city or jobs in California, and sometimes one then the other, both within reach thanks to the automobile.

When the dreams finally settled near the distant shores of the Pacific—and in the fields and orchards of the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys—they often did so because they had been stimulated by operators in California who let it be known that there were opportunities in the state for workers who would come. Even the entrepreneurial magazine *Business Week* found this tactic shameful and reprehensible. *Business Week* quoted an account from a California rural newspaper in which a migrant was asked why he had come to California:

> He pulled two newspaper clippings from his pocket, one from an Oklahoma paper and another from Texas. In them were unsigned advertisements painting in glowing terms the wonderful opportunities to

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[100] Gilbert C. Fite, "The Farmers' Dilemma, 1919-1929," in John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody, *Change and Continuity in Twentieth-Century America: The 1920's* (n.p.: The Ohio State University Press, 1968), 67.

[101] Philip Kates, "American Domestic Manners: The Accounts of Two Travelers," *Atlantic Monthly*, 130 (August 1922), 193.

[102] See Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) for a study that especially focuses on two counties in Kansas and Oklahoma.

be found in California. Are certain interests exploiting these people as ruthlessly as the steamship companies did during the days of the great immigrations from southern Europe two or three decades ago? Is there any doubt of it?[103]

The documentation of this vast migration has taken three forms: the analysis by contemporary social scientists, the photographic record, and the annals of literature. All three combined to paint a portrait not just of the human lives involved in the exodus but to imbue Highway 66 with an enduring image, though not wholly accurate, highway of exodus.

Defining the exodus in precise statistical terms proved an elusive task, but one of the more compelling descriptions, that also suggests the complexity of the phenomenon, was that offered by Carey McWilliams in his study *Ill Fares the Land: Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States*. Reflecting on the events of the previous decade, McWilliams wrote, "Across the broad acres of American agriculture, a shadow has been lengthening. It is the shadow cast by an army of migrant farm families uprooted from the land, which, here and there, merges with the moving shadows cast by processions of migratory workers following one of the established crop cycles."[104] In a similar assessment, University of California economist, Professor Paul S. Taylor testified in 1940 that ". . A stream of distressed humanity forms and hopefully seeks outlet to the West, in Arizona and California."[105]

Between July 1935 and the end of 1940, more than a half-million people in need of employment entered California by car or truck. If they had been counted prior to 1935 there is no telling how high the number would be. In the second half of 1935 alone, 43,180 people entered California in search of manual labor positions. The vast majority of these people were from the Southern Plains, where, according to the *Monthly Labor Review*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, "the dislocating forces of depression, mechanization, and drought sent thousands westward in search of economic rehabilitation."[106] Most of them were white—91.1%—and 5.8% were identified as Mexican (this appears to have been an indication of ethnicity rather than citizenship), and 1.4% were African Americans.

They were mainly families rather than individuals. They traveled cramped in cars and trucks with an average of 4.8 persons per vehicle. The average family in the migratory labor camps in California after they arrived had 2.1 persons actively in the labor market, including almost all adults, male and female, and nearly half of the teenage children. Where they came from was a wide swath of the nation's interior, but they were all called Okies; Oklahoma alone supplied nearly one-fourth of the migrants, and along with Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri, the four states were the point of origin of around half the migrants in the 1935-1940 period. In addition Kansas, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico provided important stopping places in the migration.

Historian Donald Worster, who has written about the Dust Bowl, estimated 309,000 Oklahomans departed between 1935 and 1940.[107] In Oklahoma, three of the four counties that supplied the heaviest migrant forces—Oklahoma, Caddo and Tulsa—were crossed by Route 66, while the fourth, Muskogee County, was thirty-five or forty miles distant from the highway. But while many of these people were seeking manual jobs and were often entering the agricultural labor market, approximately a fourth of the migrants had been engaged as farmers or farm laborers prior to the migration.

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[103] "Flee Dust Bowl for California," *Business Week*, July 3, 1937, 36-7.

[104] Carey McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land: Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1942), 3.

[105] Taylor's testimony before the Temporary National Economic Committee, studying technology and the concentration of economic power (1940) was quoted in Seymour J. Janow and William Gilmartin, "Labor and Agricultural Migration to California, 1935-40," *Monthly Labor Review*, 53 (July, 1941), 23.

[106] Janow and William Gilmartin, "Labor and Agricultural Migration to California, 1935-40," 18.

[107] Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*, 49.

There is no way to determine the proportions of these people by occupation, but Carey McWilliams noted that,

> The farm families, however, are by no means the only refugees who have taken to the road. The United Provident Association in Oklahoma City is the agency through which verification of residence of former Oklahomans is effected by welfare organizations outside the state. In 1940, the association analyzed 1000 such requests, 844 of which came, incidentally, from California. Farmers were the largest single group involved, with day laborers and WPA workers constituting the next largest groups. But it is interesting to note the wide variety of occupations represented in this group of former residents who had moved elsewhere. The list included butchers, barbers, bookkeepers, cab drivers, carpenters, cobblers, domestics, janitors, machinists, mechanics, miners, musicians, painters, policemen, printers, roustabouts, rug cleaners, salesmen, schoolteachers, truck drivers, waitresses—almost every imaginable occupation. The bulk of the exodus from Oklahoma has been, in fact, from the populous counties of the central part of the state.[108]

The ultimate destination for many of these migrants was California, but it was not always their first choice. It was never an easy trip and it was often complicated. Sometimes opportunities arose, or desperation reached its limit, and the cars and trucks of people found refuge or employment on the way. Again, McWilliams, who studied the phenomenon of migration carefully, noticed this when he found many stopping in Arizona.

> When migrants start out on Highway #66 for the Coast, many of them are headed, in the first instance, for the cotton fields of New Mexico and Arizona. Arizona is not only the conduit through which the stream of migration must pass in its general westward flow, but it is also the initial goal that many migrants have in mind when they set out. . . . Arizona has become . . . a winter resort for the migrants—a way station en route to the Coast.[109]

In July 1937, *Business Week* estimated that "Over the main highways leading into southern California from Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, and Arkansas, a steady stream of vehicles, mostly in a condition immediately preceding complete collapse, moves westward. The influx is now averaging one immigrant outfit every ten minutes, and the trek has only begun."[110]

Clearly it was true from the magazine's perspective on the migration that the trek had only just begun. Once they arrived in California, in their "old automobiles, piled high with poor household belongings and crowded with persons of all ages," the procession would break up and spread out into the state, in the reverse way that it had followed multiple tributary roads until they converged with Highway 66 as they began their trek.

For them, as they left Highway 66 behind, they were at the beginning of another journey; the epic migration where they crossed from the Southern Plains into California's Imperial or San Joaquin valleys, or urban Los Angeles. A journey that was indelibly associated in their experiences and memories, in official studies, and in the popular press, with U.S. Highway 66. But migrants did not use U.S. 66 exclusively to reach California. Historian Martha Weisiger has documented various detours Oklahoma migrants made in their trek west. Many migrated to Casa Grande Valley south of Phoenix to

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[108] McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land*, 197.

[109] *Ibid.*, 71.

[110] "Flee Dust Bowl for California," 36.

pick cotton before heading on to California; others returned to Oklahoma.[111] Other evidence, including photographs in Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor's book, *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*, capture other east-west highways used by Dust Bowl refugees, including U.S. Highways 54 and 80, as well the prominent north-south U.S. 99 and 101 highways in California that led to farm fields and orchards.[112] Photographs in the book showing black sharecroppers camping along U.S. 61, raises the point that the Dust Bowl migration needs to be put in the large context of other mass movements during the 1930s. These include the continuation of the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the Midwest and Northeast, and the approximately 450,000 to one million Mexican-Americans "repatriated" to Mexico between 1929 and 1935.[113]

Without argument, U.S. 66 played an important role carrying thousands of Dust Bowl migrants fleeing Oklahoma and other states, as they headed west to jobs, better opportunities, and in many cases, permanent settlement. But perhaps more important, is the iconic status the highway reached during the 1930s as this "road of flight," as Steinbeck termed it.[114] For it is with Steinbeck's characterization of the road that U.S. 66 became a cultural metaphor. Yet, more could be done to document the highway's on-the-ground use during the Depression and Dust Bowl years. Analyzing border inspection station statistics, in comparison to other highways, could establish how importantly it figured as a migration corridor. Likewise, studying the material remains of a migrant roadside camp could shed light on the highway's use and migrants' social and economic patterns.[115] And the growing body of Dust Bowl literature and oral histories could be analyzed to learn how U.S. 66 fit within the larger pattern of movement and migration during the period.

New Roads, New Tourists

It is common to think of Route 66 in the 1930s exclusively in terms of the great migration that it carried, but other forces were at work at the same time that deepened the importance of the highway to the nation. One set of those changes had to do with improving the road so that it was paved and met engineering standards. Another development was a surge in tourist traffic as motorists in the East journeyed into the geographies and cultures of the Southwest for recreation. And yet another trend, following the development of other highways, was the emergence of an alternative to the railroad for carrying the goods of commerce.

During the Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt administrations Highway 66 continued to be improved, moving it from mud and mire into pavement. The vast amounts of money that were poured into highway construction can be seen in one way as an effort to provide relief to the unemployed who desperately needed work;[116] those expenditures can also

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[111] Weisiger, Martha, "Mythic Fields of Plenty: The Plight of Depression-Era Oklahoma Migrants in Arizona," *The Journal of Arizona History*, 32, No.3, Autumn 1991, 241-266.

[112] Dorthea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor, *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939).

[113] Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of its People* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 235.

[114] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Penguin Books, 1939), 118. Interestingly, Steinbeck got the termini of the highway wrong, stating it stretched from "Mississippi to Bakersfield." (118). This perhaps created or perpetuated the stereotype that most Okies were heading directly for the San Joaquin Valley.

[115] While informal camps like these were photographed by Dorothea Lange, there is little documentation on them. They are distinguished from the formal labor camps operated by the Farm Security Administration, which in this case were not established along U.S. 66, though found on other highways in California.

[116] There is often a perception that the New Deal programs directly funded highway improvements. While federal aid was dispersed to improve U.S. highways during the Depression, New Deal programs typically associated with the period (CCC, WPA, NYA) rarely made improvements to primary highways. Instead these efforts were most often directed toward secondary state and county roads.

be seen as an indirect form of relief to the businesses whose communities needed money to spend and who needed commerce from outside their towns to increase the volume of trade. Although sometimes this aspect is forgotten, the New Deal provided not only relief to those out of work, but in the process enhanced purchasing power with the business community a prime beneficiary.

As early as the autumn of 1930, when President Herbert Hoover appointed his Emergency Committee for Employment, the nation's highways became the focus of a way to get people to work. In November of that year, Colonel Arthur Woods, who chaired the committee, declared "that carrying out a broad and comprehensive public roads program at a time like this is one of the soundest procedures to meet a situation of depression because it not only employs labor and materials necessary in actual construction, but also utilizes a background of additional labor to provide the materials and the effective completion of such a program. It is estimated that for every man actually employed in working on a road, three other people become gainfully employed as a result, not only in the supplying of materials and equipment, but in other industries all along the line."[117] As Hoover moved to stimulate road construction and other infrastructure, he went against the advice and philosophy of some of his own cabinet; he worried as well about the cost of the projects, but the result was that road construction gained a major boost during the Hoover years.

It was under this program that Missouri was able to complete paving its section of Highway 66 in 1931 and other states increased their pavement too. In 1931 a new bridge crossed the Rio Grande in Albuquerque and construction began on a two-hundred fifty foot long through-truss bridge over the Rio Puerco west of Albuquerque, to be completed in 1933—modifications that would be key in altering the alignment of U.S. 66 later. At the same time, U.S. 66 from Santa Fe to Albuquerque was being paved and relocated so that travelers would no longer have to negotiate the treacherous switchbacks of La Bajada.[118] In 1932 the highway in Arizona was realigned and paved between Williams and Ash Fork.[119] In 1933, State of Oklahoma crews paved the controversial Wellston Gap, and also created a new Route 66 alignment, including one of the longest bridges in the state, west of El Reno. The William H. Murray Bridge on the latter segment was hailed by the Oklahoma Highway Department as "the most pretentious bridge engineering project ever undertaken by the Oklahoma Highway Commission." It noted, further, that "when completed it will be the longest bridge in Oklahoma, and one of the longest in the entire Southwest."[120] About three-fourths of a mile long, the bridge is made of thirty-eight spans with Warren pony trusses, each a hundred feet long. While the highway construction program of the New Deal is often credited, appropriately enough, with massive highway construction programs, the groundwork established during the previous administration, and its impact on local economies, has too often been neglected or even subsumed as part of the New Deal.

The Roosevelt administration geared up for its public works program in a cautious fashion, with primary considerations given to economy in expenditures and procedural correctness and with unemployment relief as a consideration that came after other criteria had been satisfied. Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, and the head of the Public Works Administration, with his zeal for honesty and meticulous attention to detail, made sure that the entire program was under close control; as historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., acknowledges, "Nor can it be said that Roosevelt brought any driving sense of urgency to PWA."[121] As a result, almost all of the PWA's contracts by the end of the first year

[117] "Three Types of Highway Building Favored by the President's Emergency Committee for Employment," American City, 43 (December 1930), 158.

[118] David Kammer, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico.*

[119] Cleeland, "Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona,"E-5.

[120] Oklahoma Highway Commission, *Report of the State Highway Commission for the Years 1931-1932 Inclusive* (Oklahoma City, 1933), 49.

[121] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston: Houghton –Mifflin Company, 1958), 286-287.

of the FDR administration had gone to naval construction projects that had already been planned and approved. Instead, the primary road construction funds came from the National Industrial Recovery Act which created the National Recovery Administration and granted funds to other agencies, including the Bureau of Public Roads, and to cities and states.

While money was being expended for roads, one of the greater consequences of the NIRA funding was a revision of the formulas used by states which received road funds. A complex array of considerations now entered the picture, including the necessity of spending federal money on roads outside the city limits of municipalities (no more than 50%); on extensions of federal roads inside the city limits (at least 25%); and the new formula limited spending on secondary roads to no more than 25% until the Federal Aid road system in the state was 90% complete. In addition, the National Recovery Administration required that the funds be spent in 75% of the state's counties unless unemployment concentrations (and thus also employment opportunities) mandated otherwise.

Under the National Recovery Administration it was clear to most that a different priority had been accepted: "The practical planning of the Recovery highway program aims to put as many men as possible back to work as quickly as possible and to pay them a living wage. The 30-hour week and a minimum wage for various sections of the country have been established. Men will be hired from employment lists prepared by State Directors of Reemployment."[122] This program infused much needed additional money into the effort, but it was only in 1935 when, with the economy still sagging, the unemployment rate still unconscionable, and after trials with other direct-relief and work-relief programs, the New Deal created the Works Progress Administration which was much speedier in processing and set unemployment relief as the top priority; it also was established with a budget of five billion dollars, far more than previously allocated to construction or relief. This was the point when larger amounts of money began to pour into the nation's road system.

The most visible consequence of the new emphasis on road construction along Highway 66 was the achievement of a continuous ribbon of pavement that stretched from Chicago to Los Angeles, complete with bridges, culverts, and other highway features. On September 13, 1937, when Oklahoma governor E. W. Marland snipped the ribbon dedicating the fourteen mile stretch between Afton and Miami that replaced the nine foot wide ribbon of pavement that earlier linked the two towns, U.S. 66 was completely paved for both lanes of traffic through Oklahoma.[123] Eight months later, in Oldham County, Texas, paving was completed on the last unpaved segment of the entire length of US 66.

There were consequences of this new burst of construction. The newly-paved highway had a different feel, especially in its newer sections, than it previously had. Different standards prevailed. The effort of the engineers to make the roads of such a design that they could carry more traffic, heavier traffic, and faster traffic involved progressive changes in construction standards. The roads and bridges became wider, so that in the 1930s U.S. 66, like other U.S. highways, was being built twenty feet wide, and soon this was revised to twenty-two feet; just a few years earlier, the standard had been eighteen feet. The concrete was being poured thicker to withstand the growing volume of truck traffic. But the most conspicuous revision in the highway construction standards had to do with the effort to straighten the roads and to smooth out curves. The other engineering changes required more and better materials and bigger budgets.

The realignments of Highway 66 in the 1930s, and later in the 1950s, the four-lane widening of many sections of the route, taken together, amount to probably the single greatest alteration in the highway until the road was replaced by the interstate highway system in the 1960s. In Illinois, bypasses around some of the major cities were constructed. Joliet and Springfield, and the cities of Bloomington and Normal were bypassed to keep heavy traffic out of the dense urban

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[122] "Roadside Improvement Projects Actively Sponsored by United States Bureau of Public Roads," *American City*, XLIX (January 1934), 44.

[123] "U.S. Highway 66 Opening Monday Links Interesting State Areas," Tulsa *Tribune*, September 12, 1937.

centers. Where towns elsewhere on the route were clamoring for business and proud that their main street was also "The Main Street of America," Illinois cities depended far less on the traffic to bring them business.

In Missouri, the most significant realignments occurred at St. Louis. In 1936 a bypass directed travelers in Illinois toward the Chain of Rocks Bridge and then looped them around the western edge of the city. This realignment, in fact, came after two previous alterations in the route. There was also a new traffic control device, the cloverleaf, that made its first appearance west of the Mississippi River at St. Louis on Highway 66. In February 1932 it received this description in a Missouri motoring magazine:

> Traffic desiring to turn from one road onto the other uses a paved circle or ramp constructed at each corner of the intersection. All left turns are prohibited, and neither is traffic allowed to cross either road. The necessity for left turns is eliminated by constructing the drives so that traffic makes two right turns. It is expected that drivers may be slightly confused the first time they use this structure, but it is neither complicated nor difficult. The one important thing to remember is that in place of making a left turn, the driver of the vehicle goes over or under the bridge and then makes two right turns.[124]

It was in the states farther west, however, where the realignments dramatically altered not just the configuration of the road but the patterns of life along it as well.

That had already been clear in Oklahoma with the case of the Wellston Bypass. It was also clear in Canadian and Caddo counties, west of Oklahoma City, when the highway was rerouted—and paved—so that it went almost straight west from El Reno to the town of Hydro. Previously it had turned to the north and made a loop to swing past the towns of Calumet and Geary and then turned southwest toward the town of Bridgeport where a toll bridge enabled travelers to cross the south Canadian River. With the construction of the William H. Murray Bridge across the river, the highway now was not only much shorter, but it also missed all three of those towns.

Calumet survived because of another road that went through, and Geary managed as well, although neither prospered as they would have had the highway continued to connect them and bring them the growing stream of traffic. Bridgeport, on the other hand, faded quickly. The once busy toll bridge was generally abandoned, used only for local traffic, and then damaged by fire in 1946 and sold for salvage in 1952. Bridgeport, as noted by Oklahoma Route 66 chronicler Jim Ross, "is today considered a genuine Oklahoma ghost town." As Ross observes, this was once "the county's premiere town until the proliferation of motor cars caused its demise."[125]

One history of the town of Bridgeport notes that "Bridgeport became an isolated town in 1934 when U.S. Highway 66 was opened to the public. . . . The swinging Key Bridge was sold but years before that the town had already lost its bank. Later the large three story hotel was torn down and the material sold. In 1944, the high school was transferred to Hinton and still later the grade children were included in the transfer. In 1945, the large brick gymnasium of which Bridgeport was so proud was sold to the highest bidder who demolished the building and hauled it away."[126] Just as the traffic on Route 66 could nourish commerce when it came into an area, so too could it starve that commerce when it left.

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[124] This passage from the February 1932 issue of *Missouri Motor News* was quoted by Becky L. Snider and Debbie Sheals, *Route 66 in Missouri: Survey and National Register Project* (n.p.: Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, 2003).

[125] Jim Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66* (Arcadia, Oklahoma: Ghost Town Press, 2001), 144, 150.

[126] Hinton Quest Club, "History of Bridgeport, Oklahoma," Oklahoma Historical Society Files, Oklahoma City.

The same pattern developed, more or less, in a multitude of communities each time the highway was straightened and shortened. Probably the most conspicuous instance came in New Mexico. The alignment that was agreed upon in 1926 at the beginning of Highway 66 did not follow a straight line east and west between Glenrio in the east and Gallup in the west. Such a course would have taken it directly through Albuquerque on an east-west axis. Instead, the highway left that east-west orientation west of Santa Rosa and looped up to the northwest, connecting to the National Old Trails Road near Las Vegas at the town of Romeroville and following that road to Santa Fe and then south to Albuquerque and Los Lunas, south of Albuquerque, and then up close to Laguna before it went directly west again. This "S" configuration of the road, which followed some of the path of the National Old Trails Road, the railroad, and the Santa Fe Trail, clearly added miles to the route and made for a scenic, if slower and sometimes challenging, drive. Even at the time that the road was designated, Albuquerque businesses, who saw their city as a crossroads (despite the absence of a major east-west thoroughfare), pressed for a highway to cut directly across the state, bypassing Santa Fe and Los Lunas.

The governor, Arthur T. Hannett, appeared sympathetic to their pleas, and the New Mexico legislature, perhaps in response, enacted a measure creating a road west from Santa Rosa to the town of Moriarty, about thirty-five miles east of Albuquerque. Hannett, either in 1925, or after his re-election defeat in November 1926, as popular lore holds, ordered a road built as vengeance on Santa Fe, the capital and town to which he attributed a substantial share of his political misfortune.[127] Even so, it would not be until 1931 before the Santa Rosa cut-off would become a Federal Aid Project, and not before 1933 the road west from Albuquerque to Laguna would be similarly designated. Together, the two roads would not be completed until 1937.[128] When that happened, Highway 66 in New Mexico was not only made straighter and less mountainous, but the road's length was reduced from 506 miles to 399 miles.

The alteration of the New Mexico central segment of Highway 66 reveals additional contours of the dynamics of highway building. On the one hand, the new alignment would clearly benefit travelers who sought primarily to speed through the state as quickly as possible. On the other, it was not just about efficient routes and straighter roads. In this instance the key to the revision of the alignment was that it also helped the Albuquerque merchants who were frustrated since they competed with Santa Fe and Las Vegas for a significant portion of the tourist traffic; even though Highway 66 passed through Albuquerque on the north-south alignment of Fourth Street, Albuquerque businesses had to compete with other towns that held the strategic advantage of being located near the scenic northern part of the state. Historian David Kammer has shown that the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce in particular lobbied the state highway commission heavily for the construction of the cut-offs to the east and west.[129] When the new road was completed, Santa Fe and Las

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[127] The lore on this matter are difficult to sort from the documentary record and while the story of Hannett's alteration of the highway appears in multiple accounts, the years of his election and the years of the mandated road construction vary in those accounts by as much as a decade, Hannett's political affiliation is listed as both Democrat and Republican, and how this impacted the alignment of Highway 66 has been widely assumed to be obvious and direct. Probably a more important individual shaping this alteration was Clyde Tingley who was chair of the Albuquerque City Council (and thus, as David Kammer notes, "was the city's nominal mayor,") and who lobbied vigorously for the road change, and who was also in his day job maintenance supervisor for that district of the State Highway Commission, where he also pressed for the realignment and completion, and who served as governor from 1935 to 1939, the time at which the highway realignment was completed.

[128] Kammer, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico*, 66.

[129] *Ibid,*, 56-57, 68, 70, 76-77. This position of Albuquerque in relation to the other towns on Highway 66 meant, according to Kammer (56), that "Albuquerque was simply a stopping place along the north-south corridor, a place between the 'City Different' as Santa Fe called itself,' and the wonders of 'The Heart of Indian Country,' as Gallup billed itself." The competition at this point thus was less between the Central Avenue merchants and their counterparts on Fourth than it was between the Albuquerque merchants and those in Santa Fe and Las Vegas. While the business owners on the north-south Fourth Street route of U.S. 66 would also lose when the alignment changed to east-west, it appears that the Chamber of Commerce persisted in seeking the east-west route through Albuquerque. This in turn raises large, but as yet unanswered, questions about the division within the business community of the city.

Vegas were no longer on the highway, were no longer directly in competition for the Route 66 tourist traffic, and soon a host of highway-related businesses emerged along the new (east-west) path of U.S. 66 in Albuquerque.

The other side of the political environment was that the businesses along the former alignment were finding themselves being left, not even at the side of the road, but far from any road.[130] When the highway moved, these businesses had to move too, or depend on a smaller volume of almost exclusively local or regional trade afforded by other highways passing through town.

While Tingley Beach and El Vado Court and their lesser known counterparts opened on the west side of Albuquerque on Central Avenue, and while many more businesses opened on the east side, creating ultimately a thirteen mile long commercial strip, the tourist camps and gas stations on Fourth Street lessened when the traffic moved.[131] And it was not just along the loops of the "S" curve that had been eliminated. From Thoreau to Tucumcari as the new alignment was straightened and adjusted, businesses felt the impact of the new road. Even at this early point there was the hint that the new rivalry was increasingly between the small towns and the larger cities along the road.

Depressed economy or not, some people were still able, or newly able, to take vacations and travel for pleasure. "East, for many Americans today," author Lewis Gannett wrote in 1939, "is where we earn the right to vacation in the West."[132] And Highway 66 increasingly was the road to the West. As it was paved and straightened, this would be the case ever more emphatically. Travel as a leisure activity remained largely the province of the well-to-do. But more of them were going to the Southwest.

The phenomenon of tourism is complex because of its social and psychological roots in modern social organization. Any study of tourism must avoid dismissing the activity as empty recreation, for even when it is passive, or even devoid of apparently meaningful interaction with the surroundings, that behavior conceals an attitude toward, and more subtle contact with, the visited country and people and also about the circumstances of life from which vacation is taken.

Historian John A. Jakle has examined twentieth-century tourism and suggested some of the larger meanings the activity can take, finding it "a nearly universal behavior in advanced, industrialized societies" and arguing that tourism represents a way in which tourists "explore the complexities of the world beyond everyday existence," and provides "a significant means by which modern people assess their world, defining their own sense of identity in the process."[133]

What this suggests is directly relevant to the context of Highway 66 in at least two ways. Tourists from the East, as Lewis Gannett implies, were seeking some place different from where they lived, and the West, with its different geography, natural features, and multiple cultures beckoned them. In addition, this perspective suggests that tourists along U.S. 66 were not just driving through the area the road traversed, but were bringing to this area their own needs and expectations. They were in the process changed by the experience, but they also changed the area as they interacted with it, as they created a market for not only food, gas, and lodging, but for local cultures as well, often commercializing traditional and even sacred customs and art and nature itself.

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[130] While Santa Fe businesses lost U.S. 66 to Albuquerque, they still benefited from tourists using U.S 85 and two other U.S. highways feeding into Santa Fe.

[131] It should be noted that these businesses continued to cater to traffic of U.S. 85.

[132] Lewis Gannett, "Cross Country by Car," *Current History*, 51 (September 1939), 60.

[133] John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), xi.

This had always been true of tourists in the West and Southwest, but the process was now different in the 1930s. Earlier generations of tourists had taken the train, and some still did, but that travel was limited first of all by income level to those who could afford the luxuries of such an excursion and secondly limited by geography to the area along the tracks or accessible by planned, organized side trips into the hinterland. Moreover, by the 1930s the railroads were in decline and the automobile was in ascendance. The availability of better roads, especially a primary transcontinental route that could boast the best weather, invited those who could, to travel. And more could travel.

Historian Earl Pomeroy observed the shift from railroad to motor car and wrote that "What the motor cars and the motorists did to the outdoors would be long debated, but there is no doubt that the age of the automobile was the age in which the average American vacationer first found the West within his grasp."[134] When Pomeroy wrote those words a half century ago, he was one of the first historians to make the connection between automobile travel, tourism, and western development. Since then, the discussion has gone further. Historian Hal Rothman has argued that

> The rise of automobile travel played a crucial role in the transformation of western tourism. As automobiles became common possessions of middle class families and the broader network of roads crisscrossed the nation, the cultural dimensions of tourism shifted from the tastes of the elite, the sometimes cumbersome intellectualizing of places such as the Grand Canyon, and toward the more common tastes of ordinary people, often oriented toward recreation. . . .

Auto travelers became a source of revenue, especially in remote places, and communities offered amenities, from campgrounds to hotels, diners to fashionable restaurants. Arterial highways sprouted new businesses, especially as the construction of major cross-continental highways throughout the West.[135]

Historian John Opie further suggests, "Even during the 1930s Depression, Americans took to the vacation road."[136] Many of them went to the "Scenic Southwest" for that vacation, spurred on by improved roads, improved and inviting facilities, and energetic promotions to attract travelers to the towns along the way.

The Southwest until near the turn of the twentieth century had been largely viewed in publications as a foreboding area to be avoided, but those perceptions began to change in a mix of romanticism, anti-modernism, and paternalism toward the area and its inhabitants.

Earl Pomeroy notes in his history of western tourism that "Perhaps the most striking aspect of the changing attitudes toward nature was the new vogue of the Southwestern desert that had developed since the 1890's and reached spectacular dimensions in the thirties and thereafter."[137] Santa Fe and the Grand Canyon had already been well established as popular tourist attractions, but new national monuments and parks created recreational opportunities for visiting the area's abundant natural wonders, and in a regular pattern, private commercial operations cropped up near the entrances to the parks and monuments.

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[134] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western,* 149.

[135] Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 147-148.

[136] John Opie, "Environmental History in the West," in Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain, eds., *The Twentieth Century West: Historical Interpretations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 217.

[137] Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, 158.

Highway 66 in Arizona passed through the Petrified Forest and the Painted Desert and made the South Rim of the Grand Canyon easily accessible via a side trip. In addition, particular enterprises like the Fred Harvey Indian Detours popularized Native American cultures. In Gallup, New Mexico, one of the most famous of the efforts to attract tourists was the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial, which began in 1922, and by 1934 had become sufficiently established as an institution that the president of the New Mexico Press Association would write that "The Gallup Indian Ceremonial out Herods Herod for originality of conception, human interest, poetic beauty, attractive presentation and fundamental appeal."[138]

This revival of Indian culture, even if at times for crass commercial purposes, represented a movement toward agency for many Native Americans.[139] For the improved Highway 66 led to new commercial opportunities for many Indians. In the 1930s and 1940s, hundreds of Indian artists were commissioned to produce goods, ranging from high-art jewelry to crafts and curios, for direct sale to passing motorists; this infused families and local communities with cash. While there was likely an inequality between dealer and artisan, some operators, such as A.H. Fidel, who ran the Acoma Curio Shop in San Fidel, New Mexico, worked directly with pueblo artisans, employing Alvin Concho Lewis, an Acoma silversmith at one point to run his shop. Later Indians would break away from the middleman, independently setting up their own stands and shops alongside the highway to sell directly to the tourist.

Sometimes passing directly through a pueblo or Indian community, the transformative power of U.S. 66 on American Indian communities is unquestionable. The improved highway presented new transportation opportunities once impossible, as thousands of males left the reservation in the 1930s and 1940s for jobs in cities and the West Coast. But the road also impacted the communities directly, as tourism services came about, often employing locals. And in many instances Indians were employed to work directly on the highway, an activity that only increased during the Indian New Deal of the 1930s. Preliminary information also suggests that the automobile and the highway resulted in increased intertribal trade and communications. While the impact of U.S. 66 on American Indian communities is little understood, there are preliminary studies attempting to document the Native American experience of and reaction to the highway.[140]

The Rise of Trucking

In addition to the Okies and the newly mobile tourists traveling the nation, a third element was increasingly taking to the roads, especially once they were straightened and paved. The national trucking industry was but an infant when the U.S. highway system was created. Part of its origin, in fact, can be found in the circumstances of the Depression. The railroads, an important provider of transportation, suffered cutbacks in both volume and profits as a result of hard times, and in turn initiated cuts in service; those cuts falling especially heavy on remote areas, on small towns, on regions where the traffic was both politically and economically expendable. As the railroads reduced their operations, an increasingly robust trucking industry stepped up to fill the void.

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[138] Karl Kilby quoted in Sally Noe, *Greetings from Gallup: Six Decades of Route 66* (Gallup: Robert C. Noe, Noe Enterprises, 1991), 22.

[139] The issues surrounding tourist cultural contact with Native Americans in the Southwest and the larger pattern of cultural interaction and white attitudes toward Indians in the first several decades of the twentieth century can best be explored in Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds., *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson : University of Arizona Press, 2001).

[140] See Caroline Waddell, "Documenting the American Indian Experience of Route 66" unpublished report prepared for the National Park Service and the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division (August, 2005); Sean Kelly and Kristen Reynolds, "Route 66 and Native American" unpublished report prepared for the New Mexico Department of Transportation (2010).

Coming into the void, independent truckers, sometimes called "wildcatters," undercut rail rates and were not at first beholden to the regulations that restricted the railroad. The independents made their living by making short hauls, such as taking produce from the field and delivering it to the railhead, or delivering goods from the railroad to a warehouse. Initially the truckers were not a threat, but worked symbiotically with the railroads to speed delivery and reduce congestion of rail traffic. But as the Depression crept on, the concept of long-distance trucking, began to take hold and threaten the dominance of the railroad.

In Illinois, trucking had already been a thriving business, carrying freight between Chicago and St. Louis, and a commercial service infrastructure emerged to serve the maintenance and driver needs of truck lines in the state. Mid-States Freight Lines, established in Chicago in 1939, carried much of the Midwest traffic, and by the mid-1950s operated more than 400 tractors and 800 trailers out of eighteen company terminals.[141]

In Springfield, Missouri, three brothers, Jewell, Harry, and Herman Powell started a truck line the year after Highway 66 was designated. In the 1930s, as other trucking companies faltered, they were able to take over their routes and expand their customers between Oklahoma City and Chicago, developing in the process an efficient and large business, Powell Brothers Trucking, establishing its headquarters at Powellville near Rolla, Missouri.[142] Also in Springfield, Frank G. Campbell, who had started a freight business in 1926, in 1933 merged with 66 Rapid Express and created Campbell's 66 Express. Initially concentrating on the freight business between Springfield and Kansas City, the line soon expanded along Highway 66 and across the nation, doing so against the active pressure of the railroads; the "Frisco" railroad also being based in Springfield.[143]

In Baxter Springs, Kansas, five different national truck lines established hubs there and Yellow Freight, which started in Oklahoma City in the mid-1920s, in the years following 1932, made Baxter Springs a hub and division point for its operations.[144]

In western Oklahoma in the 1920s Whit Lee had started a small passenger bus operation and after some structural changes and reorganization, in 1930 he moved to Oklahoma City and operated Lee Way Stages, a bus line that carried passengers along Route 66 from Oklahoma City to Amarillo and on to New Mexico. Whit Lee's son Bob Lee reflected on those beginnings, noting: "The Depression saved us in the bus business. . . . People couldn't drive as much as they used to, so they rode the bus. The Depression kept us alive."[145] In 1934 Lee sold the bus company and bought several trucks. Susan Croce Kelly quotes son Bob Lee about the circumstances of this new trucking business:

> The railroads would fight very bitterly when you applied for a certificate over routes that they served, but the trucking business really started because of lack of service from the railroads for small shipments. When we started, we would unload boxcars from Saint Louis at Oklahoma City, then take the contents to Amarillo, Albuquerque, and that part of the country. The rail service just wasn't very good from Oklahoma City to Amarillo. It was good from Wichita to Albuquerque, so

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[141] M. K. Terebecki, *The Vanishing Trucking Pioneers* (Marietta Press, Georgia, 1990), 148.

[142] Alf D. Smith, "The Powell Brothers," in C. H. Skip Curtis, *Birthplace of Route 66: Springfield, Mo.* (Springfield, Missouri: Curtis Enterprises, 2001), 44-45.

[143] C. H. Skip Curtis, *Birthplace of Route 66: Springfield, Mo.*, 103; Kelly and Scott, Route 66, 45.

[144] Cathy Ambler, "Historic Resources of Route 66 in Kansas - Cherokee County, Kansas," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2003.

[145] Scott and Kelly, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People*, 45-46.

we were the connecting link between the East and the Texas Panhandle.[146]

Other trucking companies emerged, like the Mistletoe Express, started by E. K. Gaylord, owner of the company that published the *Daily Oklahoman*, as a vehicle for delivering his newspapers to parts of the state where railroad service had been withdrawn.[147]

In New Mexico, the trucking business boomed in the 1930s and Albuquerque became a main hub for trucking in the state, using the improved Highway 66 that came directly through the city and its location near the center of the state to great advantage.[148] The trucks in New Mexico, in fact, were able to deliver goods in half the time that the railroad could. By the mid-1950s Albuquerque served as the distribution center for six trucking companies, representing 1,619 vehicles and contributing 580 local jobs.[149] And there were smaller freight companies, such as the Victorville-Barstow Truck Lines, which used U.S. 66 to serve a regional population. All along Highway 66 the trucking industry expanded its operations and made huge inroads into the market that had been the domain of the railroads

In 1934 the state of Kansas established port-of-entry stations at which commercial carriers were required to stop for inspection and tax assessment. As a result the state had a system for determining what was actually being shipped on trucks, and the results were surprising. Although agricultural products were predictably at the top of the list, accounting for nearly a third of the total tons shipped by truck, the data revealed that "long-distance hauls of dressed poultry and eggs, necessarily refrigerated, have been generally regarded as strictly railroad business, yet the survey shows many trucks are now regularly moving them to points as far away as California, Massachusetts, Florida."[150] Highway 66 provided a primary route for those perishables to be taken to California quickly, and just as important, for California's produce to be shipped to Kansas and points beyond.

The significance of the rise of the trucking industry along U.S. 66 is not so obvious as the expansion of other parts of the local economy, such as service stations or motels, but it was nonetheless profound. In the first place it increased traffic along the routes that it served, thus generating additional business in those enterprises that served the traffic, whether the corner cafe or the service station.

Secondly, it provided connections to places that had never been served by the railroads, and with each additional customer it made it that much more difficult for the railroads ever to regain their prominence as a conveyor of freight, which, in turn, only increased the importance of highway arteries like Route 66 that much more. If the traffic along Route 66 were to some degree a self-perpetuating phenomenon, the trucking industry would be the purest example of the process as it supplied the businesses that depended on the traffic and as the traffic increased with the load of the trucking industry and the need for more services also increased, those services then also to be supplied by the truckers who used the road. So long as there was traffic there would be growth.

There was, however, one other factor that can not be separated from the dual evolution of the trucking industry and U.S. 66. In addition to studying the volume and content of truck freight haulage in 1934, the state of Kansas did another study of trucking, and this study showed, notably, that "the trend in truck operations seems to be in favor of the

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[146] *Ibid.*, 64.

[147] "Child of the Depression, Mistletoe Grows up to Mark its 25th Birthday," *Daily Oklahoman*, October 7, 1956.

[148] Kammer, *The Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico*, 85.

[149] "Motor Freight Lines Serve City's Expanding Economy," *Albuquerque Progress*, May 1954, n. pag.

[150] "What Interstate Trucks Carry," *Business Week*, March 16, 1935, 30.

large fleet operator, who is slowly crowding the one-truck fellow off the road."[151] That change in the structure of this part of the economy was already becoming manifest throughout the roadside business community and was also being reflected in the buildings they occupied.

From the first small independent truck stop, to the huge chain travel centers that dot the road today, the influence of truckers and the trucking industry on U.S. 66 is widespread but little understood or well documented. Even the design of the highway is shaped by the needs of the industry. Taking into account the industry's influence on the highway's commerce and landscape, it is important to give consideration to businesses and facilities that supported the trucking industry. Most obvious are motels, fueling stations, and roadside cafes. But also to consider are truck stops, repair and overall facilities, terminals, logistical offices, loading docks, distribution centers, and warehouses. While some of these services were situated adjacent to the highway, other aspects of the industry, such as terminals and distribution centers were located strategically proximate but not directly on Highway 66.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES ON U.S. HIGHWAY 66, 1926-85 (Part 2)

The volume of traffic that included the migrants heading west, the tourists seeking a respite from the urban east, and the trucking industry carrying bigger and more loads of freight required not only easily accessible roads but also a commercial service infrastructure that grew and evolved along with the highway. The remnants of these businesses form a vital component of the historic resources associated with U.S. 66. One way to view this is that suggested by the New Mexico state highway engineer Grover Conroy in 1936: "Filling stations, tireshops, supply houses, cabin camps, and hundreds of small enterprises employing thousands in gainful occupations are all the result of improved highways."[152] The road construction did not just put unemployed laborers to work; it also made it possible for private businesses to thrive. A close examination of the resources associated with those businesses, moreover, reveals an often-subtle transformation not just of the kinds of businesses alongside the road, and not just of the architecture used by those businesses, but a transformation of social relationships generated by the road.

When U.S. 66 was designated in 1926, a substantial portion of the new highway came with a ready-made system for providing meals and lodging to travelers on the highway. The National Old Trails Road, because it followed for the most part the Santa Fe Railroad, was able to draw upon the network of institutions established by the Fred Harvey Company as it built its lunchrooms and hotels across the Southwest, near the railroad depot where the traffic was. By 1910, Harvey Hotels were located in Las Vegas, New Mexico (Castaneda Hotel, and Montezuma's Castle), Albuquerque (the Alvarado), Williams, Arizona (the Fray Marcos), Barstow, California (Casa del Desierto), Winslow, Arizona (La Posada), Needles, California (El Garces), Ash Fork, Arizona (the Escalante), and Seligman, Arizona (the Havasu). In the 1920s hotels also opened in Gallup, New Mexico (El Navajo) and Santa Fe (La Fonda).[153]

These hotels, sometimes built in the Mission Revival style that became popular in the southwest in the 1910s and 1920s, tended to be grand hotels in every sense. They were large, they were sumptuous, they were well staffed, and they appealed to travelers of more than average means. That they were often not exactly on the highway, their locations having been selected with train travelers in mind, was not much of a difficulty given the slow, circuitous, or winding routes the travelers took anyway. The alternative was the ubiquitous camping grounds that cities provided for the visitors, and they increasingly became commercialized operations.

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[151] "What Interstate Trucks Carry," 30.

[152] Grover Conroy quoted by David Kammer in *Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico*, 76.

[153] Lesley Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women who Opened the West* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 233-234.

Likewise when the early Highway 66 travelers sought out fuel for their automobiles, they depended on the institutions that were already in place. Of those early filling stations—and the services were generally limited to filling up with gasoline, except for some larger stations that offered battery charging and replacement—the range was enormous. There were the tiny stations that were but the second generation of gasoline sales, their predecessors having been the general store with a gasoline pump at the curbside, and there were the (by comparison) palatial stations with pumps and canopies under a *porte cochere*, usually with an exceedingly narrow lane for the 1920s automobiles. The common denominator of these stations is that they tended to be owned by the individuals who built them and their designs often reflected not just their personalities but their economic circumstances, their taste, their ambitions, and even their eccentricities.

The increasing volume of traffic on U.S. 66 changed this. Initially the traffic supplied both the hotels (and the lunch rooms and cafes associated with them) and the filling stations with increased business, a ready market, even a windfall for people who had planned their businesses without calculating the impact of a growing volume of people in automobiles depending on them. Soon, however, a different clientele was coming to town with different expectations and needs and this changed the business formula, and so too were new businesses springing up to serve those new customers. The pressures on the older, existing businesses mounted with each day's string of cars passing in front of the business. A general Depression was not in the business plans of many, but again, this was the curious anomaly: at the same time that there was a Depression, more and more people were taking to the road.

The tourist campsites were also quickly transformed. By the late 1920s they attracted more and more, not just the adventurous traveler who enjoyed the sport of auto camping. They were attracting people who were on the road for more basic reasons in their quest for a sustainable livelihood. Families who found themselves homeless and out of work used the same roads and sometimes descended upon the same tourist camps that attracted the travelers on vacation. They were not always welcomed. In 1927 the *Daily Oklahoman*, in Oklahoma City, expressed its disgust with this new feature of that state's highways:

> . . . The friendless, neighborless, businessless wagoneers is a lone band; one impoverished, unequipped, usually incompetent, man standing against the whole world. Such property as he owns, his creaky wagon with the tarpaper and lath-covered shack aboard, his half starved, ratty horses and his ignorant, unprivileged family, follows daily in his wake and all are outcasts, unknowns. The tourists on any highway will run across these families and they will usually come to their notice when they have pulled into a blackjack fastness to camp for the night . . . . There the wagon stands, with a group of scraggly children playing around it, the horses wandering unhobbled through the copse and man and wife bent over a struggling campfire in which there are a half-dozen rusted, blackened, battered cooking pans and kettles. The man began as a renter, a cropper, moving every season. Indolent, wasteful, slothful and careless, he agreed, either by written or parol contract, to farm a plot of ground for a season and to share with the owner the usufructs . . . . It was too wet in the spring for him to plow, too windy to cultivate, too hot to chop cotton. Consequently, most of his effort was devoted to a desultory sort of plowing and planting and then the forces of nature were called upon to do the rest.[154]

In this way it seems clear that the landless who took to the road, "moving every season," did so not only against the weight of accumulated material burdens, but also against the weight of the sometimes harsh judgment and disapproval of society's leaders. Within five years of this account, however, it was clear to many that there were far more of these itinerants on the road and in the campsites and that the number was growing. There may even have been enough of them

[154] "Summer Brings 'Wagoneers,'" *Daily Oklahoman*, June 5, 1927.

in the land to suggest that not all came upon their hardship as a result of individual character flaws.

As for lodging, the Harvey-style and other grand hotels were often, despite their willingness and their availability for the new automobile travelers, the casualties of the new traffic. The hotels, located downtown, required the motorist to sometimes leave the highway; they also required more time to load and unload, and required greater public contact between the traveler and the hotel staff. These hotels proved inappropriate to the new generation of travelers—whether comfortable middle class families on vacation, the traveling peddler with a suitcase full of wares, or people facing hard times who sought better opportunities elsewhere—and so they faded in the wake of exhaust fumes of the increasing numbers of automobiles on the roads. Some of the Harvey Houses were able to survive, but they were becoming anachronisms, located next to the railroad and not the highway, providing comfortable rooms and restaurants in a leisurely atmosphere, and often with great formality. They were also expensive, both for the consumer and for the builder.

Tourist camps and tourist courts and the inchoate motel suffered no such burden. The first step in the transformation from free tourist campground was simply to start charging fees. By the late 1920s most such campgrounds were charging travelers to spend the night. This had two effects. One was to produce some revenue. The other was to exclude those who could not afford to pay. One Tulsa writer commenting on the spread of tourist camps in that city in 1928 noted:

> One feature of the new tourist camp is the almost entire absence of what is known as the auto tramp. This species is very numerous, especially on east and west routes. The tramp outfit consists of a dilapidated car and a large family. Generally the tramp family has left whatever home it had and has no other definitely in view. The charges are supposed to bar them from camps, and every camp owner will tell you he has nothing but the very best customers. The tramp element usually camps along streams and not near the established camps. . . . The only free grounds worth while are those donated to all comers by the filling station men.[155]

The bringing together of the American people by virtue of the new highway seemed to have taken a detour.

Those who could afford the more comfortable quarters often moved up and stayed in cabins while those unable to do so continued to camp. As James Agee wrote in 1935, it was not just the person seeking employment who was kept out of the pricier facilities, but the employed working class families as well: "for already, today, the cabin camp is a luxury to the workman, and every bit good enough for the lower middle class."[156]

After the assessed charge for the tourist campground, the cabin camp was the next step. Requiring minimal capital outlay, people who operated a store or service station could easily enhance their business by building a row of cabins for travelers to use. Or a farmer might build cabins on land adjacent to the highway. Marshall Smith, writing in the Tulsa *World* in 1928, estimated that the cost to construct a cabin was $250, not including the land.[157] So the number of tourist camps multiplied in the coming years and they attracted more and more traffic to the main highways, with U.S. 66 a prime example. These were the traditional mom-and-pop type operations, businesses run by a family where everybody in the family participated, though not necessarily in tasks and time of equal burdens.

These cabin camps, often called tourist camps or courts, were the early forms of motels. The construction of a

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[155] Marshall L. Smith, "Tourist Parks Spreading Fast," Tulsa *Daily World*, July 22, 1928.

[156] Agee, "The Great American Roadside," 61.

[157] Smith, "Tourist Parks Spreading Fast."

motel unit required little capital and the labor was cheap. In their standard history of the motel in America, Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers observe that "Motels indeed were born and flourished because of the Depression, not despite it."[158] The same authors note that *Architectural Record* in 1933, "declared cabin-camp construction to be one of the few 'booming' building sectors of the Depression. . . ." "The secret to success," the historians suggest, "lay in the jack-of-all-trades, do-it-yourself nature of the business."[159] The motels were easy to build, and *Popular Mechanics*, in 1935, offered a simple design for construction of a 10' x 12' cabin with gable roof along with the following encouragement:

> If you live near a well-traveled highway, or can lease space near one, a few low-cost tourists' cabins of the attractive type shown will afford you a substantial income during the summer months. If the cabins are erected in a well-kept grove where there is an adequate supply of pure, fresh water, so much the better. Also, electric lights are an added inducement to tourists.[160]

Most owners, according to Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, "literally built their own motels."[161] These tourist courts were not only inexpensive to construct, but were also cheap to operate, circumstances that made them prime for the locally-owned, individualistic mom-and-pop nature of the business. James Agee commented on the decentralized structure in the motel industry: "Low overhead is the very essence of the industry and there is little that centralized management could contribute besides capital of dubious value."[162]

While one advantage of this structure was the "sweat equity" or "self-exploitation" it permitted, as family members worked the motels without wages, there were costs that cut deeply into that arrangement. Within the mom-and-pop organization, the burdens tended to fall more heavily on mom than pop. Again, Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers: ". . . women clearly provided the preponderant amount of labor for these family businesses."[163] Even when they hired help to work cleaning the rooms, that help tended to be female and it tended to be low wage. This is not to suggest that the businesses always flourished, for often, given the needs of the traffic along Route 66, money simply was not to be had.

Lucille Hamons, who operated a service station and motel on Route 66 near Hydro, Oklahoma, recalled that "I used to rent cabins to those heading west. A dollar and a half a night. Everyone was going to California to get jobs, and they were broke. And if they were hungry I'd feed 'em a little."[164] She also noted "I've kept people in the rooms that couldn't pay their room rent. They've sold me all kinds of things for gas—clothes, cars, everything."[165]

At Dixieland, a recreational park with lodging and dining facilities just west of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, on Route 66, it was not uncommon for the owners "to accept chickens and various produce instead of money in exchange for gasoline, oil, or other park services . . . . Many a traveler on old Route 66, 'down on his luck' received a free handout at Dixieland,"

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[158] John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 68.

[159] *Ibid.*, 39.

[160] "Tourists' Cabins that Get the Business," *Popular Mechanics*, 64 (July 1935), 151-153.

[161] Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 38.

[162] [James Agee, "The Great American Roadside," 61.

[163] Sculle, Jakle, Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 69.

[164] Hamons, quoted in Craig Wilson, "A Ride down Route 66: Exploring Life at the Legendary Crossroads," *USA Today*, July 9, 1992.

[165] Hamons, quoted in Kelly and Scott, *Route 66*, 59.

relates one account of the Depression years at the park. "No one was ever refused or turned away, if he needed help."[166] The social organization still retained enough of its personal interaction, merchants knowing that they were perhaps a few steps away from needing help or moving down the road themselves, that neighbors still helped neighbors, even if that neighbor was a stranger.

The expansion of motel construction and operation along U.S. 66 in the 1930s generated both additional motels and motel units, but those motels tended to be more functional than stylish and the construction reflected their low capitalization and utilitarian design. Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers have suggested that, even with the extremely independent, individualistic nature of the enterprise, the motels tended toward a common pattern since they tended to draw upon the same basic design requirements and since they conformed to the same general considerations of operation. Their standard history of the motel describes that structure as follows:

> Cottages were increasingly arranged geometrically around a central open space, or court. The width of U-shaped courts was dependent on the depth of the lot and the extent of highway frontage. Cottages were usually arrayed as individual units with open spaces between the units. Attached garages were popular after 1930, and it was not uncommon to find cottage-garage combinations linked wall to wall to form continuous facades, the integrity of each building preserved in individual roof lines, since the units were usually freestanding . . . . The typical cottage court contained an office building that usually included private apartment space for the motel manager and his family. Another building might contain a coffee shop. As in the case of the cabin camps, public space was primarily outdoors. Space not given to parking was often landscaped to give motels a more gentrified aspect. Architecturally, cottages were made to look like little suburban houses in order to enhance their appeal for the middle-class tourist and the traveling businessman. Cottages were furnished like suburban houses, with rugs, dressing tables and bureaus, radios, and the like. Sometimes they were provided with steam heat from central heating plants . . . . Motor courts were structured like cottage courts except that room units were totally integrated under single rooflines usually as a single building.[167]

In addition, factors like the role of sanitation generated structural conformity by often providing a centrally situated bathhouse that all the guests would draw upon instead of having individual bathrooms in the separate units. This pattern can be confirmed along Route 66 today by noting the small number of surviving units separated by garages with sliding doors, and house/office in the center.

At the same time, it would be easy to overstate any uniformity since these motels, a multitude of independent operations, were anything but replicas of each other. The uniformity had more to do with structure and utility than it did construction, appearance, policy, or furnishings. The motels were perhaps most characterized by their idiosyncratic nature; they reflected the personal preferences and tastes of their owner/builders. Many, indeed most, motels from the 1930s no longer exist—a testimony to both their simple, low-cost construction and the fact that they were often pioneers on the outskirts of town that were consumed in subsequent development.

Gas Stations

As with the motels, so too with the gas stations of the period. The gas stations were transformed into service stations,

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[166] James W. Hubbard, "Dixieland Was a Dream Realized," Sapulpa *Herald*, October 18, 1992.

[167] Jakle, Sculle, Rogers, *Motel in America*, 41.

businesses that provided much more than a tank of gasoline. Writer John Margolies captures the expansion: "The overbuilding of gas stations in the 1920s was exceeded only by the building boom of the 1930s. There were 143,000 retail outlets for gas in 1929, 170,000 by 1933, and this number ballooned to a staggering 231,000 in 1940."[168]

Those numbers, however, conceal a more fundamental transformation in the gasoline retail business. Where the dominant form of gasoline station had been the independent operator who owned a station and worked it, often with the family pitching in, the trend in the 1930s was for petroleum companies to own and operate their own stations. These stations obviously had a competitive advantage over the independents, especially in their ability to withstand price wars and to take deliveries of large quantities of gasoline so that they would not run out and be able to reap the economies of scale.[169] Because of the expansion of the chain gasoline stations, more and more independent operators were forced out of business or adapted to the new climate.

For example, in Iowa the independents were able to secure state laws prohibiting chain gasoline stations, so the petroleum companies resorted to a subterfuge by owning stations but leasing them to independent operators, a circumstance which enabled them to retain the advantages of horizontal integration and to shift onto the lessor the burdens of competition, and to dodge the weight of the anti-chain law. The result was the same, as *Business Week* noted in 1939: "The economic pressure is hastening liquidation of the inept retail operator." By "inept" was likely meant the independent. When the lease-holder got in trouble, the oil company response was simple: "What can you expect with 400,000 inexperienced business men [the retail dealers] setting the price?"[170] Consolidation and the elimination of the independently-owned and operated gas station to raise the prices became the answer.

When the oil companies owned the stations, directly or indirectly, they were able to launch coordinated marketing plans to attract customers to their stations. The companies used three devices, all evident along Route 66: one was to expand into new territories, even sparsely settled areas where traffic might justify new stations and where existing supply lines (trucks supplying other stations) could be used; another was to broaden the service they provided; and the other was to generate an identity through increasingly standardized construction. The nation's small towns, including those strung along Highway 66, provided some companies a prime target, particularly those companies with refineries in the state. Sculle and Jakle offer the intriguing observation that "Skelly, Sinclair, and Continental's Conoco brand...heavily favored low-volume small-town dealers."[171]

Yet no one oil company dominated the length of U.S. 66. However, their ever-shifting territories could dominate a region of Highway 66, as Phillips Oil Company did during 1930s in Oklahoma, its home base, and the Texas Panhandle and eastern New Mexico.[172] Other companies, such Gulf Oil during the same period, maintained outlets in only Illinois and Texas, but by the 1970s, were located in each state along the route. Based on retail outlet statistics and oil company maps, the following major companies were active along Highway 66 during the period of significance: Clark; Sunoco/DX; Cities Service; Phillips; Shell; Conoco; Standard; Exxon; Fina; Sinclair; Gulf; Esso; Marathon; and Chevron.

Company stations looked alike within the company framework and thus looked different from all the others. Phillips 66 built its brick cottages complete with chimney, like the several excellent examples that remain along Route 66,

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[168] John Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance: Glory Days of the Gas Station* (Boston: Bullfinch Press, 1993), 58.

[169] "'Iowa Plan' on Way Out," *Business Week*, August 12, 1939, 27.

[170] *Ibid.*, The text in brackets in this quotation was added by *Business Week*.

[171] John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 62.

[172] *Ibid.*, 116.

as early as the late 1920s, and built more in the 1930s, switching designs to a more modern appearance in 1937. Other companies followed suit, using standard designs for easier consumer identification. Often they developed a Mission Revival aspect with stucco and parapets as part of a southwestern motif. More stations took on, with their corporate sponsors, some of the features of the Art Deco or Streamline Moderne with the image of movement and change and progress.

Walter Dorwin Teague designed for Texaco, in the mid 1930s, a formula for standardizing their stations that included appearance and functionality, that were "physical and psychological."[173] Texaco and Socony followed, introducing the oblong box station with rounded corners on the office section, in what Sculle and Jakle termed "thoroughly functional, and thoroughly bland in its functionality."[174] Although nationally the canopy was in decline, along Highway 66 in the Southwest more and more stations had canopies over the pumps, to probably block the sun.

By the end of the decade, Harold Haliday Costain could write in *Architectural Record* that "Modern gasoline stations range from tidy, somewhat sentimental little structures . . . to rationalized service buildings planned both to function as efficiently as possible and to dramatize the station facilities and service process rather than conceal them."[175] What he did not say was that the former were being replaced with the latter.

In addition, the stations became larger, reflecting a broader sales mission with greater complexity and multi-functional intention. In the 1930s, according to Jakle and Sculle,

> The large integrated corporations moved to broaden product and service mixes. Service bays were added to gasoline stations to handle increased repair work. Office spaces were enlarged to accommodate the sale of accessories—tires, batteries, and accessories comprising the so-called TBA line. Emphasis was placed on service and the term "gasoline station" gave way to "service station." Some corporations built large complexes, dubbed "super service stations" with large repair, lubricating, and washing floors tied to sales offices.[176]

If the pattern of social structure was toward centralization at the level of the oil companies themselves, as it had been in the case of Marland, that same pattern prevailed at the level of the gas station. In such an environment, the smaller station without services, equally dependent upon the majors for gasoline, could not compete and often faded from the scene. They faded, that is, unless it was possible to add a motel or a restaurant to the existing facilities, and those additions remain characteristic of the small stations that survived.

Road Food

Where there was a gas station, and where there was a motel, there was increasingly likely to be a restaurant nearby, and in fact often it was a restaurant associated with the other two businesses.

In 1937 the U.S. Census Bureau surveyed the number of tourist camps in the nation and discovered that tourist camps that included a filling station in the operation generated revenues between two and three times as great as those camps without stations.[177]

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[173] "Standardized Service Stations Designed by Walter Dorwin Teague," *Architectural Record*, 82 (September 1937), 69-72.

[174] Jakle and Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*, 146.

[175] Harold Haliday Costain, "Modern Gasoline Stations," *Architectural Record*, 90 (October 1941), 69.

[176] Jakle and Sculle, *The Gas Station in America,* 66.

[177] "Tourist Camp Census," *Business Week*, June 12, 1937, 54.

And where there was a small town, there would be a restaurant or two willing to provide some level of culinary competence to the hungry travelers. The short order cook became commonplace and probably came and went as often as the businesses that employed them; often the cook was, of course, the owner (or, again, the woman whose husband operated the gasoline station next door).

Perhaps the best description of these independent cafes, with low capital and local food and labor, all of which looked different from the others but all somehow looking alike, was fictionalized account provided by Steinbeck in a description that runs for pages and captures not only the flavors and fragrances of the establishments but also something of their social organization:

> Along 66 the hamburger stands—Al & Susy's Place—Carl's Lunch—Joe & Minnie—Will's Eats. Board-and-bat shacks. Two gasoline pumps in front, a screen door, a long bar, stools, and a foot rail. . . . the nickel phonograph with records piled up like pies, ready to swing out to the turntable and play dance music, "Ti-pi-ti-pi-tin," "Thanks for the Memory," Bing Crosby, Benny Goodman. At one end of the counter a covered case; candy cough drops, caffeine sulphate called Sleepless, No-Doze; candy, cigarettes, razor blades, aspirin, Bromo-Seltzer, Alka-Seltzer.
>
> Minnie or Susy or Mae, middle-aging behind the counter, hair curled and rouge and powder on a sweating face. Taking orders in a soft low voice, calling them to the cook with a screech like a peacock. Mopping the counter with circular strokes, polishing the big shining coffee urns. The cook is Joe or Carl or Al, hot in a white coat and apron, beady sweat on white forehead, below the white cook's cap; moody, rarely speaking, looking up for a moment at each new entry.[178]

The restaurants—more accurately cafes—were many and varied, some right downtown, some on the outskirts, but most were not built to last. Along with their counterparts in the new roadside lodging industry, these buildings have seldom survived into the twenty-first century, as pressures both natural and social have taken a heavy toll of the businesses and the structures alike. What is especially revealing in both categories, and one can add the "the one-truck fellow" who was being squeezed out of the rapidly consolidating trucking industry, is that even the "typical" hamburger stands and cafes held their own individuality.

The trends in social organization were clear and they often held positive, beckoning images. The prospect of efficient transportation bringing new opportunities to the village and the small town, the grand parades and fanfare generated with the opening of a stretch of pavement connecting the small town with a larger city, the availability of new brands with new buildings and services, the promise of new businesses, and the fluid mobility that disrupted a closed society—all of these features heralded a new day. Soon, it seemed, the problems of the past—isolation, separation, inequity, and hopeless futures—would be resolved to the benefit of the whole community.

And indeed, the signs of change were clear, even though they were not always in the headlines. By the end of the 1930s the automobile—that agent of change and sign of the future—pervaded the life of communities where just a brief while before the horse and wagon prevailed. And the automobile was being manufactured and sold by fewer companies. The petroleum companies, since the age of Rockefeller and Standard Oil vertically integrated combinations, were now becoming horizontally integrated so that fewer and larger companies dominated the production, refining, and distribution of oil and its products. The gas stations were correspondingly owned by fewer and fewer companies.

Everywhere the signs of change surfaced. In 1936 a motel appeared in Oklahoma City that was different from the

[178] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, 166-167.

other mom and pop, independently owned and operated, businesses. The Alamo Plaza Court was the first unit in Oklahoma of a new chain based in Texas that began to reach into the hinterlands all around.[179] Likewise, Beverly Osborne, the owner of a group of restaurants in Oklahoma City, in the late 1930s began to sell, not franchises to his restaurant, but the rights to use the menu item that he conceived, an entrée called "chicken in the rough" which consisted of half a fried chicken served with French fries and honey; by no means a mom and pop corner cafe, Beverly's Chicken was beginning to standardize the fare available not just on Route 66 but across the country.[180]

In motels, in gas stations, in cafes, in the multitude of small businesses lining Highway 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica, in the low-budget, low-capital, low-overhead "mom and pop" businesses of Highway 66, the independent entrepreneur was being left behind.

U.S. HIGHWAY 66 IN WARTIME,1941-1945

World War II affected different people, different businesses, and different communities in different ways. Highway 66 played a part in wartime activities. Even before the war, the potential significance of Route 66 as a defense was becoming clear. John T. Woodruff, first president of the U.S. Highway 66 Association, and collaborator with Cyrus Avery in getting the highway designated in 1926, was still active in 1941, writing his memoirs. Woodruff noted the transition in that work:

> U.S. Highway 66 is today the most important east-west highway west of the Mississippi River. Indeed just recently the Highway Department at Washington made an order favoring Highway 66 above all others in Missouri for improvement as a military route. It would seem at this time, March 1941, that Highway 66 has preference over every federal highway in Missouri as a military road, . . .[181]

Although what document or order Woodruff referred to is unclear, he probably was right in that Highway 66 was the most important road in Missouri for the military.

Well before U.S. entry into World War II, the government poured money into what was then called the Preparedness Movement and began to build up military installations of various sorts and also contract for armaments with private industry, especially on the West Coast.

As early as 1922 General Pershing had ordered a map, the so-called "Pershing Map," to identify critical wartime routes for national defense; an action less important for the actual roads charted than for the perception that highways would have military use. Given that U.S. 66 had yet to be designated, making generalizations about its future significance as a strategic military route is problematic. However, looking at the map, one segment of future Route 66, from Los Angeles to Amarillo, following the National Old Road and Ozark Trails, respectively, is designated a "second priority" road. Another, representing future U.S. 66 across Missouri is given "first priority"; other segments of the yet designated highway were not mapped at all.[182]

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[179] Sculle, Jakle, Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 107.

[180] Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66*, 120-121.

[181] Woodruff's memoirs quoted by Skip Curtis in Curtis, Birthplace of Route 66: Springfield, Mo. (Springfield, Missouri: Curtis Enterprises, 2001), 25.

[182] "Pershing Map," or the "Project Development for the National Highways of the United States" map, as pictured in, U.S. Department of Transportation, America's Highways, 1716-1976 (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 143.

In 1940, as the United States began to mobilize for war—enacting a new conscription law and building military bases—the immediate implications were substantial for U.S. 66 and other primary highways. The Federal Highway Act of 1940 gave the Bureau of Public Roads the authority to prioritize federal aid distribution to defense highways. A year later, the Defense Highway Act of 1941 identified a "strategic network" of defense highways, with a Congressional bill providing $150 million to build access roads to military reservations and $125 million to correct deficiencies on existing highways making up the network.[183] Route 66, of which most of its alignment was designated a "first priority" on a draft map of the network, received federal aid under the program.[184] In Missouri, for example, because of the location of the new Fort Leonard Wood, federal funds were made available to create a divided four-lane highway to facilitate transportation with the fort and St. Louis connections, bypassing a difficult stretch of steep and winding roadways in the Ozarks.

War Facilities along U.S. 66

From Los Angeles to Chicago development along Highway 66 took a distinctly military turn. Outside Chicago, two facilities—the Elwood Ordnance Plant and the Kankakee Ordnance Works were established in 1940.[185] Ultimately, during the war, more than ten thousand people would be employed at these two plants on Highway 66; by some reports these installations were regarded as the largest, most sophisticated munitions plants in the world.

At Granite City, on an old alignment of U.S 66 just east of the Mississippi River, the army in 1942 constructed the Granite City Engineer Depot, employing at the peak of the war effort in 1944 over 5,200 people and training 3,500 military personnel in engineer supply and maintenance functions. In Missouri, the new Fort Leonard Wood was constructed in 1940 as a basic training center and became an Army Engineer Replacement Training Center; by the end of the war over three hundred thousand soldiers had trained at Leonard Wood. At Springfield, the army located O'Reilly General Army Hospital in February 1941.

A flight school for British pilots operated at Miami, Oklahoma, and another for American servicemen and Allied Nations operated from the Tulsa Municipal Airport, training some 16,000 pilots. Also in Tulsa, the Douglas Aircraft Company plant made a mark, hiring over ten thousand people to build bombers at the Tulsa Bomber Plant. An army air force base in Oklahoma City, Tinker Field (now Tinker Air Force Base) was constructed in 1942. Also in the capital, Will Rogers Field, now Will Rogers World Airport, trained bomber groups, including pilots flying B-24s in the 44th Bombardment Group. In El Reno, the army opened in 1943 Mustang Field, or El Reno Field, a training airfield operated by the 320th Flying Training detachment. The historic Fort Reno continued to be used throughout the war. And another base, the Clinton Naval Air Station, 17 miles southwest of Clinton, Oklahoma, emerged in 1942.

The Amarillo Army Air Field, eleven miles east of Amarillo Texas, was built in 1942, which, according to the base, became "one of the largest installations in the Western Technical Training Command was established for training of air crew and ground mechanics to service B-17 aircraft."[186]

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[183] *Ibid.*,144.

[184] As represented in "Highway Map Showing Principal Route of Military Importance," appearing in, Public Roads Administration, "Highways for the National Defense," (Washington, D.C., 1941), 10. Sections of other primary highways, including U.S. highways 40, 61, 80, 85, 90, 91, 99, 101, etc. were also designated as first priority routes in the strategic network. Future research could address U.S. 66's role as a defense highway by comparing it to primary highways, in the areas of priority designation(s), number of military facilities and related wartime industries along the route, and expenditures to improve the highway during the war years.

[185] These facilities became later known as the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant.

[186] As quoted from: http://www.strategic-air-command.com/bases/Amarillo_AFB.htm

In New Mexico, the Albuquerque Army Air Base, constructed in part by the WPA beginning in 1939, became Kirtland Army Air Field in 1942 and trained flight crews for B-17 and B-24 bombers. On the west side of the state, east of Gallup, the old Fort Wingate, which had served as a munitions depot since World War I, took on new life with the storage of munitions in its bunkers, or "igloos" visible from Highway 66.

When the army established a larger munitions depot—the Navajo Ordnance Depot—at Bellemont, outside Flagstaff, in 1941, it generated a boom for what historian John S. Westerlund has termed "Arizona's War Town."[187] A few miles east of Kingman, another army air base was located, Kingman Army Airfield, for the training of gunners for B-17s.

In California, in those stretches before the highway faded in the maze of roads leading in and out of and around Los Angeles, the Barstow Marine Logistics Base was inaugurated in 1942 and Victorville Army Airfield was constructed in 1941 and later named George Air Force Base.

Each of these military installations made a contribution to the war, of course, and each made perhaps an even greater contribution to local economies. Yet there is more to this long list of bases, which could doubtless be expanded by noting other activities. Aside from the air bases and aircraft plants, many of these installations were logistics operations or depots, dealing in the materiel of war-making more than the fighting of war. The ammunition depots, from Kankakee to Fort Wingate and Flagstaff were the clearest examples, but there was also the engineering depot at Granite City and the quartermaster training that took place at Fort Leonard Wood. The key to this pattern is that logistics required a significant transportation element.

If the increase in mineral activity—helium at Amarillo and tungsten at Kingman—is included, the war effort demonstrably helped parts of the economy along some areas of Route 66. At Amarillo, for example, the U.S. Bureau of Mines had located a helium plant west of the city shortly after the designation of Highway 66. In the 1930s this single plant, the United States Helium Plant, recovered more than half the world's supply of helium.[188] The government dramatically expanded the Amarillo plant with the preparations for World War II, and it increased its size and production during the war. The explicit reasoning for these actions focused on not only its location next to an immense helium field, but its position directly adjacent to Route 66. Like Fort Wingate and other installations, trucks and cars turned off Highway 66 into the driveway and parking lot of the Amarillo plant.[189]

U.S. 66 and other strategic highways contributed to wartime transportation, but their use must be placed in context with the railroads. The railroads, empowered by the new diesel engine and increased efficiency, moved hundreds of thousands of tons of material, munitions, equipment, and troops across the United States during the war. Trains, according to some accounts, carried 90% of wartime traffic.[190] This began in 1940 with the initial movement of equipment and supplies to the East Coast, reversing after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, with thousands of troops and equipment

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[187] John S. Westerlund, *Arizona's War Town: Flagstaff, Navajo Ordnance Depot and World War II* (Tucson: University of Arizona, Press, 2003).

[188] Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Texas, *Texas: A Guide to the Lone Star State* (New York: Hastings House, 1940), 491.

[189] See the documentation of the Amarillo Helium Plant in the Historic American Engineering Record, Helium Activities Recording Project, HAER TX-105.

[190] According to the Encyclopedia of North American Railroads, "From December 1941 through August 1945 railroads carried 90% of military freight and 97% of military passengers...During the war nearly 114,000 special troop trains moved 43.7 million armed forces personnel—about 1 million per month.... an increase in overall freight traffic from 292 billion ton-miles in 1938 to 477 billion in 1941 and to an all-time high of 740 billion in 1944." William D. Middleton III et al, Encyclopedia of North American Railroads (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 1120-1125.

being transported to the Pacific Coast. In turn railroad companies and train manufacturers increased their productivity to meet the needs of the war effort. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe's mainline from Chicago to Los Angeles, of which much of U.S. 66 followed in the Southwest, saw its freighted tonnage nearly double between 1941 and 1942, with passenger traffic increasing 88 percent during the same period.[191] Manufacturing plants, such as the Douglas Aircraft facility in Tulsa, primarily employed trains to deliver the raw materials and aircraft subassemblies to the plant. Route 66, like other highways making up the strategic network, worked to complement the railroads. Future research could aim to identify specifically how U.S. 66 was used for wartime transportation and its relative importance within the strategic network.

Transportation by train, and to a lesser extent by bus and private automobile, spawned something of a temporary migration, with a rush of emigrants heading to war industries on the West Coast.[192] Some of these industries, such as the sprawling Kaiser steel mill at Fontana, lay right on Route 66. But this epic population shift did not happen exclusively along U.S. 66 or head directly to Southern California. Other primary east-west highways, such as U.S. 40 and 50 led thousands of jobseekers to the burgeoning shipyards of the San Francisco Bay Area. Others, such as U.S. 80 to the south, led to a massive naval base and air station and its attendant industries in San Diego.

As half a million people moved to California and additional numbers moved to other war industry locations around the country, the new migration was termed by columnist Drew Pearson, "the Defense Grapes of Wrath."[193] Lucius Beebe referred to the new migrants, because they were sometimes less desperate than their 1930s forerunners, as "Dress-Suit Okies."[194] But some historians, such as Walter Nugent, question the overall influence of the war on population increases on the West Coast, suggesting "Most, if not all, of these migrations would likely have happened without the war."[195]

There was another migration, too, as some people did not migrate to the coast but moved to town, and even moved their business so that it would be located on Highway 66 where the prospects looked brighter. In Kingman and Amarillo, in Albuquerque and Springfield, people from nearby towns were moving to be closer to where the jobs were—at the bases, in the mines, and in the businesses. The result of such shifting—from farm to city, from small towns to bigger towns, from Oklahoma to California or Texas—redistributed some of the nation's population, a continuation of the process that Route 66 had known intimately for more than a decade.[196] The other side of it, as the neighboring towns could testify, was the draining of population from the farms and the small towns that lacked the transportation and military connections.

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[191] Keith L. Bryant, Jr., *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), 272.

[192] U.S. 66 and other highways served another use in 1942 to "relocate" approximately 40,000 Japanese-born residents and their 70,000 American-born children from the West Coast in 1942 to interment camps in the country's interior.

[193] Drew Pearson, "The Defense Grapes of Wrath," syndicated column for February 21, 1941, as cited in McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land*, 346.

[194] Lucius Beebe, "The Dress-Suit Okies of California," *The American Mercury*, 52 (May 1941), 533-540. Beebe, a journalist of high society, sometimes referred to these people scornfully as "black tie drifters."

[195] Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of its People*. 257. While Nugent makes a point that the war effort contributed to the West Coast's population growth, he put the threefold wartime gain in context with the steady twofold rise population in the 1920s and 1930s, seeing the war increase as "acceleration, not novelty."

[196] One contemporary student of both highways and the demographic shifts of the war period went so far as to suggest that "Social mobility rose to unprecedented heights during World War II," and backed that statement with the announcement of the Census Bureau that "Never before in the history of our country . . . has there been so great a shuffling and redistribution of population in so short a time." Francis E. Merrill, "The Highway and Social Problems," in Jean Labutat and Wheaton J. Lane, *Highways in our National Life: A Symposium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 137.

This movement, however, did not necessarily translate into greater use of roads, at least not for more than a short period of time. The migration was brief, largely confined to the beginning of the war, and then it faded. Instead, traffic volume slid dramatically even from Depression levels as a consequence of increased production and employment, the rationing tires beginning in 1941, later gasoline, and the halt in the production of automobiles; the increased military use was not sufficient to compensate for the drop in private travel. With the rationing of gasoline and rubber, railroads began to cut into the automobile tourist trade, as would-be motorists returned to the passenger train for cross-country travel.

The statistical dimensions of the decline of traffic along U.S. 66 cannot be precisely measured, but some indication can be found in the larger tally of traffic levels for the state of Oklahoma. Considering only the paved roads in the state, the average number of vehicles traveling paved roads, per mile, per day, dropped by around a third from 1940 to 1944, from 1,460.6 vehicles to 974.5 vehicles.[197] With that reduction of traffic, businesses along the road, especially the smallest of them, the most marginal independent mom and pop operations, may have suffered. The migration from farm to city and from Oklahoma to California had helped sustain some of these businesses in the years of the Depression. But without the steady stream of traffic, they now found themselves closing their doors and moving to larger cities to find jobs in war production or, indeed, moving to California where the war industries flourished.

Lucille Hamons, operator of a gas station and motel in Hydro, Oklahoma recalled the war years as "especially lean," many other businesses along the road that had depended on the traffic to slow down and spend money doubtless shared the judgment.[198] In the spring of 1942 the impact of the "tire-gas shortage" was being felt nationwide, and while *Business Week* noted that Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas tourist courts were managing, thus far; the magazine also noted that tourist courts "built to provide a haven for the traveler on the long, dry stretches of highway in West Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico have been hard hit."[199] In some instances the lodging facilities were able to survive by converting to permanent or semi-permanent housing for nearby military bases.

While the pressure on the family who operated a diner or a motel or a gas station—those people who depended on the highway to bring customers their way—during the war was palpable, others managed to flourish through the expanded role prosperity during the war—or at least some of the trucking companies did.

Lee Way trucking company was one of the businesses that did well. Susan Croce Kelly quotes Bob Lee on the impact of the war: "We had a tremendous increase in business . . . from hauling war supplies for government contractors, and in shipping engines to the West Coast, ammunition from McAlester, Oklahoma, ordnance from Kansas City and outside Saint Louis, and we'd bring empty steel shell casings there to be loaded and shipped out. The war really made Lee Way Motor Freight."[200]

Government contracts helped Lee Way, but there was more to their success than doing business with a customer much larger than any that might stop at the gas station and also get a burger. Lee Way had been part of a "pool" of trucking companies, presumably rotating the distribution of contracts among the members so that they would not sacrifice their freight business with private customers. Thus, after the war, Bob Lee explained, "There was a real shakeout in the trucking industry." Those companies that had not joined a pool and had become dependent on government contracts to

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[197] *Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Highway Commission for the period ending June 30, 1946* (Oklahoma City, 1946), 24.

[198] Ross, *Oklahoma Route 66*, 154.

[199] "Touristless Courts," *Business Week*, April 25, 1942, p. 28.

[200] Kelly and Scott, *Route 66*, 77.

the exclusion of their civilian customers disappeared in that shakeout.[201] This was a sign of the times as centralization in the economy and society moved rapidly and with government support during the war years and afterwards.

One can see some of the same centralization in the petroleum industry during the war, and even in the portion of it that connected to the automobile and trucking landscape of Route 66. Jakle and Sculle summarize the trend:

> For domestic consumption, gasoline was pooled and delivered from bulk plants to the nearest gasoline stations irrespective of brand or company linkages. Many bulk plants and over one-quarter of all gasoline stations were closed. Retail sales through the war years stood at less than 70 percent of 1941 levels, the result of strict gasoline rationing overseen by the Petroleum Industry War Council.[202]

Cooperation rather than competition, consolidation of like businesses, and the closing of the independent operators was underway in all parts of the economy. This consolidation in the economy, in turn, had other consequences including especially a tendency to conformity. In the gasoline stations, the effect was distinct, as argued by John Margolies:

> The advent of World War II marked the end of a grand and glorious era in the history of the gas station. Indeed, it marked the end of an age of idealism and innocence in American culture. Never again would there be the fervor and zeal of the free-enterprise system so sumptuously and joyously expressed in commercial design. The new reality after the war would be more ascetic, economical, and practical, and what little joy remained in the commercial environment would be expressed in scaled-back imitations of the big-time hoopla of the "wonder years" from 1920 to 1940.[203]

Margolies may be accurate in his assessment of the dampening effect of institutional discipline in the architectural qualities of gas station construction as the variety and imagination sometimes found in earlier buildings faded into the conformity mandated by each company for its stations. On the other hand, the sheer number of stations—and also of fast food operations and motels—after the war increased to serve the traveling needs of a nation from which the pall of Depression and war seemed finally to lift.

World War II along Highway 66 had demonstrated the significance of the road as an artery of transportation, logistics and commerce—an artery of war. The irony was, though, that the communities and businesses along its path, and the individuals who earned their livings in ways directly and indirectly related to the highway, felt that power both when the road delivered prosperity and when it delivered hardship. Either way, the symbolism was powerful and undeniable.

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[201] *Ibid.*

[202] Jakle and Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*, 67.

[203] Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance*, 62.

RECREATION AND TOURISM ON U.S. HIGHWAY 66, 1946-1985

In March 1946, Jack D. Rittenhouse set out to put together a guide for people who he thought would want to travel Highway 66 and who would need information about the road: about places to visit, about where to stay, and how to find a good place to eat. Rittenhouse was not a writer so much as an aspiring writer; during World War II he wrote technical manuals for the Army Air Corps, and afterwards he was employed as a copy-editor in Los Angeles.[204] "During World War II," Rittenhouse later wrote, "I realized that there might be a great postwar migration from the eastern states to California. Many young men and women had received their war training at the great bases in California, and once having seen that pleasant land they would want to return." So that year he spent a month on the road, traveling from Los Angeles to Chicago and back, and published *A Guide Book to Highway 66*, a small book that he billed as "A mile-by-mile complete handbook on how to get the most fun from your trip. Full data on towns, historic spots, & highway facts: roads, hills, & garages."[205]

This is a unique document, and it is important for several reasons. Rittenhouse's selection of Highway 66 as a major route across the country reflects the road's prominence in the culture and society at the end of World War II. But it also provided a sense of historical context by comparison to what came before and what would follow in later years. It shows in subtle ways the changes in the two decades since Highway 66 was designated. The route of the highway had changed, the pavement had changed, and there was much more development along it. This was not just a comparison with the Ozark Trails years or the National Old Trails path. This book showed that the highway, as a commercial corridor, was not the same that it had been in the years of the great migration to California. And for that, the volume is significant enough.

But there was more as one turned from the past and looked to the future. The changes to come, changes that sometimes Rittenhouse anticipated and that sometimes he provided a baseline to measure against, may suggest the real value of the little book. Rittenhouse had, after all, provided a volume that helped the outsider move into the orbit of the local community, helped the traveler find local accommodations, a reasonable meal and convenient gas station, and even find an interesting historic site or pleasant rest area. Within a decade that frame of reference would itself be replaced along with many of the familiar businesses along the road. If Highway 66 in the spring of 1946, right at the beginning of the first heavy travel season of the post-war period, coursed through a country where camping alongside the road was still common and where people might stop to watch the waters of a lake and where some of the locals still rode horses, that was all about to change. Unprecedented numbers of people took to the road and as a result, businesses along 66 expanded and flourished—and changed—in dramatic ways.

Get Your Kicks

One indication of the change was the reference to the road in commercial culture. It had been less than a decade since Highway 66's most common association was with *The Grapes of Wrath*. As a result of Steinbeck's novel and Darryl Zanuck's movie of the same name, many people identified the road with the steady stream of Okies and Arkies heading west, looking for employment and new homes, and it was not a pretty picture.

About the same time that Jack Rittenhouse made his postwar trip along Route 66, so did Bobby Troup. Troup, a songwriter with one substantial prewar success, and his wife Cynthia went to California to try to make it big in the

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[204] Teague, *Searching for 66* (Springfield, Illinois: Samizdat House, 1991; 1996), 153.

[205] Jack D. Rittenhouse, *A Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: privately published, 1946; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989, 2000); Rittenhouse's recollections are in the unpaged prefatory sections of the reprint.

recording industry. On the way Cynthia suggested a song title and Bobby came up with lyrics and music. "Route 66" was the result and soon the radio airwaves were saturated with Nat King Cole Trio's version of the upbeat melody that sang the praises of the towns along the way, and urged people to "get hip to this timely tip," and "travel my way, take the highway that's the best."

The music and the words beckoned strongly for people to make the journey and get their kicks on Route 66.[206] In a nation of radios, in a nation of automobiles and travel, in a nation where the possibility of making a decent living was not unrealistic after all, and in a nation where the great Southwest summoned the wanderlust in people who had not taken a vacation in their life, or in a generation, the upbeat tempo and the fetching lyrics of escape and release turned the highway itself into a different road and into a vastly different icon.[207]

Highway boosters sought to take advantage of this new popularity and this new yen to travel the nation's highways. During World War II the original Highway 66 Association, which had also billed itself and its road as The Main Street of America, faded away. Perhaps it was the Depression that caused both businesses along the road and the potential travelers of the road to dampen their enthusiasm as either purveyors or targets of travel promotion. Perhaps it was even the success of the effort; with the road now paved and crowded with people, who needed to solicit more travelers. Possibly it was the increasing effort put forth by chambers of commerce along the road to advertise not the highway, but their community, and then as even state travel bureaus made their pitch, both of which made a highway association a little redundant or archaic. Or maybe it was the specter of The Main Street of America filled with people leaving town. Or, during the war, what was the point of such promotional activity when the kinds of optional travel plans that could respond to enticement had yielded to other pressures. Whatever the cause, the association fell by the wayside, but after World War II, in the buoyant atmosphere and promising future of travel, the merchants along the road once again organized.

In 1947 the group reorganized at a meeting of Road Boosters Clubs in Oklahoma City, calling itself the U.S. Highway 66 Association. Gladys Cutberth, who along with her husband Jack Cutberth, soon operated the business of the association out of their home in nearby Clinton, explained that "Our purpose was twofold: To improve the road by paving and four-laning it, and to attract tourists. We advertised Route 66 as the fastest, safest and best all-year route from Chicago to L.A."[208]

At the reorganization meeting, Ralph Jones, a New Mexico motel owner, pressed the basic message that "people must be sold on coming to 66 before they leave home."[209] So the merchants organized and pressed their common interest together. But what is especially revealing is that the organization now was dominated not just by merchants, but that those merchants were noticeably mom-and-pop businesspeople—as Tom Teague describes them at their first meeting, "a thousand innkeepers, cafe owners, gas station operators and other merchants from every state along the highway"—and they were especially from the small towns along the highway where 66 really was the main street in the town. The larger cities needed the organization less and less; they already had the dynamos of growth and commerce in other forms; they were not dependent upon the traveling public for revenue while the small towns were.

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[206] Scott and Kelly, *Route 66*, 148-150.

[207] A non-scientific review of indices of popular literature reveals that the term "Route 66" was not in common use until after the mid-1940s, suggesting the song and other popular culture raised the iconic significance of the highway. Several authors, including Arthur Krim, *Route 66: Iconography of the American Highway*, and Peter B. Dedek, *Hip to the Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66*, have documented Route 66's iconography and the rise of nostalgia for the highway.

[208] "A Legend's Eleventh Hour," [Phillips Petroleum Co.] *Shield*, VII (fourth quarter, 1982), 14-23.

[209] Tom Teague, *Searching for 66,* 113.

Symbolic of this difference was Jack Cutberth, a barber who had served on the Clinton, Oklahoma city council and who saw the critical relationship between the small communities along the road and the traffic that the highway brought into those towns. As a result of that first meeting in Oklahoma City, Cutberth became the state secretary of the organization and in a few years he became the executive secretary, the full-time spokesperson and prime mover, of the national organization.[210] He kept that position for about twenty-five years.

In fact, the U.S. Highway 66 Association seems to have self-consciously clung to the images of the past, somewhat reticent about changing the identity too much. There were some who wanted to change the name of the road, but they did not prevail. Ever since August 1935 when Will Rogers was killed in a plane crash and Oklahoma Congressman Wesley C. Disney introduced legislation to call Route 66 the Will Rogers Highway, the road had sometimes been referred to by the name of Oklahoma's favorite son. But at the 1947 meeting, the group abandoned that designation and "the association voted to readopt the route's former designation as the 'Main Street of America'. . ." and specifically to reject "The Will Rogers Highway."[211] The representative from Claremore, Oklahoma—generally regarded as Will Rogers' hometown—fought hard against the change but contingents from California, Arizona, and New Mexico successfully sought the more universal, and older, slogan and they prevailed.

Five years later, however, the name of the highway was designated the "Will Rogers Highway," and in that five years a significant transformation had taken place. In 1952 Warner Brothers Studios had filmed the movie, *The Will Rogers Story*, and as part of the pre-release publicity, they secured the cooperation of the U.S. Highway 66 Association—which evidently reasoned that the road would benefit from publicity as well—and placed markers proclaiming The Will Rogers Highway in Santa Monica and St. Louis (suggesting that the Illinois segment of the road was outside the core focus of their promotional efforts). Then they sent a caravan down the Will Rogers Highway to generate more publicity. Cameras whirred and clicked as the caravan made its way with various publicity stops along the road. The designation of the road as the Will Rogers Highway was less a memorial to the universally beloved humorist and satirist, as it was an effort to tie on to the commercial success of the advertising campaign for the movie.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES ON U.S. HIGHWAY 66, 1926-85 (Part 3)

Whether as a result of the advertising of the Highway 66 Association or not, many people decided to get their kicks on Route 66. There is a widespread quotation attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright in which the architect purportedly said that Highway 66 was "a giant chute down which everything loose in this country is sliding into Southern California." The quote may or may not be authentic, but certainly the volume of traffic seemed to increase in about that proportion.

The statistical measures of American's automobile use are revealing. In 1941, gas stations in the U.S. sold three and a half billion gallons of gasoline. During the war that number obviously declined, service stations closed their doors, gasoline was rationed, and travel dropped. But by 1951, the service stations in the nation sold over eight billion gallons.[212] Likewise, the number of registered motor vehicles, which had dropped during the war, grew dramatically by 1950 to more than forty million, and by 1958 there were fifty-seven million cars registered in the United States.[213] Writer John Gunther

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[210] *Ibid.*, 114.

[211] Typescript of unidentified news article of Oct. 28, 1947, in file, "Press Releases, "in Route 66 files, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[212] Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance*, 84.

[213] Rae, *The American Automobile: A Brief History*, 238; Sculle and Jakle, *The Gas Station in America*, 67 In Sculle, Jakle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 20, the authors count 24 million passenger cards registered in the United States in 1956 and 57 million in 1958, figures that are not only impossible to reconcile with the two year period of measurement, but that are also inconsistent with any others, including the work of the same authors.

offered a slightly different perspective on these numbers. In 1947 Gunther wrote, with good authority, that the United States contained "four-fifths of the world's automobiles."[214] However measured, Americans were taking to the road in ever expanding numbers in the years following World War II. Understandably, their experience would be different from that of their predecessors along the highway.

There were several forces operating in this. One was the readjustment when servicemen returned to their homes and began the search for new jobs with California and sunbelt towns of the Southwest once again being the target of many dreams. There was also the reconstitution and sometimes breakup of families that for understandable reasons had yielded under the pressures of prolonged separation and even coming of age separately during the war.[215] These circumstances often put people on the road in search of what they could not find at home, or in search of a real home. Another was simply the urge, by people who had suffered the restraints of Depression and war to celebrate, to let loose. As historian Elaine Tyler May writes, "Americans had postponed and pent up their desires to create something new and liberating, . . . People looked forward to spending their money when the war ended, in much the same way as they looked forward to delayed gratifications in other areas of life."[216] There was also a discovery, or rediscovery (as was the historic pattern), of the Southwest and its exotic charms, a perception that took forms ranging from gushing romanticism to raw exploitation. Whatever it was that beckoned, or whatever it was that pushed, more and more people were getting a car and traveling U.S. Highway 66, or, as it was now famously sung, "Route 66."

The postwar period saw Route 66 develop and change in powerful ways along its full course and along the roadside. The pattern of change often took the shape of "progress" because of the opportunities for economic growth it contained, or at least it did so in the initial perceptions. That growth potential, however, concealed other forms of change that for many on and along the highway produced fruits they neither anticipated nor relished.

The end of World War II clearly marked a new era in Route 66 and it likewise did for the service stations along its path. Within a couple of months of the end of the war the Cities Service official publication, *Service*, presented a guide for "service men everywhere" who wanted to go into business after leaving the armed services, suggesting that they consider opening their own gas station. In so doing the company presented a composite picture of that retail business.

In autumn of 1945, one third of all service stations produced less than $5,000 a year in gross sales; more than a quarter of all the service stations operating at the beginning of 1941 had closed by the end of 1943; it required between $1,000 and $2,500 capital to start a gas station business; after the shakeout of World War II, 95% of all service stations were leased from an oil company with only a few actually owned by the operator. But the article also offered specific guidance for the prospective service station entrepreneur:

> Let's assume you're satisfied with this, a small, compact station with two bays, some inside space for display, and a modest driveway area. Now where do you want it? That greatly affects the starting price and character of your business. A commercial location caters chiefly to transients and its income is mainly from gasoline, with little revenue from services. A residential location, however, allows a build-up of regular trade. A highway station must depend on trucks, transients, and tourists

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[214] John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), x.

[215] See especially the chapter, "Daddy's Coming Home" in William M. Tuttle, Jr., "Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), which documents the toll of the war on home life and the soaring divorce rate after the war.

[216] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 89.

> . . . From now on, it is probable that [the motorist] will patronize district and community shopping centers more than downtown and metropolitan areas. This should afford the station operator a chance to spread out rather than bunching up in the old four-on-a-corner pattern. [217]

This presented a difficult choice for many prospective operators—whether to locate so as to serve the highway traffic or the downtown traffic or the shopping centers. Fortunately for the people along Highway 66, it was possible to serve all three clienteles with one location. If the station was right on the main street, and if that main street happened to be right on the major highway, the future could be promising indeed.

In addition there were the existing stations, and they often expanded their operations. The service stations became busier as people like Ann and Leon Little in western Oklahoma, who had leased their station during the war, went back to operating it. During the 1930s the Littles had been open twenty-four hours a day and now they resumed that schedule. Others followed suit to serve not only the traveling public that sought to either maximize their daily mileage or to travel in the cool of the night, but also the expanding bus and truck lines. And they remained busy all day, partly a result of the shortage of new automobiles and the abundance of older automobiles that needed frequent repairs, at least into the 1950s.[218]

The stations increased in number and they changed in appearance. They took on a sleeker, shinier appearance, often with plenty of aluminum and glass, and porcelain enamel that had been used to some degree since the 1930s. The Texaco stations with their finned *porte cocheres* still can be found commonly as examples of the streamlining pervading the architecture of the service station.[219] As they moved into the 1950s, canopies, again returned to active use. They had once been an important element of the structure of the station and a testimony to the transition of motoring from a fair weather activity to year-round duty. Indeed, says, John Margolies, "... canopies reappeared with a vengeance. The box designs of the 1930s and 1940s had eliminated canopies. They were a distraction from the flowing lines and contrasting colors of the station designs. The new canopies became longer and longer, and sometimes there were two canopies. Some of them swept upward like tail fins on 1950s automobiles, and there were so-called butterfly canopies used as devices to display huge advertising signs mounted on top of them. By the 1960s, there were even freestanding canopies."[220] Within a decade there would be abundant signs of these elaborate, gravity-defying canopies, sometimes termed a "populuxe" style.

On a different level, the highway's gas stations were changing in their functionality. Dominated by large oil companies—Standard Oil, Shell, Mobil, Enco/Esso, and Atlantic/Richfield—the new stations of the 1950s were constructed in ways that stressed volume of sales as never before; they rested on huge storage tanks that increased their capacity for sales of larger quantities of gasoline. The companies themselves even made reciprocal agreements so that they could more efficiently (if less competitively) supply their stations by using each others' products. And the stations were again becoming specialized, which also meant that they were increasingly separate from the motels and restaurants which just a few years earlier had enabled them to present a variety of services to the traveling motorists in a single package.[221] The presence of the combined operations of service station, motel, and diner increasingly became a mark of age, not a key to success.

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[217] John S. Cordell, "In Reply to Yours –," *Service: A Publication of Cities Service Company*, October 1945, 2-4.

[218] Scott and Kelly, 157,

[219] Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance*, 86, 99.

[220] *Ibid.*, 90.

[221] *Ibid.*, 68; Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 79.

The motels similarly changed and so did the motel industry. The numbers of motels in the nation are subject to various estimates. In 1953, one discussion of the motel business in *The Saturday Evening Post* estimated that five years earlier there had been 18,000 motels in the U.S., and that number had increased in half a decade to 40,000.[222] As substantial as that growth would be, the estimate is probably not far off. Sculle and Jakle indicate that in 1953 the total was around 45,000, double what it had been in 1946.[223] The rate of growth, at any rate is undeniable, and that is reflected along Route 66. All along the highway new motels emerged to take advantage of the increasingly mobile public.

These motels, moreover, were becoming ever more modern—and expensive—in their construction. They remained, by and large, the same mom-and-pop operations that had always characterized the industry. One analysis indicated in 1948 that 98.2 per cent of the motels were such individually owned operations.[224] The same analysts, however, go on to note "But they came to provide the least number of units as well as the least desired form of lodging after 1945." According to historian Warren Belasco, by 1953, a pivotal year in retrospect, the trade journal *Hotel Management* estimated that, "although only 10 percent of the country's courts had twenty-five or more rooms, these leaders did 40 percent of the business, especially along the lucrative main routes."[225] Route 66 was certainly one of those lucrative routes.

What this indicated was a profound shift underway in the motel business. Up until then, motels beckoned not only to the tourists driving down the highway but also to the person who wanted to start a small business and who did not have much capital. That was the way that it had always been in the motel business, whether they were called camps or courts. In 1945 the Small Business Administration prepared a guide to the motel business, and the Veterans' Administration paid for its distribution to soldiers and sailors encouraging them to enter that business. In 1951 *Fortune Magazine*, as quoted by Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, observed that "There was a time when the sailor home from the sea went to chicken farming. Nowadays he buys a motel by the side of the road."[226]

Along Route 66, as in the rest of the nation, the motels were undergoing the same specialization as the rest of the economy—like the service stations and restaurants that used to be their neighbors and associates. Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, in their study, *The Motel in America*, identified some of the forces involved in this. They note that even though the Small Business Administration (SBA) "championed the mom-and-pop motel," and advocated "management procedures that effectively pointed away from small operators."[227] The industry was much more demanding than it had been when simply providing a safe and reasonably adequate room was sufficient. Travel associations were not only evaluating and approving motels along the major routes but were rating them as well.[228]

Motels were becoming sometimes plush, but at any rate they had more amenities. Telephones in individual rooms, for example, was not a requirement at the end of the war, but each year meant additional pressure to install them. To build a new motel was no longer the simple task it had once been; in 1953 one motel owner explained the motel business to an aspiring couple and started by telling them that "You'll need between fifty and a hundred thousand

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[222] Evan M. Wylie, "Troubles of a Motel Keeper," *Saturday Evening Post*, 226 (July 18, 1953), 69.

[223] Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 82.

[224] *Ibid.*, 79.

[225] Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 170.

[226] Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 40.

[227] *Ibid.*, 74.

[228] *Ibid.*, 136.

dollars."[229] The small businesses remained. The mom-and-pop motels lingered on, and they did so in large numbers. But they did so with often only marginal returns, with a declining share of the business, and without the funds essential for major investments to remodel or reconstruct.

Their replacements were emerging along Route 66. In 1949, perhaps ten, and at the most thirteen motels on Route 66, except for those in Chicago and Los Angeles, were members of the American Motel Association.[230] This trade association sought to promote its members through publishing a guide listing approved member motels, and providing the hallmark of professional association and identity. Being an individual mom-and-pop operation along the side of the road was no longer enough, and more associations and more motels, especially the newer ones that could afford the additional expenses and the trade association membership, attached their identities not to the community but to a nationally-run syndicate.

Rise of the Chains

The next step was the referral chain. A 1951 map of Best Western motels—a chain of independently owned motels founded in 1946 that referred customers to others in the chain—shows a clearly defined arc from Chicago to Los Angeles tracing the path of Route 66.[231] What was happening was that the "amateurs"—the moms and pops—were being separated from the "professionals"—the companies that could afford the new dispensation, and what was happening more was that the smaller businesses were being left behind in the wake of the new inns associated with either a chain or a referral group. And what was happening further was that the national chains were building properties that were identical to their other properties in other states and the tendency toward conformity and standardization and even uniformity replaced the highly individualistic businesses that once dotted the path of Route 66 through America.

The separation of the amateurs from the professionals, the separation of the small from the large, and the separation of the local from the national proceeded even faster and more relentlessly beginning in 1954. The federal income tax code enacted that year brought sweeping changes to investments in commercial construction, enabling investors to achieve significant tax benefits through accelerated depreciation of such properties. While this encouraged a wave of investment in new properties, it also foreshortened the life expectancy of such investments since there now became a distinct incentive to sell the property after eight or ten years, or even as soon as five years, when the tax benefits dwindled.[232] The motel industry had moved quickly and rapidly; it was no longer a world of small businesses, each operated by a couple to provide a service to the travelers who drove past. Instead, it limited financial investments to chain outfits (or their franchisees), who had the capital to make large investments.

Snakes on the Road: Luring the Tourist

Route 66 was changing in other ways too. The prewar parks that had provided a place for motorists to pull over and rest, maybe even to watch the water, were being replaced by more commercially-oriented attractions. And those early parks that operated as businesses found themselves outranked and out-glitzed by the newer recreation stops.

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[229] Wylie, "Troubles of a Motel Keeper," 70.

[230] Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, 133.

[231] *Ibid.*, 144, figure 5.17.

[232] Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America*, *Ibid.*, 45-47, 54. See also, Harold G. Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in the 1950's: An Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1963), 144-145 on the use of accelerated depreciation schedules in the 1954 Revenue Act to reduce corporate net income tax and increase the proportion paid by individuals. Vatter's analysis would suggest that the law thus further encouraged the corporatization of the motel industry.

All along Highway 66 such parks had been either a necessity or a luxury, depending on the expectations of the traveler. In Lyons, Illinois, Fairyland Park, located at the corner of Highways 66 and 42A, had years earlier created a set of attractions designed to appeal to children as well as adults. It featured the famous "Whoopee Coaster," an undulating plank roadway with dips and dives that tourists would drive in their own cars—an early form of roller coaster. Although the coaster could not withstand the weight of heavier cars, the park developed other amusements, including pony rides after the war and a merry-go-round.[233]

In Missouri, some of the caverns provided refuges in a park-like setting for travelers, some dating back to railroad days. In Oklahoma, there were places like Dixieland, a park just west of Sapulpa that opened in 1928, right after the designation of Route 66. The owners dammed up a creek and created a substantial lake which they stocked with fish and they also built a swimming pool and bathhouse, as well as some tourist cottages, a restaurant, a gas station and service garage, and picnic tables and barbecue pits. Dixieland even had a miniature golf course and a roller skating rink. The park catered to locals, but it also served the burgeoning traffic along Route 66, and, in fact, it fit well with the general expectations and pace of the traffic on the highway, bringing the distant traveler into the social and economic world of the community.[234] Where motels were designed to remind travelers of their homes, so too did the parks offer familiar forms of relaxation and recreation.

But these parks receded like the old motels and gas stations in the wake of postwar social change along Route 66 as commercial operations tried to attract travelers and to persuade them to open their pocketbooks. Susan Croce Kelly captures the new wave of tourist stops along the road: "Especially after World War II, Route 66 was lined with establishments that seemed to wave their arms, whistle, blow bubbles, sing, dance, flash lights, and make outrageous promises just to get drivers to slow down and pull off the highway."[235] The presence of such tourist attractions along the highway is legendary and their number appears to have been substantial, although precise data are not available.

The two compilations of accounts of such attractions on Route 66 by travel writer Thomas Arthur Repp offer a information concerning these elusive roadside stops.[236] There were trading posts and curio shops that sought to capitalize on the romantic appeal of Native Americans who sometimes became tragic features in a living diorama of conquest, sometimes caricatures of themselves to fulfill untutored expectations of outsiders, and sometimes entrepreneurs themselves. Mohawk Lodge, in Clinton, Oklahoma, had moved to the side of Highway 66 in 1939; previously it had operated in the small town of Colony, Oklahoma, with its origins as a trading post established by the Dutch Reformed Church to serve the Kiowa Nation on a nearby reservation. Even there, however, the name had been corrupted from its original Mohonk, after the Lake Mohonk, New York, conferences of the Friends of the Indians in the 1880s.[237]

Across New Mexico and Arizona, especially in the western part of New Mexico and into Arizona, tourist trading posts abounded. Often one could find concrete teepees where one might expect a hogan or pueblo, but the teepee was the billboard of the traders; inside one could find an assortment of curios that ranged from authentic jewelry and rugs and tools to rubber tomahawks and toy drums. These circumstances offered the dual situation where on the one hand Native American culture was being revived, and sometimes even revered and respected, but at the same time being tainted by

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[233] Thomas Arthur Repp, *Route 66: The Empires of Amusement* (Lynnwood, Washington: Mock Turtle Press, 1999), 5-9.

[234] James W. Hubbard, "Dixieland Was a Dream Realized," Sapulpa *Herald*, October 18, 1992.

[235] Kelly and Scott, *Route 66*, 170.

[236] Thomas Arthur Repp, *Route 66: The Empires of Amusement* (Lynnwood, Washington: Mock Turtle Press, 1999) and Thomas Arthur Repp, *Route 66: The Romance of the West* (Lynnwood, Washington: Mock Turtle Press, 2002).

[237] Barbara Palmer, "Clinton's Kicks," *Oklahoma Today* (July 1992), 42-43.

commercialization. As author Paul Horgan observed in the 1950s, when writing about the same process underway earlier under the auspices of the Fred Harvey Indian Detours,

> Not only the Indian past was revived; but the Indian present was given new energy. . . . it seemed like a sensitive and generous thing to do—to help the Indian in his process of inevitable acculturation by giving him the means of exhibiting and selling his old skills which had fallen into decline. It was true that things once made wholly for use were now made for sale; and it followed that, in a shift of purpose in their making, something was lost of spirit and quality in the piece of pottery, the silver jewel,
> the woven blanket, the carved fetish, the worked buckskin which resulted. But the society of which the Indian must one day, however far in the future, became a full member was essentially a commercial society. Was he to be denied his chance along with the rest to make money out of his knacks? [238]

Sometimes these attractions started as small roadside adventures, even as hobbies. Ed Galloway, in 1948, had completed the first phase of construction of his Totem Pole Park near Foyil, Oklahoma, and began to draw tourists several miles away from Route 66 to see his ninety-foot tall concrete totem pole with more than two hundred images of Native Americans painted on it, as well as his collection of three hundred fiddles and nearly a hundred inlaid wood pictures and tables.

Natural attractions abounded. With Highway 66 driving through national monuments and national parks like the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest, and near the Grand Canyon, the competition was stiff but the target market interested in the wonders of the natural world was already on the road passing by. That was evident from the very beginning. Hal Rothman reports that immediately after World War II, in the fall of 1945, the Grand Canyon's visitations "reached new highs each month . . . as discharged military personnel and departing war-industry workers returned to the places they left when the war began."[239] Moreover, there were the privately-managed natural attractions that hoped to draw upon this stream of traffic. There was, for example, Meteor Crater in Arizona, where its Depression-era owners had failed to make a go of it selling lectures and books and operating an observatory. After the war, however, a new owner of the American Meteorite Museum, as it was newly named, collected more than thirty-three thousand admission fees.[240]

Toward the other end of Highway 66, the owners of Meramec Caverns, another natural wonder, harbored even larger aspirations of huge crowds and equally large profits. This network of caves opened in 1936 as a commercial venture, and by the end of the 1930s had caught on as a tourist attraction. The Missouri WPA guide described it in glowing terms, and the marketing of it quickly billed it as more than a cave; it was a special cave, in size, in historic associations, in lighting, in all human dimensions including sensory grandeur:

> Left from Stanton on a marked graveled road (slippery when wet) that winds downward onto the narrow floor of the Meramec River gorge to MERAMEC CAVERN (open day and night; adm. 40¢ and 25¢; guides), 3.8 m. The electrically lighted first room of the cavern contains parking space for 300 automobiles, and a large dance floor. Reversing the usual direction of caves, this one tunnels upward through the river bluff to a height of 240 feet. It is naturally divided into four floors, through which graveled walks have been laid. The interior formations, often grotesquely shaped,

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[238] Paul Horgan, *The Centuries of Santa Fe* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1956), 319.

[239] Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 202.

[240] Repp, *Route 66: The Romance of the West*, 155.

> have been given names such as the Natural Stage, 68 feet in height and of 5 different colors; the Wine Table, in what is called the Wine Room, and the Echo Room, in which the sound of one's voice rebounds from formation to formation for several seconds. At the entrance of the cavern is La Jolla Springs, with a flow of 4,700,000 gallons daily. The entrance to the cavern is said to have been discovered by Spaniards about 1760. It was not open to the public, however, until explored by professionals in 1936.[241]

Beginning in the 1930s, the highway was lined with barns painted to advertise the Meramec Caverns, and those signs became a signature element of the highway.

After the war, Meramec Caverns was more aggressively marketed. The cave included, in the post-atomic bomb days, "The World's First Atomic Refuge" and constituted a virtual Noah's Ark for survival. Repp writes that customers "were given tiny cards with their admission tickets—cards that insured them they had room reserved inside the fallout shelter in the event the Big One dropped."[242] The point was not that people in the event of nuclear holocaust would be able to actually travel across the country to claim their designated space inside the cavern but that the attraction had one more attribute to draw people into its depths.

A prototype of many of the other tourist attractions along Highway 66, Meramec Caverns offered up a litany of delights and allures. During World War II the owner of the caverns, Lester Dill, discovered artifacts that he claimed indicated that Jesse James had sought refuge there, and in 1949 he produced a man who claimed to actually be Jesse James.[243] The appeal of the exotic and the different, of unfamiliar parts of the country and distinctive cultures was being replaced by showmanship.

Perhaps nowhere was the tourist market more intense and more developed than in the Southwest. Especially in New Mexico and Arizona, but also in Texas and Oklahoma, roadside attractions came to be not just incidental to travel but integral to the travel experience, to the point that for perhaps a generation of young people after World War II, those attractions came to be the defining elements of Route 66. In the eastern states of Illinois and Missouri, the tourist attractions tended to be places that also catered to the locals, but in the West they were designed and pitched to pull the traveler from far away off the road and into their doors.

These businesses, Repp notes, were different from the other roadside businesses which simply provided necessary services—gas, food, lodging—since they had to devise ways to attract customers unfamiliar with what they offered. "By their very nature," he observes, "

> They were capsules of ingenuity that allowed individual talents to shine. Anyone could run a cafe, a service station or a motel. But it took inspiration to bury stunt men alive, run gas lines to perpetually-burning covered wagons or fix flea markets with shacks that looked like Howard Johnson's restaurants. Necessity stopped motorists for food, fuel, and sleep. The operators of roadside entertainments lived by brains alone.[244]

There were the zoos. A frequent feature of roadside attractions, entrepreneurs would often gather an assortment of exotic

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[241] *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State*, compiled by the workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Missouri (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941).

[242] Thomas Arthur Repp, *Route 66: The Empires of Amusement* , 58.

[243] *Ibid.,* 58-59.

[244] Repp, *Route 66: The Empires of Amusement*, 1.

animals, sometimes indigenous to the location like bison and sometimes simply domestic animals, although on occasion the zoos would contain species of all kinds in the expectation that travelers might be interested in creatures they had never seen before, at least not in nearby-living proximity.

The more dangerous the creature, the greater the attraction, at least in theory; so an entire sub-grouping of attractions featured snakes and snake-handlers. As Repp notes, "Snake pits, Dens of Death, and their larger cousins, Reptile Gardens, were perennial attractions along U.S. Highway 66. They made their strong debut in western Oklahoma, grew thick in the Texas Panhandle and remained common sights through New Mexico and Arizona."[245] Rattlesnakes were a common star of such businesses, although cobras and pythons were especially noted and Atkinson's Cobra Gardens west of Grants, New Mexico, according to Repp, "became the premiere snake house on all of Route 66." With hundreds of poisonous snakes (not just king cobras, although they were a big draw), Atkinson's Cobra Gardens pulled in a steady flow of customers to a shopping strip size parking lot and provided lectures, tours, and demonstrations to the awed crowds. Many a lesser store generated smaller audiences, but the reptile gardens and snake pits became a hallmark of Route 66.

Many of these establishments were legitimate businesses, some of longstanding and honorable reputation in the communities where they lived, and some, even among those who pitched the lure of the exotic and the dangerous, were but small mom-and-pop businesses with an unusual commodity for sale as entertainment. There were, however, the others. In 1939 Graham Greene, the writer whose works were not only literary but carried the reader to interesting places, appears to have coined the term "tourist trap" as a label for those roadside establishments that operated less than savory businesses (often in disguise) and made their money not as mainstream retailers or entertainers but as purveyors of various fraudulent schemes. The snakes, on occasion, had legs, and even owned businesses.

These unscrupulous businesses kept Lyman Riley busy. Riley, a promoter of Meramec Caverns, became president of the Missouri section of the U.S. Highway 66 Association after World War II, and in that capacity he called on to keep the businesses "safe" in neighboring Oklahoma. When Susan Croce Kelly and Quinta Scott interviewed him, Riley explained that "The worst things along the highway was these zoos all through Oklahoma with signs advertising pythons. They have snakes and reptile gardens and free admission—anything to get you to stop—and then they'd get you in a bunco game. One whole year all I did was check them out."[246] The way the system worked is captured in a memoir by writer Calvin Trillin, regarding his family's summer vacations from their home in Kansas City where his father and mother were grocers. On one such trip along Highway 66, Trillin was disappointed that his father, after stopping at a zoo and after trying his hand at a shifty dice game offered by the owners, had declined to play once the stakes got serious. A grocer who tallied up the total sale on the paper bags, his father was quick in his arithmetic and perceptive in his understanding of the way the game was played. As Trillin observed, much to the shock of the young boy, his father "had known that the preliminary wins were a come-on because, unlike about everyone else who might stop at the roadside zoo, he could actually add up the dice faster than the man could scoop them back into the cup."[247] Such were the snake pits along the road.

Yet, tourism was changing, and changing dramatically, with the rise of what historian Hal Rothman has called entertainment tourism.[248] Against the backdrop of fundamental shifts in society that included the rapid growth of television, the rise of suburbia, and increases in consumer spending, the market for entertainment also altered. The major assault came with the development of theme parks in California in the mid-1950s. Much can be made of the artificial

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[245] Repp, *Route 66: The Romance of the West,* 33.

[246] Kelly and Scott, *Route 66*, 168.

[247] Calvin Trillin, *Messages from My Father* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 61, 63-64.

[248] Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 24-25, 288-289.

environments of entertainment emporiums like Disneyland, and Knott's Berry Farm, self-consciously promoting mythical history, exotic locales, and futuristic experiences, but they also represented the emergent wave of high-capital amusement parks clustered in Southern California in the 1950s.

Where the snake pits and roadside tourist attractions along Route 66 had counted success by their ability to lure tourists off the highways and out of their cars, these new tourist meccas used national advertising and sought to lure Americans out of their homes in every part of the country. With airline travel not yet a mode of tourism, when people went to Southern California they tended to travel by automobile. By this point, by comparison with the heavily-capitalized theme parks at the end of the road, the small establishments on the way that were reflections of their owners personalities seemed either quaint or amateurish. The prospect of competing with Walt Disney for the tourist dollar was not a happy thought.

Those who entered that competition along Highway 66 were not the traditional mom-and-pop businesses, but other capital-intensive projects seeking to build not a building but an entertainment city that imitated the Southern California parks. In 1958, Jim Burge, the developer of Frontier City Amusement Park on the outskirts of Oklahoma City, opened his theme park with two considerations in the location of his new venture. It had to be on land that was included in the 1889 land run, and it had to be just off the westbound lane of Route 66.[249] As Thomas Arthur Repp quotes Burge saying, "Families on the way to California will stop for every snake pit and rock pile along the way . . . when they start back, they've seen Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. They've spent all their money. They're three days late getting back to Ohio, and they wouldn't stop for the Last Supper with the original cast."[250] The westbound focus appears to have derived from an association with frontier imagery and emigration but also was based on the expectation that tourists would have more money heading west than upon returning east. It was a major theme park, with a sketchy claim to historic Oklahoma that brought to the middle of Highway 66 the attractions of the end of the road in Los Angeles and Chicago. According to Repp, "By 1960, Frontier City was billed as the most photographed spot in America."

During the 1950s the change was clear. The old businesses, the old parks, the mom-and-pop roadside stands and diners were receding into the background and the businesses that now served up the meals and hosted the weary traveler and entertained the shining faces of awe-struck youngsters were yielding to corporate chains and competing with televised entertainment. The older cohort of roadside businesses had been passed by, not only by the motorists whizzing past on Highway 66, but by a new generation of business that appealed to vastly different needs and held vastly different orientations. Where the early visionaries of highway travel saw the road as bringing them customers for their businesses, markets for the goods they grew and made, and a larger social outlet for their various energies, the modern network of commerce was more profoundly bringing new institutions and priorities and products to them, and integrating the local into the national. The orbit had changed as locals were now operating within the national commercial culture instead of bringing the nation's travelers into theirs.

A Different Experience

Traveling Route 66 conjures pleasant memories and happy nostalgia for many people as they reflect on the adventures of journeying down the road, referring sometimes to the postwar period as "golden years." And the diffusion of the automobile after the 1920s, and especially after World War II imbues the whole experience with a character of an open road and open community, dreams uniformly attained regardless of social standing.

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[249] Interview with Rodger Harris, oral historian, Oklahoma Historical Society, May 23, 2002. Harris gained this information in a separate interview with the developer.

[250] Repp, *Route 66: The Empires of Amusement*, 141.

Yet there is more to the Route 66 legacy than that; there were those whose experience of a road trip was laden with hardships that went beyond traveling the desert and negotiating heavy traffic. There were, in the first place, those who already lived in the communities that the tourists passed through. Their experience, especially if they were a different color than the tourists, was not always salutary.

Consider Rudolfo Anaya, author of the immensely popular and poignant, *Bless Me Ultima*, and who grew up along Highway 66 in Santa Rosa, New Mexico. Anaya tells of discovering tourists, tourists he says who generally fit into a pattern dominant in that area for several centuries since Spanish tourists came—and stayed, and changed the people they found.

> The first tourists I encountered were in Santa Rosa, New Mexico, my home town. On highway 66, right after World War II. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. People were moving west, tourists in search of California. I remember one particular afternoon at a gas station where we went to fill our bike tires after goathead punctures. A car stopped. Dad, mom, son, and daughter. Blonde, blue-eyed gringos from the east. They usually didn't pay attention to the brown Mexicanitos gathered at the gas station. [251]

In this instance the youthful Anaya was noticed by the tourists and in their brief conversation he discovered that they were from a different world. In that experience, there was a metaphor for many of the communities and peoples alongside Route 66 as they welcomed or discovered or fled from the tourists who descended upon them.

But what of the tourists themselves? As author Marguerite Shaffer notes of the early years of automobile travel in America, "the America of automobile camps, tourist attractions, and the open road comprised a relatively homogeneous community of native-born, upper- and middle-class, urban, white Americans."[252] How much that had changed by, say, 1950, is difficult to say, although it is clear that more Americans were on the road and that this doubtless included a greater diversity of travelers.

Two caveats, however, must be applied. One is that there were abundant circumstances at mid-century that militated against extended travel by people who were not white. The combined weight of class and color meant vastly different circumstances of daily life for African Americans, whether that was experienced in education, in job opportunities, in voting, in residential opportunities, in medical care, and in travel.

Virtually every aspect of life was literally separate, yet blacks took to the highway out of necessity, as laborers, truckers, salesmen, actors and musicians; as local, daily commuters; as travelers, as vacationing families. But to speak of a carefree family vacation is almost to trivialize the conditions of pervasive racial injustice and oppression during the Jim Crow era.[253]

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[251] Rudolfo Anaya, "Why I Love Tourists: Confessions of a Dharma Bum," in David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 65.

[252] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 233.

[253] The classic statement of that inequality at the end of World War II, supported by massive documentation and confirmed by countless other studies, begins with the two volume study by Gunnar Myrdal with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, *An American Dilemma*: Vol. 1, *The Negro in a White Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1944) and Vol. 2, *The Negro Social Structure* (Nation (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1944).

Which leads to the second caveat: when African Americans did take to the road, their experience was profoundly different from that of the white travelers on the same highway. While the automobile promised escape, it instead often resulted in a new immobility for blacks, as roadside services and overnight accommodations were concentrated in cities with large African American population, resulting in a predominant "interurban" travel pattern, much like the limited freedom of train travel of an earlier era.[254]

Irv Logan, Jr., of Springfield, Missouri related it this way: "There were things money couldn't buy on Route 66. Between Chicago and Los Angeles you couldn't rent a room if you were tired after a long drive. You couldn't sit down in a restaurant or diner or buy a meal no matter how much money you had. You couldn't find a place to answer the call of nature even with a pocketful of money...if you were a person of color traveling on Route 66 in the 1940s and '50s."[255]

By virtue of the selective nature of archival sources and other historical documents, the record of the experiences of people who do not generally benefit from the established organization of society is not only incomplete but exceedingly fragmentary and can only be suggested by scattered references. A pattern, however, does emerge.

Writer Christopher Hitchens, who began his trip west on the remnants of Route 66 in 2002, quickly encountered a man who had grown up in Chicago's black south side and recalled for Hitchens "the old days of '66' as it ran through his neighborhood, things I could never have learned from driving through it. People knew which stretches they weren't allowed to use along Cicero and Cermak and McCormick, but on July 4 they liked to block a section of Ogden Avenue for drag racing."[256] Assuming they got on the road and headed west, one of the pervasive problems they had to confront was the simple matter of food and lodging.

When Irv Logan, as a young man, saw his grandparents prepare large quantities of food to take, he knew they were going to travel to St. Louis by way of Route 66. He would ask, "Why do we need to take so much water? Why do we have to take toilet paper? What is the empty jar for?"[257]

It was a different kind of travel than many white travelers experienced. Locating restaurants and lodging could prove a daunting task, and African American travelers customarily had to find a segregated community where those services would be available to them, or at least a motel or restaurant operated by other African Americans.

Several black entrepreneurs developed commercial travel guides to assist African American motorists in their travel arrangements. Victor H. Green, a New York City-based travel agent, printed the first of these guides in 1936. His popular, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, aimed, as stated in the 1949 edition, "to give the Negro traveler information that will keep him from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trip make his trips more enjoyable."[258] The guides, published until 1964, listed hotels, rooming houses (private homes with rental rooms), restaurants, beauty parlors, barbers and other services that were owned by blacks or by "whites which cater to the Negro trade."[259] Other travel guides, including *The Bronze American* and the *Travelguide*, served similar purposes.

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[254] Lyell Henry, "Accommodations 'for Colored,'" *Society for Commercial Archeology* 23 (Fall 2005), 7.

[255] Irv Logan, Jr., ". . . Money Couldn't Buy," in C. H. Skip Curtis, ed., *Birthplace of Route 66: Springfield, Mo.* (Springfield, Missouri: Curtis Enterprises, 2001), 31.

[256] Christopher Hitchens, "The Ballad of Route 66," *Vanity Fair*, November 2002, 176.

[257] Logan, ". . . Money Couldn't Buy," 31.

[258] Victor H. Green and Co., Publishers, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (New York: Victor H. Green and Co., Publishers, 1949), 1.

[259] *Ibid.*

The 1949 edition of the *Green Book* gives a glimpse into the restricted travel of blacks on U.S. 66 during the period. While larger cities with established African American populations, such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Tulsa, St. Louis, and Oklahoma City, had numerous businesses catering to blacks, smaller cities and towns along Highway 66 had few, if any services. As a point of comparison, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which included dozens of tourist services for whites at the time, the *Green Book* listed only one hotel, two tourist homes and two restaurants friendly to blacks.[260] And for Arizona, the guide listed no black-related services along Highway 66, reaffirming the prevalent "interurban" quality of travel for blacks during the period.

While cross-country travel could be fraught with anxiety of encountering discriminatory businesses, the increased travel of African Americans led to highway accommodations opened and operated by blacks. This increased African American tourist trade resulted in 1952 in the creation of the Nationwide Hotel Association, representing black-owned tourist homes, hotels and motels.[261] In Springfield, Missouri, several tourist courts emerged to serve the African American traveler, including one started by Irv Logan's grandmother, Alberta Ellis: Alberta's Hotel. That hotel no longer exists but one cabin of another of these "colored" hotels, the Wishing Well Motel, remains. Farther west, in the high plains of western Oklahoma, the message was still clear that black people were not welcome in white-only motels. The telephone book and city directory might even contain a listing to direct those people to different establishments. If it did not, word of mouth would have to suffice.

There even appears to have been a modest market for African Americans to provide services to others. In many cities with significant black populations, large car dealerships granted dealership franchises to African Americans.[262] Equally, in cities and towns with large black populations, African Americans frequently owned and operated service stations and repair shops. Near Luther, Oklahoma, northwest of Oklahoma City, the Threatt service station on U.S. 66 was operated by an African American family. Evidently, the service station was able to cater to whites and blacks both, given the association with the station with service industry work.[263]

The record of separate travel conditions and circumstances—and treatment—for African Americans along Route 66 is incomplete and requires additional research, but promises to bear fruit. In the meanwhile, the remains of an ironic picture haunt those interested in this highway: Nat "King" Cole made a song popular about this highway, urging people to get their kicks on Route 66, but when Cole traveled Highway 66 and spent the night in Springfield, Missouri, he stayed at Alberta's Hotel.[264]

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[260] *Ibid.,* 55.

[261] Henry, "Accommodations 'For Colored,'" 9. While not researched for this study, Nationwide Hotel Association literature could potentially provide a source to better understand how black-owned lodgings were distributed along U.S. 66.

[262] John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 93

[263] Maryjo Meacham, et al., *Threatt Filling Station*, (National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1992). City directory research in cities with large populations of African Americans along U.S. 66, such as Chicago and St. Louis, could shed light on how blacks benefited from local and cross-country on the highway.

[264] Logan, ". . . Money Couldn't Buy," 32.

ROUTE 66, A HIGHWAY TRANSFORMED, 1956-1985

At the same time that Highway 66 was being filled with motorists after World War II, and was seemingly successful beyond the wildest dreams of its original promoters, that success also undermined the future existence of the road. Soon the nation found itself struggling to control the forces that Route 66 and other long-distance highways had unleashed. The enormous increase in traffic brought additional pressure to widen and divide the road and to straighten it and eliminate the many stops in the nation's small towns. The result was sometimes the improvement of the highway, but soon that turned into the replacement of the highway with an entirely new system of roadways crossing the nation.

Cracks in the Pavement

Perhaps the most obvious problem facing Highway 66 after World War II was that it was, as many highways, carrying far more traffic than it was designed for. The highway was crowded. World War II had left roads in bad shape, sometimes because of the heavy military vehicles that used the highway. The surge of highway construction in the 1930s had put in place a ribbon of pavement from Chicago to Los Angeles, but after ten or fifteen years that road was starting to wear thin; because necessary repair and maintenance had been postponed, the roadways needed to be rebuilt and because of the surge in traffic the demands on the roadway skyrocketed.

Freight transportation was heavier, both in tonnage per truck and in the number of trucks, as pent up consumer appetites were unleashed and wartime production controls faded. Tourist traffic exceeded prewar levels with cars that were more numerous and also heavier, wider, and faster. And this trend continued to grow. By 1951 one magazine reported that "if all the new automobiles built since the end of the war were lined up end to end on all the highways built since the end of the war, there wouldn't be enough room to accommodate them."[265]

In addition to a deteriorating roadway, there were the related needs, as shoulders and bridges were too narrow and sight distances were too short. One undeniable consequence of this, although hard data are elusive, was the increasing challenge to highway safety. The first widely publicized accident along Route 66 probably came when a motorist hit one of the runners in the Bunion Derby—and then sped away. In the following decades, as traffic mounted on the road, so did accidents. The paving of the highway and the straightening of the route enabled traffic to move faster, but as speed increased both the likelihood and severity of collisions climbed on the predominantly two-lane highway.

Statistics documenting what was sometimes termed "Bloody 66" are seldom separated from the state and national traffic accident/fatality rates, but the plethora of "Deadman Curves," the flourishing wrecker industry along the road, and the anecdotal evidence of mishaps and catastrophes can be found in every community along the road. Increasingly, after World War II, those accidents seemed to be associated with not just the speed and narrowness of the road, but with the volume of vehicles of all sizes using it, both as cause and consequence.

By the 1950s the stories usually mixed highway tragedy and highway crowding. In 1952 when a truck hit the Highway 66 bridge near Laguna, New Mexico, killing the driver and destroying the bridge, traffic on the highway was delayed twelve hours and had to be rerouted to be able to cross the arroyo the bridge had traversed.[266] In Arizona, James Cook recalled of the early 1950s, that as youths "With morbid fascination, we inspected mangled wrecks towed in from

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[265] "Highways Run Losing Race With Traffic," *Business Week*, December 8, 1951, 109. See also, "More Traffic than Ever Now on the Road," *The American City*, January 1950, 121; and "Billions for Roads—but Not Enough," *Business Week*, December 5, 1953, 116-117.

[266] Jill Schneider, *Route 66 Across New Mexico: A Wanderer's Guide* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 41.

'bloody 66.' Someone used to put a white cross at the scene of each traffic fatality; the shoulders of some dangerous intersections, like Cottonwood Wash east of Winslow, looked like veterans' cemeteries."[267] And the situation was only getting worse.

At the beginning of the 1950s, in a lobbying campaign the auto-related businesses pressed for greater governmental expenditures on roadways, even while those expenditures essentially doubled in 1951 from their pre-war level. Goodyear, Firestone, Mack Trucks, General Motors, and the American Trucking Association launched a coordinated effort to alter the tax structure so that more revenues would go toward highway construction and maintenance.[268] The U.S. Highway 66 Association participated in this call for improved roads, hoping that Route 66 could be turned into a four-lane highway that could carry even more traffic, and in this goal the organization may have been successful—if lamentably so—or it may have just converged with other pressures for highway improvement.

What they had in mind, of course, was an enhancement of the road that was already there, the highway that connected the small towns and big cities, the East and the West, that brought business through the main street of the myriad villages and cities that depended on the traffic that 66 carried, and that would provide an opportunity for new businesses to grow alongside them. What they got, was something entirely different. Occasionally it seemed to work out exactly the way the Route 66 promoters hoped. In 1950 *The American City* reported that "the most heavily traveled roadway in the State of Oklahoma was widened and received a new surface last summer as part of a $3,000,000 program of city street improvements in Tulsa. This roadway is Sapulpa Road, which carries the traffic of U.S. 66 and U.S. 75 and is the main highway between Tulsa and Oklahoma City."[269] That wonderful, new, improved stretch, however, was not even three miles long. This solved little. More indicative were the alterations elsewhere in the nation along Highway 66.

Two patterns emerge from the construction efforts along Highway 66 in the postwar years. One is that the road was widened, often making it into four lanes; the other is that the highway alignment was often moved. In Illinois the highway was made four lanes and moved in the sections between Braidwood and Gardner and between Staunton and Troy. Not just businesses but towns were bypassed by the changes. This was the same all along the highway. In Arizona, a new alignment in 1952 replaced the winding road that went over Sitgreaves Pass and through Oatman on the way to Topock.

There was an even more fundamental change at the same time. Partly philosophic, partly a result of engineering principle, partly the trend away from the mom-and-pop businesses that had motivated earlier road promotions, and partly a convergence of fundamental trends toward modernization in the nation, the very conception of highway and road travel had shifted. In 1953, *Nation's Business* announced the revision:

> Along with many other ideas in this changing world, our concept of overland transportation has changed in the past generation. The purpose of a major thoroughfare today is not what it was just a few decades ago. Then the road or street was expected to serve everybody who lived along it. Everybody, in short, was to have direct access to it—that was the whole idea of the road.
>
> Today, however, the primary purpose of a major thoroughfare is to move groups of people and goods from area to area. Plenty of roads and streets—too many, as a matter of fact—serve the individual home or business. What is lacking is the road or street which will move groups of

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[267] Michael Karl Witzel, *Route 66 Remembered* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International, 1996), 165.

[268] "Highways Run Losing Race With Traffic," *Business Week*, December 8, 1951, 109.

[269] William B. Wooten, "Paving Oklahoma's Busiest Street," *The American City*, 65 (June 1950), 110.

individuals across country or across town at a reasonable speed with reasonable safety.[270]

The fundamental requirement of the highways, the writer explained, was captured in the phrase "limited access," the ability to restrict entrances and exits of a highway, to limit interchanges, and to eliminate roadside businesses. This, he admitted, was a concept "difficult to get over," and his fellow engineers lamented that "The idea of limited access is not easy to sell the people."

The beauty of the system, its detractors notwithstanding, was that the highway engineer could make it right: "instead of a long open stretch along the highway to serve commercial establishments, for instance, he'd block it all off except one entrance and exit."[271] In fact, this new system of limited access highways was becoming more popular, whether the people living and working along the highway approved or not. This meant that not only was the alignment of the highway changing, but some of the institutions associated with it—often dependent upon it—were being bypassed.

The changes came in different forms as states proceeded to build new roadways. These were common enough in the states at the ends of Highway 66; Illinois and California had already been building new roads with exactly such features; so this was nothing new. The pervasiveness of the new system rather became evident in, of all places, Oklahoma in what amounted to a case study of the replacement of U.S 66. In that state the pressure for widening and straightening Highway 66 into a four-lane road wound up focusing not on improving it but replacing it, and replacing it with a toll road.

In 1949 the Oklahoma legislature debated the issue and representatives from the towns and counties along Highway 66 led the opposition to a new turnpike that would bypass the communities between Tulsa and Oklahoma City. They predicted "dire consequences" for their communities if the main traffic corridor shifted away from their main streets. Boyd Cowden, a powerful state representative from Chandler, asked why this new road was necessary and indicated the nature of the division in the state: "Why? Just because a few white-collared boys in Oklahoma City and Tulsa are just hell-bent upon getting somewhere. It will be right of way 300 yards wide with stud-horse high fence on each side of it."[272] Cowden, in his homespun rhetoric neatly captured not only the consequence of the new road, but also reflected the fundamental social division it created. But the governor prevailed over what was widely viewed as a "reluctant" legislature, and construction began on the Turner Turnpike.

Promises had been made to communities like Sapulpa, southwest of Tulsa, that the new road would, in fact, follow the route planned for a new, improved U.S. 66. When the engineers straightened out that route and moved it farther from town, another hot protest ensued, and finally the Turnpike Authority "chose a new straight-line route that skirts the northern edge of Sapulpa. The authority finally took this action after bond buyers warned no more money would be available unless the authority built the highway in the most economical manner possible."[273] The turnpike was finished and opened for business in 1953 with the promise that it would become free once the bonds were paid off in forty years. Oklahoma journalist Kent Ruth announced the opening of the Turner Turnpike in the *New York Times,* stressing the advantages of the new turnpike but also hinting at some of the darker meanings the new road held:

> . . . Near-by U.S. 66, which has always carried most of the year-round traffic from the North and East to the Southwest, is narrow and over-crowded. Offering driving ease, safety and economy at

[270] Booton Herndon, "The Roadside Is Part of the Road," *Nation's Business*, 41 (October 1953), 58.

[271] *Ibid.*, 60.

[272] Ray Parr, "After Six Years and $38 Million, Turner Turnpike is Nearing Completion," *Daily Oklahoman*, March 1, 1953.

[273] *Ibid.*

> a moderate cost, the Turner Turnpike is expected to siphon off a sizeable chunk of this cross-country highway load. . . . At the maximum 70-mile-an hour speed [the driver] saves close to two hours in actual driving time between the oil capital of the world and the Oklahoma state capital . . . . Should an Easterner find the Phillips 66 service shield unfamiliar, he will at least recognize the ubiquitous Howard Johnson Company, to whom the Oklahoma-born Phillips Petroleum Company has sublet the food concessions . . . . By-passing scores of curves on U.S. 66 of from 40 to 90 degrees and several miles of 4 to 7 per cent grades, and eliminating stop-and-go driving in four towns, the through traveler can easily save the other 70 cents [the toll].[274]

And the travel industry responded in kind. In a 1953 Rand McNally vacation guide, a writer cheered the new turnpike, stating "If you have ever taken the old road [U.S. 66], you will appreciate the contrast."[275]

The stop-and-go driving that small retailers, the garages and the hamburger stands and the mom-and-pop motels, had depended on was being eliminated. The chain restaurants reflected the integration of this route not just into the emerging national highway system but more deeply into the national commercial structure.

The New System Arrives

This toll road and other divided highways whether toll or free anticipated the nation's new highway system. The genesis of what became the Interstate Highway System can be traced as far back as highways themselves, but the specific point of departure that led to the development of that highway network probably emerged during World War II. With the military requirements of transportation very much in mind, Congress enacted the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 which approved, but did not create, a "National System of Interstate Highways," and that system became a referent point in subsequent discussions of how to improve the highways. Roads were first contracted under this system in 1952, but the conception remained inchoate and lacked specific parameters of philosophy and alignment. Dwight Eisenhower, who, as a lieutenant colonel had commanded an expedition along the Lincoln Highway after World War I, was now president and pushed hard for the new road system. He later reflected on his motivations, connecting his convoy on the Lincoln Highway expedition and his World War II experience:

> A third of a century later, after seeing the autobahns of modern Germany and knowing the asset those highways were to the Germans, I decided, as President, to put an emphasis on this kind of road building. When we finally secured the necessary congressional approval, we started the 41,000 miles of super highways that are already proving their worth. This was one of the things that I felt deeply about, and I made a personal and absolute decision to see that the nation would benefit by it. The old convoy had started me thinking about good, two-lane highways, but Germany had made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons across the land.[276]

It was only in 1956 after further study, more reports, significant debate, and wrestling with financing formulas, that Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act and Highway Revenue Act of 1956. Given the military importance of an efficient highway system, the idea of an improved highway system was widely endorsed, and some kind of change was almost universally believed to be necessary. But because its advocates held wildly conflicting views of what it would look like, not to mention the opposition of the railroads, legislation enacted in 1954 had satisfied virtually no one; the final 1956

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[274] Kent Ruth, "Oklahoma Opens a Turnpike," New York *Times*, May 24, 1953.

[275] Rand McNally & Company, *Your Rand McNally Vacation Guide* (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1953), 28.

[276] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (New York: Avon Books, 1967), 166.

measure gained passage in Congress only because it granted each of the competing interests a significant measure of what they had sought.[277]

The new system was widely hailed by highway engineers, by the automobile, trucking, and construction industries whose interests would be directly served by the legislation, by the labor unions whose members would benefit from the construction projects, and by the other businesses that saw a new, more efficient system of transportation in the offing. As the bill went toward President Eisenhower's desk for his signature, it was even touted as "The biggest public works program in history," an implicit comparison to the massive work-relief programs of the 1930s.[278] Eisenhower himself considered the new program,

> The most gigantic federal undertaking in road-building in the century and a half since the federal government got into this field by improving the National Pike between Cumberland, Maryland, and Wheeling, West Virginia—it was the biggest peacetime construction project of any description ever undertaken by the United States or any other country.[279]

The innovation was palpable and the potential huge. It was claimed to "make the federal government for the first time the biggest single factor in road building"; it would be complete by 1969 by which time a 40,000- mile superhighway interstate network would be in place; it would include a trust fund paid into by use, excise, and gasoline taxes, it would shift the 60/40 federal/state financial burden to 90/10. The only thing missing, it seemed, was the necessary engineering work: "Plans for spending these highway billions will get underway immediately."[280] That detail notwithstanding, the government's and the nation's business outlook for the new road system remained bright and rosy. *Nation's Business* offered a catalog of the advantages of the new interstate network:

- "The long distance motorist will find that he can bypass or traverse at 40 to 50 miles an hour cities he once crept through at an exasperating stop and start ten to 20 miles an hour."
- The system of controlled access will make the highways both safer and faster.
- "Owners or tenants of property bordering the new highways will be barred from direct access. Restaurants, gas stations, motels or other services will be barred from the right of way and will be available only on so-called service or feeder roads."
- "Some [businessmen] can expect to benefit from swifter and cheaper transportation of raw and finished materials. Some will even relocate their factories or warehouses near one of the new roads."
- "Many industries—auto, truck and bus manufacturers, gasoline companies, tire makers, to name a few—are expected to feel a profitable backwash from the increased travel the interstate system will cause."
- "One by-product of the new interstate system is likely to be a boom in land values near the new highways."

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[277] On the broad motivations for enacting the legislation, see especially Art Gómez, *Quest for the Golden Circle: The Four Corners and the Metropolitan West, 1945-1970* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), chapter IV, but especially 110-111, and Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1991), 553. On the more narrowly defined politics of the legislation, see Mark Rose, *Interstate Express Highway Politics 1941-1956* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), 83-94. "The key to success," according to Rose (p89), "was providing something for everyone without imposing high taxes on truckers."

[278] "Biggest Public Works in History: Now—A Guaranteed Zoom in Road Building," *Business Week*, June 2, 1956, 31.

[279] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change: 1953-1956* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), 548.

[280] "Biggest Public Works in History: Now—A Guaranteed Zoom in Road Building," 31.

- "The highway program will bring boom times to road-building contractors."
- "Trucking is expected to grow faster as the new interstate system emerges."
- The new weight and size restrictions on the trucks using the network "do not apply in states which already have in effect more lenient ceilings, and they are at least as liberal as the restrictions now in effect in most states."
- Despite the opposition of farm groups, like the Farm Bureau Federation, to the new system, "almost 90 per cent of all farm products now reach their markets via highways" and that statistic indicates "the importance to farmers of fast, safe roads."
- "Many experts see the new highway program as a life-giving transfusion to cities."

The conclusion was even an understatement: "To the motorist, the interstate system will be a dream come true."[281]

On the other hand, the downside of the new system occupied much less attention than the benefits it would bring. As to the businesses alongside highways that fought the new system and feared for their future, found in the system a nightmare instead of a dream: "Federal officials admit that some people will get hurt. But, they add emphatically, the damage will be much less than anticipated and will be much more than outweighed in any given community or area by the spur to business the new highways will provide."

Part of the problem was that some businesses would, in fact, "get hurt." Another part of the problem, however, was that this road network would reshape not just business opportunities along Highway 66 but reshape the fabric of the nation.

The much more systematic and devastating criticism of the replacement highway system came not so much from the mom-and-pop stores and stations as from the broader historical view of those like social critic and historian Lewis Mumford who bitterly opposed the new highway system:

> When the American people, through their Congress, voted a little while ago (1957) for a twenty-six-billion-dollar highway program, the most charitable thing to assume about this action is that they hadn't the faintest notion of what they were doing. Within the next fifteen years they will doubtless find out; but by that time it will be too late to correct all the damage to our cities and our countryside, not least to the efficient organization of industry and transportation, that this ill-conceived and preposterously unbalanced program will have wrought.

The superhighways, Mumford argued, tended to channel transportation, to concentrate it into specific corridors, a process which had multiple consequences, including the overcrowding of the arteries that are supposed to alleviate overcrowded arteries, the depopulation and economic undermining of the areas not served by the highway, to congest the cities supposedly served by the highways (he called it "pyramid building with a vengeance: a tomb of concrete roads and ramps covering the dead corpse of a city"), destruction of the environment, and "choking off the natural routes of circulation" and creating "inevitable clots of congestion, which effectively cancel out such speed as they achieve in approaching these bottlenecks."[282]

In its place Mumford proposed an integrated system of transportation with separate and mutually supportive roles to be performed by rails, roads, and water instead of making the roads the single dominant form. Mumford's criticism was often nuanced, frequently caustic, and generally derived from a sophisticated understanding of history. He could say with

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[281] Charles B. Seib, "New Roads: Changed Business Pattern Ahead," *Nation's Business*, 44 (July 1956), 32-33, 92-95.

[282] Lewis Mumford, *The Highway and the City* (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), 244-256.

characteristic intensity that "highway engineers, if one is to judge by their usual performance, lack both historic insight and social memory: accordingly, they have been repeating, with the audacity of confident ignorance, all the mistakes in urban planning committed by their predecessors who designed our railroads." The irony was that Mumford could possibly have drawn as easily upon the lessons learned from the history of U.S. Highway 66 to make his case against the interstates as upon the history of the railroads.

"Look at Route 66 quickly, for tomorrow it will be gone . . ."

As eloquent and sophisticated as were Lewis Mumford's lambasting of the new road program and its builders, that criticism probably paled in the poignance of Richard L. Strout, writing as T.R.B. in *The New Republic*. In 1956, after the passage of the bill creating the new interstate system, Strout wrote simply: "Look at Route 66 quickly, for tomorrow it will be gone; in no time it will be all streamlined super-highway straight and impersonal as the New Jersey turnpike. Already it is in violent transition, long stretches are divided and on others bulldozers scar the landscape's flesh for the wonder roads of day-after-tomorrow."[283]

No one missed the significance of what was going on. No one doubted that Highway 66 was starting to fade like a desert highway mirage as it came nearer. The construction of the new highway began in earnest with the first contract for the new system let in Missouri when a bypass was built around Lebanon, and bit-by-bit, piece-by-piece, mile-by-mile the Interstate Highways, five of them between Chicago and Santa Monica, emerged alongside Route 66.

The actual replacement of Highway 66 was not immediate. In fact, the proposed thirteen-year schedule of constructing the interstate highway system stretched out more and more, and the last piece of Route 66 that yielded to the new controlled access roadway—outside Williams, Arizona—opened in 1984, nearly three decades after the act authorizing the construction of the interstates. What that meant, like the building of the turnpikes to replace 66 in Oklahoma before the interstate system, was that the issue once again was local and personal as towns and businesses along the highway tried to salvage what they had built.

After 1956 at the latest, it is clear that the advocates and promoters of Route 66 were fighting a rearguard action, not following a vision of the future, but trying to hold on to what they had. Much of that battle focused on making business loops through the towns that were being bypassed so that there would be some hope for those businesses. Of course, the business loops would generally follow the existing main street paths of Highway 66. Especially in the 1960s and into the 1970s, a manifold number of challenges faced those towns when the interstate construction crews undertook their work. In the cities and larger towns, such as Tulsa, Albuquerque, San Bernardino, Oklahoma City, and St. Louis, the highway did not witness decreased traffic; instead, the highway served an entirely new role as an arterial corridor.

The results were unmistakable. In Missouri, Becky L. Snider and Debbie Sheals note that, "As each new section of the Interstate was completed, one more section of U.S. 66 was decommissioned and hundreds of roadside businesses were bypassed."[284] Kansas, which had touted 13 miles of Route 66 since the 1920s, suffered to an extreme; local businesses and towns were bypassed completely, because, the new Interstate 44 that followed the diagonal from St. Louis to Oklahoma City avoided the state entirely. In Oklahoma the Turner Turnpike already connected Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and in 1957 a second turnpike—the Will Rogers Turnpike—connected Tulsa with Joplin on the same I-44; and I-40 stretched west from Oklahoma City across the Texas panhandle, into New Mexico. In that state, according to David Kammer, "where Interstate 40 replaced Route 66, the process by which the new, limited-access highway was ultimately

[283] TRB, "Washington Wire," *The New Republic*, 135 (August 6, 1956), 2.

[284] Becky L. Snider and Debbie Sheals, and others, *Route 66 in Missouri: Survey and National Register Project*

completed required some 25 years. With the exception of Albuquerque, through which the interstate system was completed by 1962, the interstate was generally completed first through rural areas."[285] In Arizona, the new interstate was 359 miles long, compared to the 376 miles of Route 66 which it replaced—a savings of 17 miles.[286] U.S. Highway 66 was being replaced gradually, but inexorably, by this new divided, controlled-access highway often within sight of the road that brought the new road into existence.

In another sense, however, U.S. 66 was under siege enough without the turnpikes and interstates. Replacing the locally owned motels and diners along the road and taking the place of the sometimes funky and sometimes elaborate service stations were the buildings dictated by franchise plans so that the Holiday Inns in Arizona and Texas and Missouri looked like the Holiday Inns in Ohio. Moreover, the rooms in the motels would be the same, and so would the meals on the menus be the same.

Where an earlier generation of communities and businesses along Highway 66 had sought to bring the nation's traveling public into their local orbit, by the 1960s it was plain enough that the reverse had happened; the communities and businesses now operated to the standards of a national system. Where travelers could now leave home without ever really leaving home because of the sameness of their accommodations on the road, so too did they have less and less of a home distinguishable from anyone else's.

Not even a national television show based on the road and titled explicitly "Route 66" could save—doubtfully a goal of its producers—the highway or even respect its social and cultural identity. Starring George Maharis (who was subsequently replaced by Glenn Corbett) and Martin Milner, the television show focused on two young men and a Corvette traveling the road. But "Route 66," aired from 1960 to 1964, took some major detours through the rest of the nation with only a small number of the shows featuring U.S. 66 or communities along that highway; even when it did situate there, the highway was incidental to plot and storyline. Symbolically appropriate, given the cultural changes underway in the nation, Route 66 had been absorbed into the homogenous culture of television places. In an ironic twist that was assuredly uncalculated, this lack of spatial identity with the places Route 66 actually touched somehow suggested that the already legendary road belonged not only to the people who lived and worked there, and not even just to the people who drove it in trips that they would remember all their lives. Instead, the meaning of the television show could well be that the road belonged to the nation, that the road *was* America.

Because the replacement of U.S 66 was a gradual, prolonged, and an un-dramatic moment that stretched across three decades, it does not follow that the process of change was painless or gentle. Pat Stein's study of Route 66 in Arizona notes the vividness of the moment in the recollections of residents and business-owners when the new road replaced the old: "So devastating were the effects of the interstates on local economies that business owners came to recall not only the year but also the date and time of day when the ribbon was cut that opened the interstate near their towns."[287] The cutting of the ribbon opening the new highway was, it seems, also the cutting of the life-support system for those along the old. Susan Croce Kelly quotes Lester Dill, owner of the Meramec Caverns: "the interstate took all of us guys and ruined us."[288]

The ruination that Dill mentioned involved more than turning off the lights and moving on. Each place has its own

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[285] David Kammer, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico*, 95-96; David Kammer, *Route 66 Through new Mexico: Re-survey Report* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 2003), 17.

[286] Cleeland, "Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona." E-8.

[287] Pat Stein, "Historic Route 66 in Arizona," Amended Submission, Multiple Property Documentation Form (1996), E-11-12.

[288] Scott and Kelly, *Route 66*, 188.

story, and the story of the end of the road is usually one of the most dramatic parts of its narrative. Leon Little and his wife Ann, with their operation at Hinton Junction, in Oklahoma, watched the progress of the roads in the east and then in the west with trepidation. Little explained to Quinta Scott that he saw the turnpike in eastern Oklahoma as "the tip of the iceberg" and that "We were up at that old station until 1961. They didn't move the traffic till 1962, but we knew this was coming, of course, and so I came down to Hinton and took the postmaster job, and Ann managed the business out there until the traffic moved in 1962. And, of course, the day the traffic moved, well that was it."[289]

Others continued to hold on. Lucille Hamons, with the gas station and motel near Hydro, Oklahoma recalled, "They told me they were trying to get little places like this off the highway; that's one reason I stayed. The interstate hurt my gasoline business, but I've been here so long I know people from miles around. Of course, I had to start selling beer when my youngest daughter went to college."[290] She also closed the motel, but the particularly galling part of her experience was that she was still right next to the interstate which ran parallel to Route 66; a fence separated her from her customers. "That fence is terrible. People get in trouble, run out of gas, you should see them trying to climb that fence. In Oklahoma, you can't sue the state for loss of businesses close up because of this." The next year, a short ways down the road in Weatherford, Juanita and Laverne Snow's restaurant faced a similar situation: "We just never thought they'd come along three years later and put up that fence . . . ."[291]

At its beginning, Highway 66, as other with U.S. highways, held forth the promise of bringing people together and eroding the isolation that had plagued their lives and communities. At its end, however, Route 66's demise left them more isolated than they had ever been. But pattern did not prevail on the margins of a growing number of the larger urban areas, where entrepreneurs took advantage of emerging economic opportunities and opened up new companies in the old Route 66 business buildings.

A Highway to the Past

The construction of the interstates and the bypassing of communities and business for which U.S. 66 had been some, if not all of the commercial lifeblood, undermined much of the infrastructure that had developed along the road; many saw the change in both personal and structural terms as the end of a period, even the end of a way of life. Yet its deletion and replacement did not mean the road went away or was reclaimed by nature. It continued to be used and often to be preserved along with the structures along its long path. A road that was never frozen in time, a road that had evolved dramatically from its birth in the 1920s, through the Depression, through World War II, through the heyday of the post-war tourist boom, and then through the struggle with the interstates that sought to replace it, it entered a new phase of its existence.

The U.S. Highway 66 Association that Jack Cutberth had led, the organization that had promoted the highway, that had fought the interstates, that had struggled to have business loops created that would essentially continue to provide commerce along the path of old Route 66 in towns and cities, that organization continued to survive and to be vocal. The organization dissolved in 1979, a year after Cutberth died. Its demise was a reflection of the important role that this one man had played in keeping the organization alive, motivated, and coordinated, but also a reflection of the pressures on the road and the difficulty roadside businesses and communities were having holding their own as the highway lifeblood drained away from them.

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[289] *Ibid.*, 182.

[290] *Ibid.*, 183.

[291] *Ibid.*

Another contributing factor, as Gladys Cutberth explained to writer Tom Teague, was that many of the business owners were themselves reaching retirement age.[292] It seemed that the highway was reaching a dead end for several reasons. But it was also around the same time that others on the highway, people whose businesses had now been bypassed, sometimes long-time owners and operators, sometimes a new generation of Route 66 merchants, began to organize and mobilize, not to make the highway once again the main street of America, and not to fight the interstates, but to preserve something of the economy, culture, and memory of Highway 66.

Within a decade Angel Delgadillo, who had been a barber on Highway 66 in Seligman, and whose father had been a barber before him, and Jerry Richard, from Kingman, brought others together to form the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona in 1987.[293] About the same time, others were also mobilizing and forming their own state organizations. In New Mexico, in Oklahoma, in California, in Missouri, in Kansas, in Illinois, and in Texas new organizations also emerged. By the middle of the 1990s the National Historic Route 66 Federation had emerged to focus activity. The new Route 66 advocates were joined by a growing number of leisure motorists who found traveling the road to be a meaningful experience, either on their own or vicariously recreating the experience of the multitudes who had driven Highway 66 in the previous decades, or sometimes just because it was a more satisfying experience than traveling the interstate highways.

The convergence of these various constituencies proved to be powerful, and worked to generate sentiment for preserving the roadway and the institutions and structures along it in ways that reached beyond nostalgic reveries and curio-collecting. This effort then increased when the State Historic Preservation Offices along the highway and sometimes the state highway departments began to research the roadway, considering the resources as cultural and historic resources. By the 1990s, some of the states had conducted surveys of properties along Route 66, identifying road segments and buildings potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1990 Congress enacted a measure calling upon the National Park Service to conduct a study of methods appropriate for commemorating Route 66. That Special Resource Study was completed in 1995 and following its recommendations, Congress in 1999 created the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program which was placed within the National Park Service's National Trails System Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico. With an ambitious charge, a unique resource, and a growing public interest, this office has as its central mission, to

> [collaborate] with private property owners; non-profit organizations; and local, state, federal, and tribal governments to identify, prioritize, and address Route 66 preservation needs. It provides cost-share grants to successful applicants for the preservation and restoration of the most significant and representative properties dating from the route's period of outstanding historical significance, 1926 through 1970. These properties include the familiar "gas, eat, sleep"-related businesses, cultural landscapes, and the all-important road segments themselves. Cost-share grants are also provided for research, planning, oral history, interpretation, and education/outreach projects related to Route 66. The program serves as a clearinghouse of preservation information, and provides limited technical assistance.[294]

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[292] Teague, *Searching for 66,* 116.

[293] *Ibid., 66,* 250.

[294] Program Description, National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, http://www.cr.nps.gov/rt66/prgrm/index.htm

The cost-share grant program has been especially significant with its results readily apparent to travelers of modern Route 66. The cost-share grants have gone to communities, state agencies, private owners, university programs, and Route 66 preservation groups. In addition to the cost-share program, the clearinghouse function of the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program has facilitated not only broad and diverse partnerships but also a coordination of efforts among the states and between the states and the multiple private and community organizations sharing the same fundamental interest of preserving and recognizing Route 66. Additionally, several state Route 66-themed scenic byways were established to promote the highway.

The result of these various efforts has been a profound resurgence and preservation of Route 66 institutions and buildings, the roadway and associated features, and also popular interest and awareness of the highway's legacy in the nation. Museums focusing on Route 66 can be found in truck stops, at I-40 and I-44 rest stops, in formal state-sponsored institutions, and in separate sections of countless stores along the road. Published guides, sometimes mile-by-mile, exist for the various alignments of Highway 66 for each state. A veritable cottage industry of Route 66 memorabilia, calendars, photographs, books, and videos has emerged so that the appetite of the curious traveler can be sometimes satisfied but almost always increased. Those appetites are not restricted to the people who live near the roadway. Just as Highway 66 did in its prime, the Route 66 experience attracts people from all across the nation, and now, all over the world.

There is another result of this interest too. Just as with the original highway, a symbiotic relationship developed so that as businesses increased along the road, so too would motorists be more likely to travel it; and the more motorists traveled the road, the more the commercial infrastructure. In the current re-enactment of that process, however, the commercial infrastructure not only represents new businesses, but the continuation or revival of old businesses, the perpetuation of businesses that would have faded completely had they not been able to stay commercially viable with the heritage tourism traffic.

Moreover, as opposed to the chain stores that cluster at the entrance and exit ramps of the interstates, these Route 66 businesses tend to be mom-and-pop operations, and instead of simply providing commercial and logistic transactions for travelers, they are themselves points of destination. In a curious way, and in a poignant irony, the businesses along Route 66 that are and have been associated with Route 66 have become museums in themselves, attracting people not just because of their services and products for sale, but for their ability to help people touch a part of the past that often seems not only valuable, not only special, but even preferable to the present. In that sense Route 66 remains alive.

Section F: Associated Property Types

Property types associated with this historic context include the roadbed itself, road-related features such as bridges and other infrastructure, and the various gasoline/service stations, garages/dealerships, diners/cafes/restaurants, hotels/campgrounds/tourist courts/motels, recreational/travel stops/destinations, roadside parks/picnic area, and road support/maintenance/law enforcement services which lined its route from Chicago to Los Angeles and later, Santa Monica.

The road that was designated or built as U.S. Highway 66 in 1926 was a highly dynamic route, changing often in design and alignment. Approximately 2,400 miles of the main road exist today in the form of state and local roads and abandoned segments. Along this route, remnants of the road, its infrastructure, and the public and commercial landscape that emerged to serve motorists can still be identified and evaluated for their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. In general, properties will retain sufficient historic integrity to communicate their significance and their association with Highway 66 during the historic period, and be associated with one of the historic contexts identified in Section E.

This section provides general guidance on property types and character-defining features of U.S. 66 from a national perspective; it does not provide a definitive list of all property types associated with the highway. The individual state Route 66 Multiple Property Documentation Forms may have specific property types that are not found within this document. These should be referred to when a property's eligibility comes into question.

Period of Significance

Eligible properties evaluated under this context will demonstrate a direct association with U.S. Highway 66 between 1926 and 1985.[295] When evaluating historic resources associated with the highway, it is appropriate to consider a period of significance extending to the year when the section of highway associated with the property was deleted from the National Highway System. Considering early realignments and bypasses, this date could range from the 1930s until 1985, when the last segment of U.S. 66 was deleted from the system. This recognizes the many periods of use and evolving importance of U.S. 66 through 1985. In most situations the date of deletion may provide a logical ending year. In the case of an individual business that closed before the date of deletion, an earlier ending date would be appropriate; for example, the date when the property no longer served Route 66 travelers.

Criteria Consideration G: Less than Fifty Years of Age

A case for exceptional significance does not have to be made for individual properties whose period of significance began more than fifty years ago, and which continued to operate and be associated with the highway after the fifty-year mark, provided the property reflects the earlier period of significance and has not undergone substantial physical alteration in the less-than-fifty-year period.

A justification of exceptional significance is required, however, for individual properties whose period of significance began within the past fifty years, or which underwent substantial physical alteration in the less-than-fifty-year

[295] This discussion borrows heavily from an unpublished position paper, "Historic Route 66 Properties: Applying Criterion Consideration G and Defining Exceptional Importance" prepared by the Keeper of the National Register staff in 2008.

period. The fact that the property's significance can be placed within a national context, and that considerable scholarship exists on the subject, should make it easier to establish a case for exceptional importance. As such, conducting a property type analysis will provide the opportunity to state how Criteria Consideration G applies to a property in question.

Exceptional properties eligible under Criteria Consideration G might include a particularly exemplary or "rare" and intact survivor of a period of construction or type of construction, or a property of high integrity. The date of construction as well as the date when a resource took on its current appearance (in the case of a property remodeled or substantially added to within the past fifty years) should be considered in deciding whether Criteria Consideration G is applied. A motel substantially remodeled and enlarged in the early 1960s in response to increased travel on the road and changing trends in overnight accommodations would require this analysis. It would also require preparing a statement establishing exceptional importance. Based on the hypothetical example above, this might include demonstrating the property is a representative and intact motel illustrating the last period of Route 66 development.

Levels of Significance

Properties nominated under this document may demonstrate significance at the local, state, or national level. Establishing a national level of significance for an individual property will require comparing it with similar properties across the length of the highway to demonstrate it is of transcendent importance to U.S. 66. It is expected that resource surveys from the states through which U.S. 66 passed will form the comparative basis for evaluating significance. Some resources, such as the La Bajada segment in New Mexico and Sitgreaves Pass in Arizona are so exceptional in their history and stature along the highway, that a comparative study may not be required.

Application of National Register Criteria

Properties should be evaluated for eligibility under this context applying four National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Most properties will be evaluated under Criterion A, while many will meet Criterion C. For some of the associated property types, evaluation under Criterion D is recommended; others may meet Criterion B. The developed property types are weighted toward extant architectural and structural resources. While these property types may possess eligibility under Criterion D, it is anticipated they will most often be nominated under another criteria. There are, however, other resources that won't fall neatly into these categories. These resources, often without a recorded history, have the potential to yield information on the ephemeral character of roadside commerce and unrecorded use and social patterns of Highway 66.

The study of material remains of a 1920s "tin-can" tourist camp, or a Dust Bowl migrant camp, has the potential to document its occupants' economic and social patterns; a story that might not be found in traditional historical evidence, or is presented differently in the historical record. Highway construction camps hold equal potential under this criterion. Aside from camps, other potential resources include places of informal commerce, such as the roadside Indian jewelry stands that once dotted Highway 66 in Arizona and New Mexico. The study of the remains of these operations could yield important information on American Indian commerce and tourist transactions. Other ephemeral places, include roadside tourist attractions, from the small "snake-pit" operation, to larger attractions, such as Fort Two Guns, Arizona, which sprawled over several acres. While specific guidelines have not be developed for these archeological resources, the National Register bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluation and Registering Archeological Properties* and historical archeology methodologies can guide the documentation and evaluation of these sites.

Integrity

All properties nominated under this context will possess historic integrity; however, the seven aspects of integrity (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling) are weighted differently depending on the criterion

under which the property is evaluated. For all properties under all criteria, integrity of association is paramount. For many properties, separate aspects of integrity rise to the fore when evaluated under different criteria. For example, a roadbed that is eligible under Criterion A for its transportation significance would need to demonstrate integrity of location, while its integrity of materials or design may have lesser importance. Conversely, a roadbed nominated under Criterion C for aspects of engineering would need integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, as well as location. Properties that were moved during the period of significance remain eligible if they maintain an association with Route 66 and retain other aspects of integrity.

Associated Property Types

1. Highway and Road-Related Structures
2. Road Bridges
3. Gasoline/Service Stations
4. Garages/Dealerships
5. Diners/Cafes/Restaurants
6. Hotels/Campgrounds/Tourist Courts/Motels
7. Recreational/Travel Stops/Destinations
8. Roadside Parks/Picnic Areas
9. Road Support/Maintenance/Law Enforcement
10. Districts

Property Type: Highway and Road-Related Structures

Description

When designated in 1926, the highway drew upon existing roads, only small portions of which were paved. Some had already been parts of private highway systems and networks, most notably the National Old Trails Road in the section from Las Vegas, New Mexico to Los Angeles; the Postal Road through New Mexico to Oklahoma City; the Ozark Trails from Oklahoma City to Tulsa and into Kansas and Missouri. These roads were often not highways in a modern sense of designed, paved thoroughfares. While the primary promotional support came with the private organizations, the actual roads were most typically built and maintained with public funds by counties and to some extent, by early territorial or state highway departments. After creation of the uniform numbered highway system in 1926, the roads that made up the newly-designated U.S. 66 became a public responsibility and subject to national standards promulgated by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

In the five decades that U.S. 66 was designated, the route evolved and the roadbed itself changed in both construction and location. As the roadbed improved through various engineering stages, meeting different standards for heavier and faster traffic, it often shifted in alignment to reduce steep grades and curves. The process of upgrading the highway resulted in wider, straighter roads, and even divided highways. Progress brought about turnpikes and interstate highways. These new highways not only supplanted the older route, but often obliterated it. In some instances the old highway continues to be used as a service road alongside the interstate that replaced it. By following the evolution of the roadbed one gains a closer appreciation of the philosophy and technology of highway construction and transportation engineering.

Roadbeds may range from minimally paved to unpaved surfaces of the originally designated route, such as the Ozark Trails section in Lincoln County, Oklahoma, and the La Bajada section in New Mexico; to early paved sections such

as the Miami Original 9-foot Section in Oklahoma; to the four-lane, divided highway sections that make up much of the highway in Illinois.

Significance

Highway and Road-Related Structures include the improved or paved section of the road itself, curbs, gutters, drainage features, and bridges, as well as engineered features within the right-of-way, including cuts, side slopes, and back slopes. Highway and Road-Related Structures that remain from the period of historic significance are valuable artifacts that illustrate the changing physical attributes of Highway 66. The materials, designs, and locations of road segments reflect changing technologies in the evolution of pavement. Advances in road construction relate not only to an increase in traffic but also often a decline in traffic on a nearby bypassed or decommissioned segment. Changes to the roadbed could also lead to a change in use of the road. Bypassed sections of the highway no longer carried long-distance traffic, but readily converted to local use. Change in the physical aspects of the roadbed or in its location may also reflect standards required for receiving federal aid and the changing standards of state departments of transportation.

Highway and Road-Related Structures typically meet Criterion A in the area of Transportation, Commerce, or Industry. Segments may also meet Criterion C in the area of Engineering if they are a notable example of a type, method, or period of construction. The end of the period of significance for U.S. 66 properties is the point at which the property was no longer used as part of the designated highway. Those road segments associated with Highway 66 that have achieved significance within the last fifty years must meet the "exceptional significance" consideration at the appropriate level of significance. Abandoned or bypassed segments of the road may meet eligibility if they retain sufficient integrity to communicate their association with the highway. In any case, the boundaries of Highway and Road-Related Structures as a property type should encompass the extent of the right-of-way, including all major structures and other historic highway design infrastructure within that area.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the area of Transportation requires the Highway and Road-Related Structures retains integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling. Under Criterion C, a Highway and Road-Related Structures is eligible for its design characteristics if it is a significant or a representative example of design, method of construction, or materials that has retained integrity of design, materials, location, association, and feeling. For a roadbed to have integrity of location and association, the section must have been designated part of U.S. 66 between 1926 and 1985. Segments built prior to 1926 qualify only if they subsequently were integrated into Highway 66 by official designation.

For a Highway and Road-Related Structures to have integrity of materials, design, and workmanship, the segment must retain the essential physical features that identify it as a historic highway. These physical features include the original cross-section (comprised of a roadbed and drainage features in cities and the roadbed, grade, cuts, slopes and other engineered elements in rural settings); original alignment or later realignment and associated features like culverts and bridges, although a number of these features may have been modified or replaced. Segments which have been widened after the end of the period of significance may be included if they link other significant sections of the route and the extent of the widening does not obscure the original design of the highway during the period of significance. Some abandoned segments may retain their original design and materials, but are in an advanced degree of deterioration due to lack of maintenance and natural weathering. Depending on the extent of the deterioration, these may be considered archaeological features potentially eligible under Criterion D.

As part of continual maintenance and upgrading of U.S. 66, most original paving materials, such as concrete and early forms of asphalt were routinely covered over or replaced. While original or "first generation" pavement is a desired feature for eligible road segments, it is not a registration requirement. However, the cross section must be reflective of the

period of significance.

In order to ensure integrity of feeling and setting, a road segment should be of sufficient length to provide a cohesive sense of the period of significance. Places where a concentration of historic, road-related properties is present, both in urban and rural contexts, should be evaluated as a historic district. Short segments which have few remaining associated properties or a large number of properties constructed after the period of significance, should be included only if the segment serves to link significant sections of other eligible portions of the highway. The presence of associative properties historically related to the roadbed, such as gas stations, motels, and restaurants may significantly contribute to the integrity of feeling and setting (See District).

Road Bridges

Description

Bridges to cross rivers, streams, gullies, arroyos, and railroad tracks, were essential to the highway's mission of connecting different points for the motorized traveler. Bridges thus define integral portions of Highway 66 and also serve as distinct engineering, structural, and/or architectural features associated with the road. Through time bridges underwent engineering change as new elements of design, technology, and materials were introduced. Bridge designs and construction methods reflect solutions to local conditions present at the time of construction. As a result, bridges along Route 66 are a disparate collection of designs and materials that represent engineering and design trends employed during the period of significance.

Bridges marking the route today range from simple timber spans to long, multi-span, reinforced concrete arch structures. Highway 66 contains representative examples of twentieth-century bridge design, timber span bridges in New Mexico, a concrete arch bridge ("Rainbow Bridge") near Riverton, Kansas; the steel truss Chain of Rocks Bridge at St. Louis; a through truss steel arch Rio Puerco Bridge west of Albuquerque; a multiple-span "Pony Bridge" near Bridgeport, Oklahoma; and a steel arch bridge over the Colorado River at Topock, Arizona. Many of the bridges along the roadway may be eligible for the National Register for their design and/or construction, but most will gain significance from their association with U.S. Highway 66.

Significance

By examining bridges along Route 66 one can gain an understanding of the design philosophy and economy that produced them. The material, design, and location of these bridges reflect the circumstances that gave rise to the particular structure. As the highway was improved upon, some bridges were replaced or modified. In some instances, bridges were turned over to local use as the highway was realigned. Bridges reflect changing technical standards employed in their construction and often represent the social and economic factors that influenced the location and routing of the highway. The Captain Creek Bridge near Wellston, Oklahoma, illustrates a compromise between state and local governments and the Bureau of Public Roads when issues arose concerning the location of a newly designed segment of the highway.

Bridges on Route 66 not only facilitated long-distance travel, but also played a role in regional and local transportation. Functionality was a key factor in bridge design, but many Route 66 bridges were also constructed with strong aesthetic considerations. For this reason, many of the better-known bridges along the route enhance the scenic aspects of Route 66.

Eligible bridges will meet Criterion A in the area of Transportation. Invariably, they served as links in an important transportation corridor and often represented engineered solutions to transportation problems. They may also meet

Criterion C in the area of Architecture and/or Engineering if they are a notable example of a type, style, or period of construction. They may, for example, represent a novel design solution to a problem, or use materials in a novel manner. The end of the period of significance is the point at which the property was no longer used as part of Route 66. Those bridges associated with Highway 66 that were constructed within the last fifty years generally need to meet Criteria Consideration G by possessing exceptional significance.

Registration Requirements

In many instances a bridge can be nominated as part of the roadbed segment with which it is associated. A bridge may be individually eligible even if the adjoining roadbed is not if it possesses significance of its own. A bridge may be individually eligible for its engineering significance or for its historical significance if research indicates a clear association with U.S. 66. Eligibility under Criterion A in the area of Transportation requires that a bridge show a clear association with transportation along Highway 66. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that it be a notable example of an engineering type or style in its design, materials, method of construction, and that it retains integrity.

For a bridge to be eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A or C, it must retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity of location and association requires that the bridge was part of U.S. 66 during the period of significance. Bridges constructed before Highway 66 was designated may be eligible if they later became part of the highway.

A bridge may be eligible if it retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship as exhibited in its physical features. It must retain design features from the period of significance, including its character-defining structural features, railings, abutments, piers and other elements. Routine maintenance to insure the safety of the structure may have resulted in loss of original materials, but as long as these losses are minimal and do not affect the overall character-defining aspects of its design, the bridge may be eligible. Bridge roadbeds and decks were routinely replaced, and while original pavement is a desired feature, it is not a registration requirement. An eligible bridge should retain integrity of feeling and setting and provide a sense of time and place from the highway's period of significance.

Property Type: Gasoline/Service Stations

Description

Because of the length of the period of significance for U.S. 66, it is possible to observe the evolution of commercial operations where travelers purchased gasoline, and later the full gamut of fuels, lubricants, tires, batteries, and other supplies needed to service and repair their vehicles. This evolution has been best chronicled by John Jakle and Keith Sculle in their study, *The Gas Station in America*, although the architectural types of stations found on Route 66 do not always fit neatly into the categories they identify.

Filling stations initially offered only the sale of gasoline (and no or few additional services or repairs or supplies) at a store that retailed a variety of consumer goods. Eventually, the filling or service station became separated from broader retail functions and dedicated its efforts to serving the automobile trade. When stations became larger they began to offer new products and services. In that activity the gas stations joined an array of businesses already servicing automobiles: the garages and automobile dealers. The three businesses at times overlapped in their service functions and were each important in serving highway travelers.

Significance

Gas and service stations played an essential role in satisfying the needs of Route 66 travelers. Those that remain from

the period of significance illustrate the changing commercial dynamics associated with automobile travel. These stations necessarily responded to increasing traffic, to alterations in road alignment, and to the cycles of depression and war. They often reveal the larger pattern of consolidation in the industry. The construction of an alternate route connecting the same points frequently led to the closure of stations that had come to depend on Highway 66 traffic.

Gas and service stations may meet Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Commerce. They may also meet Criterion C if they are a notable example of a type, style, or period of construction. In order to qualify, the properties must demonstrate a direct association with and have been located on U.S. 66 at some point during the period of significance. Gas or service stations constructed within the last fifty years, but no later than 1985, must have "exceptional significance."

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Commerce requires a gas or service station show a clear and direct association with commercial traffic along Route 66. Particular emphasis is placed on properties that were created as a direct result of highway traffic. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that it be a notable example as an architectural style or type from the period of significance. Gas and service stations must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and design. For a property to retain integrity of location and setting it must be at a location directly adjacent to a roadbed once designated as U.S. 66.

Retention of integrity of workmanship, design, and materials requires that a property retain the character-defining aspects of its design during the period of significance. Properties should retain their original primary exterior in terms of massing and fenestration patterns. Gas stations should retain canopies and drive-thru bays if part of the property during the period of significance. Service stations should have the service bays, which will be evident from the exterior by the presence of door openings. The retention of period signage will enhance the property's eligibility but loss of signage in and of itself will not render a property ineligible. Because of environmental and public safety issues associated with fuel storage tanks and dispensing pumps, loss of such features will not impact eligibility. Additions from the period of significance are acceptable; later additions must not detract from the historic design and overall integrity of the property. Ruins of gas or service stations may be evaluated under Criterion D, when presented with well-defined research questions and associated context. To be eligible under Criterion D, the archeological integrity of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains sufficient to provide important information about the construction, use, evolution, and occupation of the property.

Property Type: Garages/Dealerships

Description

A necessary part of the support structure for highway travel was the auto mechanic who could service a vehicle by providing regular maintenance and, when necessary, repairs. There is no standard history of garages as there is for gas stations, diners, and motels, but they were important to the long-distance traveler. There were three types of repair facilities found along U.S. 66: the service station (noted above), the garage, and the auto dealership.

In the early years the automobile service garage was often a converted blacksmith or livery shop. These businesses were small, individually-owned, and had few employees. The number of independent garages increased as the automobile supplanted the horse as the primary means of transportation. During the 1930s, these small garages, servicing the "flivvers" and assorted "heaps," were integral parts of the traveling experience. The migrants, with their generally less than optimal means of transportation, depended on these garages. *Business Week* described the vehicles used by these travelers as "mostly in a condition immediately preceding complete collapse." Travelers would undertake

what repairs they could on their own, but for major work, often turned to a mechanic for repairs. The independent mechanic thus found a ready market.

The modest facilities that would typically house the one-person garage were commonly a wood frame or metal building and later, often concrete block, in which engines or radiators were serviced. Given their trade was increasingly taken over by larger gasoline service stations and automobile dealers, only a few of the independent garages associated with Highway 66 remain. The ruins or locations of former garages present an excellent opportunity for archeological investigation.

At the other end of the spectrum from the independent garage was the dealer. To the dealer, repairs came easily as part of their original function. In the early days of automobiles, the dealers even assembled automobiles shipped to them in parts. The repair business remained a constant feature of the dealership. Because of the structure of the automobile retailing business, an important source of revenue for local dealers was the repair facilities in their buildings. After World War II, dealers counted more and more on their garages as an essential part of their business. A few operations stayed open twenty-four hours a day to assist motorists in need—something that the independent mechanic could not do. In other instances, dealers "farmed out" repair work to an independent garage.

Significance

The garages and dealerships along Route 66 are important as indicators of change in the economy generated by the highway. The size, materials, design, locations, and activities associated with the building reflect the circumstances surrounding the operation of the business. The building can reveal fundamental shifts in the structure of the economy as large operations (dealerships and franchise stations) expanded and small, individually-owned garages declined in number.

Garages and dealerships may meet Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Commerce. They may also meet Criterion C if they are a notable example of a type, style, or period of construction. In order to qualify, the properties must have a direct association with Route 66 during the period of significance, or must meet Criteria Consideration G if they achieved significance within the last fifty years. Ruins of former garages or dealerships may meet Criterion D if evaluated within an appropriate context that includes a well-planned research design.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Commerce requires that a garage or dealership show a clear association with Route 66. The property must retain integrity of location, design, setting, and feeling related to the period of significance. Emphasis will be placed on properties that were created as a direct result of the highway's designation or construction. Dealerships must demonstrate this association, either through location along U.S. 66, advertising, or other verifiable indicators. Eligibility under Criterion C requires a property be a representative example of an architectural style or type from the period of significance and that it must retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and location in order to convey a sense of time and place. Additions from the period of significance are acceptable; later additions must not detract from the original design or overall integrity of the property.

Retention of integrity of workmanship, design, and materials requires that a property retain its essential physical appearance from the period of significance. The specific character-defining aspects center on the ability of the business to serve automotive traffic. Garages and dealerships should retain original canopies if original to, or constructed during the period of significance. The retention of period signage will enhance the property's eligibility but the loss of signage in and of itself will not render it ineligible. Because many garages and dealerships were not located directly on U.S. 66 (instead on side streets, alleys, or other arterials), eligible properties, while not directly on the historical road corridor, must

demonstrate through research they are associated with travel on Route 66.

For garages, a service area, which may even be outdoors in some of the earliest examples, must exist. If outdoors, this may be a simple service ramp situated over a pit, or a hydraulic lift. The service area must retain enough of its original design in terms of presence of sumps, lubrication pits or the location of a lift, to communicate its use. The retention original equipment such as lifts, vats, and tools, will enhance the property's eligibility but absence of equipment in and of itself will not render it ineligible. For automobile dealerships the service entrances for vehicles must remain.

In some instances garages and dealerships along Route 66 have deteriorated significantly so that only ruins remain. Often these properties have lost sufficient amounts of material so that the original design and workmanship is no longer evident. Such properties may be evaluated under Criterion D when presented with well-defined research questions and associated context. To be eligible under Criterion D, the archeological integrity of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains should be sufficient to provide important information about the construction, use, evolution, and occupation of the property.

Property Type: Diners/Cafes/Restaurants

Description

As a roadside institution the cafe serving travelers has a history which is often characterized by its independent ownership, unregimented appearance, and a frequently casual approach to business. Cafes and diners were often ephemeral operations that came and went. Those that emerged to serve the traveling public tended to be low-capital operations. Requiring less substantial structures than either gas stations or motels, the roadside cafe sometimes took on modest dimensions and location. These businesses often began as lunchrooms, commonly held a counter and stools as well as tables and chairs, and later, booths, and were separated from the cooking area by a service window. Increasingly, in the 1930s, cafes also became associated with gas stations, truck stops, and motels. The allure of an operation that offered all three—food, lodging, and fuel—provided a significant competitive advantage, one that was sometimes within reach of a family-sized business.

In the 1930s, as John Jakle and Keith Sculle observe in their history of *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age*, restaurants, especially in towns and cities, began to modernize their appearance with brighter façades and bigger signs. "Streamlining," giving a stationary building the appearance of a sleek, mobile, vehicle was common. Diners, often constructed to resemble railroad dining cars, took naturally to this look, but permanent buildings of brick, stucco, or porcelain enameled steel often were dressed up in this streamlined style. The design of roadside eating establishments often echoed its audience—the mobile society. In the 1940s the emerging trend was toward franchises and standardization; as mechanization took on a larger role in the kitchen, uniformity on the menu provided greater predictability for travelers.

The proliferation of roadside cafes in the 1940s and 1950s yielded to the expansion of chains or franchises, sometimes associated with motels. National restaurant chains operating along U.S. 66 during the period of significance included Stuckey's, Steak 'n Shake, Burger Chef, McDonald's, Dairy Queen, and Big Boy, among others. Smaller chains were often represented in a single state or region along Route 66. One result of the franchising trend was the effort of smaller operations to capitalize on delivering faster service than the larger restaurants, and to specialize on short orders—hamburgers, sandwiches, ice cream—rather than full meals. Even that specialized realm became target of the fast food empires. The independents that survived on Route 66 usually did so by filling a particular niche in the local community rather than depending on long-distance travelers. Architecturally, by the end of the 1950s those independent operations with their vernacular designs became as distinctive from the chain restaurants as chains are from each other.

Significance

As with service stations, restaurants and diners that remain along Route 66 serve to illustrate the changing commercial dynamics associated with the highway. Second only to businesses catering to the vehicles that traversed the road, eating establishments, catering to the occupants of those vehicles, are nearly as ubiquitous. They are the types of businesses that were most attuned to the vagaries of traffic patterns and use of the road. The buildings and locations of roadside eating establishments reflect increased traffic (more potential customers) and the constant improvements of the highway. Cafes and diners located on segments of road that were cut-off from the designated route often had to rely on local traffic in order to remain viable. Realignments and newly-constructed bypasses also created a magnet for new businesses; it was on these bypasses and widened and improved sections that the new franchises and chains often located.

Diners, cafes, and restaurants may reflect new designs and/or materials employed in the industry. The buildings represent changing technologies, changing philosophies, and changing tastes. They may represent the growing integration of building design with advertising, wherein a major component of the building is the signage, or wherein the building itself becomes a sign; this is especially true in the franchise and chain establishments.

Restaurants and diners may meet Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and Commerce. They may also meet Criterion C if they are a representative or notable example of a type, style, period, or method of construction.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Commerce requires a restaurant or diner show a direct and clear association with Route 66. Emphasis will be placed on those properties that were constructed as a result of the designation or an alignment of Highway 66. They must have integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association and must reflect the period during which they were directly associated with the road. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that the diner, cafe, or restaurant be a notable or representative example of an architectural style or type from the period of significance. Restaurants and diners must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and design. For a property to retain integrity of location and setting it must be at a location directly adjacent to a roadbed designated as U.S. 66.

Properties should retain integrity of materials and overall design. In particular the original fenestration patterns should exist. Overall, restaurant designs of the period of significance used windows to attract potential customers and such fenestration should remain largely intact. The retention of period, detached signage will enhance the property's eligibility but its loss in and of itself will not render it ineligible. Signage that is integral to the building should be present in form. The specific character-defining aspects of restaurants are also reflected in the interior, including counters, stools, open floor seating, display cases and kitchen areas. To be eligible, restaurants and cafes should retain their overall interior design and floor plan even if the property is no longer used as a dining establishment. Alterations made during the period of significance should be acknowledged; such alterations may reflect important trends in design or represent continued operational success. Additions made during the period of significance also reflect continued use; additions that are less than fifty years of age but constructed before 1985 may contribute to the significance of the resource provided the overall historic integrity is not diminished. If such addition dominates or overwhelms the older resource, it would have to demonstrate exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G in order to remain eligible.

In some instances restaurants and diners have deteriorated so that only ruins remain. Such properties may possess sufficient surface or subsurface remains to be eligible under Criterion D. To be eligible under Criterion D, the setting, feeling and association of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains should be of sufficient magnitude to yield information on the construction, use, and occupation of the property, if evaluated within a context that includes a well-planned research design.

Hotels/Campgrounds/Tourist Courts/Motels

Description

As with restaurants and gas stations, the twentieth-century motel is intimately connected to automobile transportation and reflects broader transportation and social patterns in the nation. Changes over time in the nature and number of accommodations available form a significant part of the history of roads of the United States. Route 66 serves as a microcosm of this change.

Although roadhouses, inns, and downtown hotels had traditionally served the needs of travelers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the need for overnight lodging represents a development of the rise in automobile travel. For a time hotels, those most often associated with the railroad or located in a downtown, served as overnight accommodations for automobile travelers, especially those with means. Growth in automobile travel, especially in the 1920s, however, upset the prevailing system as more and more people, known often as "auto-campers," sought a place where they could stop and sleep. As the number of such campers increased, communities sometimes created campgrounds to accommodate them, welcoming them and their business.

The Sayre City Park in Oklahoma is an example of city welcoming auto travelers into the community by providing modern, clean facilities and space for overnight campers. This stream of campers soon merged, however, with other travelers who were on the road to find work. This was especially true in rural America. There, a decline in farm prices and the increase in farming costs in the 1920s, and in the 1930s circumstances of drought and continued economic depression exacerbated the already severe hardships. An early separation of the well-to-do tourist from the "wagoneers" in search of employment came when enterprising landowners began to charge for campsites. As these entrepreneurs provided more amenities, it became less a matter of camping than of lodging, although the facilities remained primitive.

The tourist camp became an increasingly common institution along the road, popular not only with the traveler but with the family who sought to augment their income as farmers or merchants. The tourist court, a collection of small cabins, was a low-capital business, with most of the tourist courts probably built by the owners themselves.

The evolution of architectural formats of these businesses followed several stages. Identified by John Jakle, Keith Sculle, and Jefferson Rogers in *The Motel in America*, the evolution of overnight accommodation moved from the early auto camp or tourist home (in which private homes would take in overnight guests), to the post-war motor inn and highway hotel. Independent, idiosyncratic in design and decoration, these businesses remained dominant on the roadside landscape, reaching their peak in the post-World War II period.

At that point, however, the motel environment changed as greater capitalization became necessary, as group affiliation held a competitive advantage, and as changes to the tax code provided a lucrative opportunity for investing. The result was the rise of the modern corporate motel chain in which businesses established in several locations with uniform building designs and uniform signage. Motel operators, over time, recognized the need to provide travelers greater comfort, safety, and convenience. Motels and motor inns were advertised as destinations of their own, offering amenities such as swimming pools, dining rooms, and in-room televisions. Corporate brands, whether through associations (Best Western) or chains (Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson's) provided the traveler uniformity and familiarity and assurance that certain expectations would be met. But these assurances were not guaranteed to everyone. African Americans travel during the Jim Crow era were mostly denied access to these motels, having to motor on until they reached a "tourist home" or rooming house which would not discriminate against them.

Significance

More than any other property type, overnight accommodations reflect the long-distance nature of Highway 66. It is the only property type that caters specifically to non-local use of the road. In this capacity it has the most potential to possess a level of significance beyond the local. Because of the ephemeral nature of the early tourist camps, and the often inconsequential construction of many early tourist cabin courts, archeological investigation has the greatest potential to yield important information. These sites represent a type of resource that often had no formal documentation, that left no paper trail, and that involved a class of people about whose day-to-day lives little is written.

The camps, hotels, tourist courts, motels, and African American travel-related rooming houses that survive alongside Route 66 vary in design and construction. They may be simple and humble, amounting to an open space, cleared for parking and camping, with perhaps a well or comfort station as amenities; or a few cabins arranged in a crescent near the road; or they may be elaborate, integrated operations with garages or carports separating the motel units, or linked rooms fronted by an asphalt parking lot.

That these buildings remain at all is of some significance as, according to Sculle, Jakle, and Rogers, in 1960 the average life-span of a motel building was calculated to be only nine years. As with other resources on Route 66, lodgings help historians understand the social forces associated with the highway. The designs and locations of these accommodations reflect the evolution of the hospitality industry and of the road itself. One major factor in the changing landscape of roadside accommodations was the surge of tourism at the end of World War II which led to an increase in motel construction and that marked the beginning of the chain/franchise system.

Extant camps, hotels, tourist courts, and motels tell the history of the lodging industry as changes in fortune brought about by changes in the road itself impacted the industry. The construction of an interstate would often result in terminal consequences for the older camps, courts, and motels. Those motels reflect at a glance the decline of independent mom-and-pop businesses in a world turning to chains and franchises as the norm. Yet many of them survived, adapting their business model for other lodging uses.

Hotels/Campgrounds/Tourist Courts/Motels may meet Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Commerce. They may also meet Criterion C if they are a representative and intact example of a type, style, or method of construction. In order to qualify, the properties must have direct association with Route 66. They must demonstrate integrity of location either by having been located adjacent to a segment of U.S. 66 during the period of significance or by having a direct association with a travel destination associated with Route 66 (see Recreation/Travel Stops/Destinations). Because they were often not directly located on the highway, African American travel-related tourist homes do not need to be proximate to the road, as long it is established they were used for this purpose during the period of significance. Ruins of former tourist camps, tourist courts, or motels, may meet Criterion D, if evaluated within a context that includes a well-planned research design.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Commerce requires that a lodging show a clear association with Highway 66. It must be located adjacent to the highway or have a direct connection with a travel stop/destination/recreational facility associated with Route 66. It must retain integrity of location, association, feeling, design, and materials. Emphasis will be placed on properties that were created as a direct result of the highway's designation or construction.

Eligibility under Criterion C requires the property be a representative example of a type, or style, or that it demonstrates a significant and distinct method of construction. Early examples of different types, especially examples of standardized chain designs associated with the road will be good candidates for evaluation beyond the local level of significance. Motels and tourist courts must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials,

workmanship and design. Tourist camps should retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

All properties should retain materials and overall design from the period of significance. For particular property types, a higher level of integrity of setting and design is required. For example, it is important that the pattern and layout of cabin groups or motel units be intact. For tourist camps, the open space of the camping area must be unobstructed. Sites of former tourist camps, tourist courts, and even motels may meet Criterion D, if evaluated within a context that includes a careful and well-planned research design. To be eligible under Criterion D, the setting, feeling and association of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains should be of sufficient magnitude to yield important information on the construction, use, and occupation of the property

Some operations scattered along the roadway, like the Wigwam Motel in Holbrook, Arizona, the Blue Swallow in Tucumcari, New Mexico, and the Wagon Wheel Motel in Cuba, Missouri, because they were not excessively modernized nor adapted to different uses, have been preserved almost as museum pieces. Most motels that remain have been modified in some way. The loss or modification of some buildings within the complex would not be sufficient to make a property ineligible provided the overall pattern is discernible. Another common evolution of motels along Route 66 was the enclosure of original parking bays between units in order to create additional motel rooms. Properties which underwent such remodeling may still be considered eligible as long as these changes occurred during the property's period of association with U.S. 66. The retention of period signage will enhance the property's eligibility but the loss of signage in and of itself will not render it ineligible. Most motels along Route 66 have had their interiors updated to allow for upgraded wall, ceiling, and floor surfaces, replacement bathroom fixtures, and modern heating and cooling units. These modifications do not diminish integrity so long as the overall form and exterior appearance remains.

Recreational/Travel Stops/Destinations

Description

It is unlikely there has ever been a well-established American transportation route completely lacking tourist attractions; as early as the1850s some merchants along the Oregon–California Trail posted signs inviting emigrants to visit their stores to see grizzly bears in chains. Route 66 is no exception. The earliest attractions along Highway 66 were often natural or were related, authentically or artificially, to indigenous cultures. Some of the important natural sites along the way, such as the Grand Canyon and the Petrified Forest were publicly managed and thus not heavily advertised on the road.

But for privately-managed properties, orchestrated marketing efforts were necessary to attract travelers. The Inter-Tribal Ceremonial at Gallup, New Mexico, and the Native American powwow of Flagstaff, Arizona, are typical of events that advertised heavily along U.S. 66. Marketing, whether sophisticated or simple, whether far-ranging (Meramec Caverns) or local, was an essential component in drawing travelers and most importantly, their money, to these destinations.

Such destinations include countless stores advertising "curios," Native American jewelry, and other merchandise. For part of Route 66, it was the mythology of the "West" that served as the common theme for these businesses. An array of tourist attractions—many tourist traps—competed for the growing number of recreational travelers. Sometimes, when grand enough, these attractions even prided themselves on being not just a travel stop, but a destination. A fine line separated the authentic scientific, cultural, and natural attractions from the dubious "zoos" and snake pits and the curio shops hawking "authentic Indian crafts." When Highway 66 traffic was replaced by the interstate highway, most of these tourist-operations closed, leaving only the ruins of roadside attractions and the memories of those who visited them.

Drawing on a local or regional audience, another "destination" found along Route 66 is the drive-in movie theater. The marriage of the movie industry and the automobile began in 1933 in New Jersey with opening of the first drive-in

theater. It was the post World War II era that saw an explosion of the new form. Between 1947 and 1950 the number of drive in theaters in the United States quadrupled from just over 500 to over 2,200. By 1960, there were over 4,700 drive-ins in the United States. These theaters, catering exclusively to automobile-bound customers, typically were constructed on busy thoroughfares on the edges of towns or cities. There are a number of drive-in theaters located along Route 66. While not catering specifically to the long-distance traveler *per se* they did attract long-distance travelers as well as customers from a broad region who used the highway as a pipeline to the venues.

Significance

A popular mythology that has grown up around Route 66 is based primarily on the function of the road as the artery of westward vacation travel. Fueled by memories of countless baby-boomers who crammed into cars and station wagons with family and friends and hit the road, the tourist traps, snake pits, roadside zoos and other such attractions have taken on an iconic status. While U.S. 66 was a way to move people and goods efficiently from Chicago to Los Angeles and vice versa, it was also a network of independent destinations, of isolated islands of commerce, and an important artery for local traffic. It was the recreational and tourist destinations catering to the cross-country traveler that defined the national essence of the "Route 66 experience." While these operations were less prone to franchising and consolidation than were the food, fuel, and lodging businesses, these buildings and structures and objects indicate the transformation of the nation to an automobile culture that provided a ready market for curiosities.

Even more than the railroad-related travel culture, automobile culture spurred the growth of the "attraction" entertainment industry. As more Americans took to the highways, more facilities were invented to cater to their needs or wants. Railroads could take visitors directly to certain destinations, but once there it was difficult to branch out and explore. The road network and the automobile allowed for greater mobility. And, the expansion of road networks allowed for the creation of new sites and attractions that catered specifically to the auto-bound visitor. U.S. Highway 66, with its eastern terminus in Chicago and western terminus in Los Angeles, was a perfect avenue for developing roadside attractions. The road passes through a number of mild-weather states providing a longer season for recreational visitors. In time, many of these recreational, roadside or road-related attractions became significant waysides along Route 66.

Destinations such as drive-in theaters generally catered to a local or regional audience but were also frequented by visitors. Designed expressly for the automotive public, the very designs of the facilities are auto-related. The primary character-defining elements include a large screen which often also served as a sign, the ramped parking spots facing the screen, and the projection/concession building. Route 66, along with many major highways, is dotted with extant or remnant theaters, typically located on the historic periphery of a town or city.

Recreational/Travel Stops/Destinations may meet Criterion A in the area of Commerce. They may also meet Criterion C if they are a representative example of a type or design. Properties must have been located on or closely associated with U.S. 66 during the period of significance.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A requires that a recreational or travel stop, or tourist destination show a clear association with U.S. 66. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that it be a representative example of a type or style, or that it represents a period or method of construction, and that it retains integrity from its period of significance.

Travel stops, recreational facilities, and tourist destinations must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship and design. For a property to retain integrity of location and setting it must be at a location directly adjacent to, or accessible from Highway 66.

By their very nature, it is important to understand these stops were not necessarily located alongside the highway. While some operations were able to take advantage of a close proximity, others demonstrated their marketing prowess by being able to draw customers some distance from the highway. Properties located some distance from the historic alignment must demonstrate that the highway was a prominent avenue for attracting customers. This may be demonstrated through evidence of signage or advertising that highlights access from Highway 66.

Properties should retain original overall design. Integrity of setting is an important aspect for this resource type. The retention of period signage will enhance the property's eligibility but the loss of signage in and of itself will not render it ineligible.

Tourist stops along Route 66 often are vacant or are no longer used as attractions. Such properties may possess sufficient surface or subsurface remains to be eligible under Criterion D. To be eligible under Criterion D the setting, feeling and association of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains should be sufficient to yield information on the construction, evolution, use, and occupation of the property based on a well-considered research design.

Roadside Parks/Picnic Areas

Description

Of declining importance over time in the history of U.S. 66, and thus also often neglected in documenting the road, are the small wayside features placed explicitly to serve the traveling public. These features provided travelers an opportunity to rest, picnic, or camp. These types of properties are differentiated from formal campgrounds that were designed overnight accommodation. Camping at these waysides was informal and often discouraged by authorities. These roadside accommodations mark a different period in time when travelers were more inclined to stop by the side of the road. These historic roadside parks are often now overlooked. Communities and state departments of transportation commonly provided such public facilities as a service. These roadside features often included a picnic table and a fire pit, and sometimes included monuments, such as directional signs, route markers, or commemorative markers. As the road matured and as the number of commercial waysides increased, these rest stops became less important to the traveler.

Significance

Parks and picnic areas that remain along U.S. 66 stand out as survivors of an earlier time distinguished by slower travel, shorter travel distances during a day, and more modest expectations of accommodations. These resources represent the earliest evolution of the automobile culture, when the road was still free and open and before commercial venues began to dominate the roadside. The properties represent a philosophical change in the planning and construction of highways and in various communities' reactions to the traffic the new road brought.

Roadside Parks/Picnic Areas may meet Criterion A in the area of Transportation or Recreation. Some, such as the Sayre City Park in Oklahoma, have added significance for their association with programs active during the New Deal. They may also meet Criterion C if they display the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, or method of construction. In order to qualify, the properties must have been located on U.S. 66 during and retain integrity from the period of significance. Properties that were created within the last fifty years, but no later than 1985 will need to meet Criteria Consideration G.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation and/or Recreation and Culture requires that a property show a

clear association with U.S. 66. A property may also be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture or Landscape Architecture. Of note are the park/rest areas constructed by highway departments as upgrades to the highway. It may also be eligible under Politics/Government or Social History if it was constructed by a program active during the New Deal, such as the Works Progress Administration or National Youth Administration.

Roadside parks, waysides, picnic areas, and the like also have a high potential for significance under Criterion D. This is especially true of the early, informal parks and waysides, but also the formally designed properties also may yield important information. The use and evolution of these properties is little known or researched and archeological investigation, with well-developed research questions might yield significant clues as to how automobile travel and leisure evolved. These properties need to retain integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. For "improved" waysides, integrity of materials is also important. The properties need to retain integrity from when the wayside was an integral part of U.S. 66.

Often, time has not been kind to these parks and waysides. Their obsolescence has been assured by changing routes and changing modes of travel. Many roadside parks have been abandoned and their locations forgotten. Such properties may possess sufficient surface or subsurface remains to be eligible under Criterion D. To be eligible under Criterion D the archeological integrity of the site should be sufficient to provide important information on the construction, evolution, and use of the site.

Property Type: Road Support/Maintenance/Law Enforcement

Description

After U.S. 66 was designated and improved in the 1920s and 1930s, it became the responsibility of each state to maintain the highway and enforce safety regulations. Each state's highway department faced continual challenges to improve and maintain their sections of Highway 66. The originally designated route was made up of existing state and local roads. Federal aid money was used by the states to improve the existing road or construct new, upgraded segments. Sections of the highway were routinely repaired, repaved, or rerouted. After World War II, highway departments widened numerous sections from two to four lanes to alleviate congestion. In order to meet the demands of maintaining the highway, state highway departments built garages and yards on or near the highway to house maintenance and construction equipment. With the construction of the interstate system, a number of these garages were either razed or sold for private use while many continued their original use, but expanded for added responsibilities.

Highway safety enforcement became a major concern on U.S. 66. Along with the rise in automobile and truck traffic came a corresponding increase in accidents. The highway earned the moniker "Bloody 66" due in part to the dangerous nature of some its sections. Most states created highway patrol offices in the 1920s in order to provide law enforcement regulation and oversight on the nation's roads. An example of this legislation was the creation of a statewide police force in Illinois in 1922 of "sufficient number of State Highway Patrol Officers to enforce the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Laws."[296] To meet the needs of enforcement, states built highway patrol offices along major highways, including U.S. 66. An example is the Illinois State Police Office built in Pontiac, Illinois. Completed in 1941, this building housed a unit of the State Police and included four garage bays for storage and maintenance of patrol cars. Designed in the Art Moderne style, this building continued to be used into the 1980s when it was abandoned in favor of a new patrol station on nearby Interstate 70.

Some states had other enforcement issues. California and other states built inspection and port-of-entry stations

[296] Illinois State Police Website, www.isp.state.il.us/aboutisp/history.cfm.

along U.S. 66. These stations in California were used to tax commercial carriers and to inspect agricultural products entering and leaving the state. As Highway 66 was improved near the Arizona border, an agricultural inspection station was built at the small community of Daggett in 1930. The Daggett Inspection Station was a well known stop on Highway 66 in the 1930s and 1940s, and increasing traffic led to its replacement with a modern facility in 1953. The new facility, composed of an office and a large, open-air steel structure, sheltered four lanes for auto inspections and three lanes for truck inspections. Future research efforts may identify other buildings used for inspection, port-of-entry, or law enforcement functions on Highway 66.

Significance

Road support buildings and structures that remain from the period of significance illustrate the ongoing demands to maintain and repair the roadbed and to ensure motorist safety. By their very nature highways are subject to continual wear and tear and must be routinely repaired and resurfaced. As cars and trucks increased in size and power, and as average speeds on the highway increased after World War II, some sections of U.S. 66 were widened into four lanes by state highway departments. Other sections were improved with wider shoulders and turning lanes. In order to meet the physical demands of the roadbed, state highway departments built maintenance shops and garages along Highway 66 to house equipment and offices. These facilities are significant resources in understanding the design, use and maintenance of the highway.

In addition to maintaining the highway each state was responsible for law enforcement. This included policing the highway and enforcing tax and inspection laws. Locating patrol stations directly along the busiest traffic corridors allowed for access and enabled the police to enforce speed regulations, maintain traffic flow and investigate accidents more efficiently. State police offices along Route 66 are significant in illustrating the day-to-day efforts of states to improve safety and provide law enforcement. Other properties along Route 66 are associated with each state's effort to control agricultural safety or enforce taxes or tariffs on motorists and commercial vehicles. These properties are significant in illustrating how states sought to ensure the safety of its agricultural products or to tax motorists.

Road support buildings and structures may meet Criterion A in the area of Transportation, Government, and/or Commerce for their role in the history of U.S. 66. Properties may meet Criterion C if they are an example of the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, or method of construction. Properties must have a direct association with Route 66 at some point during the period of significance. Those properties constructed, or greatly altered, within the last fifty years, but not after 1985, must meet Criteria Consideration G as exceptionally important examples within the appropriate context.

Registration Requirements

Eligibility under Criterion A in the areas of Transportation, Commerce, and/or Government requires that a road support building or structure show a clear association with U.S. 66. Eligibility under Criterion C requires that it be a representative example of an architectural style or type and that it retains integrity from the period of significance. Road support properties must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and design the period in which it was associated with Route 66.

The property should reflect its appearance from the period in which it was associated with Highway 66. Properties should retain overall design from the period of significance. If properties were built with particular characteristics in order to house or serve an automobile-oriented purpose, these characteristics must be retained. The retention of period signage will enhance the property's eligibility but the loss of signage in and of itself will not render it ineligible. In some instances these properties have deteriorated significantly so that only ruins remain. Such properties may possess sufficient surface or subsurface remains to be eligible under Criterion D. To be eligible under Criterion D, the setting, feeling and association of the property should be intact and surface and subsurface remains should be of sufficient importance to yield

information on the use, evolution, and occupation of the property.

District

Description

Historic districts may be a collection, concentration, or continuity of buildings, structures, objects, or sites that have a direct association with U.S. 66. They may be located in rural, urban, or suburban environments. Usually, historic districts will consist of geographically contiguous resources and land areas that were historically unified by association with Highway 66. This might be in the form of a commercial strip that grew because of the highway's designation or construction, or it might be reflected in a concentration of auto-oriented resources that are scattered on a particular stretch of the road.

The road itself, including pavement, right-of-way and integral structures such as bridges, culverts, and guard rails, might form a linear district. Particular attention should be given to places where an intact segment of the historic highway remains in association with the buildings, structures, objects, and landscape characteristics that defined its setting during the period of significance. District designation allows for recognition of a greater number of resources that, while not individually significant, comprise a distinctive and significant resource collectively.

Significance

The evaluation of significance for historic districts requires several considerations. In the case of a property or district that existed prior to the designation or construction of U.S. 66, the beginning of the district's period of significance would coincide with its association with U.S. 66, provided it is the direct association with the highway that endowed it with significance, and yet could maintain separate eligibility for its association with the history of the local community. If nominated with a date that does not coincide with the period of significance under the context, additional justification for significance independent of its association with Highway 66 is necessary. There may be special cases where properties that are less than fifty year old may be integral to a district whose period of significance began more than fifty years ago and where a majority of the district's resources are greater than fifty years of age. A district with particularly high integrity is more likely to be important at a state or national level than is any individual property.

Emphasis will be placed on districts that represent the salient feature of U.S. 66—businesses catering to long-distance highway travel. While the highway often served as an avenue of local transportation and commerce, its significance, as defined in the 1990 Special Resource Study is as a cross-country highway. Many significant aspects of its designation and construction are found in altered traffic and commercial patterns and in increased investment in infrastructure and commercial facilities.

A linear district might be composed solely of the road itself and may include as contributing resource those integral structures (culverts, bridges, and engineered cuts and slopes) that are found within the right-of-way. A linear district may also include properties that front the highway alignment with direct association with the use and significance of the highway. Concentrations of automobile-related properties are potential candidates for district designation, even if the roadbed itself has been altered by widening or pavement replacement. These concentrations demonstrate the importance of the highway on commercial patterns or reflect community development or planning ideals. Auto-related businesses are often concentrated at the periphery of towns and cities. They are also commonly found near the intersections of two primary roads.

Registration Requirements

Districts nominated under the context must demonstrate a direct association with U.S. 66 during its period of significance. Those districts that have achieved significance or whose primary components were constructed within the past fifty years, but prior to 1985, must demonstrate exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G. Districts may include within their boundaries resources that have no primary affiliation with U.S. 66, but a majority of the resources in the district must be related to the highway. The district must have sufficient integrity to reflect its historic association with Highway 66 during the period of significance. The district may be composed of (but not limited to) any combination of the Associated Property Types highlighted in this section. Districts with a significant number of potential archeological sites related to U.S. 66 should be considered under Criterion D in addition to any other appropriate criteria. Districts nominated under the context may be eligible under Criterion A with areas of significance in Transportation, Commerce, Community Planning Development, and/or Politics/Government. Districts may also be meet Criterion C if any combination of the roadbed and related structures or the extant contributing resources fronting the road has good historic integrity.

Section G: Geographical Data

This document encompasses all of the known alignments that were used as U.S. Highway 66 during its period of significance, as well as adjacent associative properties from its east terminus in Chicago, Illinois to its western terminus at Santa Monica, California. This includes both major and minor realignments that developed through time. This document covers the eight states in which U.S. 66 passed and, by doing so, presents a national context for the highway. Following are the major alignments of U.S. Highway 66 by state.

Illinois

The Illinois alignments are detailed in Section G of the MPDF "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through Illinois" (1997). Going north to south in Illinois, Highway 66 begins at the intersection of Jackson Boulevard and Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago. From Chicago the historic alignments of Route 66 extend south through Joliet and Wilmington, and then parallel Interstate 55 to Bloomington and Springfield. South of Springfield there are two alignments on either side of Interstate 55 to the community of Staunton. South of Staunton these two alignments merge and continue south until there is a variation again at Granite City. One alignment leads into Missouri at the Chain of Rocks Road and Bridge south of Edwardsville. Another alignment connects with Broadway Avenue and crosses the McKinley Bridge over the Mississippi River into Missouri south of Granite City.

Missouri

In Missouri, the alignments of Highway 66 are detailed in the report "Route 66 in Missouri, Survey and National Register Project" prepared for the National Park Service Route 66 Program by Becky Snider and Debbie Sheals in 2003. Going east to west Route 66 winds through St. Louis on two historic alignments and then parallels Interstate 44 to Gray's Summit. At Gray's Summit the two alignments merge and Route 66 follows county and state highways as well as frontage roads as it winds on either side of the Interstate to Rolla. South of Rolla, Route 66 extends through the Hooker Cut and community of Devil's Elbow before reaching Waynesville. From Waynesville, Highway 66 continues to weave in and out of the interstate on secondary roads until it reaches Springfield. There are two historic routes through Springfield and then Route 66 follows State Route 96 to Carthage. From Carthage, Highway 66 follows U.S. 71 to Joplin and then follows State Route 66 to the Kansas state line.

Kansas

In Kansas, Route 66 extends through the southeast corner of the state for about twelve miles. After entering the state Highway 66 follows an old alignment to Galena and then turns south to Baxter Springs. South of Baxter Springs, Route 66 crosses into Oklahoma on U.S. 69.

Oklahoma

The location of Highway 66 in Oklahoma is detailed in Section G of the MPDF "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" (1994). After entering the state, Route 66 follows U.S. 69 through Quapaw and on to Afton. Past Afton Highway 66 follows U.S. 60 and State Route 66 to Claremore before intersecting with State Route 167. Route 66 follows State Route 167 to Tulsa and then south to Sapulpa. Route 66 follows State Route 66 through a series of small communities before entering Oklahoma City. After jogging through the city, the alignment on State Route 66 continues west through the communities of El Reno and Weatherford before winding along either side of Interstate 40. Route 66 continues on frontage roads and business loops off Interstate 40 before existing Oklahoma at the community of Texahoma.

Texas

In Texas, going east to west, U.S. 66 follows frontage roads along Interstate 40 as well as business loops through the communities of Shamrock, McLean and Alanreed. Route 66 continues on frontage roads and county roads until Amarillo where if follows Business Loop 40. West of Amarillo, Route 66 continues as frontage roads and business loop roads through the communities of Vega and Adrian. A notable abandoned section of Highway 66 can be traveled at Glenrio which is on the Texas-New Mexico state line.

New Mexico

The location of Route 66 in New Mexico is detailed in Section G of the MPDF "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through New Mexico" (1993). After entering New Mexico at Glenrio, Route 66 follows frontage roads and county roads until it passes through Tucumcari on a business loop for Interstate 40. From Tucumcari west, Highway 66 follows the alignment of Interstate 40 to Santa Rosa. Past Santa Rosa there are two alignments of U.S. 66; one route follow U.S. 84 north to Las Vegas (Romeroville) and Santa Fe, while the other continues along frontage roads on Interstate 40 west to Albuquerque. The alignment of Route 66 from 1926 to 1937 through New Mexico followed present-day U.S. 84 to Las Vegas and then on county and Interstate 25 frontage roads to Santa Fe. South of Santa Fe, Route 66 follows Cerrillos Road south towards Albuquerque and winds in and out on frontage roads of Interstate 25. At the community of Algodones, Route 66 leaves Interstate 25 and turns south towards Albuquerque on SR 313. Both variations then rejoin one another and Route 66 continues south from Albuquerque before turning west again on SR 6. Route 66 then intersects Interstate 40 at Suwanee and then exists as a frontage road or county road on either side of Interstate 40 or on business loops through the communities of Grants and Gallup.

Arizona

In Arizona, Route 66 continues west as frontage and county roads along either side of Interstate 40 and as business loops through the communities of Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, and Williams. At the community of Ashfork, Route 66 leaves Interstate 40 on State Route 66. Highway 66 then curves in a large arc through northwest Arizona on State Route 66 through the small communities of Seligman and Peach Springs before entering the city of Kingman. South of Kingman, Highway 66 has two variations; the alignment of Route 66 from 1926 to 1952 follows Mohave County Road 10 while the post-1952 alignment is now incorporated into Interstate 40. The variation on Mohave County Road 10 winds through the Black Mountains and the community of Oatman before rejoining Interstate 40 at the California state line.

California

Route 66 crosses the Colorado River into California and then winds through the community of Needles. Going west from Needles the original alignment follows Interstate 40 until Goffs Road and then curves to the northwest and southwest before crossing Interstate 40 on the National Old Trail Highway. This two-lane road extends through the desert and the small communities of Essex and Amboy before turning northwest and rejoining Interstate 40 at Ludlow. Route 66 is on frontage and county roads along Interstate 40 until reaching Barstow. Past Barstow, U.S. 66 continues on the National Old Trail Highway through the small communities of Helendale and Oro Grande before intersecting Interstate 15 at Victorville. South of Victorville the alignment of Route 66 weaves in and out of Interstate 40 on frontage roads before descending into the San Bernardino valley at the Cajon Pass. A well preserved section of the original alignment parallels Interstate 15 through the Cajon Pass to the valley below. Route 66 then follows Cajon Boulevard into San Bernardino and along Mt. Vernon Avenue to Foothill Boulevard. Highway 66 then turns west onto Foothill Boulevard (U.S. 66) and continues west through the communities of Rialto and Fontana. The alignment of Route 66 follows Foothill Boulevard to Pasadena and then several variations occur through Los Angeles. The main route follows Santa Monica Boulevard before turning south on U.S. 101A and ending at Lincoln Boulevard.

Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This document is based on the "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study," a context prepared by Dr. Michael Cassity of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma which was published in December of 2004. The context was prepared by the author under a contract with the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Thomason and Associates of Nashville, Tennessee, revised the document and prepared additional associated property type descriptions under a separate contract with the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. National Park Service staff from the National Trails System-Intermountain Region, Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, and National Register office, made subsequent revisions to the document.

In order to prepare the context, the bibliography of primary and secondary sources relating to U.S. Highway 66 was reviewed by the contributors. The number of published sources relating to Route 66 is extensive and these sources are included in the following bibliography. The contributors also benefited from four statewide contexts, surveys, and nominations. These included the following individual state Multiple Property Documentation Forms:

- "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through New Mexico" prepared in 1993;
- "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" prepared in 1994;
- "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through Illinois" prepared in 1997, and;
- "Route 66 in Missouri, Survey and National Register Project"

These studies helped to define the type of properties identified along Highway 66 as well as the characteristics and integrity properties must meet in order to be eligible for the National Register.

Following the review of the source materials for Route 66, Dr. Michael Cassity drove the length of Route 66 during the spring and summer of 2004 to gather additional information and photograph and document representative property types. Information concerning extant properties along Route 66 was also provided to the primary author by Michael Dr. Arthur Gómez and Michael Taylor and Kaisa Barthuli of the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program.

In 2004, the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program contracted with Thomason and Associates, to prepare nominations for 28 individual properties. This contract was extended into 2006 in order to prepare nominations for an additional dozen properties. These properties were typically nominated under existing state Route 66 contexts. There were, however, two states in which a Route 66 context had not been developed, and existing state contexts, that because of their age were due to be updated. In order nominate individual properties not covered by existing contexts, the National Register office in Washington, D.C., recommended that the "Route 66 Corridor National Historic Context Study" be reworked into a national context. This effort was completed by Thomason and Associates at the request of the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program with additional input from National Park Service staff.

This context is intended to serve as a basis for future nomination efforts along Route 66. It is not meant to replace existing state Route 66 contexts, but to complement these documents and to address additional issues of an extended period significance, national level significance, and Criteria Consideration G from a national perspective.

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