

DO NOT
BUY THIS
GUIDEBOOK
IF YOU
WERE BORN
AFTER 1969:
ROUTE 66



CRUDEN BAY BOOKS

INTRODUCTION

If you were born prior to 1969 you have a unique opportunity - to drive a highway nostalgically. To take a road trip and remember how it was to drive when you were young - when gas stations were service stations, when road food meant Mom-and-Pop joints, when business signs meant neon. And that means only one road - Route 66.

Why is this a unique opportunity? Who is going to return to drive the interstates they grew up on? Historic I-95, historic I-80, historic I-10. Nope, it isn't going to work that way. Sure drivers will return to scenic roads like the Pacific Coast Highway or the Blue Ridge Parkway but that will be to see the sights again, not to relive a way of life. You are the last generation that has a chance to hop in your car and experience a Route 66 era that actually speaks to you.

Why 1969? If you were born after that year you would not have started driving until Route 66 was gone - at least officially. The road was decommissioned in 1985 and removed from highway maps. Drivers born in 1970 and afterwards can enjoy this book as well - and absolutely do so - but you won't be driving to remember how YOU once were. You will be driving to experience how AMERICA once was. You will be exploring Route 66 as we visit Revolutionary War battlefields - as history. In the future you may even see re-enactors on Route 66, dressed in uniforms pumping gas and checking under the hood. Yes, people used to do that at gas stations.

Don't feel badly. Those born before 1969 suffered the same fate with the Lincoln Highway. Way back when roads had names, not numbers. The Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental highway, finished in 1913. In the 1930s, when Route 66 was in its teen years, the Lincoln Highway was far more famous. It sponsored a nationwide radio pro-

**DO NOT BUY THIS GUIDEBOOK IF YOU WERE BORN AFTER 1969:
ROUTE 66**

Copyright 2022 by Cruden Bay Books

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the Publisher.

All photos contained herein were obtained from personal collections or represented as being in the public domain online. If that is not the case and the source for the image was not identified when published on the Web please contact the Publisher.

**Cruden Bay Books
184 Kanuga Heights Lane
Hendersonville NC 28739**

gram (Route 66 would have its own television show a generation later) and the Boy Scouts placed 2,400 concrete markers along the route as memorials to Abraham Lincoln. It was America's highway.

In 1938 officials of the Lincoln Highway Association marked the road's 25th anniversary with a nationwide radio broadcast. The purpose was to pass the torch to a "new era in highway building that will create a system of roads far beyond the dreams of the Lincoln Highway founders." They were talking about roads like Route 66, which would be America's first all-weather road (ie, paved) from Chicago to the Pacific Ocean. You can still drive on sections of the Lincoln Highway but no one is doing it nostalgically.

For that matter what is the future of the road trip? The golden age of Route 66 coincided perfectly with the heyday of the American car culture that defined much of the 20th century. Remember how the milestone event of your teenage years was getting your driver's license? Cars are not at the center of young lives that way anymore. And haven't been for a while. Driving for pleasure seems as alien as rushing to answer your rotary phone because you didn't know who was on the other end.

So this is the time. And if you were born before 1969 you are the one who has to do it. Route 66. Road trip. The magic is running out.



Despite its out-sized place in the American imagination, America's Main Street enjoyed only a relatively brief time in the baking sun. The entire road was not paved until 1938. President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the interstate highway system in 1956 and the modern limited-access roads began replacing the outdated two-laned Route 66. In 1985 the entire road was decommissioned and removed from maps.

Almost immediately Americans recognized that something had been lost. Preservation groups sprouted and President Bill Clinton signed into law a bill providing \$10 million in restoration funds. The National Park Service made grants available. Even so, it wasn't long before Route 66 found its way onto "Most Endangered Sites" lists.

What is it that people were so afraid to lose? Route 66 was not the first long distance highway, not by a long shot. The first interstate highways were built and promoted by private road associations led by businessmen with auto interests. The Lincoln Highway was spearheaded by Carl Fisher whose Indiana firm supplied every acetylene headlamp on American cars. The Lincoln Highway was dedicated in 1913 with 3,389 miles running through 13 states from New York to California. On its heels came the Dixie Highway, the Spanish Mission Trail, the Liberty Highway, and others.

One automobile tycoon who did not participate in the road-building mania was Henry Ford. Ford was selling the most cars of anybody with his \$490 Model T but he argued that if people got used to private money building roads they would never demand that the government - much more qualified for the job - get involved. As it turned out Ford need not have worried. In 1910 the automobile was a plaything for the rich and there were only 500,000 in the entire country; by 1920 there were eight million cars registered in the United States, one for every 10 adults. The federal government had no choice but to get involved in constructing new roads. Legislation was passed in 1916 and again in 1921 resulting in the creation of the American Association of State Highway Officials.

Job one was taming the spiderweb of private roads with a numbering system that is still in use today: north-south roads received odd numbers and east-west routes even numbers. The main routes hopped across the country in multiples of ten. The names disappeared (although the Lincoln Highway Association lobbied to keep its name list-

ed with its new number 30) but in some cases the magic of motoring transferred from names to numbers.

The U.S. 66 Highway Association formed to promote "the shortest, best and most scenic route from Chicago through St. Louis to Los Angeles." Their route promised no new necessary construction as existing roads were stitched together to connect communities along more than 2,400 miles. The plan was accepted in Washington and Route 66 was open to travelers in 1926.

The first time Route 66 penetrated the national consciousness was not with wheels, but feet. In 1928 pioneering sports promoter C.C. "Cash and Carry" Pyle staged the First Annual Transcontinental Footrace - over 3,400 miles from Los Angeles to New York City. From California to Chicago the race used Route 66 every step of the way. The winner would be the pedestrian with the lowest total elapsed time after the daily "laps." While the competitors slept away their aching feet in tents each night Pyle staged a carnival and issued daily reports on the "Bunion Derby" to a press that included the nation's first mobile radio station.

Pyle's brainchild attracted 275 entrants, including long-distance running stars from around the world. Of the 55 marathoners who finished the race the surprise winner turned out to be a 20-year old part-Cherokee farmhand named Andy Payne. Payne hailed from Claremore, Oklahoma which happened to be a town right smack on Route 66. Payne and the highway basked in national acclaim. Andy also pocketed the \$25,000 first prize which he used to pay off the mortgage on the family farm. C.C. Pyle did not make enough money to pay the winner of the Second Annual Transcontinental Footrace and there was never a third.

Route 66 was not a static road, especially as paving was introduced. The general alignment always stayed the same, however, as the route shifted to smooth out sharp turns, eliminate railroad crossings, and to

find better ways through congested urban areas. A fully paved version of America's Main Street did not appear until Texas contractors laid concrete in Oldham County in 1938.

John Steinbeck gave Route 66 its next notoriety the following year with the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, the story of the Joad family blown off their Oklahoma farm by "Dust Bowl" drought conditions and forced to head to California. A year later *The Grapes of Wrath* became a beloved motion picture, winning two Academy Awards. In describing the Joads' travels across the Southwest Steinbeck dubbed Route 66 "The Mother Road" - a moniker it would never lose.

Following World War II Route 66 entered its golden years. The Great Depression and World War II were in America's rear view mirror, times were prosperous, and the road trip vacation was invented. The battered Joad farm truck was replaced by the convertible and the station wagon and Route 66 now meant fun and adventure. When nostalgia buffs go looking for Route 66 today this is the America they are looking to find.

The highway even got its own fun theme song, courtesy of Bobby Troup. In 1946 Troup was 27 years old and driving across country to try his luck in Hollywood. He spent a lot of the trip on US 40 and was intending to work that road into a tune but his wife Cynthia offered the tagline "Get Your Kicks on Route 66" as they ventured further west. American culture was forever altered. Nat King Cole recorded the original version of "Route 66" in 1946 and it went to #11 on the Billboard charts. Bing Crosby backed by the Andrews Sisters charted with the song that year as well. Chuck Berry took "Route 66" to rock and roll and the Rolling Stones covered it on their debut album. In 1982, with the actual road in its depth throes, the Manhattan Transfer took home a Grammy Award for their jazzy rendition of Troup's 36-year old tune.

Route 66 was entrenched in the ethos of American youth in 1960

when Martin Milner and George Maharis rode their Corvette into the country's living rooms each week on the CBS television series *Route 66*. For five seasons, as the interstate highway system was methodically eliminating the obsolete two-lane highway, TV's Tod and Buz made the case why it should not ever go away. Route 66 was independence, freedom, and possibility.

But away it inevitably did go, although some 85 percent of the road can still be found. In 2002 the United States Congress initiated the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program making grants available through the National Park Service to those looking to restore existing buildings along America's Main Street. The program is set to expire in 2022 and it is far from certain that additional Route 66 monies will be forthcoming from the federal tap.

So as the window on Route 66 nostalgia begins to close what is still out there? What stories do the buildings tell? Let's have a look.



KEY TO IDENTIFYING ROUTE 66 PULLOVERS

Escape to Nature

Route 66 was designed to link towns, not parks. But there are prime opportunities to take a break from the road.

Guardian of the Road

Never restored, never torn down; these photo-ops have seen it all on Route 66.

Heritage Business

Businesses that have been in operation since before the interstates, either continuously or with a break or two in between.

Historic Infrastructure

Original bridges and road segments from Route 66.

Museum

Vintage vehicles, classic photographs, Mother Road memorabilia - places that carry on the spirit of Route 66.

Restored Architecture

Buildings that have been returned to their best days on the Main Street of America, but maybe without the businesses.


Roadside Art


Works inspired by life on Route 66.


Roadside Attraction


The unique pieces of Americana that were once the lifeblood of Route 66.


THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU DEPART

 This guidebook assumes an East to West journey on Route 66, which is the traditional orientation of these types of books. Sure, it's a two-lane road and plenty of people explore starting in the West and everyone hates to be conventional but 80% of Americans still live east of Oklahoma City.

 There are no turn-by-turn written directions inside. If you aren't all in on GPS by now you should be.

 Even though the National Park System is tangentially connected with Route 66 and its preservation the old highway is not a national park. You won't see any familiar NPS signs out there. All the Historic Route 66 signs are the responsibility of the individual states. Each does a good job but some do a better job of leading pilgrims to the old road than others.

 There is plenty more to see on Route 66 than is featured in this book. These "Hall of Famers," if you will, were selected because they help tell a wide range of stories on America's Main Street.

 There are many great websites with Route 66 information but it is difficult to keep all those electronic pages co-ordinated when you want them on the road, hence printed books like this. There are also great books to read for background before you go:

A Guide Book to Highway 66 by Jack D. Rittenhouse, 1946. The University of New Mexico Press has issued a facsimile (barely larger than a smartphone) of the first attempt to lead motorists across the country.

Route 66: the Mother Road by Michael Wallis, 1990. The first and best to capture the original Route 66 after the road was excised from highway maps.

The Route 66 Encyclopedia by Jim Hinckley, 2012. The prolific Route 66 author collects the sum of his work in a single volume.

ILLINOIS

291 miles



No state had an easier creation of U.S. Route 66 than Illinois. Route 4 was the first numbered route from Chicago to St. Louis and it was paved all the way by 1926. All it really required was switching some highway signs. But the Illini's early good fortune just pushed back its headaches for a few years. While other states hustled to upgrade existing infrastructure to meet government standards for the

new Route 66, the Illinois pavement sailed through the 1930s as it became the most heavily-used highway in the state. With the burden of transporting troops and supplies during World War II, however, the roadbed began to sag and become dangerous. Thanks to a \$400,000 cash infusion from the Defense Highway Act of 1941 Illinois was able to upgrade the Mother Road in time for the explosion of post-war travelers. Much of what those motorists experienced driving through the Land of Lincoln was far different than the congestion found in its urbanized anchors of Chicago and St. Louis. Today no state outdoes Illinois for small-town Route 66 pride.

Lou Mitchell's

Chicago
565 W Jackson Boulevard



The world's first skyscraper - all of ten stories and 138 feet - appeared on Chicago's streets in 1885. Just month's later, on January 29, 1886, Carl Benz applied for a patent for the first automobile. Never do those two symbols of modern American life mesh so perfectly as they do in Grant Park on the Lake Michigan lakeshore. Stand at the eastern terminus of Route 66 with your back to the water and look westward with 2,451 miles ahead of you. Your first task is to navigate the phalanx of Chicago's humbling army of skyscrapers - 133 stand more than 500 feet in height. In a few blocks Route 66 crosses the Chicago River and the buildings become more human in scale. At 565 West Jackson is Lou Mitchell's - a popular stop to fill up for the Mother Road ahead since forever. The breakfast institution pre-dates Route 66, started by William Mitchell in 1923. When Bill handed the keys to his son Lou, he had one request: when the cash register rings enough to permit it, make a trip back to the Greek village where dad was born. The post World War II travel boom made that possible in 1952 and the trip became an annual pilgrimage. The old country traditional greeting of offering sweets to guests carries on inside the largely unchanged eatery with Chicago-born Milk Duds passed out to all women and children.

Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket

Willowbrook
645 Joliet Road



Irv Kolarik got his start on Route 66 in 1927 like many others - he set up a hot dog stand and a couple of picnic tables at the Triangle Goat Farm. He put in a single gas pump and in short order enough people were stopping at Kolarik's Triangle Rest that Irv was able to build a prop-

er service station with a lunch counter and two repair bays. One day a pair of business-minded sisters let Irv know the quality of his food was wanting. They offered to teach him a fried chicken recipe if he would buy all his fresh poultry from their family farm. Best deal Irv ever made. He was soon selling so many chicken dinners that the two service bays were converted into dining rooms. When his lease expired in 1946 he brought architect Eugene Stoyke out from Chicago to build a new single-story brick restaurant with plenty of windows, so his customers could watch the action at the little airport across the street. He called his new place the Chicken Basket. The southern part of Chicagoland was one of the first sections of Route 66 to be bypassed and traffic on I-55 was roaring right past Kolarik's back door by the early 1960s. With process servers at the front door Irv sold out to Dell Rhea whose father-in-law had been the family with the magic chicken recipe. Rhea was a one-time executive with the Chicago Convention Bureau and he re-directed the Chicken Basket's marketing to locals instead of travelers. Business boomed again and hungry travelers were making a point to find a way off the interstate to try the award-winning chicken, still marinated in brine overnight and then refrigerated for six hours after a bath of milk, flour and bread crumbs.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Wilmington

Illinois 55



When trail blazers and eventually road builders first came to the Great Plains this is what they saw - prairie grasslands. Probably in the neighborhood of 240 million acres. By the times Route 66 was paved more than 99 percent of the ecosystem was gone. That included the 36,000 acres here that were purchased from local farmers to open the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant. The works were models of their kind during World War II, churning out over 900 million bombs, shells, mines, and the like. The Arsenal produced over one billion pounds of explosive TNT before being decommissioned in the 1970s. As the contaminated land was cleaned up it was turned over to the United States Forest Service which opened the first national tallgrass prairie in the country in 1996 on more than 20,000 acres of restored lands. The Midewin Preserve is the largest open space in Chicagoland and the biggest swatch of heritage prairie east of the Mississippi River. Bison were introduced to graze on their ancestral lands in 2015. The park is laced with hiking trails on grass and mulch and one self-guided trail leads to the bison pasture.

Ambler Beckler Texaco Station

Dwight

417 W. Waupansie Street



With Chicagoland fading in the rear view mirror, Route 66 headed into the American heartland in earnest, connecting small towns and villages. Big Oil was sensitive to the impact that this intrusion may have on residential communities so when Jack Shore built this Texaco station he designed it to look like just another house in the neighborhood. The commercial cottage was gabled with a shingled roof and wooden clapboards dressed the siding. Windows were framed with lintels and shutters and decorated with flower boxes. Basil "Tubby" Ambler came to manage the station in 1938 and stayed until 1966. The pumps kept operating until 1999 which gave the town bragging rights to the "oldest continuously operated gas station on Route 66." A few years later owner Phillip Becker gave the property to the Village of Dwight which matched a \$10,400 grant from the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program to bring the Texaco dispensary back to its pre-World War II appearance. The Ambler-Becker station now does duty as a welcome center.

Standard Oil Station

Odell
400 S West Street



To say that the United States was gripped by anti-monopoly fervor in the late 1800s would be soft-selling the point. The Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 passed the United States Senate 51-1 and the House of Representatives 242-0. That year John Rockefeller's Standard Oil controlled 88 percent of refined oil in the country's pipelines. And there weren't any automobiles on the roads yet. It was not until 1911 that the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of Standard Oil when gasoline was becoming its primary product. One of the resulting 34 companies was Standard Oil of Illinois. Patrick O'Donnell signed on to sell Standard Oil products when he opened his service station in 1932; he based the homey design on a company model from 1916. Odell was born of the railroads and was a grain collection point dating back to Civil War days. As the railroads transitioned to highways the town was so busy with traffic that a pedestrian underpass had to be built beneath Route 66. The village of 1,000 people supported ten gas stations along the Mother Road. One by one they shuttered when I-55 went into service and O'Donnell's old canopy-style station was slated for demolition in the 1970s. The townspeople called off the wrecking ball and engineered an award-winning restoration, right down to the historic Standard Oil Company sign.

Route 66 Hall of Fame

Pontiac
110 West Howard Street



John Walters founded the Shirley Oil Company in 1923 with a business plan to deliver fuel from the railhead in town out to the surrounding countryside. After Route 66 opened he established a foothold on the highway with leased space in a McLean, Illinois repair shop, setting up gas pumps and a six-stool lunch counter. Walters sold Dixie brand gasoline, a name that conjured up Southern hospitality at the time. By the 1940s Walters was providing round-the-clock service and the Dixie Truckers Home boasted a full restaurant and guest cabins. The original building burned to the ground in 1965 but truckers were being served from one of the cabins the next day. The Route 66 Association of Illinois organized in 1989 and the following year began displaying artifacts and souvenirs from the Mother Road in the Dixie Trucker's Home for its Hall of Fame. After the Walters family sold the operation in 2003 the new corporate overlords de-emphasized the Route 66 connections and the museum exhibits moved up the road to Pontiac into the city's restored 1900 brick municipal complex. The second floor is dedicated to the life and times of Bob Waldmire, the fabled Route 66 wanderer and traveling artist. The Hall of Fame hosts Waldmire's iconic 1972 Volkswagen van - his studio-home on wheels - and out back lives the converted school bus he called his "road yacht."

Sprague Super Service

Normal
305 East Pine Street



Despite hard economic times the 1930s were the sweet spot for eclectic rural gas station architecture. The first gas pumps were installed in front of general stores or even just clearings in the road. Filling stations following this period were standardized beacons of oil company brand identity. In between local Route 66 entrepreneurs created cottage-style buildings that blended into existing neighborhoods and announced their hospitality to passing motorists. William Sprague called his operation "Super Service" when it opened in 1931, without exaggeration. Gas was dispensed under the canopy of a two-story brick Tudor Revival manor house the likes of which were seen nowhere else along the Mother Road. There was enough room inside to house both the Sprague family and the station attendant. Sprague sold Cities Service Company products, which pulled its crude from giant east Oklahoma reservoirs; since the 1960s the brand has been CITGO. In 1940 the highway was expanded to four lanes, but on the other side of town. Sprague's Super Service, in all its opulence, was relegated to Business Route 66 and within a few years it was gone. Jack Rittenhouse, in his seminal *A Guide Book to Highway 66* in 1946 did not even give mention to the alternate route or Sprague's. Accordingly other businesses moved in - a welding company, a bakery, even a bridal shop. The pumps were hauled away in 1979 but the slice of Merrye Olde England on old Route 66 survived to be restored and acquired by the town as a gift shop.

Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup

Shirley
5257 Old Route 66



When American settlers first came to Illinois, lured by land selling for \$1.25 an acre, they found mostly prairie grass thriving in thick glaciated soil. But every now and then the newcomers would find small groves of hardwood trees that had managed to establish a bulwark against the grasses. These prairie groves were the first areas to be settled since the woodlands provided timber for fences and cabins and shade to escape the summer heat. Isaac Funk arrived from Kentucky in the 1820s to stake his claim. Isaac concentrated on running cattle and shaping early Illinois politics with his friend, Abraham Lincoln. His descendants, however, turned their attention to the land. In 1891 grandson Arthur tapped the abundant sugar maples for commercial purposes for the first time. Funks Grove Pure Maple Sirup - the proper spelling for the thick, sweet liquid - sold for \$1 a gallon. By the time Route 66 was routed past the maple grove the Funks were producing 240 gallons of sirup per season, along with pure maple candy. After I-55 arrived signs pulled enough sweet-toothed motorists from the highway to keep the business strong. Today's modern taps pull ten times as much golden sap from the trees. The grove itself stands as the largest prairie grove in Illinois with more than 1,000 acres. Designated a National Natural Landmark, Funks Grove features four nature preserves with miles of trails.

Mill Museum

Lincoln

738 South Washington Street



Across the United States there are 205 towns named for Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President. The first was right here in Illinois in 1853 when Abe was still a backcountry lawyer preparing papers for the Chicago & Mississippi Railroad that was founding the town. Paul Coddington had no interest in trafficking in Abe Lincoln nostalgia when he opened his Blue Mill restaurant on July 25, 1929. Coddington's hook for travelers along Route 66 was going to be a Dutch motif and he designed his building to resemble a windmill. For the Grand Opening the Coddington kids dressed in Dutch clothing and greeted guests in wooden shoes. All that was missing were the dikes. In 1945 Albert and Blossom Hoffman took over the business which became familiar for its breaded veal schnitzel; in time the tenderloins became pork. The Blue Mill survived the decommissioning of Route 66 but four generations of Hoffmans would fade away in 1996. By that time the old windmill had been taken out in a storm and the Dutch motif was a distant memory - the property seemed to be a prime candidate for the bulldozers. Improbably, twenty years later some \$90,000 was raised to replace the roof, restore the windmill, fix up all 44 windows in the original building and reopen as a museum.

Lauterbach Giant

Springfield

569 Wabash Avenue



Fiberglass was developed as a viable commercial product around the same time as Route 66, in the 1930s. The first practical applications were for things like boat hulls and auto bodies. In the 1960s, however, another type of fiberglass began appearing on the Mother Road. Bob Prewitt entered the fiberglass game to manufacture lightweight horse trailers. He added a fiberglass model of a horse to his trade show display and soon began fielding orders for the horses instead at his California company. One day an order came in for

a giant Paul Bunyan to promote a Sacramento restaurant. Prewitt created a mold of a 14-foot tall "Giant Man" with one hand facing down and the other palm aimed towards the sky so as to simulate the holding of an axe. The advertising gimmick caught on immediately and soon there were thousands of giant roadside pitchmen for mufflers, tires, carpets and the like. The Uniroyal Tire Company commissioned a platoon of giant "Uniroyal Gals." The Arab Oil embargo of the early 1970s swatted away orders and International Fiberglass stopped production of the Giant Men in 1974. All molds were destroyed but the pitchmen were still out there. The giants can still be found along Route 66 - Wilmington, Illinois boasts a 30-foot tall "Gemini Giant" erected during the 1960s Space Race and Flagstaff, Arizona has a lumberjack crafted for the one-time Paul Bunyan Cafe, among others. The Lauterbach Giant has led a bit of a peripatetic existence - he arrived in Springfield in 1962 as a tire man but was sold to the Roundup Cafe and Motel in Farmersville south of town. After the motel closed in 1978 the big guy returned to automotive duty for Lauterbach Tire.

Brick Road

Auburn

Curran Road (north of town, off Route 4)



When Carl Fisher was paving his Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 1909 he chose bricks instead of concrete for its superior traction. The bricks were formed of shale, not clay, and fired at twice the typical temperature in the kiln. More than three million were laid by hand on a bed of sand and fused with mortar. The “Brickyard” would not be fully covered in asphalt until 1961. Illinois put down its first roadway bricks in 1915 but with increased traffic in the 1920s engineers in the highway department conducted extensive tests with concrete, asphalt, and bricks. Bricks were the clear loser. In 1932, however, when the alignment of Curran Road was altered to eliminate a 90-degree turn local masons got the call since during the depths of the Great Depression the labor-intensive brick laying created more jobs. There are a few detours onto original brick roadways remaining along Route 66 but none are more pleasing than the arcing 1.4-mile journey through the Auburn countryside. Bricks are still replaced as needed, as well as the flanking ribbons of concrete curbs.

Ariston Café

Litchfield

413 Old Route 66 North



Transportation has always been a high stakes game in America, whether it be wagon roads, railroads, or auto roads. In 1850s Illinois everyone knew the Terre Haute & Alton Railroad was coming. But where? The people of Hardinsburg hedged their bets by constructing buildings on top of wooden sledges. Hardinsburg indeed lost the gamble in 1854 when the railroad went two miles north. So everyone pulled their houses to the railroad and Litchfield was born. Pete Adam felt like he won the transportation lottery decades later when his Ariston Café on Route 4 in Carlinville, started in 1924, became a part of Route 66. But fortune again smiled on Litchfield when the road was realigned in 1930. Adam’s café was not constructed on prairie runners so he picked up and followed the Mother Road to Litchfield. The new Ariston Café opened in 1935 when Route 66 was the heaviest traveled road in Illinois. But dang if the road didn’t move again, this time replacing the increasingly congested two-lane asphalt in front of the Ariston with a four-lane highway around back. Instead of moving, Adam installed a large neon sign behind the restaurant to draw hungry motorists into the parking lot. They could find the front door from there. Not only did the ploy work but the Ariston Café remained open and in family hands until 2018. Still locally owned and a bit larger, the American, Italian and Greek fare is served up in an atmosphere and setting that has varied little since Nat King Cole’s “Route 66” was coming out of car radios.

Soulsby Service Station

Mount Olive
710 West First Street



The first coal discovered in North America was uncovered by French explorers in what is now modern-day Illinois; the Land of Lincoln is still the country's fifth-largest coal producer. Led by Mount Olive native Alexander Bradley the town became a hotbed of union activity in the 1890s. Tensions snapped in 1897 in the nearby town of Virden in a confrontation that left seven miners and five company guards dead. When local pastors proved less than welcoming to memorials to the workers the union purchased a plot of ground in Mount Olive for the Union Miners Cemetery. Before she died in her nineties fiery fighter for worker rights Mary Harris "Mother" Jones requested to be buried here and her memorial dominates the graveyard. In the 1920s William Henry Soulsby was forced out of the southern Illinois mines by an injury. As he looked around for a new living he saw the new Route 66 and plowed his savings into a residential-style service station that he built himself. His family continued to pump gas until 1991, laying claim to being the longest continuously operating filling station on the original Mother Road. A restoration has taken Soulsby Service Station back to the golden age of motoring.

Chain of Rocks Bridge

Mitchell
Mississippi River



Some 130 bridges, more or less, cross the Mississippi River - none were built specifically to carry the Mother Road across the famous water. The first was constructed in 1874 by St. Louis resident and bridge-building pioneer James Buchanan Eads. The Eads Bridge was the first built primarily of steel and was the longest arch bridge in the world. To test

its holding power before sending steam locomotives across an elephant was walked from Missouri to Illinois. The first bridge selected to carry Route 66 traffic over the Mississippi was the McKinley Bridge that funneled travelers directly into downtown St. Louis. After a few years the road was re-routed onto the Municipal Free Bridge that linked with East St. Louis. Before that bridge could be named for General Douglas MacArthur in 1942 the main road was re-aligned once again to skirt downtown St. Louis to the north on the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The multiple truss bridge was an ambitious private project that eventually cost \$2.5 million when completed in 1929 and resulted in a unique 22-degree bend in the middle around the namesake rocks that created dangerous shoals before being submerged by a dam. Although tolls were collected this was an exceedingly user-friendly passage with 400 elm trees planted on the Illinois side and the Chain of Rocks Amusement Park on the Missouri side. At 40 feet in width the Chain of Rocks Bridge was much roomier than its predecessor but was still not up to the needs of modern traffic. The inevitable I-270 bridge arrived next door in 1967. None of the three Route 66 Mississippi River bridges continue to carry vehicular traffic but all still stand, not worth the cost to demolish. The Chain of Rocks Bridge has been converted into a cornerstone of bike greenways and pedestrian corridors.

MISSOURI

301 miles



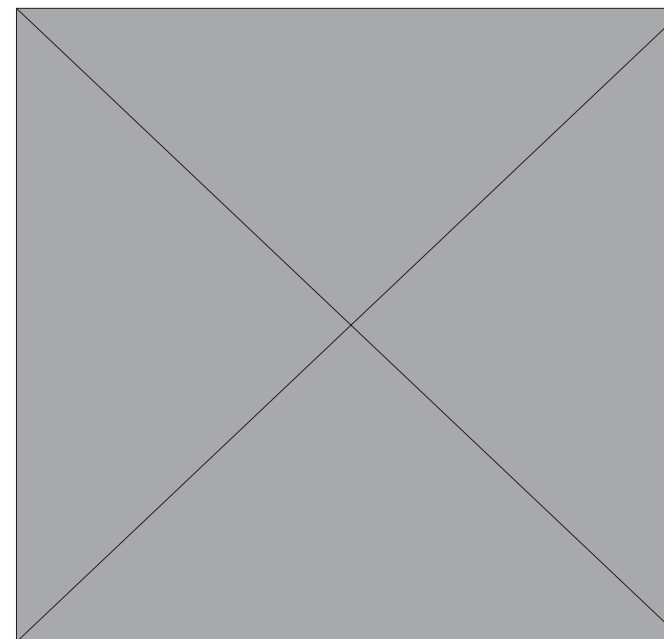
When Route 66 was christened in 1926 St. Louis was the sixth largest city in America with some 800,000 citizens. After pulling out of St. Louis the early travelers would not see a town of 100,000 people on the Mother Road until reaching Los Angeles. In Missouri the route followed the path of the Great Osage Trail, blazed through the Ozark Mountains by migrating bison centuries

before. This has been the preferred crossing across the Show-Me State ever since. When I-44 superseded Route 66 it heeded so closely to the historic corridor that America's Main Street can be driven on frontage roads between towns in many places.

Ted Drewes Frozen Custard

St. Louis

6726 Chippewa Street



Ted Drewes has been dishing out frozen custard to Route 66 travelers for more than 90 years. Locals know the ice cream stand as a favorite place to score Nova Scotia balsam fir trees for Christmas in the winter. The store is known to Mother Road aficionados around the world. But when the original Ted Drewes passed away in 1968 at the age of 70 his sweet treat

business didn't merit mention until the sixth paragraph. The earlier words were devoted to his career as a standout amateur tennis player in St. Louis. There was even mention of his high school basketball exploits. At Ted Drewes vanilla was the only flavor and a four-scoop cone could be had for a handful of coins even after Route 66 was decommissioned in the 1980s. By that time the number of serving windows had expanded from five to twelve. When sugar was rationed during World War II Drewes substituted honey into his recipe developed at a traveling carnival. In 1959 malts so thick they were served upside down in signature Ted Drewes yellow cups were introduced and the "concretes" quickly became a menu favorite. Through the years there have been many offers to franchise the Ted Drewes formula but the family insists it will never happen - you have to cruise Route 66 to experience this concrete.

Steiny's Inn

Route 66 State Park-Eureka
96 N Outer Road



Flooding has always been the defining feature of this slice of land beside the Meramec River. Farmers took advantage of the rich soil for crops and when the *St. Louis Star Times* newspaper purchased 480 acres to start a family resort many of the buildings were raised on stilts. Over the years the summer resort morphed into a Route 66 town called Times Beach with a population over 1,000. In the 1970s the city moved to improve its dirt roads but couldn't afford full paving. So Russell Bliss was hired to oil the streets periodically to keep the dust down. Bliss had other contracts as well, including hauling chemical waste for a local manufacturer of the defoliant Agent Orange. In 1982 investigative reporters revealed that for years Bliss had been spraying toxic dioxins on the roads of Times Beach. When the worst flood the Meramec had ever seen happened that winter the town was evacuated and the Environmental Protection Agency recommended that residents not return. Within a couple of years the evacuation was mandatory; it was the first buyout of an entire town by the federal government. Times Beach became a poster child for environmental degradation and in the 1990s the entire town was incinerated. When all was safe the land became the Route 66 State Park. The only structure left standing was a 1935 roadhouse on the east side of the Meramec River from the main town which became the park headquarters and museum. The deck has been removed from the Meramec River Bridge so Edward Steinberg's old inn is disconnected from the park where nature is busy reclaiming the townsite and you can still drive on a short segment of the original Route 66.

Shaw Nature Reserve

Gray Summit
307 Pinetum Loop Road



Henry Shaw was born into an iron-making family in Sheffield, England in 1800. When the business began to falter Shaw sailed to the untapped markets of North America to drum up sales. In 1819 he stepped off the steamship *Maid of Orleans* in the frontier village of St. Louis. Missouri was two years away from statehood and the community stretched just three blocks from the Missouri River. Henry set up a hardware store and did brisk business right from the get-go. By 1840 Shaw retired as one of the largest landowners in the burgeoning city. He now pur-

sued his love of plants and traveled extensively to gather specimens for a dreamed-of Missouri Botanical Garden. The horticultural displays became a reality in 1859, one of the first in the country. By the 1920s the urban smog was threatening some of the garden's more exotic plants. In 1926, the same year America's Main Street was officially cobbled together, the Shaw Nature Reserve was established as an extension of the Botanical Garden. The main route of Route 66, today Route 100, veered away from Gray Summit in 1932 but the reserve, with over 17 miles of hiking trails and a Missouri garden with over 500 natives, is a quick detour away.

Meramec Caverns

Sullivan
1135 Highway W



When Missouri isn't going by the nickname "Show-Me State" it uses the nickname "Cave State." There are more than 6,000 caves in Missouri but travelers along Route 66 likely knew only one - Meramec Caverns. To promote his tourist cave Lester Dill had yellow and red advertising signs painted on some 200 barns in 14 states, peppering the Mother Road for hundreds of miles. The 35-year old Dill bought what had been known as the Salt Peter Cave in 1933 and changed the name. For 140 years the underground rooms had been mined for saltpeter, a necessary ingredient in making gunpowder. Dill didn't stop his promoting after luring motorists from the highway. While the tourists were on cave tours he hired "bumper sign boys" to assault the parking lot to wire cardboard advertisements to car bumpers. Eventually he just used adhesive and the souvenir bumper sticker was born. Dill developed Meramec Caverns until there were seven levels for underground visitors to visit. When he found century-old artifacts deep in the cave he put out the word that this was once a hideout for legendary Missouri bad boy Jesse James. More cars began pulling off the highway. Dill passed his promotional wizardry down to subsequent generations - in the internet age the Meramec Caverns operators grabbed "Americascave.com" as its web address.

Wagon Wheel Motel

Cuba
901 East Washington Street



Leo Friesenhan earned his spurs as a master stonemason in St. Louis so when he got the call to construct tourist cabins down the road in Cuba with native Ozark sandstone he knew how to put up buildings that last. Not only is the Wagon Wheel Motel the oldest continuously operating guest quarters on Route 66 but the restored Tudor-style accommodations look just like they did at the 1936 opening. The first tourist courts constructed along the Mother Road were mostly single unit cottages with a carport or garage conveniently attached. Robert and Margaret Martin, however, fashioned their overnight quarters with buildings containing three units. There would eventually be 14 cabins, each with steeply pitched roofs and ornate stone trim around the windows. Stacked against the hundreds of idiosyncratic motor courts along the Mother Road, the Wagon Wheel stood out. If that wasn't enough to pull travelers in for the night subsequent owner John Mathis designed the two-piece neon sign in 1947 that became a Route 66 icon. In its first incarnation as the Wagon Wheel Cabins the operation included a cafe and a gas station for Standard Oil products. These were soon eliminated to provide additional room for lodging that was then \$2.50-\$3.00 per day. Today it is \$72 to \$138.

“Four Way” Phillips Station

Cuba

102 W Washington Street



There are eight towns in the United States named Cuba, none remotely near the Caribbean island. Cuba, Missouri is the biggest, with a population around 3,000. Like many communities the original name sprang from the post office - Amanda, who was the postmaster's wife. When the town was platted in 1857 in

anticipation of the coming of the Union Pacific Railroad the surveyors chose a new name based on their fondness for the island after a visit returning from the California gold chase. Apples were the first big industry in Cuba but by 1946 Jack Rittenhouse was writing in his guidebook that “though still important as an agricultural center, Cuba is now an important highway town.” One of the most popular stops on that highway was the Midway, a restaurant/garage/new car dealership, that thrived at the busy intersection of Highway 19 and Route 66. In 1932 Paul T. Carr jumped into the game by building a sharp-gabled service station in front of his house across the street. The Carr Service Station began as a Phillips 66 retailer but would eventually dispense Standard Oil and then Mobil Oil gasoline. Whatever the brand, Carr’s was always known locally as “the four way” because stop signs were needed at each corner to control traffic. In the 1980s the pumps were removed and the building became a bakery. After the oven shut down owner Lynn Wallis rejected offers to buy the lot and instead worked with the Phillips 66 organization to restore the cottage-style station, right down to the unique roof pattern and identifying cursive “P” on the front brick chimney. The three garage bays received a mural treatment, one of a dozen historic wall paintings in the “Route 66 Mural City.”

Devil’s Elbow Bridge

Devil’s Elbow

Big Piney River on Teardrop Road



It is a toss-up who is more excited to get to Devil’s Elbow Bridge - artists, kayakers, or Route 66 buffs. Two centuries ago timber was cut down, milled in the Ozarks and floated down the Big Piney River to St. Louis. The bend in the river was so severe here that logjams were a commonplace; “Devil’s Elbow” was probably the most family-friendly euphemism to survive from those days. The double span steel truss with the gently curving approach on the east side arrived with a dedication on July 4, 1924. Route 66 officials chose this way to cross the Big Piney. It was still a sleepy corner of the Ozarks in 1940 when Fort Leonard Wood was created nearby to train U.S. Army infantry troops. There was such an influx of traffic on Route 66 that the road abandoned the quaint river crossing by building one of Missouri’s first four-lane stretches of highway. It required blasting 90 feet out of the Ozark sandstone in what became known as the Hooker Cut, an engineering feat that brought motorists just to drive through the exposed rock. The Devil’s Elbow Bridge trundled on but eventually was closed to traffic. After a makeover in 2014 the bridge happily re-opened to vehicle crossings.

Route 66 Shield

Waynesville
301 U.S. Route 66



Revolutionary War commander George Washington once summed up one of his most trusted generals, “Mad” Anthony Wayne, this way: “Open to flattery—vain—easily imposed upon—and liable to be drawn into scrapes.” But aside from the President himself and the Marquis de Lafayette no figure from the Continental Army captured Americans’ hearts like Wayne. Across the United States there are seven cities, 10 towns, eight villages, 16 counties and on and

on named for the Revolutionary War leader from outside Philadelphia. When Route 66 rolled through downtown Waynesville in 1930 the population was 392. But as guide book writer Jack Rittenhouse noted in 1946: “During the war, Waynesville was the chief recreational center for the soldiers from Ft. Leonard Wood. It experienced a sudden boom...” That boom drove the highway south of town. Nostalgia travelers will skip that bypass and on the main square see the 1000-pound representation of the *Route 66 Shield*, imagined by Tim Berrier. The art installation stands in front of the brick Romanesque Pulaski County Courthouse from 1903, the county’s fourth seat of government and now a museum. Route 66 became an official historic Missouri highway in 1990 when then-governor John Ashcroft signed the designation into law here.

Roubidoux Bridge

Waynesville
Roubidoux Creek



The Missouri State Highway Commission designed this handsome bridge in 1923 when the roadway wasn’t even paved. Construction was contracted out to George W. Koss of Des Moines, Iowa. Koss was a civil engineer for the Chicago Northwestern Railway until striking out on his own in 1907 to specialize in pouring concrete bridges. Koss Construction completed bridges across the Midwest from Alabama to Minnesota and did this work for \$44,035. The 415-foot long bridge across Robidoux Creek was a five-span concrete spandrel design that became a favorite of Missouri highway builders in the years prior to World War II but you won’t see another one like it in the Show-Me State today. The original Route 66 crossed over the Roubidoux Bridge from the beginning in 1926. It was widened with a sidewalk in 1939 and given a full facelift in the early 2000s.

Munger Moss Motel

Lebanon
1336 U.S. Route 66



Nelle Munger Megan began chasing tourist dollars on America's Main Street in 1929 when she built a sandwich shop with her husband Howard at the ramp for the Devil's Elbow Bridge. Howard died in 1936 and her new husband Emmett Boss took over the open pit Kentucky-style barbecue. The roadside stop was so popular that when new owners Jessie and Pete Hudson bought the business in 1940 they kept the Munger Moss name. They even kept it when they followed the new road alignment to Lebanon in 1945. The following year 14 tourist rooms sprouted from seven stucco cabins raised on the property. As big chain motels began creeping onto Route 66 in order to compete the Hudsons added air conditioning,

free televisions, an outside pool - the works. The most obvious change was the installation of an eyeball-grabbing neon sign hanging off the highway. The new amenities seemed like wasted money with the announcement of the interstates but fortune smiled on the Munger Moss - the new I-44 so closely hugged the forsaken Route 66 at this point that the nearest off-ramp turned out to be only a half-mile from the motel. While mom-and-pop motels up and down the Mother Road were shuttering, the Hudsons added 25 rooms in 1961. The trademark sign scored a restoration grant in 2010 to return to its original splendor.

Route 66 Museum

Lebanon
915 S Jefferson Avenue



Arthur Truman Nelson arrived in Lebanon with his family in 1882 at the age of 18 from New York, looking to start an apple orchard. By the time he took over the business after his father's death in 1901 the Nelson Orchard was growing ten varieties of apples, shipping the fruit from "the land of the big red

apple" all across the country. Nelson was one of the first to use trucks to drive his crop to market, or at least attempt to do so. Roads were horrible and Nelson became a leading voice for improving rural Missouri roads. He served on the Ozarks Trail Committee and was instrumental in bringing the multi-state road through Lebanon. As Route 66 began to stir Nelson donated chunks of his farm for the new highway. When travelers began using the road he opened the Nelson Service Station selling Barnsdall Be Square Gasoline. A hamburger stand, tent camp, Spanish-styled hotel and opulent Nelson Tavern followed. With ornate plantings from around the world "Nelsonville" became a featured Route 66 attraction. In 1934 a fully formed "village" came to Nelson in a dream and he set out to create it across the highway. The cabins were constructed of stone, hand-picked by Arthur, and situated around a fountain highlighted by colored lights. Word quickly spread along the Mother Road of Nelson's creation as one of the most attractive stops on the highway. The Nelson family assumed management of the Dream Village but without his passion the enterprise did not make it out of the 1950s before being razed. The Route 66 Museum in the Lebanon-Laclede Library building features a full re-creation of a 1950s gas station and a roadside diner. And a detailed diorama of the Nelson Dream Village.

Hubcaps on Route 66

Springfield
1000 W College Street



Without Springfield businessman John Thomas Woodruff there would be no Route 66. Not the road, but the name. Along with Cyrus Avery, "the Father of Route 66," the two were instrumental in developing the route from Chicago to Los Angeles. When the federal highway system coalesced in the 1920s it was decided that all transcontinental routes running north to south would be numbered with odd numbers and those east to west in even numbers. Furthermore, the major routes would be spaced in multiples of 10; it is a system in use a century later. Initially the Chicago to Los Angeles route had been assigned Route 60. Avery and

Woodruff were delighted. But that number had already been assigned to a different road, one going through Kentucky. An indignant William J. Fields, governor of Kentucky was not about to let that injustice stand. When he complained Avery and Woodruff's road was changed to Route 62. Deflated but not defeated the men thought it over before sending a telegram from Woodruff's office: "Regarding Chicago Los Angeles road if California Arizona New Mexico and Illinois accept sixty six we are inclined to agree to this change. We prefer sixty six to sixty two." And that is how Springfield became the "Birthplace of Route 66." There are many Mother Road souvenirs in the city thanks to several re-alignments through the years: the Rockwood Motor Court, the Gilioz Theatre, the Steak N' Shake with its original signage, This stainless steel sculpture is the work of Joe and Terry Malesky.

Gary's Gay Parita Sinclair

Ash Grove
21118 Old Route 66



Gay and Fred Mason built a filling station on this stretch of Route 66 in 1930. The Mason's sold Harry Sinclair's products, the largest oil company in the Midwest. A fire destroyed the Sinclair station in 1965 and that appeared to be the end of a familiar story - another business along America's Main Street gone and forgotten forever. But Gary Turner was restless in his retirement so why not build a spot-on replica of the old Sinclair station. The building itself turned out to be a draw to the new wave of Mother Road adventurers but not as much as Gary, who tapped into his experience as a gun-slinging train robber in the Old West stage shows at Knotts Berry Farm in California. From his outpost in southwestern Missouri the gregarious Turner acted as a story-telling tour guide for the people and experiences awaiting travelers along the entirety of Route 66 until his death in 2015. The Turner family has picked up the torch as caretakers for the popular attraction, stuffed with signage, antique vehicles, memorabilia, and hospitality.

Spencer Garage

Spencer
County Road 2062



The tiny village of Spencer was bypassed by Route 66 not once but twice - and that was after it already had become a ghost town. The first stirrings of civilization here were in the 1860s when Oliver Johnson built a flour mill on the creek that took his name. A general store opened in 1868 with a post office and the nascent town took the name of the owner, Spencer, who otherwise seems to be lost to history. By 1907 there were a couple of churches and a schoolhouse in the little farm community but the town became dented after the access road became impassable. In 1925 entrepreneur Sydney Casey caught wind that the routing for the proposed Route 66 would include the old stagecoach road through Spencer. He paid \$400 for the entire town which included two acres of land and the store building. When the roadway indeed appeared Casey re-opened the store and attached a row of buildings from which he dispensed Tydol gasoline. The Caseys added a platform across the road to hold community dances and soon an enclave of nine tourist cabins known as Camp Lookout appeared. In 1961 Route 66 was realigned, taking the service station with it. What was left of Spencer disappeared when I-44 bypassed everything. A ghost town for a second time, Spencer remains in private hands and various states of restoration. Out front is a rare stretch of original Route 66 pavement as it crosses Johnson Creek on a 1923 steel truss bridge.

Boots Court Motel

Carthage
107 S Garrison Avenue



Arthur Boots' professional background was as a machinery salesman but he certainly possessed the innate instincts of a hustling Route 66 entrepreneur. Before establishing his service business Boots researched traffic patterns and locations extensively, eventually settling at the corner of Routes 66 and 71, what the locals fancied as "The Crossroads of America." Boots started with an office building in 1938 he designed himself, giving the vernacular structure a streamlined Art Moderne style with rounded corners and a smooth stucco dress. Then came a pair of gas pumps for his Red Horse filling station. Next followed a motor court, stuffed with all the

latest amenities, including "A Radio in Every Room" as his prominent signing advertised. Boots charged a hefty \$2.50 a night for one of his rooms to encourage an upscale clientele. Legend has it that Clark Gable, the "King of Hollywood," once signed the guest register. With the demise of Route 66 hard times inevitably descended on the Crossroads of America. Demolition was stopped by public protest in 2003 and in 2011 the Boots was rescued from duty as low-income housing by sisters Debye Harvey and Pixie Bledsaw. They returned the motel to its stylish beginnings and set about restoring the rooms one by one. The Boots Court Motel under the glowing green neon lights is thus one of the oldest operating tourist courts on the entire Main Street of America. In keeping with the 1940s vibe the Boots still has a radio in every room - but no television.

66 Drive-In

Carthage

17231 Old Route 66 Boulevard



Richard Hollingshead began showing outdoor movies in his New Jersey driveway in 1933 with a projector mounted on the hood of his car and a screen pinned to some trees. A radio placed behind the screen provided the sound. He patented the concept for what he called Park-In Theaters. Hollingshead battled in court to retain exclusive rights to movie drive-ins but he ultimately lost and outdoor screens sprouted everywhere by the 1950s. At one time there were more than 5,000 drive-in theaters operating in America; today 95% are gone. The

numbers are similar in Missouri where 11 outdoor screens remain, including this one on the Mother Road. Bill Bradfield, who owned the Roxy Theater on the square in Carthage, expanded his cinematic footprint in town with the opening of the 66 Drive-In on September 22, 1949 with room for 500 cars. The steel tower holding the screen was an apropos 66 feet high. Bradfield put his son-in-law, V.F. Naramore, in charge of operations which began with an opening night presentation of *Two Guys from Texas*, a musical farce with Dennis Morgan and Jack Carson as song-and-dance men who get stranded on a dude ranch when their car breaks down. The Carthage drive-in died along with Route 66 in 1985 but was rescued and spruced up for an April 18, 1998 reopening. Most of the theater infrastructure is original, including the glass-block clad Art Deco ticket booth.

Route 66 Mural Park

Joplin

619 S Main Street



Bobby Troup signposted Joplin, Missouri in his landmark 1946 song, "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66." For travelers heading west at the time that sentiment was more than a song lyric. Joplin was the last stop for adult refreshment before reaching Kansas, where the alcohol laws were among the nation's strictest. While national Prohibition ended in 1933 with the repeal of the 18th Amendment, the ban on liquor sales would not end in the Sunflower State until 1948, the last state to remain dry. Route 66 ran right on Main Street in Joplin for seven blocks, providing ample opportunity for motorists to find a watering hole. There won't be any businesses from those days in downtown Joplin today but the buildings will look familiar. To honor that colorful slice of Joplin history the town installed two tile murals designed by Paul Whitehill and executed by artists Chris Auckerman and Jon White, *Cruisin' into Joplin* and *The American Ribbon*.

KANSAS

13 miles



The signing into law of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways in 1956 meant that states would suffer the loss of many communities that had grown up along Route 66. In Kansas it was different; the entire state would be bypassed by the interstate system. Historically, the southeast corner of the Sunflower State has been one of the nation's busiest lead

mining districts. That infrastructure included paved roads which attracted the planners of the original alignment for Route 66. When the highway was commissioned in 1926 only Illinois and Kansas offered motorists completely hard surfaces from the get-go. That route required a ninety-degree jog through 13 miles of Kansas. Pavement wasn't a novelty for interstate planners so they selected a more direct route for I-44. So long, Kansas. Old Route 66 is still there, waiting for road warriors to exit off the interstate.

Cars on the Route

Galena
119 N Main Street



Rich veins of lead made Galena the first mining town in Kansas in 1877. Times were good and the population exceeded 10,000 by 1900. There were half as many people when America's Main Street linked in during the 1920s to staunch the decline. When Route 66 went away there was nothing to take its place as the Galena population dwindled under 3,000. The old Little's Service Station built in 1934 on Main Street became the restoration project of Betty Courtney, Melba Rigg, Renee Charles and Judy Courtney. When the work was done "4 Women on the Route" dished out sandwiches and gifts to Route 66 explorers. Parked outside was a rusty 1951 International Harvester L170 SERIES boom truck that would go on to make a star turn as Tow Mater in the animated movie series, *Cars*, voiced by Larry the Cable Guy. The tow truck is kept in running condition and rents to special events. With the success of the movie franchise the station name was changed to Cars on the Route.

Old Riverton Store

Riverton
7109 SE Highway 66



Back in the day, if you were looking for a competitive game of croquet along Route 66, this is where you came. Leo Williams, who built the store in 1925 after a tornado wiped out his previous operation next door, added a regulation court complete with a walled enclosure and lights for night play. In addition to croquet competition folks could also get everything from Texaco gasoline to freshly barbecued venison to shoes at the Williams' store. Leo died in 1948 but his wife Lora could still be found managing things into the 1970s. The second - and current family, the Eislers - took over in 1973. The vernacular commercial architecture of the single-story brick building has remained unaltered as it enters its tenth decade. Except the croquet court is gone. It was sacrificed for parking long ago when the welcoming business was tabbed as a official stop in Route 66 literature.

Rainbow Bridge

Baxter Springs
SE Beasley Road off N Willow Avenue



Concrete is the most widely used building material in the world but its adoption was slow in coming. The first use of reinforced concrete in an arch bridge was in Hungary in 1889. When James Barney Marsh, an Iowa engineer and bridge builder, started constructing concrete and steel bridges in the early 1900s he published papers to advocate their use. In 1912 Marsh received a patent for a reinforced highway bridge that became known as the Marsh Rainbow Arch. He would oversee the construction of some 70 such bridges, many in the Sunflower State. There were three Marsh Rainbow Arch bridges on the short 13-mile jaunt for Route 66 through Kansas. When two of them were hauled away for scrap the Kansas Historic Route 66 Association became alarmed and stepped in to save the Rainbow Bridge. A spot for the 1923 bridge on the National Register of Historic Places alone did not insure its survival. Every Route 66 motorist drove across this graceful 130-bridge until the Mother Road was bypassed by I-44; it is still open for vehicle and pedestrian traffic beside the crossing that replaced it.

Phillips Station

Baxter Springs
940 Military Avenue



In 1927 Frank Phillips decided to enter the gasoline retail business. For months company officials puzzled over a trade symbol for their new gasoline. Marketing people were leaning toward the current fad of combining a numeral with a word or two. A special executive meeting was called for the sole purpose of settling the question of a trademark. On the eve of the meeting a Phillips official was road-testing the new gasoline. "This car goes like 60 on our new gas," he exclaimed. "Sixty nothing," roared his driver, glancing at the speedometer, "we're doing 66." The incident took place on Highway 66, heading out of Tulsa. That clinched it. "Phillips 66" would be the brand name. The first station opened in Wichita, Kansas. Phillips Petroleum took over this Tudor-cottage service station on September 2, 1930 - barely two months after Independent Oil and Gas opened for business. With the bypassing of Kansas by I-44 on the horizon Phillips sold the property in 1958. A little more than a decade later it was housing office workers. The Baxter Springs Historical Society took over the property and restored the building to its 1940's appearance in 2005. It is now a Route 66 Visitor Center.

OKLAHOMA

373 miles



Twenty years before the creation of Route 66 three of the states it would pass through were not even states. Oklahoma was one of them. When it came to select the roads that would make up the route barely 10% of them were paved. Road improvements led to new alignments and Route 66 was not stabilized through the Sooner State until the 1950s.

By that time the Mother Road was humming and motorists came to regard Oklahoma as marking their entrance into the American West. Towns bypassed by the shifting highway did not thrive but they adapted rather than disappear as was common in those western states to come. Oklahoma boasts more drivable miles of Route 66 than any other state and they tend not to be deserted miles. No individual was more associated with Route 66 than Oklahoma native son, Will Rogers. Rogers promoted the road in his radio appearances and newspaper columns to such an extent that after he died in an Alaskan plane crash in 1935 Congress considered naming the entire Main Street of America after him. The initiative failed but in 1952 the U.S. Highway 66 Association dedicated a monument to the Will Rogers Highway at its terminus in Santa Monica, "as Highway 66 was the first toad he traveled in a career that led him straight to the hearts of his countrymen."

Broyles' Station

Commerce
100 N Main Street



Sharp-eyed travelers score a bonus point for thinking that the Dairy King along Route 66 in Commerce was once a cottage-style gas station. Roy Cowherd and Jim Mullen built the vernacular cottage with steep gables to dispense Marathon gas on newly paved Route 66. It was later sold to Loren and Grace Broyles who contracted with Tydol Oil Company and inserted their distinctive Flying A brand logo in the front facing gable. The Broyles started selling soft serve ice cream in 1951 and eventually a twist cone replaced the Tydol logo in the gable. After buying a bag of trademarked Route 66 cookies from the Dairy King walk across the street to see the tiny Allen's Conoco Fillin' Station, known by Mother Road travelers as the "Hole in the Wall Conoco Station." After a restoration it has operated as a gift shop. Baseball fans will be excused for leaving Route 66 in Commerce and seeking out Ythe boyhood home of Yankee legend Mickey Mantle at 319 South Quincy Street. Mantle's family moved here when his father took a job as a miner. A statue of the Hall-of-Famer stands outside Commerce High School baseball field directly on Route 66.

Coleman Theatre

Miami
103 N Main Street



The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, a world's fair in 1893 to honor the founding of America by Christopher Columbus, changed the way Americans looked at cities. Instead of places that just contained jobs and industry cities could be environments of aesthetic enrichment. The fair spawned the City Beautiful Movement that emphasized Neoclassical architecture. The Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915 had a similar impact with Spanish Colonial Revival Style buildings. Master architect Bertram Goodhue had recommended that his temporary buildings be torn down after the fair but the public was so enamored with the extravagant buildings that they were patched up and preserved. Meanwhile Spanish Colonial Revival became the a go-to style for California in the decadence of the Roaring Twenties. George Levi Coleman, who had made his money managing local lead and zinc mining leases, and his wife were theater devotees who traveled widely. Miami had a fine theater - the Glory B - but it was too small to host national touring acts. So Coleman plunged into the theater business, plowing \$600,000 into his Orpheum Theatre in 1929, including a cooling system capable of producing 40 tons of ice daily to enable summer performances. The opulent Spanish Colonial Revival stage was hailed as the finest between Kansas City and Dallas and brought not only first class entertainment to Coleman's hometown but gave California-bound travelers on Route 66 a sneak preview of what awaited them on the West Coast.

Gateway Sign

Miami
Main Street



When the sun set on this land on April 21, 1889 there was no town in central Oklahoma. At noon on the 22nd the federal government opened "unassigned lands," land not allocated for Indian reservations, to homesteaders who raced to stake a claim around a single thread of track on the Santa Fe Railroad, joining those "Sooners" who slipped in ahead of time. That day when the sun went down again there was an Oklahoma City with 10,000 settlers. It was the wildest founding of a city the country had ever seen. Two years later things were different with the proposed county seat for Ottawa County. The location was carefully surveyed and a petition to the U.S. Congress was introduced that resulted in the Department of Interior approving the purchase of 588 acres of Ottawa tribal land for \$10 an acre. Lots were auctioned off and Miami was incorporated in 1895 with 800 residents. The population increased tenfold with the discovery of lead and zinc in the area and the Jefferson Highway that coursed through the center of the country from New Orleans to Winnipeg, Canada in 1915 found its way through Miami. A large gateway sign across Central and C Street greeted visitors to town. The sign was removed in the 1930s when Route 66 took a slightly different route. A new arch was constructed in 2012 that serves as a welcome to one of the longest stretches of downtown on America's Main Road.

Ribbon Road-Sidewalk Highway

Afton
E 140 Road



Route 66 was a "highway" knitted together from existing roads resulting in something a far cry from the modern interpretation of a highway. One of those original roads linked Miami and Afton, a 15-mile journey that encompassed six 90-degree turns along the way. It was a quality roadbed laid by the Western Paving Company in 1922 with a five-inch thick concrete base topped with two inches of hot-mixed Topeka asphalt. The roadway was dressed with a concrete curb and gravel shoulder. Most of the way the road is 18 feet wide but there are also stretches where the road is only nine feet wide. The story likes to be told that Oklahoma was a young state (15 years old) and only had so much money, enough to build a full road halfway or a half road the whole way. There may have been a lack of funds, but the money was coming from Federal Highway Project No. 8. An alternate explanation is that designers figured they could get away with just a single lane where little traffic was expected. No one anticipated the national highway that began arriving in 1926. Nonetheless there was no attempt to widen the road until it was taken out of service completely in 1937. You can still drive on the only section of nine-foot original pavement on Route 66, a National Register of Historic Places site.

Avon Motel

Afton
Highway 60/59



The Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad built through Afton in 1901 and established a repair and shipping center before fading away. Route 66 roared through and Afton teemed with motels and eateries before I-44 bypassed the town in 1957. Through good times and bad Afton's population has rarely deviated more than a few families from 1,000. John Foley built an overnight stop he called Avon Court out on the west end of town in 1936. There were seven square units, each with its own carport. Promotional literature cheerily proclaimed: "Panel Ray Heat, Air Cooled, Clean, Comfortable, Reasonable Rates and a Modern Trailer Park." The 1950s brought multiple owners and eventual abandonment. More than 60 years after the last guests checked out three units remain, providing an arresting photo opportunity and a definite motor court vibe from the original days rolling down Route 66.

Chelsea Motel

Chelsea
N Walnut Avenue and E First Street



"Born of the Highway - 1936. Died of the Highway - 1957." That tombstone inscription could be applied to hundreds of small town "mom and pop" motels along Route 66. It was a time when just a few rooms and some creature comforts could bring enough income to support a family. The Chelsea was constructed "out on the highway" as the Mother Road skipped around the town's business district. In the decade following World War II the number of motels doubled across the United States. To keep pace the Chelsea added the requisite telephone and air conditioning units to its rooms. And in 1947 a big neon sign went up to do battle with the Shady Grove Tourist Camp, the Hester, and others. But there was no competing with the coming of the interstate and big hotel chains at the interchanges. Unlike so many of its cousins the Chelsea was never torn down. Nor was it converted or restored. As a result the privately owned motel building instead found its way onto the National Register of Historic Places as a hallmark of early Route 66 commercial architecture.

Pryor Creek Bridge

Chelsea
S4260 Road



This type of steel-truss bridge was the go-to choice for the Oklahoma State Highway Commission in the early days of road-building but it is the only unaltered example in the state today. The 123-foot span carried Route 66 traffic across Pryor Creek from the beginning in 1926 but was relieved of duty when the route was re-aligned in 1932. The Pryor Creek Bridge is a prime example of the through truss design favored for Route 66 bridges that faced heavy traffic demands. Original truss spans featured trusses only on the sides of the roadway, called

pony trusses. Automobiles required bridges with additional support featuring bracing across the top of the deck, giving motorists the feel of traveling through a framework tunnel.

Totem Pole Park

Foyil
Oklahoma State Highway 28A



Historic Route 66 through Oklahoma is studded with the small towns and kitschy roadside buildings that came to define the Mother Road. There are a string of places to seek out; one that is a short jog off the highway that is certainly worth a stop is Totem Pole Park. Spanish-American War veteran and retired school teacher Ed Galloway settled here in 1937 and began building a totem pole on the back of an outsized turtle. After 11 years he had built a 60-foot totem pole of concrete over a scrap metal and sandstone rock skeleton. Billed as the "World's Largest Totem Pole," Galloway's creation was considered to be a monument to the tribes that lived here when Oklahoma was reserved as Indian Territory but the sculptor himself always said

he built it simply to have something to do. He built other structures on the property including a house supported by 25 concrete totem poles. Galloway's handiwork was disintegrating for decades after his death in 1962 when they were preserved in the 1990s for this park and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Blue Whale

Catoosa
2600 U.S. Route 66



Located at the head of navigation on the 445-mile McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, Tulsa became America's most inland port when the Port of Catoosa opened in 1971. Not long after that the Blue Whale appeared in a pond in Catoosa just off Route 66. Probably just a coincidence. Hugh Davis, an executive with the Tulsa Zoo and fancier of whale figurines, used concrete and welded iron to construct the 80-foot cetacean as an anniversary gift for his wife, Zelta. The Blue Whale featured a diving platform on its tail and slide into the pond from its head. It was intended as just a family fun spot but so many neighbors wanted in that Davis hauled in sand, constructed a picnic area, and hired lifeguards. The smiling whale became a recognizable Route 66 landmark and additional attractions added. Davis closed the Blue Whale in 1988 when the repairs outpaced his ability to keep up. After a decade of deterioration the community began restoration work. In 2020 the Town of Catoosa bought 23 1/2 acres from the Davis family to spruce up the property and keep the roadside attraction pulling motorists off the Mother Road.

East Gateway Arch

Tulsa
East 11th Street



Cyrus Avery was born on the East Coast in Pennsylvania and died on the West coast in Los Angeles. In the years in between he made his reputation as the "Father of Route 66" in the middle of the country. He came to Oklahoma to be an insurance agent but was soon in the oil business; by 1908 he was raising livestock on a ranch in Tulsa. Avery was a prominent voice in the Good Roads Movement advocating for highway construction, eventually taking the position as the head of the Oklahoma State Highway Commission. He lobbied for the federal government to take a stronger position in road-building which landed him on the Joint Board of Interstate Highways. Avery would eventually be instrumental in selecting the route for U.S. Route 66 - through Tulsa, of course - and be directly responsible for the route number. Tulsa has taken its role in the birth of America's Main Street to heart. There are 28 miles of historic Route 66, in two separate alignments, threaded through the city. Millions of dollars have been spent to revitalize and refurbish Route 66, including relighting dozens of heritage neon signs and the installation of dozens of Route 66 planters. All is bracketed by Art Deco-inspired gateways at the east and west gateways to Route 66, installed in 2014.

Rock Cafe

Stroud
114 W Main Street



The Rock Cafe came by its name honestly. Roy Rieves paid \$100 for the land in 1936 and started laying the concrete foundation one wheelbarrow at a time. For building materials he used local sandstone gouged out for the paving of Route 66. The price tag to create the recognizable giraffe-style walls was \$5. The first meals to be served were three years away. During World War II the Rock Cafe was pressed into duty as a Greyhound bus stop. So many service personnel flowed into Stroud that the eatery stayed open 24 hours. After Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985 the diner remained open but was on life support when Dawn Welch took over in 1993. Designation as a National Historic Landmark brought matching grants and loans for a restoration so that a tornado (1999) and fire (2011) could not bring down the Rock. After Pixar scouts for the movie *Cars* stopped into the cafe they and met Welch they had their model for the character Sally Carrera and the Rock Cafe was launched on a media whirl that has sustained business in the years since.

Route 66 Interpretive Center

Chandler
400 E 1st Street



Route 66 came of age at the same time as the Great Depression of the 1930s. One of Franklin Roosevelt's signature programs to combat unemployment was the Works Progress Administration (WPA). More than \$5 billion was authorized to employ young people on projects that would benefit local communities: building parks, roads, post offices, and the like. In the first two years of the WPA 119,000 Oklahomans found jobs such as the Chandler Armory, which was built in two sections from 1935 to 1937. Some 250 quarrymen alone were employed to provide the dressed sandstone used in construction. The Armory found quick use in World War II for the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard but in 1971 the Guard moved to a more modern facility and passed the deed to the city. Private businesses used the deteriorating building for several years before a motivated local preservation group spared the sandstone carcass for a restoration that led to an interactive Route 66 museum and event center. Other Mother Road attractions in Chandler include the original cabins of the 1939 Lincoln Hotel and a prototypical cottage-style brick Phillips 66 station.

Round Barn

Arcadia
107 E Highway 66



Orson Squire Fowler was responsible for two wildly different fads in the middle of the 19th century. One was phrenology, the practice that mental acuity could be determined by the bumps on one's head. The other was eight-sided houses that he championed in a book called *The Octagon House, A Home for All*. Neither are much in vogue

these days but the octagon at least made sense - at least for barns. They offered a greater space-to-surface ratio and thus were cheaper to construct than rectangular barns. Octagonal barns dotted the countryside in the 19th century before being replaced with non-traditionalists by the completely round barn that stayed popular through the 1920s. William Harrison Odor began clearing 320 acres for his farm in the 1890s. Big Bill designed his barn using native red stone for the base and softening bur oak timbers in water to form the intricate rafters. Odor was looking to store hay and grain but during construction his workers kept picturing a dance hall in the loft and offered to pay for hardwood flooring to make it happen. So after the round barn was finished in 1898 every now and then the livestock was shunted aside for community dances. The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad built through the Odor farm in 1902 which led to the town of Arcadia. A dirt road was laid past the barn to get to the railroad tracks that was designated State Highway 7, destined to be Route 66. For decades Mother Road travelers heading west could tell they were nearing Oklahoma City when they caught sight of the landmark barn. In the 1980s when Route 66 was decommissioned the barn - mostly just walls after the roof collapsed - was in sorry shape. Luke Robinson, a local carpenter, saw the relic as a retirement project and formed the Arcadia Historical and Preservation Society. Using the same construction technique as Big Bill Odor before him Robinson executed an award-winning restoration dedicated in 1992 that is open to visitors.

Milk Bottle Grocery

Oklahoma City
2426 North Classen Boulevard



As auto travel grew increasingly popular so too did the imagination of roadside architecture. Buildings sprouted whose appearance told the tale of their business - coffee pots, donuts, cheese wedges, baskets, chickens, hot dogs. This type of novelty structure is known as mimetic architecture from the Greek word for mimic. This sheet metal milk bottle is actually mimetic-adjacent, not an actual building but an advertising beacon. Perched conspicuously on an island in the center of a three-way junction, the 350-square foot brick commercial building replaced a trolley stop on Classen Boulevard, the original routing of Route 66 through Oklahoma City, in 1930. The first occupant was Cooper

Cleaner & Dyer but by the 1940s a food market was in operation here. After selling the roof space for Steffen's Dairy in 1948 to promote its milk on the bustling thoroughfare the business became known as the Milk Bottle Grocery. Aside from the branding on the bottle changing through the years there has been little alteration in the unique setting that has landed the Milk Bottle Grocery on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mother Road Monument

El Reno

W Wade St & S Choctaw Avenue



Pulling out of Oklahoma City heading west on Route 66, El Reno is the first town you reach as you begin to head due west after tacking southwest from Chicago. The original route came right through El Reno and kept the mostly single-story town (there are an average of 11 tornado watches a year) humming until the arrival of I-40 in the 1960s. In its heyday there were dozens of filling stations and eateries along Wade Street and, after a one-block jog, Sunset Drive. Across Wade Street from the Mother Road Monument is a 1934 cottage-style former Phillips

66 station and across Choctaw Street is a 1933 Cities Service Oil Company station with a distinctive Art Deco parapet. At the other end of the block on the opposite side of Wade Street is Robert's Grill that has been serving El Reno signature onion hamburgers to travelers since Route 66 opened in 1926. The monument was an inspiration by mayor Matt White in 2018 to provide a photo op for Route 66 adventurers with room to sit in the numerals.

Provine/Hamons Station

Hydro

U.S. Rt. 66



The rural filling station known to 1930s Route 66 travelers as the Provine Station was constructed by Carl Ditmore in 1929. Ditmore gave his vernacular building a bit of architectural flair by using exposed rafter tails in the eaves on the second floor and tapered piers to support the canopy. There was a small, seven-unit tourist court on the grounds and quarters upstairs for the owner. After 1941 that became Carl and Lucille Hamons who used Carl's inheritance to buy the business; they raised their three children here. After a divorce Lucille kept the filling station open until her death in 2000, a six-decade tenure that earned her the nickname "Mother of the Mother Road" and landed "Lucille's" a niche in the National Register of Historic Places. There was also a place for Lucille in the Oklahoma Route 66 Association Hall of Fame. She penned a memoir describing the frequent travails of operating a rural outpost on Route 66, including taking assorted objects as payment from cash-strapped customers and even buying their cars and finding buses for them to return home in desperate cases.

Oklahoma Route 66 Museum

Clinton
2229 W Gary Boulevard



Of the eight states to be favored by a piece of Route 66 only Oklahoma has established a state-operated museum, run by the Oklahoma Historical Society. For a quarter-century exhibits were developed in Clinton for the Museum of the Western Trails that was operated by the Oklahoma Tourism Department. When the collection was given over to the Historical Society in 1991 it was decided to focus on the Mother Road instead, only five years from its demise. The impetus for the switch was the wealth of artifacts available from Clinton natives Jack and Gladys Cutbert. After two decades of official and unofficial cheer-leading for the Mother Road the Cutberts were widely known as "Mr. and Mrs. 66." The striking retro exterior was designed by architect Rand Elliott fabricated from the core of a Shamrock, Texas diner that was relocated here. "America's Main Street" is re-created with classic art, period music, and commercial remembrances. Across the street is the Trade Winds Motel, said to be a frequent stopping point for Elvis Presley on his cross-country drives from Memphis to Las Vegas; Room 215 was supposedly his favorite place to bivouac.

Glancy's Motor Hotel

Clinton
217 W Gary Boulevard



Chester and Gladys Glancy married in 1925 when anything seemed possible in America. After a year of farming they came to Clinton and tried their hand at running a fruit stand and a restaurant and a filling station and even a carnival. Eventually Chester looked around and saw more money in the motel business on Route 66 than anything else. They built the Glancy in 1939, enlarged it through the years and wound up with a small chain of hotels between Elk City and Oklahoma City. America's mid-20th century fascination with the space age reached architects' desks in the form of free-floating parabolas, star-bursting neon signs, up-tilting roofs, animated shapes, and Crayola paint jobs. It was known as Googie or Doo-Wop architecture. Roadside motels were particularly susceptible to motion-infused design and one of the best places to see an Atomic Age motel along Route 66 in the Glancy after it received an upgrade in 1962 to 75 rooms. There would be no further expansions after the coming of I-40 but the Glancy trundled on until being condemned in 2019.

National Route 66 Museum

Elk City
2717 W 3rd Street



All you need to do to experience all eight states on America's Main Street is hop into a 1959 Cadillac, buckle up and enjoy an interactive journey at the National Route 66 Museum. What's that you say? You can't find a seat belt on the large bench seat? It was not mandatory for new cars sold in the United States to include seat belts until 1968. That is one reason the Mother Road endured the nickname "Bloody 66" for decades. The narrow two-lane road often included harrowing switchbacks and sharp curves without barriers that made for white-knuckle driving even before traffic exploded in the 1940s and 1950s. There were infamous stretches known as "Dead Man's Curve" and "Dead Man's Alley" and "Slaughter Lane." After World War II Arizona reported that one of every seven wrecks in the entire state took place on Route 66. Through the years realignments eliminated notorious curves and additional lanes were added that made driving the Mother Road a safer place. The museum tells the entire Route 66 story through re-creations, exhibits, and historical artifacts. The complex includes several other museums, all watched over by a giant kachina doll named Myrtle looking over Route 66.

Westwinds Motel

Erick
623 Roger Miller Boulevard



When Route 66 first opened in 1926 only a little over of half of American families owned an automobile. One of the most popular styles was the touring car, a large open pleasure machine that seated four or more people. Then came the Great Depression and the automobile was an even more precious possession. The result is that motor courts devoted as much space to the vehicles as they did the occupants, with either a carport or a full garage available. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that auto ownership became commonplace and the emphasis on motel comfort shifted to the humans. The West Winds Motel was built in 1948 and even though long abandoned the motor court still shows the automobile-centric emphasis in its Spanish Mission-style design. The post-World War II era was a time of renaissance in western Oklahoma. The "Dust Bowl" that left Erick nearly deserted had abated and the economy was booming. Erick fancied itself as the beginning of the "real West" for travelers heading out along Route 66. Hence the motel name, the architecture and the still barely perceptible bucking bronco and his gritty rider on the sign out front. For its integrity as a Mission Revival style motor court the West Winds lives on the National Register of Historic Places.

TEXAS

179 miles



The closest the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad ever got to the Pacific Ocean in the 1800s was Santa Rosa, New Mexico, just across the Texas line. To get that far the line pioneered a nearly straight route across the Texas Panhandle. The Ozark Trail Highway followed that route and then Route 66 and then Interstate 40. Most of Route 66 is drivable through Texas but not

so much of the Mother Road in its heyday remains to greet you. The living ghost towns roll by without fanfare: Shamrock, McLean, Groom, Vega, Adrian. Economic activity in the Panhandle has always been sucked into the vortex of Amarillo where the Route 66 Historic District lives on 15 blocks of Sixth Avenue between Georgia and Western streets.

Tower Conoco

Shamrock
101 E 12th Street



George Nickel applied for a post office out in the dusty plains of the Texas Panhandle in 1890, submitting the name "Shamrock" as the town name. Nickel was lucky to get the name approved but unlucky when the post office burned down and never opened. It took the coming of the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railway a decade later to make the name official. Shamrock had a big year in 1926 - oil was discovered nearby and Route 66 came to town. It wasn't long before the long, straight East 12th Street was bursting with service stations, motor courts, and diners. By the time I-40 bypassed Shamrock in 1959 the oil industry had moved on, both draining commercial life in the town. The country's craving for nostalgia decades later resurrected many businesses along Route 66, none more spectacularly than Tower Station and the adjoining U-Drop Inn. Local architect J.C. Perry created the flared Art Deco towers and eye-catching chevrons and neon accents from ideas scratched in the dirt by owner John Nunn. Nunn pumped Continental Oil Company gas and served food in the only eating joint within 100 miles of Shamrock. Tower Station received a \$1.7 million restoration in 2003 and took a star turn in the computer-animated Pixar film *Cars* as Ramone's House of Body Art. Primarily a visitor center these days, the Tower Conoco even boasts a Tesla supercharger station not far from its old-fashioned gravity-fed gas pumps.

Devil's Rope/Route 66 Museum

McLean
100 Kingsley Street



Alfred Rowe was born in Peru, educated in England and came to America to learn to run cattle. He arrived in Texas in 1878 and with his brothers established the RO Ranch on Skillet Creek in the Panhandle. The 25-year old Rowe was one of the first foreign investors in Texas ranch country to actually live the life. He would eventually control 200,000 acres. In 1898 Rowe bought out his brothers and set about looking for an efficient way to get his Longhorns to market. He engineered the establishment of a cattle-loading operation with the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Texas Railroad and laid out the town of McLean around it. As his own family grew Rowe relocated his wife and children back in England. In 1912 he booked a return trip on the maiden voyage of the R.M.S. *Titanic*. He perished along with more than 1,500 of his shipmates. Alfred Rowe's departure was a dramatic one; McLean's has been a gradual one. As the population seeped away there was nothing to replace the closed businesses and the streets provided such a frozen-in-mid-20th-century appearance that the McLean Commercial Historic District was created. Fifteen of those businesses were service stations; the well-preserved cottage-style Phillips Petroleum station at 218 West First Street was one of the first in the state. The Devil's Rope and Old Route 66 Museum opened in 1991, devoted to the history of all things barbed wire and the Route 66 Association of Texas. It is not housed in a defunct gas station - a textile company used the building to manufacture undergarments which is why travelers on the Mother Road were once welcomed by a billboard into "The Uplift Capital of the World."

Big Texan Steak Ranch

Amarillo
7701 Interstate 40 Access Road



In 1900 Amarillo was just like a bunch of other towns in the Texas Panhandle, in existence mainly to ship cattle with a population around 1,000. A century later Amarillo was the undisputed capital of the Panhandle with more than 200,000 residents. U.S. Routes 60, 87, 287, and 66 all coursed through the city. Meatpacking is still a prominent industry and so are steakhouses. R.J. Lee opened his Western style steakhouse beside a 60-foot neon cowboy right smack on Route 66. Steak dinners were \$1.50, unless you were able to polish off a 72-ounce steak, baked potato, salad, shrimp cocktail, and a bread roll in one hour. Then your meal was free. When the Big Texan moved off East Amarillo a short distance to its current location in 1970, its status as a Route 66 legend was secure; a crane helped the big cowboy make the trip. The Steak Challenge came along as well, becoming famous in the movies and a staple on television food shows. The Big Texan Motel next to the restaurant is a bit of mimetic architecture as well; although it is constructed with cinder blocks the exterior has been done up to resemble the friendly accommodations of an old West Texas town.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park

Canyon

11450 State Hwy Park Road 5



Just a half-hour south of Amarillo you can disappear into some of the prettiest country the Lone Star State can muster, a world away from the featureless countryside surrounding Route 66. The “Grand Canyon of Texas” is one of the largest in America, yawning for over 120 miles and reaching depths of 800 feet. This is particularly impressive since the gaping chasm is invisible as you drive east from the only access town of Canyon. Early Spanish Explorers are believed to have discovered the area and dubbed the canyon “Palo Duro” which is Spanish for “hard wood” in reference to the abundant mesquite and juniper trees.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park opened on July 4, 1934 with over 26,000 acres in the scenic, northernmost seven miles of the canyon. With all that, the classic Palo Duro hike has nothing to do with the canyon. Instead, point your compass towards the park’s signature rock formation, a multi-tiered, 300-foot high pier of Trujillo sandstone known as the Lighthouse. It will be three miles before reaching the base of the tower but you will see it in the distance long before that, sticking out above the prairie grasses, cholla cactus, and mesquite bushes. The route follows dry washes and troughs between small hills as you gain an easy 900 feet in elevation. There are overlooks from the Capitol Mesa and while red dominates the color palette there are bands of yellow, purple, and brown in the buttes as you close in on this designated National Natural Landmark.

Cadillac Ranch

Amarillo

13651 I-40 Frontage Road



This 1970s art installation was never on the original Route 66 but so many people traveling the Mother Road have stopped to see it just off I-40 that it has sort of been adopted as a member of the family. And after a relocation to escape the growing town of Amarillo the Cadillac Ranch is just off what would have been Route 66 if it wasn’t subsumed by I-40. Stanley Marsh 3 (he believed Roman numerals to be pretentious) was the grandson of oilman Stanley Marsh who spearheaded one of the leading natural gasoline producers in America. In 1974 Marsh hired a trio of avant-garde San Francisco artists known collectively as Ant Farm to half-bury ten Cadillacs on a family wheat field. The Cadillacs were entombed nose down by date of release from a 1949 Club Sedan to a 1963 Sedan de Ville at a precise 52-degree angle, said to match the Great Pyramid of Giza. Marsh claimed the art installation to be an homage to the automobile, the great symbol of American freedom and coming of age. Visitors, however, seemed to view the attraction as an opportunity to grab souvenirs and commit a bit of spray paint vandalism. Marsh encouraged the practice, choosing to view it as the expression of an ever-changing piece of art. In the ensuing decades Cadillac Ranch has become a cultural touchstone and a candidate for the Mount Rushmore of Americana roadside attractions.

Vega Motel

Vega
1005 Vega Boulevard



Today's road warriors may think they are going retro when they skip the chain hotel for a stay in a mid-century single-story roadside motel. But going back even further to the golden age of American motoring there were tourist courts, collections of very small one-room buildings often separated by just the width of a large chrome-wheeled touring car. Such was the case at the Vega Court where Ervin Pancoast constructed his roadside lodging with pairs of motel units alternating with pairs of enclosed garages. He built himself a small house in the middle of the 12 units where his family could live and cater to travelers until the 1970s. The 1960s were a time when Americans were looking to modernize the look of their tired brick and stucco buildings with space-age materials like aluminum siding and, for Pancoast, simulated stone sold in sheets known as Permastone. The Vega Motel is a rare intact tourist complex in the Texas Panhandle, listed on the National Register for Historic Places. Apart from breathing spells for renovations the Vega Motel has been in continuous operation along Route 66 since 1947. There has been one conspicuous nod to the 21st century on the property however - the owner residence is now rented out as an Airbnb.

Ghost Town

Glenrio
Old Route 66 (State Loop 504)



Texas has 80,700 miles - and counting - of roadways, more than any other state. If laid end-to-end that is enough macadam to circle the earth three times. Texas is also on the wrong end of the list for traffic fatalities, not a few of which are caused by motorists exhausted by the long stretches of open road. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has historically embraced the effort to lure drivers off the road to take a break in attractive, regionally-themed rest stops. There were wagon wheel structures and oil derrick shade structures and teepee structures. Texas erected a "welcome station" on Route 66 in Glenrio in the 1940s. It takes a big imagination to picture the hundreds of cars that stopped here each day standing in the ghost town today, with grass growing in a roadbed that hasn't seen paving since I-40 came through in 1975. Traveling along the Mother Road these days there will be individual towns that sport Route 66 information centers for travelers but there are no welcome centers to greet you as you move from state to state. The entire abandoned business district and the weedy roadbed in Glenrio have landed on the National Register of Historic Places for their unvarnished look at mid-century America.

State Line Cafe & Gas

Glenrio

Old Route 66 (State Loop 504)



Straddling the Texas-New Mexico border Glenrio was indeed a town divided. The post office was on the New Mexico side but the mail arrived at the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railway depot on the Texas side. The Texas side was in a dry county so all the bars were on the New Mexico side. The gas tax in New Mexico was vicious so all the service stations were on the Texas side. The Glenrio *Tribune* was delivered to both sides. Homer Ehresman operated a tourist court and cafe on the New Mexico side, his wife ran that post office. When talk about fancy new highways began percolating after World War II the Ehresmans, like many others along Route 66, didn't wait around for the inevitable decline and sold out. After nothing happened for a few years they came back in 1953 and built a gas station and cafe on the Texas side out of concrete blocks. Two years passed and still no interstate so he opened the Longhorn Motel out back with 13 tourist rooms. The highway would not arrive until 1975 by which time Ehresman had been able to build a modern motel out by the interchange, which he had his son run. Homer Ehreshman had waited out the coming of the interstate age on Route 66 all the way until retirement. The old motel was used to house employees at the new business until ultimately joining the rest of the Glenrio ghost town on a dead end of old Route 66.

NEW MEXICO

399 miles



Route 66 runs through two state capitals - Springfield, Illinois and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It was originally three, linking Santa Fe into Mother Road. Santa Fe is the highest state capital in the United States at 7,199 feet - the challenges of building a road there were so daunting even the namesake Santa Fe Railroad wound up routing its main line past the 400-year old capital city. New

Mexico entered the Union in 1912 with 28 miles of paved road. Infused with federal dollars during the Great Depression bridges were built, new routes were found and by 1937 Route 66 was straightened thorough the Land of Enchantment to slice the journey from 506 miles to 399. The Mother Road was the first fully paved highway in New Mexico and Santa Fe would never see any of it. At the time Albuquerque had a few thousand more residents than Santa Fe; today it is around a half million more. These days it is impossible to trace the original Route 66 through New Mexico without I-40 but there are plenty of exits leading onto the towns of Historic US 66; only a few stretches of missing roadway prevent you from following from town to town along the 35th Parallel.

Blue Swallow Motel

Tucumcari
815 E Route 66 Boulevard



Few towns leaned into the Route 66 experience like Tucumcari. For hundreds of miles in both directions the Mother Road was peppered with billboards suggesting "Tucumcari Tonite" and boasting of "2000 motel rooms." If they were all filled on any particular "Tucumcari" night it would increase the town's population by 50%. There were four private roads in Tucumcari until federal money fused them into Route 66 in 1933. With the coming of the interstates in the 1950s the motel room tote board number was amended to "1200" but wasn't updated further as business continued to shrivel. Several Tucumcari motels survived until America's longing for a slower pace began pulling motorists off the interstates. The 14-room Blue Swallow Motel, the only town motel on the National Register of Historic Places, looks as fresh as it did when W.A. Huggins, a local carpenter fashioned it in 1939. Rancher Ted Jones insisted that his new business venture be infused with Southwestern flavor. The Blue Swallow continues to offer its guests "100% Refrigerated Air" as one of the longest continuously operating motels along Route 66.

Motel Safari

Tucumcari
722 E Route 66 Boulevard



In the early days of Route 66 everyone was in on the adventure together. On their own independent motel operators began calling one another and making referrals to travelers. Merile Key Guertin, who owned 13 California motels, began formalizing the referral system under the "Best Western Motels" brand in 1946. By 1963 Best Western was America's largest hospitality chain with 699 properties and boasted the nation's only coast-to-coast reservation system. Guertin was known in the business as "Mr. Motel."

Chester Dohrer built and designed the Motel Safari in 1959 and it was originally a Best Western motel. The "23 lovely, well-furnished units" were spread behind an impressive Googie-designed sign that left no guesswork as to what awaited the weary traveler. Googie architecture was a futuristic mash-up of car culture and the jet age that originated with the Googies Coffee Shop on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood in 1949 and swept across a Space Age-obsessed American culture. In the 1960s the familiar Best Western Gold crown atop the sign was switched out for Clyde the Camel, a nod to Edward Fitzgerald Beale and his 1st U.S. Army Camel Corps. In 1857 Beale was tasked with testing the viability of the "ships of the desert" as military transports while blazing a wagon road. The camels performed splendidly by soldiers hated their nasty dispositions and refused to ride them so the experiment was abandoned. In the next century Route 66 would follow part of Beale's Wagon Road.

TeePee Curios

Tucumcari
924 E Route 66 Boulevard



Leland Haynes constructed this building in 1944 to sell Gulf gasoline. Route 66 was just two lanes then but in 1960 the road was widened to four lanes and the gas pumps were a casualty to progress. Haynes had been selling groceries and curios inside for most of his time on the Mother Road so new owner Jene Klaverweiden decided to go all in on the souvenirs. An eye-catching cement teepee was mortared onto the entrance and a few years later the playful neon sign - a favorite with Route 66 explorers - was added at the edge of the highway. Today Tee Pee Curios is one of the last curio shops in New Mexico. "Tee Pee" is spelled two different ways and technically neither is correct; it is "t-i-p-i." It is understandable that there would be confusion in the Southwest since the portable shelters were only used by tribes in the upper Great Plains. But they are much more eye-catching on the highway than a low-slung pueblo so the tipi with a popularized spelling became the Indian symbol of Route 66.

Route 66 Auto Museum

Santa Rosa
2436 Historic Route 66



If there were a poll conducted amongst seasoned Route 66 travelers as to the most memorable billboards on the Mother Road the "smiling fat man" might run away with it. Newton Epps opened the Club Cafe on the original New Mexico Route 66 in 1935. After Phillip Craig took over in 1939 he wanted a logo of a happy, satisfied customer and the "smiling fat man" was born. Over the years the Club Cafe became famous for its sourdough biscuits - "two million" was stenciled on the wall outside to let folks know how many had been served. Many of those who stopped for a biscuit wanted to meet the man they had seen painted on the billboards and buildings and boulders along the way but left disappointed that he was no more than a caricature. After the Club Cafe closed in the 1990s there was hope of reviving the Santa Rosa institution but the building was ultimately razed in 2015; the large neon signs out front came down in 2019. And the original "smiling fat man" sign? It is among the displays at the Route 66 Auto Museum along with more than two dozen of owner Bozo Cordova's meticulous restorations of vintage cars, trucks, and hot rods.

Sun 'n Sand Motel

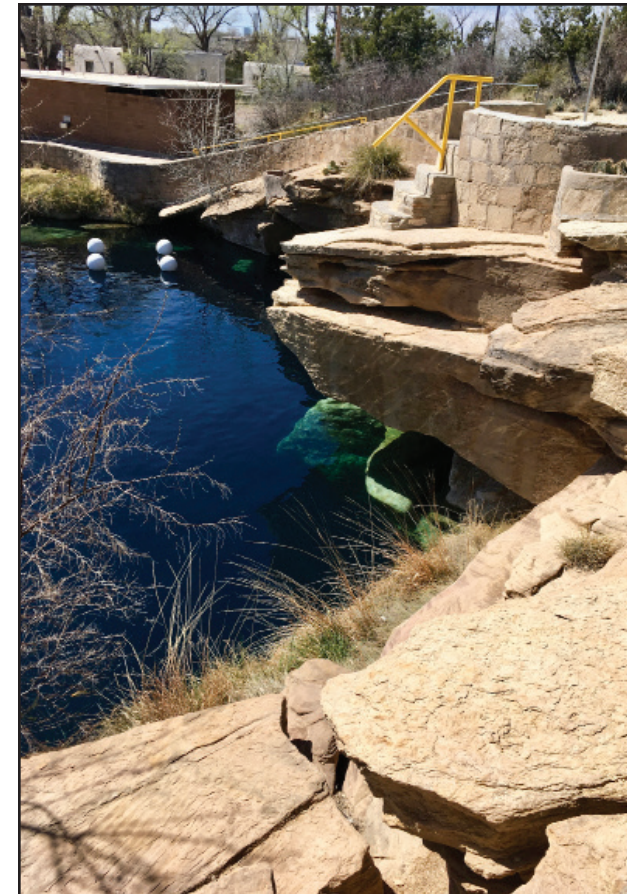
Santa Rosa
2050 U.S. Route 66



The last time the U.S. census checked in on Puerto de Luna, the original county seat for Guadalupe County, the population was 141. Santa Rosa was no Puerto de Luna in 1900 and then the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad railroad moved into town from the east. Right on its heels was the El Paso and Northeastern Railway from the south and Santa Rosa boomed with the interchange. The railroad crossing moved east to Tucamcari but the die had been cast. The highway through town in 1926 was designated Route 66 and the requisite motels and restaurants sprung up through town. John Ford even showed up to shoot a scene for *The Grapes of Wrath* with Henry Fonda looking wistfully across the Pecos River. The Sun 'n Sand was Santa Rosa's "Most Modern Tourist Court" when it opened with 40 units in the 1950s. The 40-foot neon sign topped by the iconic New Mexico sun symbol of the Zia people became a Route 66 landmark in 1960. The motel motored along without the interstate, receiving a facelift in 1998. But in recent years the motel slid into decay, although the restaurant is still serving. The big draw for Route 66 buffs, however, is the photo opportunity with the New Mexico flag rendered in neon.

Blue Hole

Santa Rosa
1085 Blue Hole Road



In the glory days of Route 66 it was possible to pull off the highway, drive a short distance, jump into the artesian spring to wash off the desert heat and be back on your way in a matter of minutes. These days the Blue Hole has been fenced off and requires a small admission fee. What hasn't changed is the crystal clear water and constant 61-degree temperature. If you fumble your smartphone while taking a picture you will be able to watch it sink all the way to the bottom 81 feet down. The Blue Hole attracts as many scuba divers from around the world

as Route 66 fans although many of its underwater caves have been gated off since a 1976 accident claimed the lives of two divers. Within walking distance is the Park Lake Historic District along the Pecos River. The municipal park was developed around a spring-fed lake as a Works Progress Administration project during the Great Depression. Buildings were constructed in the agency's trademark rustic style.

Hotel Andaluz

Albuquerque
125 2nd Street NW

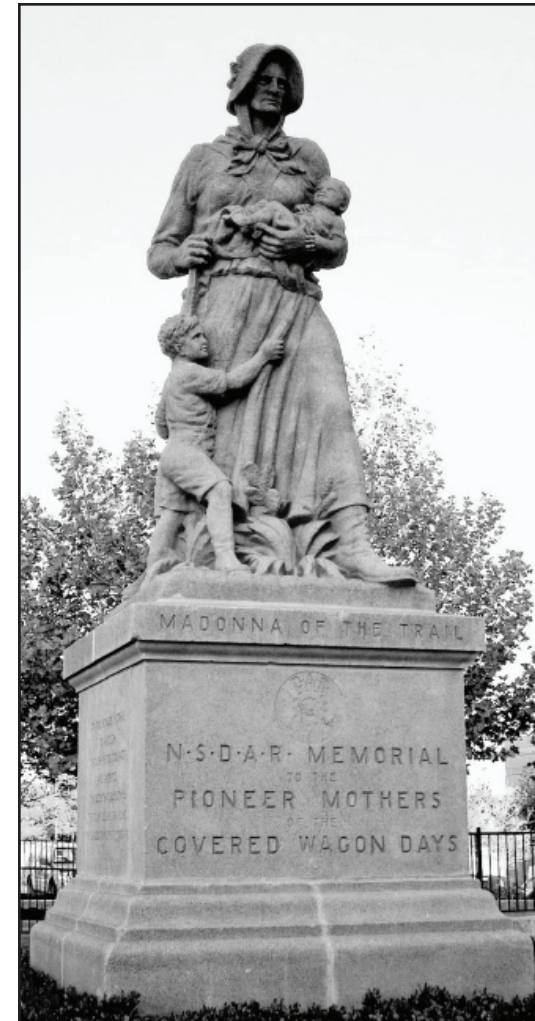


The first Hilton hotel was set up by Conrad Hilton in his family's adobe home in San Antonio, New Mexico in 1907. Business reversals in his father's general store necessitated the conversion of six of the rooms in the house into quarters for transient lodgers. Conrad, then 19, worked all day in the store and went to the train station at 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. to meet the arriving trains and solicit potential guests. Room and board was \$2.50 a day. Hilton started his world famous hotel chain in Texas and this is the first he built outside of the

Lone Star State, opened in 1939 on the original routing of Route 66 through Albuquerque. Architect Anton F. Korn provided the Territorial Style for the ten-story building that was the tallest in New Mexico and the first to be fully air conditioned. In 1984, the year it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel received a facelift and a new name - La Posada. Rebranding came again a generation later and the now Hotel Andaluz continues to receive guests in Mid-century style.

Madonna of the Trail

Albuquerque
4th and Marble NW



In the 1920s the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose members trace their ancestry directly back to the struggle for Independence, sought to honor the spirit of the pioneer women who settled the United States. The idea was to create 12 identical monuments and place one in each state crossed by the National Old Trails Road that ran from Baltimore to Los Angeles in 1912; part of that route would soon be usurped by Route 66. Although the sculptures from August Leimbach would be identical the individual bases would distinguish the monument in each state. Santa Fe was actually ticketed to get the statue in New Mexico but the city was embracing a moratorium on all non-Pueblo Revival style building and the local chapter of the DAR didn't feel the *Madonna* was the right fit for its town. Albuquerque,

where the architecture is more egalitarian, welcomed the five-ton pioneer mother, cradling a baby in her arms with rifle at the ready, with bands and a ceremonial unveiling on Route 66 in McClellan Park. The Mother Road went another way in 1937 leaving the pioneer mother behind. But the statue remains a cherished local landmark. When a relocation was necessary in the 1990s rather than being hauled to storage the *Madonna of the Trail* was lovingly restored and nudged 100 feet away.

KiMo Theatre

Albuquerque
423 Central Avenue NW



Pablo Abeita, well-respected governor of the Isleta Pueblo, won \$50 in a naming contest for the KiMo Theatre in 1927. The name translates loosely to “king of its kind,” which is an apt description of the exuberant Pueblo-influenced Art Deco theater. Carl Heinrich Boller of Kansas City, who with his brother Robert designed over 100 classic theaters, wedded adobe building techniques and Southwestern culture with geometric Art Deco sensibilities to decorate the three-story stucco building. The money man was Oreste Bachechi who came to Albuquerque from his native Italy in 1885. He set up a tent saloon catering to railroad workers which evolved into a prosperous wholesale liquor business. When word of his success filtered back to his homeland it launched a wave of Italians flowing to Albuquerque. Like most of the grand downtown movie palaces in America the KiMo waged a losing battle with suburban mall multiplexes and television in the mid-20th century and closed in the 1970s. It dodged the wrecking ball thanks to a ballot vote by the citizens of Albuquerque and has been restored to its rightful place as a Route 66 showcase.

El Vado Auto Court Motel

Albuquerque
2500 Central Avenue SW



The original Route 66 followed a constrained north-south path through Albuquerque. In 1937 it was re-aligned to a more natural east-to-west orientation along Central Avenue and the commercial strip blossomed. In the 1950s one could count 98 motels along the 18 miles of Mother Road in Albuquerque;

it is still the longest urban stretch of drivable Route 66. Many of the buildings are gone, many have been repurposed, and some, like the El Vado Auto Court, have managed to survive with their historic integrity intact. Daniel Murphy was a bit city hotel man; he cut his teeth in the hospitality trade in New York City and managed the six-story Hotel Franciscan in downtown Albuquerque. But he saw the potential the realignment of Route 66 would offer and he left the world of business travelers for families and vacationers. Murphy constructed his El Vado Auto Court Motel in the Pueblo Revival style inside and out. All the exterior walls of the 32 units were whitewashed but not too perfectly so as to present a hint of centuries-old authenticity. The *Albuquerque Progress* gushed about the El Vado's opening in 1937 that the “swanky tile cabin suites were ready for the summer tourist trade.” The excitement had waned completely by the time the El Vado was included on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 for its unaltered representation of a picturesque Southwestern motel form motoring's golden age. Demolition seemed almost certain for years but the City of Albuquerque had other plans. A 22-room boutique motel was carved out of the El Vado as the centerpiece for an \$18 million redevelopment with an event center, shops, and a brewpub.

Rio Puerco Bridge

Albuquerque
14311 Central Ave NW



The Rio Puerto Bridge is one of longest single spans in all of the Land of Enchantment, even though the river it spans spends much of its time with no streamflow. But often when the water flows, it rages. So this Parker through truss design was chosen because it could be constructed without a vulnerable center pier. Two of the worst floods on record took place in 1929 and one of the victims was the bridge that carried the original Route 66. The Kansas City Structural Steel Company had this bridge ready by 1933 and its location was chosen to create a straight path for the Mother Road through Albuquerque, which was ultimately engineered in 1937. The sturdy 250-foot bridge served Route 66 until the end when I-40 was constructed right next door. The Rio Puerco Bridge carried traffic on the frontage road but has recently been closed to all but pedestrian traffic.

El Malpais National Monument

Grants
1900 E. Santa Fe Avenue



The Spanish dubbed this volcanic field “Malpais,” meaning “badlands,” but it appears anything but when you start to get out and explore. The landscape is dotted with Ponderosa pines and some of America’s oldest Douglas fir trees. Pygmy pine forests struggle atop the vulcanized rock. Even aspens, seldom found at these elevations, grow along the lava flow edges. The dirt and crushed gravel walking trail soon reveals another story. The El Calderon Cinder Cone began shaping this landscape 115,000 years ago, spewing rivers of molten rock into lava trenches and tubes. Caves and sinks sculpted from grey-black basaltic rock quickly begin appearing on the 3.8-mile loop that explores the largest lava fields in New Mexico. The caves are free to explore with a permit. The trail winds easily to the top of the cinder cone with views across the grasslands to the 400-foot high sandstone bluffs that frame the monument.

El Rancho Hotel

Gallup
1000 E Highway 66



The El Rancho was never the type of motel along Route 66 where weary travelers could pull in, sleep for the night and get right back on your way after it opened in 1937. The maestro behind its construction was R.E. "Griff" Griffith whose brother was the powerful Hollywood director D.W. Griffith. Both men promoted the desert terrain around Gallup tirelessly as a location shoot for movie directors. Dozens would come and cast and crew would bunk in the rambling hotel with the wavy brickwork and unmilled lumber. Hollywood stars lacked for nothing at the El Rancho where John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart, Errol Flynn, Katherine Hepburn, Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas, Ronald Reagan and many more signed the guest register. By the 1960s the movie western was dying and Route 66 was disappearing under the interstate highway system and El Rancho faded from prominence. One landmark bulldozed by the interstate was The Hopi House in Arizona, a trading post run by the Ortega family. Armand Ortega couldn't do anything about his childhood home but he was able to breathe new life in the El Rancho beginning in 1986. Heading east out of Gallup the highest point on Route 66 - 7,263 feet - awaits; heading west you may have missed it in Continental Divide. Several trading posts once marked the spot. Today, the milepost is celebrated mostly with signage, albeit with conflicting elevations.

ARIZONA

374 miles



In the beginning, Arizona was, save for a stop in the Painted Desert or at the Grand Canyon, a state for Route 66 travelers to get through on the way to California. The state population in 1930 was 436,000 and the 1940 census tallied an increase only to 499,000. The obstacles to Mother Road motorists in Arizona were many - paved roads were rare and towns were few and far between. The moun-

tain grades were the steepest of any Route 66 state. The history of highway construction is etched into those slopes as the road's alignment changed and straightened with improved engineering. Route 66 preservation efforts began in Arizona and today's pilgrims can find some of the most satisfying stretches of the original roadbed in the Grand Canyon State.

Querino Canyon Bridge

Houck

Querino Dirt Road - original Route 66



The Grand Canyon State does not lack for historic bridges; there are 89 that reside on the National Register for Historic Places. The Arizona Highway Department tapped the Pratt deck truss style for this steel-and-concrete bridge in 1930. Three under-road trusses were bolted together to span the canyon so the bridge, save for its decorative railings is practically imperceptible from its dirt road approaches on either side. The Querino Canyon Bridge would be the most ambitious of the state's efforts to bring Route 66 across the inhospitable desert lands of northern Arizona. The sturdy canyon crossing was not pulled out of Mother Road service until the coming of I-40 in the 1960s; it still carries local traffic through the Navajo Nation.

Petrified Forest National Park

Petrified Forest



Francisco Vazquez de Coronado only ever cared about one color - gold. But even he was impressed by these desert lands as he scoured the Southwest in the 1540s in search of rumored cities of precious metals. He called the re-

gion El Desert Pintado, "the Painted Desert," and so it has been known for almost 500 years. The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad built though the Painted Desert in the 1880s and profiteers rode the trains to the nation's largest field of petrified wood. They carried off specimens lying in the desert and dynamited the largest logs in search of quartz and purple amethyst crystals. The Crystal Forest Trail meanders through the remains of obliterated petrified logs, whose preservation led to the creation of the Petrified Forest National Monument in 1906; national park service arrived in 1962. When that happened it became the only national park that Route 66 passed through. A section of the original Main Street of America route has been preserved with telephone poles and the carcass of a 1932 Studebaker that evoke the desolation of long stretches of Western travel more acutely than any other exhibit on the 2,400-mile route. Although the park encompasses some 146 square miles the core of the visitor experience revolves around a series of short interpretive trails. The Blue Mesa Trail descends into an amphitheater surrounded by banded coulees of bluish clay called bentonite. Rainwater is the brush that creates streaky patterns in the barren porous hills. Some of those namesake prehistoric trees can be seen on the Long Logs Path. Extinct conifers form the largest concentration of petrified wood left in the park. The Agate House Trail leads up a slight rise to a reconstructed Anasazi Indian Pueblo built entirely of colorful petrified wood sealed with mud. The Civilian Conservation Corps raised the Pueblo Revival style Painted Desert Inn during the Great Depression out of the former Stone Tree House that was built from petrified wood. It now serves as the park visitor center.

Wigwam Village

Holbrook
811 W Hopi Drive



Frank Redford made his first contribution to roadside architecture immortality in 1933 when he opened a service station in his native Kentucky in the shape of a tipi. Although he based his design on an ice cream stand he had seen in California, Redford patented his "wigwam" and sold the plans to other tourist entrepreneurs. Charles Lewis built Wigwam Village #6 along Route 66 in Holbrook with 15 concrete and steel units. He installed a coin-operated radio in each wigwam that delivered 30 minutes of music for each dime. The dimes were the royalty

paid to Redford. Lewis followed the traffic to I-40 to operate newer motels and shut down his tourist cabins. Eventually the pull of nostalgia for Route 66 led future family members to air out the old wigwams in the 1980s. The original hickory furniture was still inside and with a few modernizations Wigwam Village was once again greeting overnight travelers.

Jack Rabbit Trading Post

Joseph City
3386 U.S. Route 66



Route 66 was always an opportunity for an entrepreneur with the heart of a showman. When Jim Taylor arrived in Joseph City, an old Mormon town, in 1949 to open his trading post there were already tourist shops of long-standing operating nearby. One of the

things Taylor carried in his convertible on the move from Albuquerque was a statue of a black rabbit that turned out to be an attention-grabber. So the Jack Rabbit Trading Post it would be. The first order of business was to remove the snakes and lizards from the Arizona Herpetarium that had operated in the old Santa Fe railroad building he had just bought. Then he turned his attention to promotion. It seemed like every trading post along America's Main Street had some sort of hook to lure a motorist off the highway - zoo animals or the "World's Largest Petrified Log" or "authentic frontier artifacts." Taylor had his rabbit. He ordered an oversized hare made of wood and horsehide, with a saddle suitable for riding. The new mascot was an intimidating leporine, one that would take no gruff from a mountain lion for sure. Next Taylor began promoting his trading post with simple rectangular signs painted yellow that revealed little - only the silhouette of a black rabbit and a mileage. The mystery signs would eventually appear from Missouri to California. As a payoff for days of anticipation Taylor erected a large billboard at the Jack Rabbit Trading Post announcing "Here it Is." A warren of black rabbits scamper across the top. By the time Jim Taylor sold the business in 1961 the gimmick was no longer a mystery - thousands of Route 66 travelers had taken away a souvenir mileage sign back to all corners of the globe. The trading post remains a favorite stopping point on the Mother Road, "still hopping" on Route 66, as they like to say.

La Posada Hotel

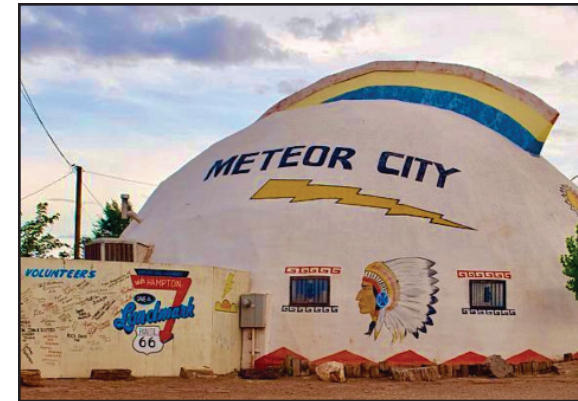
Winslow
303 East 2nd Street



Fred Harvey founded the first restaurant chain in the United States and he did it before the invention of the automobile. Harvey sailed to New York from Liverpool, England in 1853 when he was 17 years old. He found work as a pot scrubber at a popular downtown restaurant. When he later went to work for the railroads he called on this experience to strike a deal with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in 1876 to open eating houses along the tracks 80 miles apart. Harvey's formula of fresh food and quality service led to 47 Harvey Houses, 15 hotels, and 30 dining cars on the Santa Fe line. The "Civilizer of the West" became a leader in promoting the American Southwest to travelers. Harvey House coffee - always with a pinch of salt to combat bitterness - was the standard of the day. He hired young women as waitresses with the covenant that they could not marry until one year of service. Some 5,000 women worked as "Harvey Girls," spawning novels and a popular movie with Judy Garland. The company's oasis in Northern Arizona was La Posada ("the resting place"), built with a rumored \$2 million Depression-era budget; architect Mary Jane Coulter, who did most of the work at the Grand Canyon, considered it her master work. The hotel closed in 1957 but quick-stepped the wrecking ball for 40 years until a restoration arrived. As for Fred Harvey, according to a biographer, his last words to his sons when he died in 1901 were, "Cut the ham thinner, boys."

Meteor City

Winslow
West Highway 66



About 95% of all the meteors that enter earth's atmosphere burn up but still thousands of meteorites crash into earth every year. Most are barely more than specs of space rock that splash unnoticed into the oceans. Some 50,000 years ago one such meteorite smashed into grasslands

here, leaving a crater three-quarters of a mile across and more than 500 feet deep. Most of the humans who saw the hole assumed it to be of volcanic origin. Mining engineer Daniel Barringer, intrigued by oxidized iron fragments, though it might be a depression caused by a massive iron fireball that buried beneath the surface. He began mining operations but 27 years later had still not discovered meteoric iron since, as we know now, the meteorite vaporized on impact. By the time Barringer stopped mining operations Route 66 had started a few miles away. He began charging curious travelers an admission to view the crater - even though it was not verified that the hole in the ground was an actual meteorite until 1959. In 1938 a Texaco station opened just off the highway and three years later "Lonesome" Jack Newsum took over and expanded the operation into The Meteor City Trading Post. His complex would eventually include a geodesic dome and a 100-foot map of America's Main Street painted by famed highway artist Bob Waldmire. In the meantime Harvey Nininger, who had assembled America's largest private collection of meteorites, moved to the site to open a meteorite museum with a stone observatory for folks to view the crater on private property from a distance. The realignment of Route 66 in 1949 siphoned away much of the business save for those dedicated to seeing the big hole. The original dome burned in 1990 and was replaced but operation of Meteor City has been sporadic ever since. Meteor Crater Observatory is marked only by stone rubble. Meteor Crater is still owned by the Barringer family and draws tens of thousands of visitors per year.

Walnut Canyon Bridge

Winona

12771-12829 Townsend-Winona Road



Truss bridges were sturdy, quick to assemble, and inexpensive. All characteristics made them the favored design in the early days of Route 66. There are dozens of variations of truss bridges but most involve assembling relatively small structural members into interconnected triangles. The graceful workhorses of the Mother Road eventually required too much maintenance and were systematically replaced by concrete girder bridges. Today's journey along the highway will seldom encounter a truss bridge but the Walnut Canyon Bridge, not even a stone's underhand toss from the main highway, is an exception. Completed in 1924 the bridge has survived all life-threatening scrap metal drives and remains open to pedestrian traffic.

Walnut Canyon National Monument

Flagstaff

3 Walnut Canyon Road



The waters of Walnut Creek eventually join the Colorado River where they helped to carve the Grand Canyon. Before that they eroded 600 feet of Kaibab limestone for twenty miles. Quite a bit of work from a little water source. Nine hundred years ago the Sinagua people built cliff dwellings in the canyon and the dry climate has left 20 or so remarkably intact. There are two ways to experience the National Monument, established by Woodrow Wilson in 1915. The Rim Trail gives a panoramic look around the ancient neighborhood and the Island Trail is a more physically demanding descent into the canyon for an up-close look at the living quarters that have long since been inhabited by mule deer, squirrels, and coyotes.

Hotel Monte Vista

Flagstaff
100 N San Francisco Street



In the early 1900s as America became a more urban country small cities felt it mandatory for their big-time bonafides to have a first-class hotel ready for visitors. In Flagstaff, with a population of 3,000 and wanting to be the be the main city on Route 66 between Albuquerque and Los Angeles, the need was even more urgent. To that end a group of Flagstaff businessmen and community leaders pooled \$200,000 to open the 73-room Hotel Monte Vista one block from the

railroad station on New Year's Day, 1927. The hotel would not be sold to private interests until the 1960s, ending a run as Arizona's longest publicly owned commercial property. The Monte Vista, like the entirety of the Mother Road, launched in the middle of Prohibition but hotel guests would never know there was a nationwide ban on alcohol - a popular speakeasy kept patrons lubricated until being shut down in 1931. Similarly, the Monte Vista served up the city's only slot machines during the 1930s. Such amenities indeed established the "Monte V" as the go-to hostelry for celebrities and well-heeled Route 66 wanderers. Movie companies rented its rooms for stars who came to the desert to shoot the popular Westerns of the day and the undocumented story has persisted for decades that Monte Vista rooms even took a star turn in *Casablanca*. The biggest stories swirling about the hotel lobby are the haunted ones - John Wayne, the Duke himself - is said to have seen the first ghost reported on the premises.

Pete's Gas Station

Williams
101 E Route 66



Williams is the closest city to the Grand Canyon on Route 66 - it was about 65 miles on a straight shot to the South Rim on a paved highway in the heyday of the Mother Road. By the 1950s there were enough cars in the town of 3,000 that one-way traffic was instituted on the two main

streets. Legal challenges forestalled the completion of I-40 until 1984, making Williams the last Route 66 community bypassed by the interstate system. The lawsuits were not settled until it was agreed to give Williams three separate I-40 exits and only then were the signs removed from the final six miles of Route 66. Within months America's Main Street was officially no more. There were only a few years left until the Route 66 nostalgia boom and instead of deteriorating many downtown buildings were repurposed for the next wave of highway explorers. Jack Rittenhouse's classic 1946 guide book listed 12 motels and tourist courts operating in downtown Williams and almost all are still renting rooms in one form or another under a different name. Most of the businesses are on the east end of town - the better to be the first to greet westward-bound Route 66 traffic. Many of the towns along the Mother Road are similarly lopsided for that reason. Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) opened this station to sell its flagship Union 76 brand in 1949. The company patriotically name-checked the year of the United States Declaration of Independence; its signature orange ball was introduced in 1962. In 1997 Unocal sold its refining and marketing operations in the western United States and the station went vacant. The property is now a private museum and gift shop.

Grand Canyon Railway

Williams

233 N Grand Canyon Boulevard



In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt visited the Grand Canyon for the first time. In a speech on the South Rim he said, "What you can do is to keep it for your children and your children's children and for all who come after you, as one of the great sights which every American, if he can travel at all, should see." Since that moment the government and big business have gone to great lengths to make it possible for that to happen. The Santa Fe Railroad had built a branch line out of Williams through utter wilderness in 1901 to reach the Grand Canyon. A small guest house was planned on the canyon rim but with Roosevelt leading the cheering squad the El Tovar Hotel was expanded to 103 rooms. Of course, when it came to encouraging ridership on the new cross-continent collection of roads seeing the Grand Canyon was the best reason to hop on Route 66. The Grand Canyon Railway ceased passenger operations in 1968 and it was 30 more years before the 64-mile line re-opened as strictly a tourist railroad. More than 200,000 people a year now reach the Grand Canyon in style after a two-hour train ride from the edge of historic Route 66.

Copper Cart

Seligman

114 Historic Route 66



There aren't many places along the modern Modern Road where actual Route 66 history took place. This is the restaurant where Angel Delgadillo ("Angel of Route 66") called the first meeting to form the first Route 66 preservation society. Ethel and Guy Rutherford, in his days before entering Arizona politics, opened the Copper Cart in 1952 "with food comparable to that found in fine city eating places." The Rutherfords were running the Qumacho Inn up the road in Peach Springs at the time where their "Cattleman's Morning Diet" stirred up Route 66 word-of-mouth. For \$2.75 diners could feast on a ham steak, a half dozen eggs, a half

loaf of bread - toasted if you wanted, potatoes and a bottomless cup of Joe. The Copper Cart featured a private dining room and a full charcoal broiler; despite its desert location the restaurant prided itself on its seafood menu and, somehow, "fresh Idaho trout." The broiler was shut down in 2008. The building has been repurposed as a Route 66 memorabilia store and you can also get a motorcycle fixed in the small engine repair shop out back.

Delgadillo's Snow Cap

Seligman
301 AZ-66



The longest remaining intact section of Route 66 can be found in Arizona, running for 157 miles from Seligman to Topock. It is no accident. By the 1980s America's favorite road was mostly forgotten - torn up in many places, buried under interstate highways in others. Seligman native Angel Delgadillo had once seen 9,000 cars a day pass his barber shop, by 1987 the

head count was in the dozens. He formed the Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona and began pestering state and local officials to save the road and the dying communities it once spawned. Finally, after ten months of the Delgadillo onslaught the state designated Route 66 from Seligman to Kingman "historic." Route 66 historic associations would eventually open in all eight states the iconic road passed through. Delgadillo opened a souvenir shop at his business, beating a couple hundred others to the punch. The memorabilia spills over into the Snow Cap Drive-In franchise across the street that his older brother Juan started in 1953, building it from scrap lumber scavenged from a local railroad yard where he had worked for 35 years. That is true Route 66 spirit. Delgadillo was hoping to land a Dairy Queen franchise, which had started on Route 66 in Joliet, Illinois in 1940, but instead hooked up with The Snow Cap Ice Cream Company out of Phoenix. If Juan's deal with Warren Buffet's favorite ice cream vendor had actually gone down you can be certain Delgadillo's Snow Cap would not be the Mother Road icon it became.

Grand Canyons Caverns

Peach Springs
Historic Route 66



Walter Peck happened onto rare completely dry caverns while looking for gold in 1927. He never found any ore so Peck decided to build his fortune one quarter at a time, charging travelers on the newly opened Route 66, about a mile away, for tours. It was two bits at a time since only one person - at the end of a rope - could enter the natural entrance at a time. Eventually a new entrance needed to be blasted 210 feet deep with an elevator installed. The caverns cycled through several names as a service station and motel were added to the complex. The cavern tours never stopped after I-40 opened far to the south but the amenities shuttered. With the Route 66 renaissance of the 1990s the attraction slowly returned to life. Further explorations revealed it to be the largest dry cavern system in the United States. The Cavern Grottos opened with four tables for underground dining in 1917 and a single suite hotel room was added for an underworld overnight experience. Naturally the cost of the cavern tour is included.

Hackberry General Store

Hackberry
11255 AZ-66



The only thing to differentiate this rickety building on the verge of collapse from other Route 66 Guardians of the Road is that you will usually find vehicles of late model vintage out front. The Hackberry Store never thrived when the Mother Road was in service like it has since Route 66 was decertified. In its original

incarnation the general store was a lifeline for the miners scattered around the region. Bob Waldmire grew up on Route 66 in Springfield, Illinois where his father sold the country's first corn dogs in the Cozy Dog Drive In. Bob was part of the hippie generation of the late 1960s when he hit upon an idea that would enable him to maintain that lifestyle forever. He drew a whimsical, detailed "birds-eye view" map of Springfield and got merchants to pay to be included in the tableau. The merchants would then sell the printed India ink posters. Waldmire replicated the formula 34 times in 15 states while living on the road - literally in a 1972 Volkswagen van - as a traveling artist. He did not, however, rekindle his roots on Route 66 until 1987 when America's Main Street was gone. Waldmire began applying his talents to maps of the Mother Road and advocating for what remained. He bought the crumbling service station in 1992 to peddle his wares and promote Route 66, leaving it in its "native" state. He sold Hackberry General Store to John Pritchard in 1998 with the proviso that he not change the shaggy aesthetic. Pritchard moved in his extensive memorabilia collection and extracted the same promise from Amy Franklin when he sold it to her in 2016. Along the way the part-gift shop, part-time capsule has become a touchstone for Route 66 nuts around the world.

Powerhouse

Kingman
120 W Andy Devine Ave #2



Like a condemned man digging his own grave, this powerhouse supplied the energy necessary to construct the Hoover Dam, whose 4 billion kilowatts of hydropower cover the electrical needs for 1.3 million people. This power plant sprouted in Kingman, an enclave of several hundred miners named for Lewis Kingman who had surveyed and built the train line from Flagstaff to Needles, a quarter-century earlier. Despite its remote location this was one of the largest steam-powered electric plants ever constructed on the West Coast. It was plenty big enough to handle Kingman's energy needs - aside from the region's mines the only industry was making rope from yucca plants. When Hoover Dam came online the 1930s and the boilers were abandoned. Kingman became the "Gateway to Boulder Dam" - its original name before memorializing President Herbert Hoover. Before motorists could reach that gateway to the north they had to come east or west on U.S. Route 66. In the 1990s the forgotten roadway met the forgotten power plant, which had been empty for over 50 years. The only reason it was never torn down was that the thick concrete walls made the demolition price too high - the powerhouse is the oldest reinforced concrete building in Arizona. Now it is a visitor center and museum for Route 66.

Mr. D'z Route 66 Diner

Kingman
105 E Andy Devine Avenue



In the 1913 edition of *Who's Who in Arizona* - the last he would appear in before dying the following year at the age of 63 - John Rowland Whiteside was lauded as an eminent Kingman physician for the Santa Fe Railroad and several major mining outfits. There was no mention of his work with the National Highways Association. Yet without John Whiteside Kingman could not boast of being "the Heart of Historic Route 66." In 1912 the National Old Trails Road Association and the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Association met to hammer out a final route for the National Old Trails Road. The expected choice through Arizona would be through Phoenix and onto a southerly path through Yuma. Whiteside led a contingent armed with sheafs of facts and figures supporting a northern route following the lead of the Santa Fe Railroad. Arguing for the quality of northern Arizona roads was a heavy lift since the state only had 300 miles of paved roads as late as 1929. But Whitehead's group carried the day and that National Old Trails Road would become Route 66 a decade later. Kingman is stuffed with vintage Route 66 attractions. Mr. D'z is a former 1938 Shell Station reimagined as a classic diner. The building still features the rounded Streamline Moderne treatment given the windows and corners. The curving features mimicked the stylish roadsters that were pulling into the pumps at filling stations at the time.

Durlin Hotel

Oatman
181 Main Street



There were plenty of people who were happy when the interstate highway bypassed Oatman. The serpentine mountain approaches to the town were so intimidating that locals made a living driving petrified motorists up and down the slopes. Gold Hill Grade gained 1,400 feet in elevation in nine miles - before the invention of fuel pumps some drivers would be forced to ascend backwards to keep fuel flowing to the engine. The town named for an Illinois girl kidnapped by Apaches had flourished in the early 1900s with the discovery of gold nearby - enough wealth that after the Durlin Hotel burned in 1924 it was immediately rebuilt. The mines played out in the 1940s and when the interstate was built Oatman indeed became a ghost town. But Route 66 nostalgia gave Oatman - where wild burros still command the streets - a second act as a tourist town. Every tourist town needs a good story and the Durlin Hotel has a whopper. After eloping to get married in the Saint John's Methodist Episcopal Church in Kingman in 1939 Hollywood screen idols Clark Gable and Carole Lombard stopped in Oatman to spend their wedding night upstairs in the Durlin, as the sign memorializing that blessed event on March 18 points out. Even the National Park Service faithfully recounts that trip. No matter that the wedding took place on March 29. Or that the Hollywood stars held a press conference on Miss Lombard's front yard the following morning. Never let the facts get in the way of a good story in the tourist game.

Trails Arch Bridge

Topock
Old Route 66 at Colorado River



Arizona had just issued its first license plates - black script on white tin, four numbers only - when clamoring began to construct vehicular bridges across the lower Colorado River. The 336-foot Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge in Yuma started first. It had to be built upstream and floated down the river to the bridge site due to unpredictable currents in the Colorado. Engineers at Topock had their own problems. Their solution was to build an 800-foot steel arch bridge on both shores and link them with a center hinge. When the Trails Arch Bridge opened to traffic in 1916 it was the longest arched bridge in the United States. With its dramatic half-through arch profile the bridge carried Route 66 across the Colorado River from its beginnings in 1926 until 1947. At that time the Red Rock Bridge, a railroad crossing constructed in 1890, was converted to automobile use and the deck removed from the Trails Arch Bridge to carry a natural gas pipeline for the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. The utilitarian Red Rock Bridge was dismantled in 1976, taking its Route 66 memories with it. Meanwhile with its frequent coatings of white paint the century-old Trails Arch Bridge looks as fresh as ever.

CALIFORNIA

317 miles



In good times and bad California was always a magnet pulling transplants westward on Route 66. It was estimated that Dust Bowl conditions of the 1930s drained more than one million people off of Midwestern farms. So many tried to reach the Golden State that California police maintained a “bum blockade” at the border in a vain attempt to stem migration. For many of these

transplants the ultimate destination on the Mother Road was Barstow. Here a life decision had to be made. One fork in the road continued on Route 66 into downtown Los Angeles. The other fork pointed north to the impossibly fertile valleys of Central California. Six in ten chose the farms. Like most of the other transplants, the many alignments of Route 66 through the City of Angels dissolved into the fabric of the city. Thus the best Mother Road souvenirs are found out in the Mojave Desert, baking in the highest heat found anywhere on the highway.

El Garces Hotel/Depot

Needles
950 Front Street



Travelers along the original Route 66 could be excused for doing a double take when driving on the road that ran directly in front of the El Garces. The Atcheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad had a long history of building its hotel/depots in the Southwest to blend in with the countryside. But when their original depot in Needles burned in 1906 the country was swept up in the City Beautiful Movement and its love affair with classical architecture. So architect Francis Wilson dropped a grand Tuscan temple into the desert town. It was named for missionary Francisco Garces who was credited with being the first European to successfully cross the Mojave Desert. The Fred Harvey Company operated the concession and the "Civilizer of the West" never had a more luxurious setting to tame the uncivilized. Meals were served on patterned china flanked by silver utensils and sitting on linen napkins. When the Harvey Girls received an assignment in Needles they considered it "going to Europe," the triple digit temperatures outside notwithstanding. The Santa Fe closed the El Garces in 1949 and used it as offices for the next four decades before moving. Demolition loomed but the City of Needles purchased the property in 1999 and repurposed it as a transportation hub.

Route 66 Murals

Needles
1417 Needles Highway



No city in America is more intertwined with the automobile than Los Angeles but it was a romance slow in boiling. In 1908 the Los Angeles Auto Club decided the best way to make the case for good roads in Southern California was to stage the Cactus Derby, a 517-mile race

between Los Angeles and Phoenix. Four cars entered with vehicles loaded with gasoline and spare parts, two actually finished. The Cactus Derby had its intended impact and continued until 1914 when there actually were some "good roads." The last race featured famous speedster Barney Oldfield, the first driver to go one mile in a minute on a race track, and Louis Chevrolet, the brawny French champion bicycle rider turned daring auto racer and future nameplate. The first overnight stop was in Needles where thousands turned out to fete race leader, and eventual winner, Oldfield. Needles enthusiasm for the automobile was rewarded with the routing of the Old National Trails Highway and subsequently Route 66 as the gateway town to the unforgiving Mojave Desert from the east. Needles has not been able to let the Mother Road go more than 50 years on, adding Route 66 murals to its streetscape. The first one paid homage to America's most famous cartoonist, Charles Schulz, who lived in Needles between the ages of six and eight. Snoopy's older brother Spike was a Needles resident befriend cacti in the *Peanuts* comic strip.

Goff's Schoolhouse

Essex
37198 Lanfair Road



To make the railroad work across the Mojave desert in the 1800s between Needles and Barstow it was necessary to provide supply depots every five miles or so. When the Southern Pacific Railway built out in 1883 Goffs became a critical siding for thirsty steam locomotives at the top of a significant rise

in elevation. Naturally the wagon roads that followed traced this life-line of support through the desert. By 1914 the Santa Fe Railroad had enough employees in the area to necessitate the building of a schoolhouse. The County of San Bernardino went way beyond the typical vernacular one-room school doled out to other desert communities. Goffs received a Mission-style stucco building flanked with spacious covered porches. The space was so large it handled community events with room left over for a library. Route 66 absorbed the original wagon road so the earliest Mother Road travelers could gape in amazement at the beautiful building they were passing out in the desolate desert. Those automobiles, however, could handle steeper grades than the locomotives and so the highway was realigned on a shorter, more rugged route in 1931. By 1937 the school was moved out there as well. Goffs quickly declined but the U.S. Army sent thousands of troops to train for World War II into the area in the 1940s. The soldiers burned most of the buildings in the ghost town to stay warm at night and used the schoolhouse as a cafeteria. After the war the building transferred into private hands for use as a residence. After severe deterioration Goffs Schoolhouse was restored by the Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association without a dime of public money.

Mojave National Preserve

Kelso
90942 Kelso Cima Road

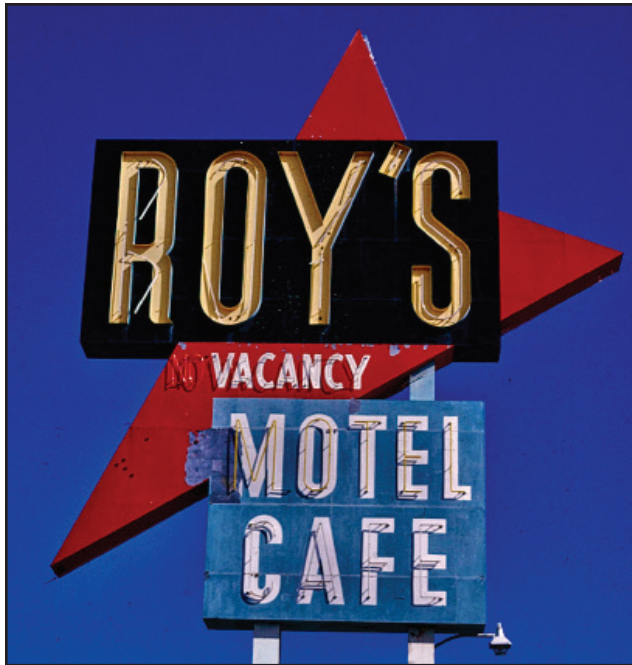


The Joshua tree has its own national park but the densest concentration of the oddly shaped member of the Yucca family, whose uplifted branches caused Mormon settlers to saddle the tree with its Biblical name, occur in the Mojave Desert Preserve. The photo-demanding trees grows so thickly on the Cima Dome that it resembles an orchard. A trail pushes pleasantly towards the foot of 5,755-foot Teutonia Peak, passing through hundreds of Joshua trees and an abandoned silver mine that was worked in the 1890s before switchbacking up the mountain. In the southern part of the Preserve are the Kelso Dunes, the largest sand piles in the Mojave Desert. The main dune rises 650 feet and can be summited in 1.5 miles - all in soft sand. To reach this giant sandbox requires navigation of a graded three-mile dirt road that is two-wheel drive friendly and delivers a genuine historic Route 66 sensation. The Preserve delivers another piece of elegant, middle-of-nowhere architecture - the Kelso Depot from the Union Pacific Railroad. This was a critical water source for the railroads before the diesel locomotive rendered such stops obsolete. Spared demolition the depot was given a welcome facelift to stand as a symbol of the railroad's opening of the Western desertlands.

Roy's Motel & Cafe

Amboy

87520 National Trails Highway



There is no architectural style better suited for Route 66 than Mid-Century Modern Googie. Bred in California and inspired by the Space Age, the bold colors and dynamic shapes of the Googie style spoke of an America with a can-do spirit looking to a future where anything is possible - exactly the same feeling of thousands of Americans who set out for an adventure in the West on the Mother Road. Roy Crowl

opened a service station here in 1938, taking care of visitors to Amboy Crater, an extinct volcano down the road. The surge in Route 66 traffic following the end of World War II spawned a cafe and an auto court with a small collection of cabins. Roy's was operating 24 hours a day with a work force of 70 in those days. The Googie makeover took place in 1959, highlighted by the 50-foot sign that quickly became a Route 66 landmark. The interstate arrived in 1972 and Amboy rapidly entered the growing family of Route 66 "living ghost towns." The dramatic Roy's sign was now seen more often in movies and music videos than by actual motorists. Since the 1990s the town of Amboy and Roy's have been in private hands. Restoration is proceeding piecemeal - first the gas station to bring in revenue and then the lobby and the iconic sign with the eatery and motel on the to-do list.

Bagdad Cafe

Newberry Springs

46599 National Trails Highway



The Bagdad Cafe is not a pure Route 66 nostalgia piece - unless you remember a meal at the Sidewinder Cafe after it opened in 1975. Or maybe you remember the town of Bagdad down the road which set the American record for the most days in a

row without any rain, 767 back between 1912 and 1914. The end of America's Main Street literally killed Bagdad; it was demolished without a trace, including the town's namesake cafe. Only a tree growing between Ludlow and Amboy marks Bagdad today. The current Bagdad Cafe's rise to Route 66 stardom began with German movie director Percy Adlon who was making the segue from documentary films to features with an adaptation of a novella by Carson McCullers called *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*. In 1987, for the title role of his *Bagdad Cafe* Adlon tabbed the Sidewinder in the middle of the Mojave Desert. The feel-good *Bagdad Cafe* won some awards, did a modest business in the United States and was an international smash. It wasn't long before curious visitors - especially from overseas - began showing up at the Sidewinder looking for their favorite American eatery; the French in particular were big fans. In the 1990s the owners leaned into their notoriety and adopted the movie persona for the cafe. Movie fans still make the pilgrimage to the Bagdad Cafe and, if they are Route 66 fans as well, stop to photograph the rusting Henning Motel sign next door. The motel was around when the film crews came to Newberry Springs but it did not become a movie star and has disappeared.

Mother Road Museum

Barstow
685 North 1st Avenue



Spend any amount of time on Route 66 in the west and you are certain to notice that a set of railroad tracks is often your companion. The railroads beat the automobile here by half a century and they spent great resources scouting the most cost-effective paths through the terrain. Road builders arriving later simply followed the hoof prints of the Iron Horse. The forebearer of Route 66, the National Old Trails Highway, arrived in Barstow around the time Francis Wilson was putting the finishing Southwestern accents on his Casa del Desierto train station for the Santa Fe Railway. To replace the previous depot that had burned, Wilson tapped a classical style for the imposing two-level, brick-and-stone building. He then infused the multiple arcades with Spanish flavor and added Moorish domes to the corner towers. The Santa Fe pulled out for good in 1973, many decades after the last meals were served in the Barstow Harvey House. The City of Barstow executed a full restoration in the 1990s, even reopening the "House of the Desert" to Amtrak passengers. Also operating here are a pair of museums including the Mother Road Museum with collections and a jazzy version of "Route 66" from Manhattan Transfer playing on the jukebox.

California Route 66 Museum

Victorville
16825 D Street



In his seminal *A Guide Book to Highway 66* Jack Rittenhouse typically sticks to a recitation of available services and a line or two of background. However, when he arrives at Victorville he glances over the nitty gritty and unleashes over 100 words on everything from Mormon pioneers to turkey ranches to silent film Westerns to "the big airfield nearby." Clearly Victorville is a place where stories matter and you can find them in the California Route 66 Museum, dedicated to "those who lived, passed through and passed on here." The free interactive museum operates Friday through Sunday out of the low-slung building that originally held the Red Rooster Cafe back in the 1930s. The greatest Victorville story spinner was Miles Mahan who settled in the town after retiring from the carnival. Beginning in 1955 he started displaying beer bottle tree sculptures and other works of folk art. His Hula Ville - a dancing hula girl at the entrance welcomed visitors - became a Mother Road attraction but mostly the people stopped for Miles and his stories. Looking every bit the grizzled prospector, Miles took his tales to *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* in 1990 when he was 94 years old. Hula Ville was ripped down after Mahan's death in 1997 but much of his folk art made its way here.

Wigwam Village Motel

San Bernadino
2728 Foothill Boulevard



There were seven Wigwam Villages built across the United States and this was the last one. Frank Redford, who built the first in Kentucky in 1933, constructed this one as well. Redford hated the word “teepee” so he called the auto courts “wigwams.” The two have very different architecture but, well, that’s for other people to nitpick. Like so many others, Redford headed West after World War II and constructed 11 wigwam-cabins here in 1950. He miscalculated demand and quickly added an additional eight stucco wigwams over a wood framing. After a bypassed Route 66 failed to deliver a necessary stream of overnight customers subsequent owners became increasingly uninterested in upkeep. In 2003 there were only three of the original seven Wigwam Villages left standing, soon to be two. But before this Wigwam Village could be folded up Kuman Patel, a nearby motel operator, acquired the property and fully restored all 19 of the 32-foot high units.

Cucamonga Service Station

Rancho Cucamonga
9670 Foothill Boulevard



The Richfield Oil Corporation began life in 1915 as the Rio Grande Oil Company in El Paso, Texas. Their first big customer was the United States Army who bought Rio Grande gasoline in their futile chase of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. By the birth of Route 66, Richfield Oil’s hacienda-styled service stations were familiar sights in California. This station dates to

1915. Ancil Morris, a Richfield Oil Distributor, took over in 1925 and Richfield gasoline flowed into the 1960s when the Mother Road was bypassed by I-15. In those years this was one of hundreds of Spanish-flavored stucco station in Southern California; none would have stood out. Today it is a rare sight. Its companion garage collapsed and the advertising company that owned the property was prepared to clear the entire weedy lot. But a deal was brokered that turned the station over to the enthusiastic preservationists of the Route 66 Inland Empire of California in exchange for the ability to display billboards.

Aztec Hotel

Monrovia
311 W. Foothill Boulevard



The early 1900s brought an explosion of interest in revival architecture. The mania started with Ancient Greece and Rome and quickly spread to buildings from Spain, the Orient, Merry Olde England, Russia - whatever cultures architects could find to emulate. One of the least likely sources was the jungles of Mexico. Really all architects had to go on was a book of photographs of overgrown Maya ruins written by John Lloyd Stephens and illustrated by Frederick Catherwood. Frank Lloyd Wright was an early cheerleader for Mayan Revival style with its horizontal lines and textile block designs. His Ennis House in Los Angeles, completed in 1923, is considered the apex of Mayan Revival residential architecture in the country. Two years later Robert Stacey-Judd took a swing at adapting Mayan style to commercial buildings with the Aztec Hotel. He called his wildly ornate creation "Aztec" since he thought it more well known than the Mayan civilization. Stacey-Judd carried the Mayan motif inside with furniture, murals, and decorative glyphs. It was almost as if Route 66 had to be routed past the 44-room hotel to see it when it debuted the next year. Ultimately the highway was realigned in 1931 and by that time the public fascination with Mayan style had gone as well. The Aztec Hotel was one of the earliest Route 66 icons to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, getting the nomination in 1978. As a commercial enterprise the hotel has a long and checkered history. The bank foreclosed for the first time way back in 1927. And 1930. And 1932. And so on. So far it has always returned to life. Based on the paranormal activity reported in the Aztec Hotel the ghosts won't allow it to be demolished.

Santa Monica Pier

Santa Monica
Colorado Avenue



The Santa Monica Pier was never on Route 66. It was never the western terminus of the Mother Road. Nor was Palisades Park that borders the Pacific Ocean. The original plan was for Route 66 to terminate in downtown Los Angeles at Broadway and 7th. In 1936 the road was extended to Santa Monica at Lincoln and Olympic boulevards. Rules mandate that a federal highway not transport a motorist into a "dead end." So Route 66 had to feed into the California Pacific Highway. But who was going to travel 2,448 miles from Chicago and not go another mile all the way to the Pacific Ocean? So travelers just keep driving the few remaining "unofficial" Mother Road blocks to the Santa Monica Pier which became the "spiritual" end of Route 66. The amusement pier opened on September 9, 1909 and during its 100th birthday in 2009 former California Historic Route 66 Association president Dan Rice got permission to install an "End of the Trail" sign in the middle of the pier in front of his memorabilia store. The Santa Monica Pier that Route 66 adventurers have always seen is actually two adjoining piers. That 1909 entry only carried sewage out into the ocean. The Pleasure Pier to its south was built in 1916 by Charles I.D. Loeff, a master carver and America's foremost builder of carousels. Loeff installed the first merry-go-round at New York's Coney Island and was 58 years old when he decided to take his talents to the West Coast in 1910. But unlike the millions of others who would soon follow their dreams to California on Route 66, Loeff had to take the train.

