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**ROUTE 66, 1926 TO THE PRESENT:
THE ROAD AS LOCAL HISTORY**

TERRI RYBURN-LAMONTE

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF ARTS

Department of History

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

1999

UMI Number: 9960423

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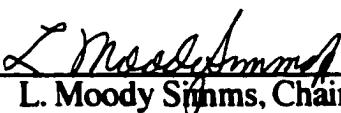
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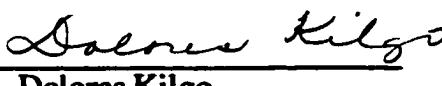
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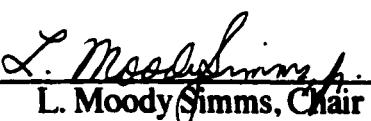
419 pages

December 1999

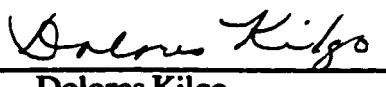
This dissertation has three purposes. The first is to provide a history of roadbuilding and transportation in the United States and Illinois as well as the history of Route 66, focusing primarily on Illinois. The second is to suggest ways that high school and college teachers can employ local history to teach some broad, basic concepts in United States history. The topics of material culture, popular culture, oral history interviews, and images are discussed as ways to supplement written documents. The third purpose is to provide practical, concrete activities for classroom use, including assembling a guidebook to Route 66. The use of local history helps to personalize the road which is then studied within the larger context of American history. Application of traditional teaching methods allows students to learn research skills as they gather primary sources, and to hone these skills as they weigh the historical evidence associated with road culture. Students then make practical application of what they have learned to their immediate surroundings and to their everyday lives, as they add to their knowledge of American history. Chapter 6 presents a guidebook to Route 66 in McLean County, synthesizing the topics covered in Chapters 2-5, demonstrating the practical application of the knowledge gained by students.

Route 66 is important to understanding the evolution of American road building and transportation, but also the interconnectedness of the road with the American consciousness. Route 66 has become more than mere pavement and can tell us something about who we are as a society. This dissertation will help teachers adapt and implement Route 66 as a topic into their teaching schedules.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank Dr. L. Moody Simms, chairman of my dissertation committee, for his valuable advice and assistance. To him and the other members of my committee, Dr. M. Paul Holsinger, Dr. Lawrence W. McBride, and Dr. Dolores Kilgo, I acknowledge my gratitude for their help and encouragement in finishing this project.

The writer also wishes to thank Ann Malone, Melanie Verbout, Sandy Harmon, Jo Ann Rayfield, Nancy Lutgens, Anita Revelle, Barbara Alexander, Julie Ruby, Sharon Foiles, Nancy Bragg, Denise Beurskens, Sally Pyne, and Nancy Allen for their encouragement and help. In addition, Joan Winters and the staff at Milner Library have provided valuable assistance in the gathering of materials for this dissertation.

Finally, I offer a special thanks to my daughters, Stacie and Amy; my grand-daughter, Jessika; and my husband, Bill Sanders, all of whom have shown great patience and understanding during this process.

T.R-L.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: ROUTE 66, 1926 TO THE PRESENT: THE ROAD AS LOCAL HISTORY

It is sometimes difficult to identify and communicate historical events which high school and college students find relevant to their own lives. However, students are continually bombarded with popular culture. Russel B. Nye, an early leader and prolific writer in the study of popular culture declares that it is "everywhere about us, in the air."¹ The history teacher can use the familiarity and comfort level students have with popular culture to teach the relevance and applicability of the past to the present. One method of transporting students back in time is through the use of an American popular culture icon: Route 66. And since many of the resources still exist (documents, photographs, pavement, structures, people), students can make immediate and practical application of their new-found knowledge through the use of local history.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to develop appropriate curriculum for use in teaching American history via the popular culture icon of Route 66.² This is necessary not just because understanding Route 66 is important to understanding the evolution of American road building and transportation, but because of the interconnectedness of the road with the American consciousness. Route 66 has become more than mere pavement and can tell us something about who we are as a society. The study of Route 66 on a local level is also necessary because

of the scarcity of national academic resources for studying Route 66.³ Teachers who wish to incorporate popular culture into their lesson plans on American history have little direction except for their own creativity and initiative.

Scheduling and/or publication demands in most high schools and colleges leave little time for integration of new or innovative lessons, much less entire courses. This dissertation will help teachers adapt and implement Route 66 as a topic into their teaching schedules.

This dissertation will provide both a solid academic foundation and hands-on activities for the teacher who is interested in incorporating local and oral history into traditional American history courses. It will set Route 66 in time/space, giving meaning to a series of otherwise seemingly disconnected places and events. The use of local history will help to personalize the road which will also be placed within the larger context of American history. Application of traditional teaching methods will allow students to learn research skills as they gather primary sources, and to hone these skills as they weigh the historical evidence associated with road culture. Students may then make practical application of what they learn to their immediate surroundings and to their everyday lives, as they add to their knowledge of American history. Suggestions will be given for sharing this new-found knowledge with the community, including written essays and articles, oral presentations, public exhibits and displays, and bus tours.

This dissertation will have three sections. The first will be a history of road building and transportation in the United States and Illinois as well as the history of Route 66.

The second section of the dissertation will define and discuss local history, including oral history and the use of images, such as postcards and photographs

as they apply to this topic. Popular culture will be discussed, with examples given of the art, music, literature, and film associated with Route 66.⁴

The third section of the dissertation will be the presentation of a road guide to Route 66 in McLean County, Illinois, which will incorporate all of the elements discussed in the first two sections of the dissertation. The guide will be organized in a geographical manner, following the road from north to south. The objective will be for students to effect cognitive gain (for instance, learning facts and concepts about American history) by studying a familiar and specific locality. The structure of the road guide will allow the classroom teacher to select discreet sections or adapt various components for classroom use without substantial modification.

An appendix will contain maps, a course syllabus, and a series of classroom activities, as well as forms and a list of questions necessary to organize an oral history project.

Route 66 Overview

In 1926 construction began on a highway that eventually stretched from Chicago to Santa Monica, California, a distance of approximately 2,400 miles. An important all-weather transportation corridor, Route 66 connected the Midwest to the West Coast and all points in between. Route 66 left Lake Michigan in downtown Chicago and cut a southwest, diagonal route across Illinois, through Joliet, Dwight, Bloomington-Normal, Springfield, and Litchfield on its way to St. Louis, Missouri. There it turned west through Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and the spectacular views of New Mexico and Arizona, before ending at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, California. Some concrete pavement already existed across these states prior to 1926; new sections were poured to connect them,

forming a continuous ribbon of highway. The road was considered completed in the late 1930s as it sliced its way through the middle of small towns and large cities alike, thus earning the nickname of "The Main Street of America," a phrase coined by Cyrus Avery of the U.S. 66 Highway Association shortly after the road was designated a national highway.⁵

The concrete had barely set up on the new "hard road" when people began to complain about the dirt, noise, traffic congestion and delays as traffic crawled along the narrow, two-lane road through their towns, clogging residential streets and downtown business districts alike. Americans demanded roads which would allow them to travel more quickly and safely and by the late 1930s, the first two-lane alignment was being replaced by a four-lane highway which swept around towns in far-flung arcs called bypasses or beltlines. Thriving roadside businesses dried up, almost overnight, with the changed alignment of the road. Not even newly-erected billboards and "Business Route 66" signs could lure enough traffic off of the four-lane and into their establishments to ensure their survival; many entrepreneurs moved to the new road and its increasing traffic.

The new, four-lane road served as a major military corridor during World War II, although a lack of money, materials, and manpower meant that even routine maintenance of the road was suspended and the pavement deteriorated, requiring its eventual replacement. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces and soon to be President of the United States, was reported to have been so impressed with the speed and efficiency of traffic on the German Autobahn that he determined to replace American highways with superhighways.⁶ His purpose may have had more to do with movement of military troops and convoys in the event of an attack by Cold War enemies and

super powers than any concern for the convenience of every day drivers, but the end result is our present-day interstate system. Originally proposed during Eisenhower's presidency, the Federal Highway Act of 1956 took five different interstates and more than 20 years to replace Route 66: I-55 from Chicago to St. Louis; I-44 from St. Louis to Oklahoma City; I-40 from Oklahoma City to Barstow, California; I-15 from Barstow to San Bernardino; and I-10 from San Bernardino to Santa Monica. The last stretch of Route 66 was bypassed in 1984 by a section of I-40 near Williams, Arizona.⁷ This further removal from traffic doomed some towns, as they watched the traffic and their businesses dry up without much hope of being able to compete with the large corporations which continue to dominate business at interstate exchanges.

Since the early 1990s, Route 66 has enjoyed a renaissance and all eight states through which Route 66 traveled have associations whose members travel the road and work for preservation of those sections which survive.⁸ For instance, the Route 66 Association of Illinois Preservation Committee successfully submitted a Route 66 multiple property documentation and an individual property to the National Register of Historic Places.⁹ Also, many people now travel the road as a destination in and of itself. For example, the Route 66 Association of Illinois sponsors an annual two-day motor tour between Chicago and St. Louis, involving 200-300 cars and several hundred people, stopping along the way to visit historic sites and some of the people who have given the road its unique character.¹⁰ Many international visitors join the tour or come for self-guided tours throughout the year.¹¹ The Association also maintains a Hall of Fame at the Dixie Trucker's Home in McLean into which it annually inducts those people and places in Illinois which best exemplify the Route 66 spirit.¹²

NOTES

¹Russell B. Nye, "Introduction to the Conversation," Why Pop? A Conversation About Popular Culture with John G. Cawelti (San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc., 1973), vii.

²Terri Ryburn-LaMonte, "Route 66: Still Kickin' but Why?," Bulletin of the Illinois Geographical Society, 38:2 (Fall 1996): 13-19.

³These resources are listed in Appendix C.

⁴Ryburn-LaMonte, "Route 66: The Next Generation Hits the Road," Teaching History, a Journal of Methods 21 (Spring 1996): 3-10.

⁵Susan Croce Kelly and Quinta Scott, Route 66: The Highway and Its People (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 24.

⁶Michael Wallis, Route 66: The Mother Road (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 25.

⁷Ibid, 26.

⁸A complete list of these associations and their addresses appears in Appendix C.

⁹The Illinois Route 66 multiple property documentation, entitled "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through Illinois," provided the basis for approval of individual properties as well as sections of pavement along the road. The Odell Standard gasoline station was the individual property submitted for consideration. Both nominations were approved at the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois' annual meeting in Galesburg, Illinois, and by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1997.

¹⁰This event occurs on the second weekend in June each year and travels between Chicago and St. Louis, alternating directions each year.

¹¹Ryburn-LaMonte, "Route 66: Still Kickin' for Students and International Visitors," in Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go, Carol Traynor Williams, ed., (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998).

¹²Nominations are accepted by the Route 66 Association of Illinois in January of each year for induction during the June Motor Tour. A complete list of the current Hall of Fame members appears in Appendix C.

CHAPTER II

ILLINOIS HISTORY AND EARLY ROADBUILDING

Illinois History

Glaciers are the most important factor in the settlement and subsequent development of the transportation system in Illinois. Four glaciers, occurring over a period of thousands of years, covered the state to various degrees (see Appendix A). The Illinoian glacier, occurring between one hundred to one hundred fifty thousand years ago, flattened land, leaving a surface which roads and railroads would later traverse without encountering steep grades. The glacier also left rivers and lakes by which the earliest explorers traveled. Most importantly, however, it deposited a thick and fertile layer of topsoil, known as loess, over the state which in future years made Illinois a leading agricultural area, drawing settlers who required adequate roads for travel and transport of their agricultural products.¹ Transportation unlocked the natural resources of Illinois, allowing agricultural, industrial, and commercial development.

Early settlement in Illinois began in the southern part of the state (see Appendix A). Settlers stayed near the streams; only later did people move out onto the prairie, following extant Indian and buffalo trails that took the path of least resistance through the tall prairie grass and marshy swampland. Illinois landforms and their topographical features shaped the north to south diagonal pattern of Illinois' transportation corridor as rudimentary paths became early

roads. Later alignments of rail and automobile roads changed, but the same general pattern of traffic remains.

The geology of Illinois meant that early road builders had to adapt to a range of soil types and in many areas of Illinois, clay, gravel, and limestone were readily available. In areas where building materials were not available, residents and road builders struggled through the mud with no solution in sight. In their desperation, they experimented with roads of planks or large rocks, only to see the materials engulfed by the thick, soupy Illinois mud with its voracious appetite. The earliest and most efficient method of transportation in Illinois was by the Mississippi River, which brought settlers upriver to Illinois as well as transported their agricultural products down river to market (see Appendix A). The Illinois and Michigan Canal, from Bridgeport to LaSalle, and from the Illinois River to the Mississippi River; the Erie Canal, linking the Eastern seaboard with Chicago; and Lake Michigan played a later, but very important, role in the development of northern Illinois and Chicago.

French Explorers

The seventeenth-century French were the first Europeans to explore the northern wilderness and to trade with the Indian tribes. The French were more willing to accept the Indians as equals than were the English or the Spanish; thus, French explorers, traders, and missionaries made inroads into the American interior. Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620, the French had settled at Quebec and, in 1671, the French officially claimed title to the yet undiscovered Illinois country. At a Chippewa village at Sault Ste. Marie, the sieur de St. Lusson, a French official, claimed for his king and country: "...the vast and unknown interior of the continent, with all its countries, rivers and lakes, discovered

and undiscovered."² It is impossible to know what the natives thought of the ceremony, but they told the French of a great river to the south; the French surmised that it flowed into the Pacific Ocean.

Louis Jolliet, an explorer and map maker, had traveled previously to the Great Lakes and got along well with the Indians. He was placed in charge of an expedition to look for this mysterious river. (Much later, of course, an Illinois town would be named for him but the spelling of the name would be Anglicized and simplified to "Joliet.") Father Jacques Marquette was assigned to go along on the expedition. A Jesuit priest, who had arrived from France in 1666, his goal was to establish a mission among the Indians. In 1673, when Jolliet and Marquette reached the area, Illinois was generally defined as the Illinois River Valley and the territory northward and southward, extending into present-day Wisconsin. The explorer and priest left St. Ignace on the north shore of Mackinac Straits on May 17, 1673, in two birch bark canoes with a crew of five. They traveled "...down Lake Michigan, into Green Bay, and up the Fox River of Wisconsin [where] they had been preceded by other white men."³ When Marquette told the Indians of his mission, they tried to dissuade him from undertaking the journey. He reported that:

They represented to me that I would meet Nations who never show mercy to Strangers, but Break Their heads without any cause; and that war was kindled Between Various peoples who dwelt upon our Route, which Exposed us to the further manifest danger of being killed by the bands of Warriors who are ever in the Field. They also said that the great River was very dangerous, when one does not know the difficult Places; that it was full of horrible monsters, which devoured men and Canoes Together; that there was even a demon, who was heard from a great distance, who barred the way, and swallowed up all who ventured to approach him; Finally that the Heat was so excessive In those countries that it would Inevitably Cause Our death.⁴

Despite this ominous warning, the expedition set off and on June 17 paddled out into the Mississippi River; three days later they saw the present state of Illinois. Marquette recorded a June 25 visit to an Indian village which was about two leagues (up to six miles) from the river. Their visit was congenial and yielded a definition of the Indians' name and the name of the area which would eventually become the name of the state: "To say Illinois [sic] is, in their language, to say 'the men,' as if other Indians compared to them were mere beasts. And it must be admitted that they have an air of humanity that we had not remarked in the other nations that we had seen on the way."⁵ The explorer and the priest continued down the Mississippi River, passing the Ohio River before realizing that the Mississippi River was not a route to the Pacific Ocean.

Jolliet and Marquette crossed the future state of Illinois on their return trip; they traveled the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers to Lake Michigan. When they reached the DePere Mission at the head of Green Bay, Marquette, who was ill, stayed behind while Jolliet continued to Montreal. Unfortunately, Jolliet's canoe capsized and all of his records and carefully drawn maps were lost. Thus, the only first-hand account of the discovery of Illinois was that contained in Marquette's journal, which provided details about the religious practices of the Indians but was vague about other details and dates. Jolliet never returned to Illinois but he later filed a report which provided a brief description of Illinois: "At first, when we were told of these treeless lands, I imagined that it was a country ravaged by fire, where the soil was so poor that it could produce nothing. But we have certainly observed the contrary; and no better soil can be found, either for corn, for vines, or for any other fruit whatever."⁶ He continued, "A settler would not there spend ten years in cutting down and burning the trees; on the very day of his arrival, he could put his plow into the ground."⁷ Marquette, who

had not fully recovered from his illness, traveled to the Kaskaskia village and founded the Mission of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin in 1675. Although terminally ill, in the spring he started for St. Ignace, site of his northern mission, but died on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan and is buried at an unknown location.⁸

Robert Cavelier, sieur de laSalle continued the exploration of the lower Mississippi in hopes of discovering a transcontinental waterway to the Pacific Ocean. LaSalle was born in France, and farmed unsuccessfully in Canada for two years before he became an explorer. He recruited Henri de Tonti, an Italian soldier, for this expedition. Tonti had lost his right hand in a Mediterranean naval battle; replaced with a metal hook, it caused quite a stir among the Indians, who called him "Iron Hand." LaSalle made two trips to France to get financial backing to support his venture and was given a land grant and a monopoly on the fur trade south of the lakes. His motives for exploration were more self-serving and profit-oriented than were Jolliet's, who was friendly with the Jesuits.

In 1680 LaSalle led fourteen men into the Illinois, erecting Ft. Crevecoeur at the present site of Peoria. It is significant as "...the first building erected by white men in Illinois and the first fort built by the French in the West."⁹ Tonti and LaSalle, in the spring of 1682, made the first trip to the mouth of the Mississippi. On April 9, 1682, LaSalle "...erected a column and in a loud voice claimed possession for his king of all the region watered by the Mississippi, from the Appalachians to the Rockies."¹⁰ He named it Louisiana, after Louis the XIV.

LaSalle returned upstream to build Ft. St. Louis on Starved Rock. The government of France, however, withdrew financial support of LaSalle and canceled his monopoly and, in 1684 LaSalle, who had envisioned a vast French empire in North America, went back to France never to return to Illinois. He did,

however, return to North America at a later date and as he searched for the mouth of the Mississippi River, was assassinated by a member of his expedition. Tonti then took over LaSalle's work and encouraged French settlement in Illinois. In the winter of 1691-92 Tonti abandoned Ft. St. Louis and moved 80 miles downstream, building a second and larger Ft. St. Louis about a mile and a half above the outlet of Lake Peoria; the fort was commonly known as Ft. Pimitoui, after a local Indian village. Tonti's nephew, the sieur de Liette, accompanied Tonti on this trip and described the beauty of the Illinois country in his memoirs: "You see places on the one side that are unwooded prairies requiring only to be turned up by the plow, and on the other side valleys spreading half a league before reaching the hills, which have no trees but walnuts and oaks; and behind these, prairies..."¹¹

By 1699, thanks to the efforts of LaSalle and Tonti, there was a thin, long line of French settlement from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico; they had shifted their settlements in the Illinois country to the fertile plain on the east side of the Mississippi River. In May of 1699, three Seminarian priests built a chapel and house at Cahokia, the oldest settlement in the American interior. Another settlement was begun at Kaskaskia in 1703; this became the first capital of Illinois. In 1820, the capital was shifted to Vandalia because of the northward shift of population and the floods which plagued Kaskaskia; a catastrophic flood completely destroyed Kaskaskia in 1881.

Because of the ease of travel on the Mississippi River, the Illinois country became an economic dependency of New Orleans and by 1717, Illinois was under the government of Louisiana. In 1720, Ft. De Chartres became the seat of military and civil power. Destroyed by a flood in 1727, it was rebuilt of stone and had the distinction of being the strongest military post away from the Atlantic sea-

board.¹² Ft. De Chartres was built against the influx of British settlers, not as protection against the Indians.

Founded in about 1723, Prairie du Rocher was another important town but the French could not hold on to this territory, since their numbers were spread very thinly over a vast area. In fact, "...the white population at its peak probably only numbered 1500 to 2000, including soldiers and temporary residents..."¹³ When France lost the Seven Years War (also known as the French and Indian War), the 1763 Treaty of Paris gave to Great Britain all of Canada and New France; the rest of the United States was the property of Spain.

The Illinois Country

Although the crest of the Alleghenies was fixed as the boundary beyond which whites could not settle, only large-scale Indian raids could block the westward spread of the white settlers and by December 9, 1778, the county of Illinois was created. The county was defined as a vast area of indefinite boundaries extending from the Ohio River to the Mississippi River and on to Canada. The county existed for three years before Virginia recognized that it could not afford to support a government in the far Northwest and ceded its claims north of the Ohio to the Continental Congress; the law which created the county of Illinois lapsed on January 5, 1782.¹⁴

On May 20, 1785, the Continental Congress adopted a land ordinance which established a neat and orderly system of rectangular surveys. This rectangular/grid system set townships at six square miles, containing 36 sections of 640 acres each. It had the advantage of exactly locating any field by a universal system of numbering and description. Congress required that these surveys precede sale of public lands. The sale of Illinois land started at \$2 an acre, regardless of

the condition of the land (i.e., swamp or prime land). Government land offices opened at Kaskaskia, Illinois, Vincennes, Indiana, and Detroit, Michigan, allowing many land speculators to become wealthy. The Northwest Ordinance, signed on July 13, 1787, provided a blueprint for expansion of counties into territories and territories into states.

The Illinois Country was slow to attract settlers because of Indian troubles, problems with French land titles, delays in opening other land for public sale and a lack of effective government. However, on March 1, 1809, Illinois became a territory with Kaskaskia as its capital; the territory was two and a half times the size of the present state.¹⁵ The War of 1812, lasting two years, intervened in the settlement, causing westward migration to cease.

Immediately after the war, the federal government tried to increase Illinois land sales but could not legally do so because Indians still had claim to much of it. William Henry Harrison had negotiated the 1803 Ft. Wayne Treaty which obtained title to salt springs at the Saline River, and induced the Kaskaskia Indians to sign away their property in southern Illinois. Although the last Indian treaty was not negotiated until 1833, for all practical purposes, the Federal government had legal title to most of Illinois by 1818. As treaties were signed, land speculation and migration resumed, but a national depression, which occurred between 1818-1825, checked westward migration. Illinois was admitted to the Union on December 3, 1818, as the 21st state, even though it probably had 35,000 residents, not the 40,000 claimed by the census, and certainly not the 60,000 required by the Northwest Ordinance.

Early Road Building

The most important road to early European settlement of Illinois was the National Road, begun in 1808. People had dreamed of such a road as early as colonial times. George Washington, for instance, believed a National Road was necessary to hold the East and West together. The West, he felt, might grow too independent because of the difficulty involved in trading with the east. This trade required that goods be sent down the Mississippi River, then up the Atlantic coast to Eastern markets--a long, tedious, and expensive process. President Thomas Jefferson appointed the first road commissioners for the National Road, which followed a route traveled by buffalo and Native Americans. The road started at the Potomac River in Cumberland, Maryland, and ran through Pennsylvania into Wheeling, Virginia (which later became West Virginia). It crossed the Ohio River and ran through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Construction of the National Road was stopped during the War of 1812, and the road did not reach the Ohio River until 1818, stopping just short of Vandalia, Illinois, in 1839. The road was known by various names: A Delaware Indian named Necomolin helped blaze a trail for the Ohio Company and early pioneers called the road "Necomolin's Trail." Later, British General Braddock widened a 100-mile stretch of the road during the French and Indian War, after which it was called "Braddock's Road." The legal name was the Cumberland Road although it came to be called the "National Road" or "The Pike." U.S. Route 40 later followed this same route.

Prior to the National Road's construction, road building was done primarily by individuals or by states. However, none of them could afford a project of this

magnitude; money had to come from the Federal government. The merits of the road and the government's right to build an interstate highway were hotly debated in Congress. The issue was the rights of states versus federal obligations. Although Congress did not state outright that the United States government had the power to build roads from one state to another, it gave authority for use of a portion of the profit made from the sale of land in Ohio to build public roads "...leading from the navigable waters emptying into the Atlantic, to the Ohio [River]..."¹⁶ when it became the 17th state in 1803.

Congress later became even more involved in building the National Road by advancing money when Ohio land sales failed to meet the cost of construction. The same arrangement was made when Indiana became the 19th state in 1816 and when Illinois became the 21st state in 1818. By this time, traffic first traveled over the National Road to Wheeling, Virginia. The road was very busy with stagecoaches, wagons, and foot traffic, including farmers who drove their animals to market along the road. This heavy traffic meant that the road needed maintenance. However, President Andrew Jackson, a supporter of state's rights, believed that the government had no right to collect tolls for repair of the National Road. Thus, the road east of the Ohio River fell into disrepair and was given back to the states in 1835, as eventually the whole road would be given back to individual states.

Meanwhile, road construction technology advanced in Europe when Scotsman Thomas Telford began using heavy stone for roadbeds and smaller stones for the upper layers of the road in the 1820s. Road specifications have not survived but Robert Southey, a poet who toured the Highlands in 1819 described Telford's exacting standards for roadbuilding:

...first to level and drain; then, like the Romans, to lay a solid pavement of large stones, the round or broad end downwards, as close as they can be set; the points are then broken off, and a layer of stones broken to about the size of walnuts, laid over them...every precaution is taken to make the road firm in all its parts.

Southey continued:

In Telford's work on these Highland roads, nothing marked his engineering skill and foresight more clearly than his attention to their embankments and his careful provision against that great enemy of road construction--water.¹⁷

A fellow countryman and contemporary, John Loudon McAdam, further refined Telford's early road building efforts. The ideal road, according to McAdam, was

...only to be attained if the road is entirely composed of stone to a thickness of about ten inches in which every stone is broken until none exceeds six ounces in weight. Under pressure of the traffic the sharp angles of the stones unite into a compact mass entirely impervious to moisture. A road should be laid as flat as possible with just enough rise in the centre to allow the rain to run off it into ditches at either side. [He] advocated a three-inch rise on a road eighteen feet wide, and rather more on a 30-foot road, which he thought necessary in the case of main roads near large towns.¹⁸

McAdam did not add earth, clay, or chalk to the broken stone because it might soak up water and be affected by frost:

Nothing is to be laid on the clean stone on pretence of *binding*. Broken stone will combine by its own angles into a smooth, solid surface that cannot be affected by vicissitudes of weather, or displaced by action of wheels which will pass over it without a jolt and consequently without injury.¹⁹

McAdam rejected Telford's practice of paving the foundation of the road as an unnecessary step which also increased the cost of the road. Nevertheless, he developed "...an impervious surface...of clean, broken stones of a fairly small, uniform size"²⁰ and his name soon became synonymous with his method of road

making; a macadam road referred to any road built in the manner he advocated. His stature was such that he became known as "The Colossus of Roads." Both Telford's and McAdam's technological developments had great impact on road building, although it would be many years before Illinois was able to implement them.

The Erie Canal

The Erie Canal was completed in 1825 at a cost of six million dollars which was soon repaid in tolls. It stretched 363 miles from the Hudson River at Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo, New York, and allowed settlers to travel directly to Chicago, via the Great Lakes. Prior to the Erie Canal, Illinois settlement occurred in the southern one-third of the state. The canal helped immensely in the settlement of northern Illinois, encouraging Yankees and Europeans to emigrate west. Many New Englanders migrated to Illinois to become farmers and many Europeans, especially the Irish, came to Illinois to build the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the railroads. The Erie Canal "...made Illinois much closer to eastern and foreign markets than the all-water route down the Mississippi to New Orleans...."²¹ Then, Chicago began its transformation from a small trading post to an important city as speculators began to purchase Chicago real estate. As a result, land sales in the southern counties slumped, and people headed north.

Internal Improvements

Early pioneers were accustomed to living and farming in wooded areas and, thus, settled in the scattered groves of Illinois, rather than on the expansive prairies. Life was much easier for settlers who had access to trees for building materials and fuel as well as a water supply from the creeks and rivers which wound

their way through the groves. Although some crops could be planted in "hills" by drilling holes in the ground, settlers were unable to plow the prairie because of the tangled root system of the thick and tall grasses. This difficulty was also the reason the prairie soil was so fertile:

The very extensive systems of fine roots that characterized the prairie grasses were readily incorporated into the upper soil horizons as decayed organic matter (humus). This material imparts the characteristic dark color to prairie soils, improves their tilth by clumping together the smallest of particles, and reduces the rate at which mineral plant foods are dissolved and carried downward by rainwater.²²

It wasn't until the 1830s that technological developments moved large numbers of settlers onto the prairie, to build houses and plow extensive acres of land for farming. Still, raising a corn crop was a difficult, labor-intensive task; a detailed description of pioneer farming is necessary:

They began in early spring by plowing strips about four feet apart and then cross plowing at ninety degrees to the original furrows. The distance between rows was important because it was dictated by the width of a horse. Cross plowing was essential to keep weeds from choking the corn plants. If the early farmer was fortunate enough to have a harrow, or skilled enough to improvise one, the ground might be further dragged, pulverized, and leveled. Wherever the furrows crossed, small mounds were formed. Into each of these hills, the pioneer corn growers might hoe a little manure, but mostly they counted on the natural fertility of the soil. The hills, each about three to five feet apart, would be the foundation of cornfields for the next hundred years....Come May, the farmer would drop four to seven kernels into each hill and cover them with a little dirt....When the young corn plants were about a foot high, the farmer would walk through the field, pulling out the least promising ones so that only four remained in each hill. Cultivation followed. It was the goal of farmers to control weeds by plowing the fields three times in each direction. Come September, the corn was cut and shocked to allow it to dry. It was then picked and hauled back to the farmstead where the husks would be removed. Because there was no economical way to move corn to market, the corn was either stored in ear form for later use or fed to livestock.²³

As early settlers spread out on to the prairie and planned for permanence, Native Americans could not ignore the fact that the settlers meant not only to stay, but to expand. This encroachment resulted in the Black Hawk War of 1832, which temporarily slowed westward migration. Later, Black Hawk War veterans selected the best land for farms and towns, and more settlers than ever poured into Illinois. Not all who bought land in Illinois, however, planned to live or farm there. Speculators bought up huge sections of land, reselling them at a sizable profit to would-be farmers, or renting the land to tenant farmers, a practice not so distantly related to feudalism in Europe. Regardless of their land ownership status, farmers found it difficult to travel within the state because of a lack of even rudimentary roads. As the population increased, there was a demand for better roads and railroads to move agricultural products from farm to market, via roads which connected Illinois to the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. In addition to being a practical thing to do, an element of greed may have crept in to this demand:

Statisticians were everywhere present to demonstrate the profits that would go to the pioneer if these could be built. A bushel of corn, they pointed out, sold in the interior for from 12 to 20 cents; at Chicago or on the Ohio River that same bushel fetched 50 cents. As the average farmer produced 60 bushels to the acre, lead-pencil engineers needed only enough ciphering paper to prove the stratospheric profits that would be the farmer's with better outlets. For every 100-acre farm the increased return would be \$1,800 a year...²⁴

This was a considerable amount of money in the 1820s and 30s, by anyone's standards. In his inaugural address, Governor Joseph Duncan (Democrat, 1834-1838) summed up the optimism of Illinois residents:

Our state is comparatively in its infancy, and in roads, trackways, railroads, and canals, are now laid out, they can be made straight between most of the important points with very little expense and difficulty; compared with what will result, if their location is postponed until lands

increase in value, and settlements are formed on the roads which are now in use or daily making.²⁵ (See Appendix A.)

As a result of increasing population and the demands for cheaper and more reliable transportation, the 1836 Illinois General Assembly approved The Internal Improvements Act of 1837, an optimistic bit of legislation, given that it "pledged the 400,000 poverty-ridden inhabitants of the frontier state to spend more than \$10,000,000 on a network of railroads and canals which would crisscross in every direction."²⁶ The act unfortunately coincided with the Panic of 1837, a national economic downturn that delayed most of the improvements planned by the General Assembly.

As early as 1673, Joliet had the idea that Lake Michigan and the Illinois River could be connected by a canal and in 1822 Congress authorized construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which would connect the Chicago and Des Plaines Rivers between Bridgeport, just west of Chicago, and LaSalle, where a turning basin was built. The building of the Canal began in 1836, but was halted by the Panic of 1837, which lasted five years. Construction limped along for a while as contractors paid wages by issuing their own scrip. By 1842, however, construction came to a complete standstill and the Canal was not completed until 1848. In the end, it cost nearly six and a half million dollars and had taken twelve years to build, but it was worth it. Chicago was now more than a lake port--it had an inland water route to the Gulf of Mexico. Anyone with access to a river could now ship to and buy from Chicago.²⁷

Railroads

The biggest project proposed by the General Assembly in 1837 was the Illinois Central Railroad. This was again approved by Congress in 1850 and

Illinois received 2.5 million acres to be used in financing a road from Cairo to Dunleith (East Dubuque), with a branch to Chicago. The IC sold land to 35,000 families, changing settlement patterns and the ethnic makeup of Illinois.

The land-grant railroads aggressively advertised in eastern newspapers for people to settle near the new lines. Land grant agents of the Illinois Central offered married men jobs at \$1.25 a day, guaranteed for two years...Runners waited dockside in New York City to pounce on immigrants newly arrived from Europe, while Illinois Central agents scoured Germany and Scandinavia for potential settlers.²⁸

Y-shaped, the Illinois Central filled the central eastern prairie region with prosperous farmers, linked by rail to Chicago markets (see Appendix A). At 705.5 miles it was twice as long as any other railroad, becoming a marvel of the transportation industry. Although railroad building in Illinois began in 1836, a series of depressions and financial disasters forced Illinois settlers back to the rivers until the 1850s when rail lines increased from 110 miles to 2,867, making Illinois second (after Ohio) in the nation for total rail mileage.²⁹

The Illinois Central arrived in Bloomington in 1853, followed quickly by the Chicago and Alton. By February of 1854, The Weekly Pantagraph sang the praises of the railroad:

...The iron horse works in any harness, and is equal to, and willing to do any labor. He carries the pioneer into the wilderness, or the elegant into town--helps building the settler's cabin, or the merchants mansion--draws the farmers produce, or the trader's goods. His appearance in a State is a signal for an unusual waking up. Locations are made--barns are built--the prairie is broken up--the timber entered--the fields are plowed--the farms are sown--villages appear--orchards are seen, and the school houses and churches are thronged, the feverish pulse of the trip hammer--the ring of the anvil--the rumbling of the flouring mill--the rattling of the loom--the lowing of cattle--the bleating of sheep--the laughter of children--the ring of bells, and all the sounds and sights of industry, of plenty and of peace accord and cord with him and his train, his whistle and bell as he goes thundering by. The creature who does so much lives on cord wood and water.³⁰

The results of the arrival of the railroad were immediately felt in the cost of transportation. The fare from Alton to St. Louis to Chicago was \$8 and from Chicago to New York City was \$25--a total of \$33 which The Intelligencer in 1853 described as "...cheap, compared with olden times." But, the paper warned, "The Chicago and lake lines have got to do better than that, to secure the travel east from this section of the country."³¹

Another dramatic result of the arrival of the railroads was the growth of towns on the prairie. "Many towns began as stations on rail lines, and those that prospered grew at the expense of those not so located."³² The railroad became the primary method of transportation for both people and freight. Since trains made stops at each town, avoiding the muddy and often impassable roads, they proved to be a faster and less expensive method of travel. Although some towns were already in situ, much wrangling and behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing occurred as entrepreneurs bought up land through which railroad tracks might be routed.

Western settlers learned that good things came to a town fortunate enough to have a depot; to lack one was to be left behind. Their eagerness was not lost on the railroad men, who raised capital by convincing people who wanted the train to stop in their town to buy stock....So virulent was the railroad fever that railroad promoters could often dictate their price for steering tracks into a town.³³

The resulting towns generally had two things in common--a grain elevator and the railroad--as they dotted the prairie approximately every five miles or so along the rails. In 1855, The Weekly Pantagraph reported that a small town in Ogle County had shipped more than one million bushels of corn via the Illinois Central to Eastern markets within the previous six months. "Nine years ago," the paper proclaimed, "the most of this town was an unsettled prairie."³⁴

None of this growth would have been possible or necessary, however, without the advent of new farming methods. The most important technological advance which affected farming was an invention by John Deere, a Vermont blacksmith, who came to Illinois in 1837. His self-scouring steel plow, mass produced at Moline by 1847, quickly revolutionized farming. Land could now be cleared and planted more quickly and efficiently. Deere's invention brought about the need for another: the increased crops which resulted from use of the improved plow would have rotted in the field if it had not been for the invention of the reaper. Cyrus Hall McCormick, frequently given credit for the reaper's invention, actually only perfected an earlier reaper, however, he was able to produce the reaper in quantity. Other technological advances in the 1840s were the cultivator, which loosened the ground around the plants, enabling them to grow, and the thresher, a machine for separating crops into grain, or seeds and straw. Wheat soon became the most important cash crop and by 1859, Illinois led the nation in its production. Corn was an equally important crop during this early period, consumed by farm animals and pioneer families: "We know [settlers] made corn into hasty pudding, johnny-cake, hot cakes, Indian mush, Indian meal gruel, corn bread, corn cake, corn biscuits, corn crumpets, hominy, green corn dumplings, corn porridge, and summer succotash.³⁵

None of the improved technology benefited the farmer financially unless he could transport his crops to market efficiently and inexpensively. The rich, black prairie soil so important for growing grain, turned to mud during the rainy season, becoming impassable to farm animals and wagons. Settlers even tried to pave the prairie with tree trunks or rough-hewn planks. In September 1848, ten miles of plank road were built near Chicago. The road was graded and ditches dug. Stringers, or supports, were imbedded into the ground and eight-foot, three-

inch thick planks were placed on them. They were only moderately successful, however, as water accumulated under the planks, causing them to warp. Since builders failed to set aside the money to maintain the road, it was soon abandoned and traffic returned to the packed dirt roads.³⁶

The condition of streets in town was not any better. An eyewitness tallied the objects he found imbedded in the mud of a few blocks of downtown Bloomington in the mid-1800s:

...many small boxes, a broken lamppost, a large barrel with the head knocked out, a small barrel in the same condition, one baby's shoe missing its lace, several granite blocks, three pieces of wood said to be as straight as a politician's course at election time, two stakes driven into the road for unknown reasons, a stone jug minus its spout and handle, a large window frame, a lady's hatbox, a large box with a shovel standing upright in it, several pieces of pig iron, piles of ashes, burnt coal, waste paper, and an immense mound of unidentifiable substance crowned with a broken sawhorse.³⁷

Thanks to the new railroads and the water and overland routes from the east, Illinois' population passed the one million mark in the 1850s. The state which had been admitted to the Union with 25,000 fewer residents than the minimum population requirement, became the fourth largest state in the nation. In the north, thanks in large part to the Erie Canal, Chicago experienced an influx of settlers, resulting in a population boom. In 1860, Chicago was the ninth largest city in the United States. Illinois could no longer be considered frontier; that was disappearing to the West while industrialization moved into the Midwest. This progress would not have been possible, of course, without the canals, the extensive rail system which criss-crossed the state, and the implementation of new road-building techniques. On the other hand, the influx of settlers and the development of transportation were interdependent, neither being necessary or possible without the other.

Paving the roads

The necessity of paving country roads was crucial to both rural and urban residents. Farmers and rural residents were losing money on their produce as well as suffering wear and tear to their horses and wagons, while town residents paid higher prices for goods which were delayed by poor road conditions. Three primary road conditions restricted travel: mud, dust, and roughness. While dust was a serious annoyance in dry weather, it usually did not impede traffic. Mud, however, brought traffic to a halt by entrapping horse, wagon and driver in a seemingly bottomless pit. The rough condition of the roads also affected speed and safety of travel. In addition to their hazards, mud and rough roads could also result in additional expenses, such as repairs to broken axles, etc.³⁸

This problem was discussed for many years, beginning in the mid-1800s, as committees of leading citizens met to discuss permanent or "hard" roads. By the late 1880s, the consensus seemed to be that gravel roads were the best solution and that roads built by a combination of subscription and by a community of labor best accomplished this goal. An 1889 Pantagraph article appealed to each man's ideals of citizenship, manhood and Christian duty to build good roads:

...Good roads not only indicate broad, intelligent citizenship, but more, the status of its actual Christian growth and worth. If we are proud of our house, our farms, our horses, it is somewhat more of manhood still to be proud of our County.³⁹

George Bartholomew lobbied for the nation's first concrete street which was poured in Bellefontaine, Ohio, in 1891. This accomplishment earned him the designation of "father of the concrete road."⁴⁰ "...[L]ime mortar is mentioned in the Bible, and other forms of concrete were used by the Greeks in the palace of Croesus, and by the Romans in the Pantheon and the Colosseum...."⁴¹ Portland

cement, named for the English isle of Portland, is a "...gray, powdery substance...Mixing cement with sand, rock and water produces concrete."⁴² In 1892 when concrete paving was still a novelty featured at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it became obvious that the most durable solution to the ongoing paving problem was concrete. As a result short stretches of road were paved in many areas of the country; these roads, however, were novelties and too short in length to provide a permanent, long-term solution.

The movement for good roads was helped by a new source when Albert A. Pope of Hartford, Connecticut, founded the League of American Wheelmen in 1880 as a way to politicize and agitate for better roads. Owner of a bicycle factory, his motives may have been less than altruistic, but his methods were effective as the growing number of bicyclists added their voices to those who petitioned Congress for smooth-surfaced roads.⁴³

It was the coming of the automobile, however, which provided the most compelling reason for building good roads. "In 1895, nearly all cars in the world were made by Benz in Germany and P & L and Peugeot in France. In Britain, Sir Herbert Austin vowed to "motorize the masses" with his seven-horsepower lightweight car....By 1899, thirty U.S. companies turned out more than 2,500 cars a year."⁴⁴ And, by 1900, when 200,000 cars were produced in the United States, the need for additional pavement became crucial. Although they became more numerous, in some ways automobiles were still perceived as "toys" for the wealthy. The "common" person complained about the speed at which automobiles traveled dirt roads, stirring up dust, creating ruts, and scaring both they and their animals. This new machine was not only a nuisance, it was downright dangerous, as anyone could get behind the wheel and drive, without any instruction and without the safety features that would be added many years later.

Henry Ford, who reportedly condemned history as "bunk," nevertheless had a tremendous impact on American history himself when he founded the Ford Motor Company in 1903, producing a lightweight, medium priced car. No longer were the roads necessary just for farm-to-market and rural resident-to-town convenience, now the leisure traveler had to be accommodated. Communities organized automobile clubs to enjoy and promote automobile travel, as arduous as it must have been. In the fall of 1905, the nine cars of the Bloomington Auto Club, one of which carried spare parts for frequent and inevitable roadside repairs, left for Chicago to promote good roads. It took the group two hours to reach Lexington, a distance of approximately 15 miles, and two more to reach Pontiac, an additional 18 miles. What made the trip so difficult was that the roads were mostly dirt; a few were gravel, but none were paved. The automobile enthusiasts arrived at Chicago the next day.⁴⁵ This event occurred the same year that Illinois government established a commission to study the Illinois road system, with an eye to improvement.

The Model T, appearing in 1908, was Henry Ford's lightweight, inexpensive automobile which was put together on a moving assembly line. He was able to produce almost 250,000 units per year, at a price of \$500 each.⁴⁴ The volume produced and the relatively low price of this vehicle changed both the perception and the reality of automobile ownership, putting a black Model T Ford within the buying power of the average person.⁴⁶

By 1909, Portland cement was used to pour a concrete test road for a total of one mile in Detroit and land grant colleges also began to teach highway construction although the federal government was still seven years away from involvement in road building and maintenance. In Illinois, real progress began the next year, in 1910, when state legislation required state licensing of vehicles with

the fees to be used for road construction. In 1911, the first full year of the Illinois State Automobile Law, there were 38,269 automobiles registered in Illinois, whose owners contributed \$105,344.00 to the Good Roads Fund.⁴⁷ All fees collected were used exclusively for building, improvement, and maintenance of roads. The same year, according to Illinois' Superintendent of Highways, S. E. Bradt, Illinois residents began to realize:

...the condition of our highways as compared to other states and the handicap under which we were working in the marketing of products and the carrying on of that part of our ordinary business which required the use of our highways....the State of Illinois, standing first in agriculture, second in wealth and third in population, occupied twenty-third place among the states of the union in the matter of highways which were improved.⁴⁸

When the Federal Aid Road Act was finally passed in 1916, one of its main purposes was to ease the difficulties encountered as the post office struggled through the mud to deliver the mail. Rural Free Delivery, begun in 1893, was designed to deliver mail to nearly five million people. By 1912, it had

...spread to 1.2 million miles of mostly dirt road, a tremendous boon to the public as well as to Sears and Roebuck. Because the trekking of the mails over sometimes-impassable roads put the government \$28 million in the red, bills championing better roads were passed, in the hopes of cutting that deficit. The proposal that five hundred thousand dollars should go to states and counties that put up a million dollars established the principles of matching funds--an idea that would fuel big government for the balance of the century.⁴⁹

While matching funds were still being discussed in 1912, Carl G. Fisher, founder of a carbide headlight company, proposed a 3,150-mile road from New York City to San Francisco, California. The resulting Lincoln Highway "...contributed more to firing the imagination of Americans than to providing them smooth travel, as sections of newly paved road and rutted dirt roads were patched together across the country."⁵⁰

The Tice Road Law of 1913

The Tice Road Law passed by the Forty-eighth Illinois General Assembly in 1913, under the leadership of Governor Edward F. Dunne (Democrat, 1913-17), approved state bonds to be used for roadway improvements. Considered a temporary measure, it nevertheless "...provided for a bi-partisan state highway commission of three members and a state highway engineer, who were responsible for the general supervision of the highways constructed by the state. Each county was to have a superintendent of highways, appointed on the basis of selective tests."⁵¹

Under the Tice Road Law, 18 percent of the state's public roads were named "State Aid Roads." The cost was shared equally between the State and the counties through which the roads ran. The State agreed to maintain the road as long as the construction was of concrete or brick; if the road was gravel or macadam, the county shared equally with the State in its maintenance. If, however, the road was of earth, the cost of maintenance was left to the counties. Significantly, each county board was allowed to choose the type of construction they preferred, but if they could not agree on the road type, the State Highway Commission selected the type of road to be built in the counties.⁵² The law further stated that the roads were to be laid out to connect the main trading points within counties and to those of adjoining counties. A. D. Gash, President of the Illinois State Highway Commission, proudly announced: "Thirty per cent of the citizens of the State reside along the system of State Aid Roads, and seventy-five per cent of the people reside along and within one mile of these thoroughfares. There is not a home further than four and one half miles from these State Aid Roads."⁵³ Among the State Aid Roads was the Pontiac Trail, the earliest road

between Chicago and St. Louis. Christened in 1915, the road followed a much earlier trail left by native Americans and "...began in Chicago, traveled through Lemont, Lockport, Joliet, Morris, Dwight, Odell, Pontiac, Lexington, Bloomington, Lincoln, Springfield, Carlinville, Edwardsville, Collinsville, and East St. Louis."⁵⁴

Although the state was to advance half of the money for road building, if businesses and individuals wanted a road through their towns, they could not wait for funding, for which there was fierce competition and no guarantee that it would be forthcoming. It was up to them to build, mark, maintain, and promote local roads, as well as to issue maps. Some communities responded to the perceived need by building their own hard roads which were subjected to constant use by a public who enjoyed their novelty and the fact that their vehicles would not be mired in the deep mud which passed for Illinois roads during much of the year. For example, the 1914 Pantagraph reported on the popularity of a local 1-1/4 mile engineering marvel:

The hard road running southwest of Bloomington to Shirley is already beginning to show wear in places. It is no wonder for most any time an auto leaves Bloomington for a joy ride, it is down the hard road. Probably that road has ten times more travel than it otherwise would have had and that very thing shows how much such roads are liked.⁵⁵

That same year, Gash emphasized the importance of having a "system" in place to coordinate road building efforts. He felt that it was the key to success in every endeavor:

In the matter of laying out, improving and maintaining our public highways, system is the most important factor. Since the first settlement of Illinois by the white race up to two and one half years ago, our public roads have been laid out and improved after a fashion but without system. The results were not satisfactory, hence that Legislature completely revised the [Tice] road law providing a systematic method of procedure in these particulars in the future. The expenditure of means and energy were great enough to have accomplished much in the line of good roads, but owing to the lack of system, little was attained in the way of getting properly improved highways.⁵⁶

Apparently Illinois roads had a dubious reputation among drivers, as Gash spoke of his concern that "Illinois will not be spoken of as the "State of Bad Roads."⁵⁷ Figures for 1915 showed that the United States had 2,423,788 automobiles on the road, more than five times as many as all of the other countries for which records were kept: Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada, and Russia. In 1915, seven states had registered more than 100,000 automobiles each: Illinois, with 180,832, was second only to New York, which registered 212,844.⁵⁸ Good roads became ever more important as more vehicles took to the roads. Automobiles had become a permanent part of every day life, Gash believed: "The world today moves on wheels over the land and it glides on steel bottoms over the sea. Steam, electricity and gas have caused it to move with a speed undreamed of by our ancestors. Adequate means to accommodate these various means of travel is the order of the times. The command is 'forward.'" He continued with a warning: "Let no laggards get in the highways or trails of progress lest its automobiles or steam rollers crush them. Never in the history of the human family has good roads been so attractive as at present and to secure them for the present generation in Illinois is our constant aim."⁵⁹

Gash was right to be concerned about the possibility of automobiles "crushing" those who stood in the path of the vehicles that crowded the roads. The sheer number of automobiles might appear to account for the increase in fatalities and serious accidents. While lamenting the increased number of accidents, Gash nevertheless put the blame squarely on drivers and pedestrians, saying "This is not necessarily due to the increase in the number of cars sold each year, but in nearly all cases is due either to careless driving, inability to drive properly, a reckless disregard for others or the carelessness of pedestrians."⁶⁰

Federal Aid Road Act (Shackleford Bill) of 1916

Road building efforts made major strides in 1916, through the Federal-Aid Road Act, or Shackleford Bill, which provided for the construction of new roads.

- Representative Dorsey W. Shackleford (Democrat, Missouri) argued for rural interests, over long-distance highways, apparently reflecting the interests of his constituents.

[He] pushed through a compromise between those who advocated long-distance roads and those who championed local ones. Under his plan, states would divvy up \$25 million a year, one-half by population and the remainder by mileage of RFD roads. [Individual states] built the roads, the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 would set up state highway departments, wresting control in some cases from county governments. The bill sailed through the Senate...It became law with the signature of President Wilson on July 12, 1916.⁶¹

The federal government essentially became an active supporter of state highway improvements with this act, which allocated \$75 million of matching funds, to be distributed over a five-year period. No restriction was placed on which roads would be constructed; that decision was to be made at the state level. The act specifically mentioned, however, that any rural road was eligible if it was intended to carry the mail.⁶²

In 1916 the total number of automobiles of all classes licensed in Illinois was 248,429, an incredible increase of 67,597 from 1915. The total amount collected in fees was \$1,236,566.⁶³ By the end of 1916, the Illinois Highway Commission developed a plan for a 4,000-mile network of hard roads in Illinois. In order to finance this undertaking, a bond issue totaling \$60 million was planned. One of the consequences of this was the paving and standardization of the Chicago to St. Louis Route. This route--essentially replacing the Pontiac Trail--was designated SBI 4 (State Bond Issue 4).⁶⁴

By January 1, 1917, the Illinois State Highway Commission had existed for three years. It had awarded contracts for "478.46 miles of hard roads, and had built 414 bridges at a cost for the latter of \$253,541.16. The improvements were paid for by state and counties jointly and included 162.91 miles of concrete, 123.74 of oiled earth; the rest was of plain earth or brick, followed by bituminous concrete, bituminous macadam, water bound macadam, gravel, and some bituminous macadam resurfacing."⁶⁵

Also by 1917, thanks to the Tice Road Law and its influence on all the road work of the state, Illinois had climbed from 23rd place among states in road improvement to 16th place. S. E. Bradt, Illinois Superintendent of Highways, felt that what seemed an acceptable accomplishment was less than Illinois citizens expected. He wrote:

...the people of the great agricultural State of Illinois with all its teeming thousands and its unbounded wealth will not be content until it has attained its proper rank in road improvement; until its farming population can carry the products of its farms to market as cheaply as the farmers of any other state, and until it has reached the same place in road improvement that it occupies in agriculture, wealth and population.⁶⁶

A 16,000 mile system of State Aid Roads out of a total of 95,000 miles of county highways in Illinois had been laid out between 1914 and 1918 and over 500 miles had been improved. Bradt continued:

...the money has been scattered and the improvement placed upon several widely separated stretches of road with mud at each end and where they can be of little benefit to anybody until they are connected with main centers of population and with each other. The day when these scattered sections will be connected is so far distant in the minds of the people that they are becoming dissatisfied with the working of the law.⁶⁷

The improvement of the road was estimated to cost at least \$160,000,000, or \$10,000 per mile. "[T]o complete this work within a period of 20 years will require not less than \$8,000,000 per year of which \$4,000,000 would be the pro-

portion furnished by the State and \$4,000,000 by the respective counties. Bradt worried that while Illinois could appropriate its share each year, the counties would have difficulty raising this amount and still be able to meet their regular expenses. Even if the counties could raise \$4 million, people would not be content to wait for improvement as evidenced by an increasing interest in County Bond issues.⁶⁸

In 1918, Vermilion and Cook Counties had already voted the bonds and the roads were under construction. Eight other counties had voted upon the proposition, and 25 counties were discussing the bond issue.⁶⁹ Bradt acknowledged one or two main arteries of travel through each county which might be called interstate or state highways but felt that county bonds would prevent their proper improvement. He worried that the county bond system would contribute to haphazard, disjointed road building.

In a county where public sentiment is favorable the bonds will be approved by the voters; in adjoining counties if the question is put up at all the voters will fail to give this method of financing their approval and will insist that the piecemeal method be followed. Thus we shall have excellent roads through one county with mud roads through the adjoining counties; and this hit or miss plan will exist over the entire state.⁷⁰

Bradt estimated that voters in 25 or 30 counties might approve county bonds but not state bonds, leaving Illinois without a comprehensive state road system.

\$60,000,000 Bond Issue of 1918

In 1917, the Illinois General Assembly approved 4,800 miles of main highways in the State and called for a bond issue to be used for road improvements. The law fixed general routes, naming the county seat and the larger centers of population as points which had to be reached by the system. It provided for a

traffic and community survey of various roads in order to determine the most economically feasible roads on which to focus building efforts. The bill provided that \$60,000,000 in bonds be issued in annual amounts on an "as needed basis" to cover the cost of construction. Each annual issue would mature in series over a period of 20 years.⁷¹ The repayment plan was unique in using motor-vehicle fees to retire the bonds. "The original plan proposed by the State Highway Department provided that one-half of the bonds and interest should be paid from motor fees and the remainder from general taxation; but Governor [Frank O.] Lowden [Republican] (1917-21 term), with his usual foresight, said that the entire amount should be paid from the license fees on motor cars. His reasons were that the general tax burdens of the State were already too heavy..."⁷² The bill also provided that after roads were constructed, it became the responsibility of the state to maintain them.

Roads in Illinois "naturally divided themselves into four classes," according to Bradt: Interstate or National Highways, of national importance, comprising nearly 1 per cent of the total mileage of the state; State Highways, the main state thoroughfares crossing the state, comprising nearly 4 per cent of the total mileage of the state; the County Highways, carrying through county traffic, comprising 10 per cent of the total mileage of the state; and, Township Roads, purely local roads, comprising 85 per cent of the total mileage of the state.⁷³ In 1917, sixty-six per cent of the people of the state resided in the cities and villages which the highway system connected or in the country beside the system. Eighty-six per cent of the people of the state either resided upon the road itself or within five miles of it.⁷⁴

The bill passed by the Legislature could not authorize the issuance of bonds or the improvement of this system of roads; that awaited a decision by vot-

ers at the November 1918 general election. The vote was in the affirmative and Illinois launched an aggressive road-building campaign. In addition to the \$60 million which Illinois voters approved for the improvement of 4,800 miles of roads, the federal government had already appropriated \$3,300,000 to be spent between 1917 and July 1, 1920. This figure was matched by the State of Illinois, for a total of \$6,600,000.⁷⁵

Bradt predicted the developing symbiotic relationship which would exist between the state and federal governments when he said:

No state or nation after having started on a task of road improvement can go backward, and undoubtedly the federal government will continue its annual appropriations for road improvement after the year 1920 and that the succeeding federal appropriations will be even larger than present appropriations.⁷⁶

By 1918, the federal Office of Public Roads was elevated to bureau status in the Department of Agriculture and became known as the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR); In 1919, Thomas Harris MacDonald was selected as its leader. A native of Montezuma, Iowa, MacDonald attended Iowa State College to learn road building. In 1905, directly out of college, he was made Iowa's highway commissioner, with control of a \$5,000 annual budget.⁷⁷ By 1919, MacDonald had become Chief Engineer of the Iowa State Highway Commission and had been president of the American Association of State Highway Officials [AASHO], a group formed in 1914 to discuss highway legislation, and economic and technical subjects; they became very influential in American highway building. MacDonald kept his rural ties and remained a board member of the AASHO, as well as serving on the boards of public and private groups that had an interest in road building and a stake in the outcome.⁷⁸ As McAdam's name would always be associated with a method of paving, MacDonald's eventually became syn-

onymous with highway building. He was rightfully, and respectfully, called "Mr. Highways."⁷⁹

The five roads in Illinois designated to receive money from the Federal Aid System in 1919 were the National Old Trails Road which extended from East St. Louis to the Indiana State Line near Terre Haute, Indiana (161 miles); Lincoln Highway beginning at Chicago and extending west through Geneva, DeKalb, Dixon, Sterling, and to the Mississippi River at Fulton (140 miles); Dixie Highway, beginning at Chicago and traveling south to Danville (140 miles); the Chicago-Springfield-East St. Louis Road, via Joliet, Ottawa, LaSalle, Peoria, and Springfield (300 miles); and the road from Chicago through Waukegan to the Wisconsin State Line (38 miles). The Chicago-Springfield-East St. Louis Road included portions of Route 4 which would later become U.S. Route 66 from East St. Louis to Springfield.⁸⁰ These five roads totaled 779 miles. By 1919, 161 miles had already been improved, as township, State aid, or federal aid roads, leaving just 618 under contract. The work was delayed, however, due to World War I and the lack of manpower as well as inflated war prices on materials, which increased the cost of building.⁸¹

When it made its initial selection of roads for inclusion in the Federal Aid System, the state highway department included some of the alignment of what would initially become U.S. 66. Inclusion as a Federal Aid Project (FAP) was no guarantee that a road would receive immediate construction work. The BPR developed a section of road before moving ahead to another section. This policy permitted, for example, an initial grading and draining of a section that could be financed with federal funds, and then returned to the section at a later date, sometimes years later, to improve curve grades, make necessary alignments, and add a final surface. The "stage construction" policy developed by MacDonald of-

fers a striking example of the rational planning measures he brought to the federal road system.⁸²

By 1919 Bradt, was able to declare: "The State is now definitely launched upon the largest highway construction program ever attempted. With contracts awarded for the 618 miles of Federal-aid roads this year, we shall then be obliged to carry on construction at the rate of about 1,000 miles per year for the succeeding four years in order to complete the entire bond issue system within the period contemplated by the law. Difficulties are being constantly encountered; but the State had the courage of its convictions in inaugurating the plan and will beyond question have the same courage in carrying it to a successful completion."⁸³

In February, 1919, the federal government made an additional appropriation of \$200,000,000 to aid states in improvement of post roads. Illinois received approximately \$8,700,000, making a total allotment of \$12,000,000 from the two appropriations (1916 and 1918) for road work in Illinois.⁸⁴ One of the principal factors leading to the Federal appropriation of two hundred million dollars, for road construction, in the early part of 1919, was to give employment to the returning soldiers and labor released from war work.⁸⁵

By 1920 "...of the almost 3 million miles of highways in America, the majority were fit for travel by horse and buggy. Only about 36,000 miles had all-weather surfaces that would accommodate the wear and tear of automobile traffic."⁸⁶ In 1920 Illinois Secretary of State Louis L. Emmerson noted that 568,739 automobiles were licensed and \$5,886,771 was collected in fees.⁸⁷ Illinois, with its commitment to road building, had completed 692 miles of hard-surfaced roads, or nearly two percent of the national total prior to 1921. Some of these roads had been built before the \$60 million bond issue, and were subsequently taken over by the state.⁸⁸

When bids were let for highway construction in 1921, they were rejected by Governor Len Small, (Republican, 1921-29), who had been elected on his promise to get Illinois up and out of the mud. The bids averaged \$40,000 per mile, including cement but Small felt that the bids were too high and announced that no contracts would be awarded until bids were received in the range of \$30,000 per mile for an 18-foot standard reinforced concrete road complete, including cement. The next set of bids received were \$10,000 to \$13,000 less per mile than the original bids and a large number of contracts were awarded. In addition, 190 miles of uncompleted paving sections, 83 miles of uncompleted grading sections, and 51 uncompleted bridge contracts were carried over from 1920.⁸⁹

At the same time, automobile fees, which went directly into the Good Roads Fund for the construction of the State Highway System, increased approximately 450 per cent between 1916 and 1921, principally due to the increase and reclassification of fees, the increase in the number of automobiles, strict enforcement of the law, and the enactment of a number of laws giving the Secretary of State more power in making collections.⁹⁰ Bradt could rightfully boast:

More concrete cement road is being constructed in Illinois during the 1921 season than in any state in the Union, with the possible exception of Pennsylvania, according to figures complied by the Department of Public Works and Buildings. This is being done, too, at prices probably lower than those paid in any other state for the same class of work.⁹¹

In 1921, up to September 14, 643,500 automobiles had been licensed and a total of \$6,522,771 in fees had been collected and paid into the State Treasury. It was estimated that at least 660,000 automobiles would be licensed that year and a total of more than \$6,800,000 would be collected.⁹²

By 1921, MacDonald had streamlined the federal government's role in the distribution of highway aid money so that each state was able to designate seven

percent of its certified public road mileage for inclusion in its system of Federal Aid Highways. There were limits placed on what a state could spend per mile of road construction as well as road standards that evolved as technologies improved but, in general, each state was free to spend its share of the federal aid money as it saw fit on constructing, but not maintaining, its roads in the system.⁹³

During the first half of 1921 contracts were awarded for 330 miles for paving, 165 miles for grading, and 68 bridges. Before the close of 1921 contracts for at least 200 additional miles of 18-foot concrete road was planned.⁹⁴ The Fifty-second General Assembly re-appropriated \$30,000,000 of the \$60,000,000 bond issue to construct the hard roads. Although the bond issue was approved by voters in November of 1918, as late as July of 1921 none of the bonds had been issued. All of the work had been paid for from road funds whose source of income was revenue from automobile licenses, the allotment of the Federal Government, and money advanced by various counties.⁹⁵

At the beginning of 1921, 442 miles of Federal Aid Road had been completed; 162 miles of road, 175 miles of grading, and 89 bridges were under contract. The total mileage was 42 percent of the 881 miles allowed by the Federal Aid Road Act. "Up to September 1, 1921, 325 miles of the 357 miles had been completed on the Chicago-Springfield-East St. Louis road via Joliet, Ottawa, LaSalle, Peoria, Springfield and East St. Louis.⁹⁶ The road was nearly completed in early October, 1921. By 1921, Illinois had received \$12,024,266 from the Federal Government: "...\$220,926 was allotted in 1917; \$441,852 in 1918; \$2,843,874 in 1919; \$4,152,546 in 1920 and \$4,365,067 in 1921."⁹⁷

The Bates Test Road -1920-1923

Even as record-setting numbers of road miles were being paved, Illinois became involved in a project which attracted world-wide attention. It was decided that a road project of this magnitude needed a scientific basis. So, an experimental road was constructed in 1920 and 1921 to study how different pavements would hold up under truck and rural conditions. During its progress it was visited by engineers and highway officials from all over the United States as well as Canada, South America, Europe, Japan, India, and Australia.⁹⁸

The Bates Road was approximately twelve miles southwest of Springfield. "It consisted of 68 sections of pavements of different types and designs, aggregating two and one-half miles in length; several thicknesses of each type being used so that when trucks were operated over the road with increasing loads the capacity of each section, in terms of weights and numbers of trucks, would be plainly obvious."⁹⁹

In late March of 1922 until August of 1923, a fleet of 10-20 trucks "...were operated at the speeds provided in the Illinois motor vehicle law, i.e., 15 miles per hour for loads of less than 5,000 pounds down to 12 miles per hour for loads of 12 tons." Observers meticulously recorded all cracks, depressions, and other failures. "All breaks and other defects which appeared were immediately painted and detailed sketches recorded. A record was also kept of the amount of gasoline and oil used in the operation of the trucks during the test in order to provide data on the cost of truck operation over improved highways."¹⁰⁰

The truck loads were increased at the rate of 1,000 pounds for each rear wheel--from an initial load of 2,500 pounds to a maximum of 13,000 pounds. The wheel load was increased in successive stages until the maximum load permitted by the Illinois law (i.e., 8,000 pounds on each rear wheel) was reached. Three thousand round trips were made with

each loading except the 8,000 pounds loading. In this case 10,000 round trips were made in order to be sure that the sections which had withstood the previous loads would stand up under the legal limit. Then, in order that designs might finally be selected which would have a "factor of safety" to cover poor soil conditions or occasional overloads, loads in excess of the legal limit were added until a maximum of 13,000 pounds per wheel was attained. Of course many of the thinner sections were entirely destroyed long before this enormous load had been applied.¹⁰¹

The results of the tests showed that concrete pavements could be designed and built to carry any load by reducing the center thickness and strengthening the edges. The second result was a reduction in construction costs and future maintenance expense. It also showed the vital importance of keeping truck loads within the legal limit.¹⁰² The Bates road design was so successful that it was adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials at its annual convention in 1924, and by 1925 was used by a majority of the state highway departments throughout the United States.¹⁰³

Developing modern, well-maintained highways was a daunting task requiring years of planning and many more years of building. Even as the road was being planned, road building technology was advancing, requiring adjustments to the plans, and providing a sense of playing "catch up" in order to accommodate the volume of automobiles as well as the road-punishing buses and trucks. For instance, when the "hard" roads were being poured, there was no official maximum speed limit on them. Drivers were expected to drive at a "reasonable and proper" speed, to be determined by road and weather conditions and, to some extent, by the ability of their vehicle. During 1921, the first year of Governor Small's administration, nearly 1,100 miles of roads were paved. Soon, however, heavy trucks, loaded beyond their capacity, began to break up the road. In 1921, the Fifty-second General Assembly authorized the Department of Public Works

and Buildings to hire a sufficient number of State Highway Patrol officers to enforce the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Law. "Under the provisions of the new act the Secretary of State has sent out a few automobile investigators, who travel about from place to place, seeing that automobile laws are enforced and cooperating with local authorities in compelling observance. Results so far indicate that this will accomplish the collection of many thousands of dollars annually in fees which have been escaping."¹⁰⁴ Thus, the Illinois State Police were formed in 1922 to serve the people of Illinois on the new "hard roads." Eight officers covered the entire state and were paid \$150 a month. Their primary importance was the enforcement of weight limitations to protect the pavement. Other violations such as speeding (driving faster than was "reasonable and proper") were of secondary importance. The officers were to be firm but courteous with traffic violators and to be ready to aid law-abiding travelers with directions, conditions of the roads, and locations of garages.¹⁰⁵

Safety concerns were an area addressed by Secretary of State Louis L. Emmerson who sent a pamphlet to all Illinois automobile owners, calling attention to the 2,270 accidents at railroad grade crossings in 1918, resulting in 1,131 fatalities. He also pointed out that during 1919, a total of 420 persons were killed in automobile accidents in Chicago alone. He called special attention to the speed limit: 10 miles per hour in the business sections of cities; 15 miles per hour in the residence sections; 20 miles per hour inside city limits but outside the business or residence sections;...not to exceed 30 miles per hour on the public highway.¹⁰⁶ Although Illinois was beset with problems such as coal strikes, car shortages and a shortage of cement, it nevertheless set a new record for paved roads and shattered its own record again in 1923 by completing 1,085

miles.¹⁰⁷ Illinois was, indeed, on its way to being "up from the mud," Governor Small's campaign promise to voters.

Frank T. Sheets, Superintendent of Highways, Department of Public Works and Buildings, declared with obvious pride that "During the years 1922 and 1923, Illinois has taken the position of undisputed leadership in the construction of high type durable, hard-surfaced roads. During 1922, the State broke the world's record for the amount of paved roads completed, when 722 miles were finished..."¹⁰⁸ "Construction has been forging ahead at the rate of over 40 miles per week, and it is fully expected that this rate will reach 50 miles per week during the peak of the construction season....One contractor laid 1,761 feet in a single shift of eleven hours and one contractor has completed this year with one single outfit 9.2 miles....In addition to the pavement work, large mileages of heavy grading work and many large and important bridge structures have been finished....Approximately 2,100 miles of the State bond issue system have been completely paved."¹⁰⁹

Many roads, including the Pontiac Trail, followed the same road bed from Chicago, cutting a diagonal path across Illinois on their way to St. Louis and points west. State Bond Issue (SBI) Route 4 was the hard road forerunner of Route 66 and followed closely the Chicago and Alton railroad tracks. In 1922, the bed for this 14 foot-wide road was prepared by horses dragging special equipment. Laborers performed back-breaking tasks and received 40 cents an hour for their efforts. In 1923 the cement was poured through Bloomington-Normal and by 1924 SBI Route 4 was completely paved between Chicago and St. Louis, along roughly the same route which the first alignment of Route 66 would take in 1926.

Meanwhile in Washington, D.C., MacDonald made the growing highway movement seem larger than it was by setting up new, seemingly independent groups to crusade for good roads. The Highway Education Board (HEB) generated prohighway propaganda "...before the word gained its invidious cold war connotation...For MacDonald, however, the HEB served as an information factory that allowed him to feed information selectively from Washington to the states through AASHO and from AASHO back to Congress. The rectitude of this proud corps of engineers...gave their congressional testimony a special credibility and helped mask the fact that AASHO was essentially just another lobby."¹¹⁰

The HEB had a long-term goal of raising public awareness as to how highway building affected their lives. So, students and adults alike participated in essay contests on such topics as "How good roads help the religious life of my community," in safety lesson contests, and hosted classroom talks by members of the HEB Speakers Bureau. The HEB also produced brochures and films to emphasize the good points of highway building.¹¹¹ MacDonald did his part to promote the road. In 1923, when radio broadcasting was in its infancy, he used the medium to address the nation on the similarity of roads and radio. He proclaimed that: "Radio is free as air; and the open road is symbolic of freedom."¹¹²

By 1923-24, Illinois drivers were paying \$10.10 per car in automobile fees, less than the weighted average for the United States of about \$11.70 per car, making the Illinois average lower than the national average. Considering maximum car fees, 28 states had greater fees than Illinois, 8 were equal to Illinois and only 12 paid less. Illinois car owners, it was felt, could afford to double their fees to insure the completion of the great highway system proposed. But this was not deemed necessary, since the scale of fees yielded sufficient revenue to pay the principal and interest of both old and new bond issues.¹¹³

\$100,000,000 Bond Issue Law of 1924

Governor Small and the Department of Public Works and Buildings pushed ahead with road building, but had to scale back their ambitious plans when it was discovered in 1924 that the \$60 million bond issue and other funds were about to be exhausted. The program was reduced but, still, 1,230 miles were completed that year. The building program was rigorous: "At the peak of the season, 63 miles were completed in one week, or a rate of 10.5 miles per day or approximately one mile per hour. Eleven thousand, seven hundred and fifty men and three thousand teams [of horses or mules] were engaged on construction during that week. A new world's record for pavement built in one day was made by an Illinois contractor whose forces completed 2,669 feet of standard 18-foot concrete pavement."¹¹⁴

Governor Small recommended a law to the Fifty-third General Assembly which allowed voters to decide on whether to issue additional highway bonds to complete and enlarge the original highway system. In November of 1924, the voters passed a \$100,000,000 bond issue law which added approximately 5,100 miles of hard-surfaced roads.¹¹⁵

About the large amount of money to be spent on highways, Sheets said: "The amount of the new and old bond issue of \$160,000,000 seems a stupendous sum to expend for roads, yet when compared to other things it shrinks into insignificance. Each year Illinois pays in Federal taxes about twice that amount. When the cost of these roads is distributed over a period of years as proposed in this plan, the burden becomes insignificant."¹¹⁶

"Under the act providing for the \$100,000,000 bond issue for an additional highway system, it is stipulated that, unless engineering problems make it clearly

impracticable, contracts shall first be awarded for the completion of Route 1 to 46, inclusive, provided for in the \$60,000,000 bond issue act, and after that routes 47 to 185, inclusive, the routes outlined in the new act, shall be paved.¹¹⁷ Among others, the new routes included: "Route No. 126--Beginning at Springfield and extending in a southerly direction to Litchfield, affording Springfield, Divernon, Waggoner, Litchfield and the intervening communities reasonable connections with each other."¹¹⁸

By 1925, Sheets could declare that in the construction of roads

...no effort is spared to conform to the best engineering practice. Roads are relocated to secure the most favorable alignment between given points. Grades are reduced and curves are built which are traveled safely at the legal speed limit. All dangerous grade crossings are eliminated where practicable. Supervision of the contractor's construction methods and inspection of the materials entering into the roads and bridges are rigidly carried out by competent engineers. In short, Illinois is not only building roads on a large scale, but is building them so that the slogan of Governor Small and of the Division of Highways, "A dollar's worth of value for each dollar expended" is being realized to the full.¹¹⁹

Illinois had done its part and while pulling itself from the mud, had moved from 23rd place in road construction among states in 1911 to first place by 1925. Although Illinois had set an example for other nations and countries to emulate, Sheets was not content with past accomplishments, urging Illinois's to "...enlarge our vision and take as our goal the bringing of an improved road to the front door of every man, woman, and child in the great State of Illinois."¹²⁰

Concurrent with Illinois' efforts at road building, other visionaries were at work on a national highway that literally would bring the world to the front door of Illinois' inhabitants--Route 66 was about to be unveiled.

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CHAPTER III

ROUTE 66 AND ILLINOIS ROADBUILDING

Route 66 holds an interesting place in transportation history. Other roads are older, and some are longer, but it is Route 66 that has captured the imagination of generations of travelers. The route emerged at a time when road construction techniques were developing to meet the needs of ever-increasing numbers of automobiles and drivers who demanded good roads. By 1939, a Work Projects Administration writer noted that "US 66, the most heavily traveled major highway in the State, cuts diagonally across Illinois between the great population centers of Chicago and St. Louis."¹ Route 66 was the road of choice for westward-moving people who required an all-weather road to ensure safe travel and timely delivery of goods. From its inception in 1926 to its 1977 decommission, Route 66 has been intertwined with American history and culture.

Restaurants, gas stations, truck stops, and other businesses sprang up along the road to accommodate the business persons and vacationers who traveled Route 66. As America grew, with the resulting demand for faster and safer roads, the original two-lane road was replaced by a four-lane highway that closely paralleled the first. Because this new road generally skirted towns, some businesses moved closer to the road; others counted on the "Business Route 66" signs to funnel traffic off the new four-lane and into their places of business. The replacement of this four-lane highway by a more efficient pavement, the inter-

state, was authorized by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. It took five different interstates to replace Route 66: I-55 from Chicago to St. Louis; I-44 from St. Louis to Oklahoma City; I-40 from Oklahoma City to Barstow, California; I-15 from Barstow to San Bernardino; and I-10 from San Bernardino to Santa Monica. The last section of the interstate to bypass Route 66 was completed on I-40 near Williams, Arizona, in 1984.

A study of Route 66 as it passes through Illinois reveals movement across the expansive prairie and provides examples of the evolution of road-building technology. As traffic streamed onto the new, but fragmentary, hard roads, engineers and builders began to link short sections of earlier roads, providing wider and thicker pavement to accommodate the increasing volume and weight of automobile and truck traffic. In addition, the latest engineering innovations were implemented as the road was rebuilt from two- to four-lanes, adding or widening medians, straightening curves, leveling hills, and removing dangerous crossings at railroad tracks.

Route 66: A Timeline:

When Route 66 was designated a U.S. highway in 1926, its boosters predicted that it would be a "scientific" marvel, as it swept from the Midwest to the Pacific Ocean. It traveled through eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The story of Route 66 is one of frantic building, linking short sections of extant paved road while concurrently implementing technological advances, resulting in the evolution of a narrow, two-lane highway to a four-lane, limited access highway, and, ultimately, to its replacement by five interstates. It is also the tale of a modern-day resurrection and renaissance of the old highway by preservationists and road enthusiasts.

This evolution can be told in six stages: 1) The Early Years, 1926-1932, 2) The Depression Years, 1932-1941, 3) The World War II Years, 1942-1945, 4), The Ascendant Years, 1946-1956, 5) The Replacement Blues, 1956-1977 and 6) The Once and Future Road, 1977 to the present.

The Early Years: 1926-1932

One man's name echoes through both the story of the United States highway system and Route 66: Cyrus Stevens Avery. Active in the "good roads" movement and a prominent businessman in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Avery is most famous as the "Father of Route 66."² He focused his early interests primarily on Oklahoma and held several positions in organizations whose purpose was to support the building and maintenance of Oklahoma's roads. In 1923, Avery was appointed a State Highway Commissioner of Oklahoma, later becoming a member of an important highway booster group, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) which was made up of 42 different highway associations. In 1924, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture asked Avery's and the AASHO's involvement in the preparation of a proposal to select and designate a comprehensive system of interstate routes. As a result, Avery was chosen to lay out and create what would be known as the United States Highway System.³

Road numbering was an important issue for both planners and promoters. Early roads had been given names, often of only local significance, but with a more complex road system in the planning stages, an attempt was made to eliminate confusion for motorists, who had to rely on verbal directions, well-known and obscure landmarks, or sporadically posted signs for directions to their destination. The AASHO, with Avery's guidance, developed a system that assigned even numerals to east-west highways and odd numerals to north-south high-

ways. Routes that crossed state lines were given shields to signify that they were U.S. highways; circular signs indicated state roads. In addition, "...principal north-south roads would end in '1' or '5' and principal east-west roads would end in '0.'" The result would be twenty base longitudinal roads and ten base latitudinal roads. US 1 would line the East Coast; US 101 the West Coast. US 2 (to avoid a confusing '0') would parallel the Canadian border; US 90 the Mexican border. Lesser roads would be assigned numbers in between based on their location.⁴

Since the proposed road, later to be numbered 66, was not entirely north-south or east-west, it didn't neatly fit the plan submitted by the AASHO. It was Avery's and the AASHO's intention to use the number 60, to indicate its primarily east-west orientation and to denote its importance. However, eastern officials held out for the designation of 60 for an extant road from Newport News, Virginia to Springfield, Missouri. Discussion dragged on between the various constituencies and the Bureau of Public Roads; however, "...the preparation of annual highway maps moved ahead as usual. As a result, between December, 1925, and August, 1926, the road that would become US 66 was designated as US 60; what would become US 60 was designated as US 70."⁵ At an April meeting in Springfield, Missouri, Avery's group discussed their alternatives. An alternate number of 62 had been suggested to the AASHO by the eastern group and Washington officials, but after careful consideration, Avery and his group settled on another number. They sent the following telegram to MacDonald, head of the Bureau of Public Roads:

Regarding Chicago Los Angeles Road/If California Arizona New Mexico and Illinois will accept sixty six instead of sixty we are inclined to agree to this change/we prefer sixty six to sixty two.⁶

Some controversy surrounded this choice; the preferred number seemed to brand the road as one of lesser importance since it was three even numbers away

from 60. Avery's committee remained firm in their choice and while discussion followed, late in 1926 a compromise had been reached. "US 60 would pass through Kentucky to Newport News, Virginia, connecting the East Coast with Riverside, California--just as the east-west base roads were intended to do. And the Chicago to Los Angeles road would become US 66."⁷

As a visible result of the AASHO proposal, private highway association signs were removed and standardized road signs began to appear along the new highways. "The white United States shield outlined and lettered in black appeared along the road as did the array of diamond, octagonal, circular and square warning signs. Where federal highways overlapped, the primary route appeared above the other...."⁸ By 1927, Illinois boasted standardized road signs to announce the mileage to destination and the population of towns, as well as to caution motorists about curves, cross roads and junctions.⁹ (See Appendix B.) Because the road was now officially numbered and marked, however, did not mean that it was completely paved. None of the dollars previously set aside by the Federal government was specifically earmarked for national highways. Congress left final road-paving choices to the states.¹⁰

In Illinois, Chief Highway Engineer Frank T. Sheets, described the four distinct, but interrelated and overlapping road systems as that of township, State aid, State bond issue, and Federal aid. Exact mileage was available for only the State bond issue; it was necessary to estimate mileage on the other three. As of January 1, 1927, the total road mileage in the state was estimated at 97,287 miles. The mileage completed on the \$60 million bond issue system was determined as 4,794 miles. The \$100 million bond issue mileage was estimated at just over 5,000 miles. The total mileage of the State bond issue system was 9,794 miles.¹¹

Roadbuilding in Illinois did not proceed as smoothly as it had begun, encountering difficult right-of-way and location problems during construction of the \$60 million bond issue system. Pavement construction dropped from 1,230 miles in 1924 to 906 miles in 1925 and 464 miles in 1926 as location disputes were taken to court during 1925 and 1926. But, "...[b]y the end of 1926, all contracts were let which did not involve engineering difficulties and work was started on the new routes in 1927."¹² In 1927, Governor Len Small (Republican, 1921-28) sponsored the State Gasoline Tax Bill to provide additional funds for completion of the State route program. The intention was to allocate collected revenue toward completion of the State road system. The Legislature amended the bill to provide that one-half of the tax collected be returned to the counties for road construction purposes. The bill in its amended form was passed by the Legislature, becoming law on August 1, 1927.¹³ The funds, combined with Federal Aid funds and surplus motor license fees, insured the completion of the entire State bond issue road system within a reasonable period of time. Also, it provided funds for the beginning of immediate construction of the State aid or principal county roads throughout the State. The money derived from the gasoline tax was allotted to the counties in proportion to the amount of motor license fees paid in. If counties already had voted bonds or advanced funds to construct State aid roads without State assistance, the gasoline tax refund could be used to pay off bonded indebtedness or other obligations.¹⁴

Even with sufficient appropriation and projected revenue from taxes, road building reflected a lag in both technology and available financial resources. State highway departments and private contractors used surplus World War I machinery and trucks to supplement or replace horse and mule teams (see Appendix

B). "Emphasis lay on efficiency so that road alignment decisions were often based on the availability of nearby aggregates for building the road grade. Engineers would generally try to obtain fill from borrow pits located within the usually 120 feet-wide right-of-way, using cut and fill procedures. In most instances much of the material could be handled by wheelbarrows and fresnos, heavy horse-drawn scrapers. Sometimes, however, it was necessary to dig the borrow pits on private land, paying royalties to the owners, and to haul the material using teams of horses and wagons."¹⁵ Many ponds, created from borrow pits, line Route 66 in Illinois. These shallow ponds have become a permanent part of the landscape and many now serve a recreational use; some are stocked with fish, allowing fish stories to be told even in the middle of the prairie.

Road construction proceeded at such a rate that Sheets was able to declare 1928 the greatest construction program in the history of the Division of Highways (DOH). The mileage constructed exceeded by 75.25 miles the previous seasonal record of 1,229.5 miles accomplished during 1924. During the year, "...[a] total of 1,304.75 miles of pavement was completed, of which 1,075.27 miles were on the State bond issue system. The remaining 229.48 miles were completed under State supervision by the counties on the State aid system....Of the 1,304.75 miles completed, all but 13.62 miles were of concrete or concrete base with a brick surface, the 13.62 miles being surfaced with gravel."¹⁶

While road construction proceeded at record-breaking rates, a potential financial crisis loomed. By the end of 1928, nearly all of the \$23 million in unsold bonds of the second bond issue of \$100 million were obligated by construction contracts. Additionally, road fund money, consisting of motor fees and federal aid allotments, was also obligated by existing contracts. The State had to provide

additional funds to continue construction or to abandon road building for purely road maintenance activities.¹⁷ Only about \$6 million per year remained for new construction on the bond issue system, about enough to construct 200 miles of pavement per year and "...without the provision of additional funds, the completion of the State bond issue system would be delayed for approximately twenty years."¹⁸

Given the serious nature of the problem faced by Illinois, it is not surprising that Governor Louis L. Emmerson's (Republican, 1929-1932) inaugural address dwelt on the road situation. He appealed to the pride of Illinois government and private citizens as he declared that "...Illinois is morally obligated to build the roads provided in the bond issue system and to do it as quickly as possible. Further, that the routes are designated in the enabling legislation--the two State Bond Issue Road Acts--and that the honor of Illinois requires the fulfillment of these contracts with the people."¹⁹ Emmerson considered it a top priority to widen the main arteries entering the large cities and to surface secondary roads in order to extend the benefits of hard roads to smaller communities. He recommended a financial plan to accomplish this but expressed concern about imposing additional taxes on citizens; his plan was to implement a gasoline tax. Illinois was the last state to enact a motor fuel tax law when in 1929, it imposed a tax of three cents per gallon. This was less than the average of 3.70 cents per gallon imposed by the other states. The tax was divided between the state and the counties with two-thirds given to Illinois for improvement of the State bond issue road system and one-third given to the counties for the construction, under State supervision, of permanent improvements on the State-aid roads. Lawmakers estimated that the tax would yield \$21 million per year, allowing construction to proceed on Illinois highways and secondary roads.²⁰

If anyone doubted the advantages of paying the new tax, Sheets was quick to emphasize the approximately 3.6 cents per mile saved in operating costs by motorists using improved roads, noting that if a motorist drove his car only 640 miles per year on the State highway system, he/she would save in operating costs the amount of the motor license fee and gas tax for that year. Obviously, the more miles driven, the more of a dividend might be realized. Not only did Sheets believe that improved roads provided a direct savings to the car owner, but on a more abstract level, he saw a social benefit which may not have been capable of evaluation but was shared by all Illinois citizens, whether or not they owned a vehicle.²¹

The State's share of the estimated \$21 million generated annually by the gasoline tax was about \$14 million. With an additional \$6 million per year available for construction from surplus motor license fees and Federal aid funds, a total of about \$20 million was available for construction. The plan was to complete the bond issue system within approximately seven years, anticipating that workers could complete approximately 550 to 600 miles per year, depending upon weather, type of construction, and the cost of wages and materials. The counties' one-third share, allotted to individual counties, totaled approximately \$7 million per year, allotted in proportion to the motor license fees paid by each county. Counties faced the same building constraints encountered by the state, and anticipated improving 200 to 300 miles of road per year, bringing the total permanent highway program to between 800 and 900 miles per year.²² Illinois, by enacting the motor fuel tax law provided a method of financing which produced a stable, steady revenue and provided for a uniform rate of progress of highway construction. This permitted the State to proceed with a "...rational development of highway facilities from year to year, and at the same time stabilize and provide more

satisfactory conditions in the highway construction industry than have heretofore prevailed."²³

At about the same time, a drought affected Illinois and contributed to the misery of the wide-spread economic depression that had begun to be felt in Illinois and which manifested itself in wide-spread unemployment. Fortunately for Illinois, road building motor fuel tax collections in 1930 exceeded the original estimate, and an extra allotment of \$2 million was made by the Federal government for road building purposes to relieve unemployment. The Department of Public Works and Buildings (DPW&B), acting under instructions from Governor Emmerson, "...placed under contract several million dollars worth of emergency highway and bridge construction to be started at once as an aid to this situation. This consisted of 175 miles of pavement, 19 miles of grading, and 20 bridges."²⁴

The maintenance work performed in 1930 included "...the physical maintenance of roads, bridges, culverts and properties; the placing and maintenance of route markers, warning signs, and city limit and directional signs; the mowing of vegetation; trimming of trees, and keeping the rights of way in a neat and attractive condition; the removal of snow and ice from the pavements; the repair and replacement of guard fence; the construction of incidental improvements to eliminate dangerous road conditions and to increase the permanency of road structures or correct minor defects unforeseen during construction; and other items relating to the roadway and its preservation, use and beautification."²⁵ The DPW&B was able to keep the costs down since the original work was of high quality and by making immediate repairs whenever necessary, heading off more extensive future repairs.

During 1930 some contracts were awarded directly by the state, some existing contracts were adjusted, and some contracts were carried over from 1929.

"[T]he net total mileage under contract on the State Bond Issue system for the year were 946.57 miles of pavement, 177.05 miles of grading, and 161 bridges."²⁶ Also, progress on construction was advanced by the mild weather experienced during the autumn of 1930, which "...permitted the construction to continue on these projects much later than usual, with the result that much was accomplished in relieving distress in the employment of thousands of men by the contractors and material producers in carrying on the various activities."²⁷ A combination of the above factors allowed Illinois to complete Route 66 from Chicago to St. Louis and by 1930 it could claim the distinction of being the only state, with the exception of the 15 miles which passed through the southeast corner of Kansas, to have Route 66 completely hard surfaced.²⁸

The Illinois State Police continued to monitor the hard roads as they arrested reckless or intoxicated drivers and furnished first aid to travelers, while exercising their general police powers. They used cars, motorcycles, and scales to enforce traffic and weight laws. In 1930, they apprehended drivers of 4,169 overweight vehicles, some of which had not been properly licensed.²⁹ Additionally, the State of Illinois was concerned about the increased traffic near large population centers. Not surprisingly they focused on the City of Chicago and the surrounding metropolitan area. The solution appeared to be the construction of new roads, while widening existing roads, and constructing grade separations between important traffic arteries and railroads.³⁰ Along with the increased mileage of paved roads and the attendant increased traffic, came a dramatic rise in fatalities resulting from motor vehicle accidents. Between 1903 and 1912, when there were few paved roads and few automobiles, the U.S. averaged 1,200 automobile-related deaths per year; 1913 to 1922 saw a dramatic increase to 9,600. Between 1923 and 1927, deaths again jumped dramatically to

an average of 21,700 per year. Although fatalities leveled out somewhat between 1928 and 1932, they averaged approximately 30,900 per year.³¹ Illinois' automobile-related deaths followed a similar pattern, rising and falling with the number of vehicles on the road.

The Depression Years: 1932-1941

Much of the second alignment of Route 66 was completed during the Great Depression, prior to America's entry into World War II. The amount of work created by road construction helped to alleviate the extreme poverty experienced by the nation in general.

By the 1920s rural America was already experiencing hard times as economic conditions pointed to the coming depression. Contributing to the problem was the technology that was beginning to revolutionize farming. Reduction in the numbers of farmers and farm workers necessary to maintain agricultural production drove them from the land and by 1929, nearly half of all American farmers were tenants, rather than landowners. Rural people, in particular, suffered economic hardship during the 1920s. The near-poverty of this period caused them to look for sources of income which were not affected by the ups and downs of the shaky economy. Some built gas stations, tourist courts, cafes, grocery stores, and bus and truck lines, provided entertainment, or sold souvenirs along the road. Their instincts were right; the service industry boomed and businesses along the road prospered as these early entrepreneurs watched desperate families from the drought-ravaged Midwest travel Route 66 west to California and the longed-for Promised Land.

A survivor of the Great Depression reflected that "Most people blamed [the Depression on Herbert C.] Hoover [1929-1933], and they cussed him up one

side and down the other--it was all his fault. I'm not saying he's blameless but I'm not saying either it was all his fault. Our system doesn't run by just one man, and it doesn't fall by just one man, either."³² In fact, when the stock market crashed in 1929, "...the Hoover administration had already begun to use increased highway appropriation as a way of trying to stimulate the economy....With federal monies increased for the fiscal years 1931-33 and with supplemental emergency loans made to states so that they would have the funds to match their federal shares, some of the worst areas of Route 66 were improved during the Hoover years."³³

It wasn't until the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Presidency (Democrat, 1933-1945) and the 1933 implementation of his "New Deal," however, that highway construction began to boom. Raymond Moley, a member of Roosevelt's original Brain Trust, observed: "The first New Deal was a radical departure from American life. It put more power in the central Government. At the time, it was necessary, especially in the farm area of our economy. Left to itself, farming was in a state of anarchy. Beyond that, there was no need to reorganize in industry. We merely needed to get the farms prospering again and create a market for the industrial products in the cities."³⁴ The government also responded by funding projects designed to revive the economy. Following Hoover's example, money continued to be poured into road building as a way to ease unemployment. In addition, programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Work Projects Administration (WPA) funded projects for "...roadside municipal attractions, such as parks with lakes and swimming pools, which benefited not only townspeople but tourists. Town promoters used these new public facilities to induce tourists to spend a night in town. This priming of the [economic] pump led to the creation of jobs along the road where the number

of tourist courts, garages, stores, and cafes serving travelers as well as road workers proliferated.³⁵ Illinois was able to alleviate some of the economic crisis by putting men to work on road building. The DPW&B reported that "...26,652 men [were] employed directly on State highway construction in 1932, an increase of 4,285 men over 1931." This number did not include "...the large number of men employed on county highway work, the State engineers, employees at the material plants, etc."³⁶ Federal regulation of construction employment guaranteed that Illinois residents would benefit from the road contracts and meant that "...77 per cent of the labor employed during 1932 resided near the work being carried on, 20 per cent were non-local but residents of Illinois, and 3 per cent were from other States." The apparent allowable exception to the requirement was the latter group, consisting "...of the executive employees of the Contractors of men who were necessary for the efficient performance of the work."³⁷

A total of 2,324.62 miles of high-type pavement surfacing [concrete, brick on concrete base, or bituminous surface on concrete base] was under contract during 1932, including some contracts carried over from the year before. Grading work contracts for 1931-32 totaled 546.92 miles and a record number of bridges, 471, were completed. By the end of 1932, there was a total of 97,532 miles of public highways in the state of Illinois, of which 12,187 miles had been improved with some sort of surfacing; 10,634 miles were surfaced with brick, asphalt, bituminous concrete, bituminous macadam, waterbound macadam, or gravel.³⁸

The Federal Emergency Relief and Construction Act of July 21, 1932, made \$5,082,847 in Federal-aid road funds available to Illinois. Work had to move forward quickly, encouraging winter work, in order to meet the completion deadline of June 30, 1933.³⁹ The act provided certain conditions designed to increase employment:

...that manual labor be used instead of machines in a number of construction operations, that all labor except executive employees be limited to 30 hours employment in any one week, that preference in employment be given ex-service men with dependents and local labor, that all common labor should be recruited locally from lists of those in real need prepared and furnished to the Contractor by a designated County Employment Committee, that Contractors be required to proceed with such construction as practicable during the winter months, and that contracts specify minimum wage rates.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, county highway building programs for 1932 saw a drastic reduction since the 57th General Assembly amended the 1929 Motor Fuel Tax Act to permit counties to "...divert any unobligated balances in this fund for relief of the destitute."⁴¹ One of the major thrusts of road building during this period was the separation of grades. Safety was uppermost in the mind of the director of the DPW&B as increasing traffic encountered dangerous intersections and the sheer volume of vehicles interrupted the smooth flow of traffic. In 1932, "...the Department placed 9 new grade separations under contract...in addition to the 6 separations carried over from 1930 and 1931. Plans were prepared for additional separations but failure to secure rights of way kept these projects from advancing to the construction stage. Five of these separations were completed during 1932, exceeding the 1931 work by 3 separations."⁴² Safety continued to be a major issue along Route 66. One thing in particular was very dangerous: the railroad grades that cars encountered while traveling the road. A significant number of fatalities occurred at these crossings. During WPA construction projects, state highway departments began to eliminate these crossings with bridges or underpasses which took traffic over or under the dangerous tracks. Even though traffic deaths decreased slightly in Illinois during 1932, perhaps reflecting less travel, 2,109 people were killed.⁴³

Motorists also had to concern themselves with the possibility that their cars might be stolen or that they might unwittingly purchase such a car since

Illinois was known as the "mid-west dumping ground for stolen cars." That changed in 1933 when Illinois enacted the Certificate of Title Law, a motor vehicle anti-theft act, meant to address a growing problem. Motorists purchased a car title for fifty cents, thereby protecting his/her car from theft and resale.⁴⁴

At the end of 1935, Ernst Lieberman, Chief Highway Engineer of the DPW&B, could boast of three years of steadily improving roads: "During the three years, 1933, 1934, and 1935 a total of 3,305.75 miles of surfaced highways were built. Of this, 1,686.50 miles were high-type pavement, 177.23 were medium type (bituminous surfaced gravel or stone), and 1,442.02 were low type (gravel or stone surfaced)."⁴⁵ A more impressive amount of construction could have been accomplished, however, if more money had been designated for road construction and less for railroad grade separations and bridges although Lieberman acknowledged that the latter two projects were equally important to that of pavement completion. A total of 116 grade separations were completed during 1933-35, compared with 77 built during the previous four years, and the bridge over Lake Springfield, south of the city, was completed during this three year period. The state of Illinois put its energies into the improvement of primary roads while Lieberman expressed concern that the road system would not be of maximum benefit unless secondary roads also received all-weather surfaces.⁴⁶

Highway congestion continued to be an area of utmost concern to the DPW&B as they also turned their attention to the East St. Louis metropolitan area. Traffic congestion there was nearly equal to that of Chicago, although fewer efforts had been made to remedy the problem. The problem was aggressively attacked in both metropolitan areas during 1933-35, resulting in the construction of 65.38 miles of 20-foot and 4.31 miles of 40-foot pavement, and the resurfacing and widening of 12.99 miles of existing pavement outside of cities

and 12.88 miles within cities.⁴⁷

Road construction would not have proceeded at all during the Depression, however, without receipt of Federal funds. Illinois received allotments from three emergency appropriations in this period:

- ...\$17,570,770 from funds appropriated for highway work by the National Recovery Act of 1933; \$8,921,401 by the Hayden-Cartwright Road Act of 1934; and \$8,694,009 for highways and \$10,307,184 for grade crossing eliminations from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. All of these allotments were 100 per cent grants and no matching with State funds was required.⁴⁸

In addition, the DPW&B acknowledged the importance of spending funds on highway maintenance in order to protect the investment that Illinois had made in its highways and to ensure that traffic could move freely and efficiently. "At the end of 1935, a total of 12,370.57 miles of surfaced roads were subject to maintenance by the State, exclusive of the mileage of extensions of State highways in cities and villages. The average annual cost per mile for maintenance was reduced to \$296.54, compared to an average annual cost of \$339.22 in the previous four year period.⁴⁹

Maintenance during 1933-35 also included highway landscaping and roadside planting. This was done not only to improve the appearance of the highways but to reduce maintenance expense by eliminating soil erosion. The U.S. Bureau of Public Roads officially recognized roadside planting as an essential phase of highway development and one percent of all allotments were to be used for landscaping. Safety considerations were also involved in maintenance. In an effort to reduce automobile accidents, earth slopes were flattened and, in an effort to stimulate the economy, native trees and shrubs were purchased from local nurseries, plantings being completed by labor provided by the federal Civil Works Administration.⁵⁰

The State Highway Police remained active on the highways during this time period, increasing the number of arrests. "[A]fter an initial 15 per cent fewer arrests made in 1933, 1934 and 1935 showed increases of 32 and 35 per cent, [respectively]." In addition, the mileage police traveled over the highways increased over 1932 by "...18 per cent for 1933, 30 per cent for 1934, and 37 per cent for 1935. An increase in the force from 300 to 350 officers was authorized in 1933, but in spite of this and of the increased activities, expense of policing in each of the three years was from five to ten per cent less than in 1932."⁵¹ Part of the credit for the increase in arrests and the reduction of policing expense was attributed not only to a larger police force but to the new radio communications system, which augmented traditional policing efforts, making them more efficient in the process.

By 1936, the Illinois Division of Highways announced that U.S. Route 66 from Chicago to St. Louis was the heaviest traveled long-distance highway in the state.⁵² Between 1932 and 1941, segments of the original 1926 alignment of Route 66 were bypassed by new highway construction which routed traffic around Joliet, Bloomington-Normal, Lincoln, Springfield, and Staunton, including some short sections of divided four-lane pavements. The main impetus behind the bypasses, or belt lines as they were sometimes called, was to speed up traffic, both highway and inner-city, by providing wide swathes of pavement with few or no intersections to slow down the large volume of traffic. And by 1938 the DPW&B was able to report definite progress toward this goal.⁵³

The Joliet bypass was completed in the northern part of the state between 1935-38 when State Route 59 was extended in Shorewood at the junction of the U.S. Route 52 south across U.S. Route 6 to just north of the Chicago and Alton Railroad tracks near Braidwood. There it turned southwest, following the north

side of the tracks to join U.S. 66 on the south end of Gardner. This two-lane pavement allowed travelers to bypass Joliet completely; motorists simply followed State Route 59 north to Plainfield and State Route 126 northeast to the junction with U.S. 66 north of Joliet.⁵⁴ Chicago-bound traffic followed the extended "...Route 59 between Gardner and Plainfield and Route Ill. 126 between Plainfield and U.S. 66 north of Joliet. The extension...also provide[d] a Joliet bypass for traffic on Route U.S. 6 and Route Ill. 69."⁵⁵ This alignment addressed one of the concerns of the DPW&B: that of traffic congestion. Route 59 served as a belt line around the entire Chicago Metropolitan area. By the end of 1938, only "...6.78 miles of pavement remained to be completed, all of which was under contract."⁵⁶ Before traffic could be carried on the bypass, however, it was necessary for the DPW&B to construct a bridge over the Mazon River and the Alton Railroad viaduct at Mazonia. Plans were completed and contracts awarded in early 1939 for both the bridge and viaduct. Of the two structures, the railroad viaduct was the more unique, with a 252.5 foot long tied-steel arch track span and 13 other spans of continuous I-beam type. The viaduct was 1,095.5 feet long, the first of its kind to be built by the Division.⁵⁷

In the center of the state, Bloomington-Normal was able to put unemployed men to work as they labored to build the nearly eight-mile bypass around the two cities. In addition to providing desperately-needed employment, the construction addressed citizens' complaints about traffic congestion, noise, and the inordinate amount of time it took to travel through town on the original Route 66. In 1938, plans were completed, rights-of-way were acquired, and the DPW&B awarded contracts for heavy grading work early in 1939 and for paving in 1940.⁵⁸ In 1940, the gentle, sweeping curve was begun around Bloomington, reportedly designed to handle 100-mile per hour traffic, similar to Germany's

Autobahn. This was theoretically possible because of the sophisticated engineering plan and the fact that there were no traffic-lights and few intersecting roads to slow down traffic on this four-lane engineering marvel. The dual pavement bypass provided for three railroad grade separations, one northeast of Normal at the Alton Railroad, one south of Bloomington at the Illinois Central Railroad, and one south of Bloomington at the Illinois Terminal, Chicago, Cincinnati and Cleveland & St. Louis and New York City & St. Louis Railroads. In addition, there were three highway grade separations, one northeast of Normal at existing Route 66, and two south of Bloomington, at Bunn Street and at Route U.S. 51. The bypass was finished in 1941, approximately three weeks after the December 7 bombing of Pearl Harbor. Locally, the road was called the Belt Line and, although renamed Veterans Parkway in 1979 to honor veterans of all wars, many local residents still refer to it by the former name.⁵⁹

Built as a four-lane, divided highway, the Lincoln bypass extended along the north side of town west to State Route 121 on the west side of town. Construction began in 1938, when a portion along the west side of Lincoln was constructed as a part of Route 121 and work began on the two- and one-half mile section which ran along the north edge of the city. In addition, contracts were awarded in 1938 for a subway under the Alton Railroad, a viaduct over the Illinois Terminal and Illinois Central Railroads, and for the grading of the approaches.⁶⁰ The DPW&B anticipated awarding the paving contract late in 1939. "This improvement permits through traffic on U.S. 66 to by-pass Lincoln, eliminating two grade crossings and the necessity of traveling a portion of the distance over narrow city streets."⁶¹

Plans were announced in 1936 to bypass or relocate portions of a section 4.5 miles long immediately north of Springfield. Some of the extant pavement did

not meet modern highway standards and was in hazardous and poor condition, having been built as State-aid or county construction, some as early as 1914. The proposed bypass was a four-lane, divided highway; it stretched from the north-east corner of the Illinois State Fair Grounds to Sherman, crossing the new bridge built to handle traffic across the Sangamon River. This new road required another new bridge across the Sangamon River, but it eliminated some hazardous curves while it bypassed most of the town of Sherman.⁶² The Springfield bypass route extended along the east and south sides of the city on the present-day Dirksen Parkway and Adlai Stevenson Drive. By 1938, Sangamon County had "...already built the portion extending from the junction with Route U.S. 66 south of Springfield to a connection with marked Route 125 east of Springfield." The belt line was extended northerly to connect with Route U.S. 66. The bypass plan called for three railroad grade separations, a subway to the north under the Alton Railroad, a subway under the Illinois Terminal Railroad, and a viaduct over the Wabash, Illinois Central, and Illinois Terminal Railroads. A subway was also built under the Illinois Central Railroad south of Springfield, replacing the grade crossing. Contracts for all of these grade separations were awarded in 1938, construction began in 1939.⁶³

In 1938 the design work was completed for a viaduct over the Chicago, Cincinnati and Cleveland & St. Louis Railroad in Macoupin and Madison Counties. Contracts were awarded and paving began in 1939 for an 8.64 mile stretch of 22-foot pavement, called the "Livingston cutoff." Completed in 1940, it swung around the town of Staunton, permitting traffic to avoid a previous alignment which included narrow pavement and sharp turns.⁶⁴

The traffic congestion problems in the Chicago vicinity and the East St. Louis metropolitan area was a continuing issue for the DPW&B. The Department

had worked on the East St. Louis problem since 1933. In 1938 and 1939, the DPW&B followed an aggressive program of construction, building "...sixteen miles of 20- to 22-foot pavement, twelve miles of 40-foot pavement, and seven railroad grade separations, including subways on Route 3 (St. Clair Avenue) in East St. Louis under the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and a viaduct on U.S. Highway 50 over the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and the St. Louis and O'Fallon Railroad near the east edge of East St. Louis."⁶⁵

With increased road use and the resulting congestion came an increased concern with safety. Illinois passed two new laws in 1938 and 1939 in an attempt to monitor drivers and their behaviors, creating the psychological effect of making them accountable to the State for the consequences of their actions.

The first of the two companion laws, The Financial Responsibility Law, was enacted during 1938 requiring that "...motorists convicted of negligent driving make adequate financial reparation and show proof that they can do likewise in the event of further damage or loss of life they may inflict."⁶⁶ At first glance, this law might appear to be a "mandatory insurance law," but the State was quick to point out that it was not in the insurance business since it accepted proof other than an insurance policy to demonstrate financial responsibility. The hoped-for outcome was "...to drive the irresponsible and financially insolvent motorist from the highway, and place financial responsibility squarely on the shoulder of the motorist who is guilty of endangering the lives and property of others."⁶⁷

In 1939, for the first time, a compulsory law, unimaginatively entitled The Drivers' License Law, required Illinois drivers to obtain a driver's license in order to operate an automobile in the state. The license was valid for a period of three years and the fee was 25 cents for drivers under 18 and 50 cents for those over

18. If the license was obtained prior to May 1, anyone could become a licensed driver by filling out an application blank and having it notarized, without taking a physical or passing written or driving tests. After May 1, the Secretary of State's office required a "more stringent examination on physical fitness, driving ability, and knowledge of traffic regulation."⁶⁸

By the end of 1939, Illinois boasted 102,683 miles of public roads, excluding city and village streets. "Of this total, 18,808 miles had been improved by the state, or under state supervision with some type of surfacing. The improved roads consisted of 13,270 miles of concrete pavement, or of brick or bituminous surface on concrete base, 1,170 miles of bituminous surface on gravel, or crushed stone base, and 4,368 miles of gravel, or crushed stone surface. During the biennium, 1938-39, a total of 3,204 miles of surfaced highways was built. Of this, 766 miles were high-type pavement..., 801 were medium-type..., and 1,637 were low-type...."⁶⁹

During 1939-40 the Department spent \$123,219,110.88 on highways. "Of this amount \$85,688,179.35 was expended directly by the state. Some of the principal expenditures were \$40,730,603.35 for highway construction, \$11,783,593.13 for highway maintenance, \$2,877,332 for highway policing, and \$19,080,760. for principal and interest payments on State Highway bonds." The large portion of the State budget allocated for maintenance was to protect the previous investment in highways. The total cost to maintain 13,516.73 miles of surfaced roads was \$11,061,100.89; the average annual cost per mile for maintenance in this period was \$412.51.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the Illinois State Police continued their efforts at patrolling the highways and controlling traffic and criminals. During 1939-40, they were responsible for 43,504 arrests, resulting in the collection of \$352,469.96 in fines

and costs, and the imposition of jail and prison sentences aggregating more than 83 years. "During the two years, more than 16,000,000 miles were driven in [the] line of duty by police officers with an accident rate of less than one per hundred thousand miles, a record approximately twelve times better than that established by operators of private and commercial vehicles as a whole."⁷¹ The police radio communications system, begun in 1935, became an increasingly important tool, enabling the State police to apprehend criminals and by 1939, Chief Highway Engineer Ernst Lieberman could boast that the radio system "...is admittedly one of the finest and most complete state communications organization in the nation." He offered proof of the system's efficiency by stating that "...during the past year it has participated in the recovery of 5,596 stolen cars valued at \$2,798,000, and in the apprehension of 2,617 criminals. During 1937, the first full year the system was in operation, 1,248 cars valued at \$624,000 were recovered and 517 criminals were apprehended by officers making use of state police radio."⁷²

By 1939, the Illinois Division of Highways (DOH) began to plant roadsides as a regular part of highway design and construction. What began as an issue of improvement of appearance and a follow-up job after completion of construction, became an integral part of highway planning. Landscaping the roadsides had been proven to reduce soil erosion and maintenance costs. While federal aid projects already provided for complete roadside development, including regrading, reshaping back slopes, shoulders and ditches, seeding, sodding, and planting for erosion control, and safety and appearance features, states usually confined themselves to concerns with soil erosion plantings. Now, however, the DOH acknowledged that proper landscaping was more than plant materials, requiring proper drainage and seeding, prevention of erosion, snow drift control, safety factors, and the provision of greater opportunities for recreational highway use.

Landscaping had a profound effect on the appearance of the roadsides; a phenomenal number and variety of landscaping materials were used by the DOH: "Since the inception of a roadside improvement and planting program in 1933, approximately 350,000 shade and flowering trees and two million and a half shrubs, vines and ground cover plants have been planted on 4,664 miles of roadside. During the years of 1938 and 1939, 1,219 miles were planted as state roadside planting projects, and 166 miles as federal aid roadside improvement projects."⁷⁴ In 1939, the DOH experimented even further with the appearance of the roadside when they planted five- to six-year old nursery stock along Route 66 between Springfield and Sherman. Planting mature stock provided a striking contrast to roadsides planted with younger, standard-sized trees and shrubs, immediately allowing the DOH to visualize the future appearance of roadsides. Additional landscaping was required at the rest stops erected by the DOH to provide a safe and pleasant environment in which the public could relax along the road during breaks in their journeys. In 1939, they built "...ninety-nine roadside picnic areas, where turn-out drives, picnic tables, and fire places were provided in landscaped or naturally attractive settings. An additional one hundred and fifty-nine roadside picnic tables were also placed along the highways, in locations where shade was provided, but where right of way was insufficient for further development."⁷⁵

Safety continued to be a major concern of the DOH as 1939 brought increased speeds and traffic volumes. H. H. Harrison, Engineer of Traffic and Safety for the DOH, identified three "E's" of highway safety: engineering, enforcement, and education.⁷⁶ Since 1934, the Traffic and Safety division had been responsible for "erecting highway signs and markers, checking road plans for safety features, compiling and analyzing traffic accident statistics, lowering the employee

accident rate, and in general promoting the program to reduce the state's death and injury toll. To these original functions has been added the task of offering technical service to municipalities, schools, and other governmental unofficial groups.⁷⁷

Harrison felt that one of the most important duties performed by the traffic safety section of the DOH was to mark and provide signals for the state highways. Over the years the DOH had tried various methods to make signs more readable both to day- and night-time motorists by using reflective materials, including "...using flat glass to form letters, symbols and numerals."⁷⁸ A continuous system of 1,600 reflector signs had been placed along 14-mile section of Route 66 north of Springfield. It was determined, however, that they were not particularly effective in preventing night accidents. Since the markers were effective in marking the location of obstructions in the road, it was decided that future installation would be limited to the latter use.⁷⁹ Improvement of motorists' night vision was a continuing concern with the DOH and by 1940, plans were being prepared to install sodium vapor lights at major intersections, including Illinois Route 4 and U.S. Route 66, and at the north junction of U.S. 66 and the Springfield belt line.⁸⁰

In addition, large caution signs that instructed drivers to stop or turn, and to observe curves, cross roads and side roads, began to replace smaller signs along four-lane highways. To promote safer highways, caution signs warned motorists as they approached junctions. During 1940, approximately fifty rural junctions were signed with larger prejunction signs posted "...approximately 800 feet in advance of the intersection and an intermediate sign giving the direction of the route on departure from the intersection [was] installed at a distance of 400 feet from the junction point."⁸¹ Also, the state experimented with critical speed signs

on highways, informing motorists of the maximum safe speed at which the curves could be navigated under favorable conditions. The experiment resulted in "...approximately 400 additional curves [being] given this treatment in 1939 on...important routes of the primary system [including] U.S. 66." Harrison was able to point to a total of "...2,010 miles, or 15 per cent of the primary system," that had been posted with the signs. He declared that "A majority of motorists are now traveling these curves at a speed approximately the same as that set forth on critical speed signs."⁸²

The State of Illinois continued to promote its public safety program, focusing on educational activities by "...organizing, training and equipping approximately two hundred safety patrols in the elementary schools each year. The engineers promoted the inauguration of driver education and training programs in five hundred and ninety-three high schools, using the special Illinois edition of the text book, Man and the Motor Car. Approximately 50,000 students enrolled in the courses each year; fifteen high schools used dual control driver training cars for behind the wheel road instruction, and highway engineers helped colleges design effective courses to prepare teachers to teach driver training courses. "During 1938 and 1939, two hundred and seventy-six teachers enrolled in these courses."⁸³

During 1940-41, Walter A. Rosenfield, Director of the DPW&B, could boast of taking the lead in first-class highway construction: "At the close of 1941, the network of high type pavement totaled approximately 13,683 miles, a figure substantially in excess of similar mileage in other states. During the two-year period, the Division of Highways completed 361 miles of high type roads, and 433 miles of other types of highways. Also built were a series of 106 bridges, 29 rail-

road grade separations, four highway grade separations and two large belt line improvements at Lincoln and Bloomington.⁸⁴

With the anticipated entry of the United States into World War II, road building activities and road-related concerns shifted. The primary impetus of highway building during the war was modernizing old highways and constructing or improving roads which supported defense activities. Training centers and munitions plants required adequate access in order to provide troops and materials to the war effort.⁸⁵ Even as the U.S. entered into World War II, the Defense Highway Act of 1941 recognized the importance of highway planning for both immediate and post-war needs. The Act authorized \$10,000,000 for carrying out "advance engineering surveys and plans for future development of the strategic network of highways and by-passes around and extensions into and through municipalities and metropolitan areas."⁸⁶ Early in 1941, the War Department designated as strategically important 2,090 miles of Illinois' highway network. "Much of the portion so earmarked includes heavily-traveled through routes deteriorated by age and now requiring modernization or rehabilitation. In this category are such arteries as U.S. Route 66 from Chicago to St. Louis. Development of this route as a four-lane express highway is expected to go forward unimpeded because of its high position on the strategic list."⁸⁷ Wartime priorities became effective at the end of 1941, and "...construction for the duration of the war would be rigidly limited to strategic highways and access roads to military camps and industrial plants engaged in armament production. At the same time, a substantial shrinkage in revenue from motor fuel tax and motor vehicle license fees, resulting from tire rationing, was anticipated."⁸⁸ The DOH adjusted, as required, to the restrictions imposed by war, changing engineering practices to make better use of steel and other materials critical to the war effort.

Even as plans were being made for war-time conservation, the DOH continued the important roadside planting and erosion control program. In 1941, "[m]ore than 400,000 trees, plants and seedlings were set out and 20 new roadside picnic areas were developed, financed by State and Federal aid funds."⁸⁹ Also, ever-mindful of safety issues, the State of Illinois operated Motor Vehicle Inspection lanes in 31 cities, checking a total of 25,790 vehicles. Motorists voluntarily brought their vehicles to these lanes where they received unbiased advice on the condition of their vehicles.⁹⁰

During 1941-42, the Traffic Section of the Bureau of Maintenance placed "...between 90,000 and 100,000 new and reconditioned directional information and regulatory signs on State highways....Of this number, 20,000 [were] reflectorized through a new type of material to give signs greater nighttime legibility. Ten thousand warning and cautionary signs were reflectorized through the use of reflector buttons and flat glass units." In addition, sodium vapor lights were "...installed at eight locations, where accident records clearly indicated the need for better visibility at night, and approximately 3,500 'no passing' zones were marked on the primary system with a total length of approximately 1,000 miles of barrier lines."⁹¹

John Nash, the Chief Clerk of the Secretary of State's Automobile Department in 1941-42, declared that increasing traffic had brought about two problems: "On the one hand there is the increased necessity for building new roads and keeping existing roads in repair. And there is the necessity of enforcing laws intended to cut the toll of traffic accidents which have risen in incidence directly comparable to the growth of the motor industry." Nash predicted, incorrectly, that the pleasure car, no longer a "badge of wealth, but a utility, would

"... continue to be a utility throughout our wartime effort."⁹² Nash apparently did not foresee the gasoline and tire rationing, and the unattainability of spare automobile parts when making his prediction. "During 1941 revocations under the Drivers License Law increased 21 per cent over the figures for the previous year, and suspensions under the Financial Responsibility Act rose nine and one-half per cent."⁹³ In 1941, 1,247 motorists were convicted of driving while intoxicated, the most common offense. "There were seven convictions for accidents involving death; one for manslaughter; six for third conviction; one for speed restrictions; one for failure in the duty to aid following an accident; and one for the use of a motor vehicle in the commission of a felony."⁹⁴ Nash saw this as a positive indicator of the effectiveness of the laws.

The War Years: 1942-45

World War II drastically affected all domestic travel. The home front faced rationing and shortages which included a cessation of automobile production in 1942. Even those who had automobiles had problems getting enough gasoline or replacement tires when frequently-patched ones finally wore out. There was also a shortage of replacement parts if a car broke down. During the war, more than \$40 billion was invested by the federal government in the west, primarily in California steel plants. A second mass migration, to rival that of the Depression, began as people traveled to fill these new war industry jobs.⁹⁵ This migration and the related defense shipments and use of the road by the military meant that Route 66 was filled with traffic. The trucking industry also exerted pressure on states to overlook overweight trucks, according to Kammer:

Much as it had done during World War I with an earlier generation of trucks, many with solid rubber tires, the trucking industry appealed to patriotism and wartime shortages to convince state authorities to look the

other way. At the outset of the war the AASHO and the Public Roads Administration (PRA, the bureau succeeding the BPR in the later 1930s) had agreed on uniform truck weights and sizes. Loads were set at 18,000 pounds per axle, 30,000 pounds gross weight for a four-wheel truck, and 40,000 pounds on trucks of three or more axles....⁹⁶

Major projects for which design work was in progress included Route U.S. 66. The road had assumed additional importance with its designation as a strategic highway. "Much of the original pavement, built over 20 years ago with an 18-foot width and only a 6-inch interior thickness, is still in service. The age and design of the pavement, together with a concentration of heavy transport truck traffic--much of which is permitted to carry excessive loads in order not to hinder transportation of vital war materials--have resulted in accelerating the destruction of portions of the route with attendant excessive maintenance costs and traffic hazards and inconveniences."⁹⁷

Route 66 began to collapse from overuse, and by 1942 extensive failure of the pavement at three locations along Route 66 in Illinois reached the stage where maintenance costs were excessive, making it almost impossible to keep the road open to traffic. Plans were made to construct new pavement at these three locations. The new 24-foot wide, Portland cement pavement was constructed to one side of and separated from the old pavement by a 30-foot central parkway. The plan was to keep the old pavement in service until the new pavement was finished, and then to abandon the old pavement until after the war when it would be rebuilt as the second half of a divided four-lane highway.⁹⁸ Construction work began on the three damaged segments during 1943. The three segments were from Illinois Route 18, west of Raymond, south for 21.48 miles to the new Staunton bypass that was completed in 1940; from Sherman to Lincoln for 20.18 miles, from the end of the existing four-lane highway at Sherman to the south end of the newly completed Lincoln bypass; and from Pontiac to Gardner, for a dis-

tance of 21.87 miles. The new construction work included by-passes around Dwight (completed in 1946), Odell, and Pontiac.⁹⁹ Once completed, a four-lane, limited-access highway stretched from Chicago to St. Louis. The construction costs for each new section included funds for right-of-way procurement. The latest modern design principles with respect to horizontal and vertical alignment, sight distances, railroad and highway grade crossing separation and protection, and other safety features were incorporated into the new highway. These new segments became the southbound lane of the new limited-access highway.¹⁰⁰ This work was sufficient to keep Route 66 open to traffic during the war.

Contracts let in 1944 allowed the construction of 27.27 miles of pavement between Pontiac and the north end of the by-pass at Bloomington and 12.27 miles from the south end of the by-pass at Bloomington to just north of McLean.¹⁰¹ In 1945 contracts were let for a new 18-mile segment between Funk's Grove and Lincoln."¹⁰²

Priority restrictions on road building were set when the attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the nation into a full-fledged war. These restrictions meant, as a first priority, the preservation of the existing routes and pavement by patching until after the war and the construction of roads to enable war efforts to proceed, permitting access to military-related installations and industries. During 1944-45, for instance, a total of almost \$25 million was expended on more than 300,000 yards of concrete pavement patching.¹⁰³

The War Department had classified U.S. Route 66 in Illinois as a strategically important highway. Approximately seventy five miles of new pavement on this vitally important road were completed during 1945-46 to replace wornout sections rapidly approaching the point of being closed to traffic. The cost of this improvement approximated \$6,000,000.¹⁰⁴ "Under the Defense Highway Acts

of 1941 and subsequent amendments, \$4,688,000 was allocated to Illinois for such construction. Up to July 1, 1943, 'access' road contracts aggregating \$6,473,000 had been awarded for some 95 miles of various type roads. Of the total cost, \$1,552,000 came from State funds.¹⁰⁵

Even while limiting highway building, the DOH looked to the future, preparing a long-range plan for post-war construction. The post-war plan called for an expenditure of \$371,000,000, including such projects as

...necessary construction and modernization of the primary road system by building 110 miles of four-lane pavement, 701 miles of two-lane pavement, 100 railroad grade separations, 165 bridges and improvement of 160 miles of secondary roads of various types. Surveys and plans for a substantial percentage of these undertakings are now completed. Among the larger projects will be the future development of U.S. Route 66 as a four-lane superhighway throughout its extent from Chicago to St. Louis.¹⁰⁶

In the middle of 1943, the Illinois State Police took over the Traffic Safety and Driver Education section previously administered under the DOH. By this time, the State Police force numbers were limited by law to 350, including one Assistant Chief, 10 Captains, 15 Lieutenants, 51 Sergeants, and 273 Officers.¹⁰⁷ One of their main functions was to promote safe driver education in Illinois' high schools. In addition, the DOH cooperated with the War Department to "...teach high school students the required knowledge of the operation of military motor vehicles, ...[and] to train special officers employed in plant protection and traffic control in many of the large war production plants in Illinois."¹⁰⁸

During 1945 reconstruction of Route U.S. 66 was continued, including approximately 46 miles of new pavement, 24 feet wide and 10 inches thick, which was completed from Pontiac south to Funks Grove, joining the Bloomington bypass at each end, and including the bypass around Pontiac "...In order to avoid continued heavy maintenance expense, traffic was directed over the new pavement as soon as it was completed, and the old pavement was barri-

caded."¹⁰⁹ The completed slab allowed motorists to drive on "...a new pavement between Joliet, via Alternate Route US 66, and Funks Grove, except for a few miles north and south of Wilmington and the bypass around Dwight, now under contract. A small portion of this mileage is a divided four-lane pavement, which is the ultimate design for the entire length of this trunk highway."¹¹⁰ In 1945, "...about 18 miles were placed under contract between Funks Grove and Lincoln as a part of the post-war program."¹¹¹ It was anticipated that this last section would be completed in 1946.

The Ascendant Years: 1946-1956

The state's highway engineers were ready for postwar construction because of the comprehensive plan that was prepared prior to and during World War II. The plan was for not only repair to roads heavily damaged by military traffic but for construction of high-speed expressways. They happily turned their attention to belt line construction, elimination of traffic congestion, and the construction of grade separations, even as the interstate system loomed in the near future.¹¹² Immediately after the war, Route 66 experienced a heyday as ex-GIs returned and used the route in a third westward migration to plentiful jobs in California. Jack D. Rittenhouse anticipated the westward migration and to allay the fears of "easterners" and to assist in their travels, set out in his 1939 automobile along Route 66. After his trip in the spring of 1946, Rittenhouse published only 3,000 copies of his Guidebook to Route 66. Other guide books followed but none provided the detail of Rittenhouse's book, which was also free of commercial endorsements. However, he ruefully admitted in the preface to the 1989 reprint of the guidebook that he "learned the hard way that a self-publishing au-

thor usually has a fool for a distributor. I never reached my full market."¹¹³ The guidebook provided information such as mileage between towns and points of interest, including historic sites such as Lincoln's home and tomb in Springfield. The guide was especially important to travelers because it included information on garages, cafes, service stations and accommodations in each area. His intent was not to endorse particular services but to provide a linear log of their location and potential usefulness to motorists. And, on a serious note, his book contained practical, but rather ominous, advice to the would-be traveler:

Be sure you have your auto jack. A short piece of wide, flat board on which to rest the jack in sandy soil is a sweat preventer....Include a steel tow-rope, tire tools, tire patches, tire pump, and tire chains. One of those war-surplus foxhole shovels takes little space and may come in very handy. Put new batteries and a new bulb in your flashlight. Carry a container of drinking water, which becomes a vital necessity as you enter the deserts. For chilly nights, and early mornings, you'll find a camp blanket or auto robe useful—it comes in handy if you find inadequate bedding in a tourist cabin....Hardly a month goes by that some motorist does not die who would have lived if he had such equipment.¹¹⁴

Although the road was filled with post war traffic, described by various eye witnesses as a "traffic jam" or "bumper-to-bumper," for the first time in many years, road repairs and improvements were being made. Rittenhouse described the post war road between Chicago and Los Angeles as "well paved and passable. War-worn stretches of pavement are being repaired wherever pitted."¹¹⁵ The repair described by Rittenhouse occurred in Illinois, along with construction of 16 miles of new Portland cement concrete pavement, 24 feet wide and 10 inches thick from Lincoln northeast to Funks Grove, and 3 miles of the same design in the bypass around Dwight. The new construction included two highway grade separations and two bridges.¹¹⁶ Motorists could now drive over the new pavement between Springfield and Gardner and over Alternate Route US 66 from Gardner to Joliet, except for short gaps north and south of

Wilmington. Also, travel time was reduced by the World War II-era bypasses built around Illinois cities. The new pavement was the first half of a proposed divided four-lane highway, with a parkway of generous width between the two opposing traffic lanes. Portions of the ultimate four-lane design, totaling about 26 miles, were completed at critical locations.¹¹⁷

Of the extant 124,250 miles of Illinois roads and streets in 1946, the primary State highways comprised only 9.7 per cent of the total mileage.¹¹⁸ Inflation of labor and material costs, along with a shortage of manpower and materials, combined to slow highway construction and repair immediately after the war. The DOH pushed forward, however, to make up for the lack of building progress during the war. In 1946, it "...made surveys for 450 miles of primary highways; completed detailed plans for 375 miles of highways, 128 bridges of various sizes and types, and 5 railroad-highway grade separations; and prepared typical plans and specifications for a \$6,000,000 pavement patching and resurfacing program."¹¹⁹ During the two years following the war, the Division maintained and operated

...14,873 miles of improved highways and streets, inclusive of those roads on the State-aid (county) system that have been improved with a high-type paved surface. In addition to this mileage of highways, 1,165 separate bridges of over 100 feet in length were maintained as well as 5 moveable-span bridges over the Illinois River. For the safety and convenience of the traveling public, the Division maintained approximately 250,000 plain and reflectorized route marking, directional, and warning signs that have been erected along the primary routes as well as traffic control signals at 104 highway and street intersections.¹²⁰

Much of the DOH's 1947 budget continued to be allocated to reconstruction and maintenance of the State's primary highway system. Of the \$23,447,490.20 awarded in contracts for primary highway construction, "...forty-six per cent was for pavement rehabilitation, thirty-nine per cent for reconstruction, modernization and widening, seven per cent for restoration, additions and

betterments, and eight per cent for new highways...."¹²¹ The DOH spent \$10,708.877.60 in the maintenance of 14,125.35 miles of rural highways.¹²² In total, they "...completed a total of 470.83 miles of surfacing, including concrete pavements, low-type bituminous surfaces and gravel surfaces. Contracts for 248,908 square yards of concrete patching on 1,267 miles of pavement were let."¹²³

By 1948, the Division maintained 14,133.95 miles of rural highways and awarded \$20,808.088.13 worth of contracts for the primary system; the total allotted for the Federal-aid secondary system amounted to \$11,290,848.73. "Of the contracts awarded on the primary system, thirty-six per cent was for pavement rehabilitation, thirty-three per cent for new construction, twenty-seven per cent for reconstruction and modernization, and four per cent for restoration, additions and betterments."¹²⁴ This reflected a dramatic 25% increase for new construction over the previous biennial report. The construction work "...completed on the primary system consisted of 811.52 miles of surface, including new concrete pavement, bituminous resurfacing, bituminous surface treatments, and new gravel or crushed stone surfaces. Contracts for 381,718 square yards of concrete patches on 1,835 miles of pavement were let."¹²⁵ The total 1948 construction expenditure by the Division of Highways nearly doubled from the previous year: from \$24,902,738.62 in 1947, to \$42,154,258.61 in 1948.¹²⁶

In 1949, Route 66 was paved from Glenarm to the junction of Route Illinois 48 north of Litchfield. The pavement, 20.8 miles in length closed one of the last gaps in the highway's reconstruction through Illinois.¹²⁷ Three paving contracts were awarded; one in June and two in August. "The completion of this pavement, with the exception of about 2 miles, and its opening to traffic by the end of the construction season, was a remarkable achievement in pavement con-

struction progress. The total awarded contract cost was approximately \$2,295,000."¹²⁸

Reconstruction of Route 66 at the Chain-of-Rocks Bridge in Madison County relocated Route US 66 and provided for the "construction of a new embankment and pavement from the Chain-of-Rocks Mississippi River Bridge east to a point two miles west of Mitchell. The length of the improvement is 8,482 feet. The height of the new embankment varies from 13 feet to a maximum of 38 feet at the abutment of the bridge over the Chain-of-Rocks Canal. The grade was constructed higher than that of the old pavement to be above the flood waters in this area."¹²⁹ The contract, in the amount of \$430,919.51, was awarded in December 1948 and the new pavement was completed and opened to traffic in November 1949."¹³⁰

Also, during 1949, the DOH concentrated on reconstruction and modernization of existing highways, reducing the amount spent for new highway construction. Contracts totaling \$26,672,209.20 were awarded for primary highway construction and \$3,785,054.36 for Federal-aid secondary highway construction. "Included in these primary highway awards there were: 39 per cent for reconstruction, modernization, and widening existing highways; 39 per cent for pavement rehabilitation; 17 per cent for new highways; and 5 per cent for restorations and additions and betterments."¹³¹ The 732.54 miles of highway surfacing completed during 1949 "...included concrete pavement, bituminous resurfacing, bituminous treatment of gravel or crushed-stone surfaces, and gravel or crushed-stone roads. A total of 1,830 miles of pavement were repaired by placing 316,835 square yards of concrete patches....The mileage of new surfacing completed was distributed as follows: 434.13 miles on the primary system; 298.14 miles on the secondary system; and 0.27 miles on the other roads."¹³²

The Division of Highways reported that in 1949 daily traffic numbers on Route 66 ranged from 7,500 vehicles in the vicinity of Chicago to 3,000 on the lightest-traveled portions. The road carried a high proportion of commercial traffic along its entire length. Route 66 was the principal trunk route between Chicago and St. Louis and as part of the National System of Interstate Highways, early 1950s, much of the old 18-foot-wide road was reconstructed as a 24-foot, four-lane highway.

In 1950, Illinois had approximately 125,000 miles of all types of roads and the DOH spent \$27,859,000 in state and federal funds in new construction on the 12,000 mile primary road system. This included 41 miles of concrete pavement, 71 miles of concrete pavement widening, 93 miles of bituminous surfacing, 218 miles of miscellaneous surfacing and reconstruction, 26 new bridges, and 16 highway and railroad grade separations. In addition, the state spent \$18,174,000 for maintenance. During the year various proposals were advanced for increasing state highway revenues, among them an increase in the three cents per gallon gasoline tax, which was one of the five lowest state gas taxes in the nation, and an increase in truck license fees, in which Illinois ranked 36th among the states.¹³⁴

The DOH could not possibly build or repair roads quickly enough, however, to accommodate the demand created by the sheer number of vehicles being produced by the automobile industry which set all-time production records in both 1949 and 1950. Since industry needs were less pressing, manufacturers were able to divert a larger share of available materials to the production of passenger cars during 1949 and 1950: Total 1950 production was 7,987,493 vehicles, of which 6,649,492 were passenger cars; 1,333,258, trucks; and 4,743, motor coaches. The 6,649,492 passenger cars represented an increase of 1,530,000 cars, or 30%, over the 1949 total. Commercial vehicle production

increased by 204,000 units, or 18%. Along with total vehicles produced, the 1950 passenger car total was a new record. However, commercial vehicles fell short of the 1948 record of 1,376,155 units.¹³⁵

The road maintenance, repair, and construction issues faced by the DOH in Illinois mirrored that of the United States in general. No matter how rapidly additional highway mileage was available to motorists, it was insufficient to handle the increased traffic. There was serious congestion and delay on highways in all cities and travel on many sections of main highways between cities was made difficult and dangerous by deficiencies in surface condition, width, grade and curvature. The cost of correcting existing deficiencies was variously estimated at from \$42,000,000,000 to \$47,000,000,000. In a number of states plans for more rapid highway improvement and for increasing funds for highways were debated. In the last half of 1949 and during 1950 ten states increased the rate of tax on gasoline to produce more highway funds.¹³⁶

Highway use, congestion, and public demand for better highways escalated even as various states made improvements. "There was a marked increase in the number of cities constructing expressways to solve their worst traffic problems. Construction of four-lane, divided highways, often with controlled access, was accelerated. Many miles of obsolete two-lane roads were widened and straightened, often by relocation. Building of secondary or farm-to-market roads went forward at a record-breaking pace."¹³⁷

Construction contracts awarded by all state highway departments in the first nine months of 1950 totaled \$1,100,000,000 for 48,800 miles of road, with the expectation that the total for the year would rise to \$1,500,000,000 for 65,000 miles. It was estimated that about 45,000 miles would be completed, not including work done by counties and cities without state or federal assis-

tance.¹³⁸ The federal-aid highway program completed 20,208 miles of new highway and made the following improvements: "On the federal-aid primary system outside cities (principal inter-city highways), 5,914 mi. of highway and 1,163 bridges; on urban federal-aid highways, 779 miles and 353 bridges; and on secondary or farm-to-market roads, 13,515 mi. and 1,631 bridges. Federal-aid funds authorized for the year amounted to \$450,000,000 and work was done at approximately that rate."¹³⁹

Vacationers accounted for an increasing number of automobiles on the road. "By 1950, close to 70,000,000 Americans were contributing annually to the gross national vacation expenditure, estimated at between \$7,000,000,000 and \$12,000,000,000."¹⁴⁰ The travel increase could be attributed to the recently enacted 40-hour work week with an annual paid vacation, a rising standard of living, and the affordability of private passenger cars. "Between 80% and 90% of all vacation travel [was] by means of the automobile."¹⁴¹ The three leading tourist states in 1950 were Florida, California, with about 4,800,000 visitors spending an estimated \$880,000,000, and Michigan. Arizona and New Mexico were other Route 66 states which considered vacation travel one of their three major industries.¹⁴² "About 50% of all vacation trips were taken during the summer months, 25% in autumn, 13% in spring and 12% in winter. The average motoring vacationist traveled 928 mi[les] per trip; in aggregate, motorists spent \$970,000,000 for gasoline, oil and automobile accessories in the course of recreational travels."¹⁴³

During 1950, the DOH "...maintained 14,224.37 miles of rural highways, 1,201 bridges having a length of 100 feet or more, and five movable span bridges over the Illinois River. The cost was \$16,556,971.79. It also maintained 577.13 miles of city streets, beltlines, and bypasses at a cost of \$470,845.17.

Maintenance costs during 1950 exceeded those of 1949, due to generally rising costs and a marked increase in the expense of maintaining the wearing surfaces of pavements.¹⁴⁴

During 1950, contracts for \$13,722,834.53 were awarded for work on the primary system and contracts for \$4,130,080.77 were awarded for the Federal-aid secondary system. Primary highway contracts awarded included "51 per cent for reconstruction, modernization, and widening of existing highways; 30 per cent for pavement rehabilitation; 13 per cent for new highways; 5 per cent for restorations and additions and betterments; and 1 per cent for truck weighing stations."¹⁴⁵ The construction work completed on the primary system consisted of "460.43 miles of surface, including new concrete pavement, bituminous resurfacing, bituminous surface treatments, and new gravel or crushed-stone surfaces....The mileage of highways on which construction was completed consisted of 295.70 miles on the primary system, 164.61 miles [on the] secondary system, and 0.12 miles on other roads."¹⁴⁶

In Springfield, traffic congestion on the old 20-foot pavement of Route 66 continued to be a problem and by 1950 "...the average daily traffic on US 66 south of Springfield ranged from 10,500 vehicles at the south city limit to 6,600 vehicles at the Lake Springfield Bridge." In July of 1951 a contract was awarded for converting the 4.27 miles of existing pavement to a divided four-lane highway with controlled access. The new pavement was to carry two lanes of south-bound traffic and was built west of, and separated from, the existing pavement by a 30-foot central parkway, except in the one-half mile immediately south of Springfield. "On this portion the old pavement [was] abandoned and a new divided four-lane pavement built on relocation to provide better alignment and a channelized intersection for the interchange of traffic between US 66 and City

US 66. Frontage roads [were] constructed on each side of the dual highway to afford access to abutting properties." The cost of the contract was \$789,458.68.¹⁴⁷ Soon, the two northbound lanes around Springfield were widened to 24 feet and surfaced with bituminous concrete and lighting and traffic signals were installed at the intersection of U.S. 66 and City U.S. 66¹⁴⁸

The money that the Illinois Division of Highways was allocated to spend did not come from general taxation, but was provided by license fees and a gasoline tax. The Sixty-seventh General Assembly passed two important bills to increase highway revenue. "Senate Bill 96 substantially increased truck licenses beginning on January 1, 1952. Another, but smaller increase under this bill [became] effective on January 1, 1954. Senate Bill 97 raised the State motor fuel tax from 3 cents per gallon to 4 cents effective August 1, 1951, and...provide[d] for another increase to 5 cents per gallon at the beginning of 1953. Only approximately one-third of motor fuel tax funds [were] available for State primary highways since the counties, municipalities, and townships share[d] in this revenue."¹⁴⁹

The years 1951-52 saw the return of record-breaking highway construction in Illinois when the Division of Highways awarded more than \$44,000,000 in new contracts during 1951. "With one exception, this represented the biggest annual volume in the history of state highway construction. The figure previously was topped only in 1928, when contracts aggregated \$48,000,000 on the old bond issue road system."¹⁵⁰ Illinois experienced another boom in road construction when the figures for 1953 surpassed even those for 1951-52. "An all-time record in construction was established during 1953 when completed work totaled \$83,470,000, or \$12,000,000 more than the comparable expenditure for 1952 and \$36,000,000 more than the previous high mark in 1948."¹⁵¹ In 1953

primary highway construction contracts were awarded, totaling \$46,548,211.64 and \$15,126,914.98 for Federal-aid secondary highway construction. These primary highway awards included: "25 per cent for reconstruction, modernization, and widening existing highways; 16 per cent for converting two-lane pavements to four lanes; 41 per cent for pavement rehabilitation; 13 per cent for new highways; and 5 per cent for restorations and additions and betterments."¹⁵²

In 1953, construction work completed on State highways "...consisted of 1,439.05 miles of surface, including new concrete pavement, bituminous resurfacing, bituminous surface treatments, and new gravel or crushed-stone surfaces.

...The mileage of highways on which construction was completed consisted of 838.82 miles on the primary system, 529.23 miles on the secondary system, and 1.00 mile on other roads."¹⁵³ This year, for the first time, the distribution of motor fuel tax was reversed: the five cents per gallon was allotted 35 per cent to the State for State highway purposes, 32 per cent to the municipalities, 12 per cent to down-state counties, 11 per cent to Cook County, and 10 per cent to townships.¹⁵⁴

Governor William G. Stratton (Republican, 1953-61) aggressively pursued road and bridge building, earning the nickname of "Illinois' Greatest Road Builder." In 1954 a record was set "...when construction expenditures (including payments for right-of-way) totaled \$98,400,000. During 1955, expenditures for construction amounted to \$95,700,000, and based on current revenue estimates, it [was] anticipated that expenditures for construction in 1956 would be about the same as the total in 1955."¹⁵⁵ One of the Stratton administration's accomplishments was to convert Route 66 from a two-lane highway to a divided four-lane expressway...."At the end of 1952, only about 49 miles of four-lane pavement were in service at various locations along the route between Chicago

and St. Louis. During 1953, 1954 and 1955, 154.3 miles of Route US 66 were converted to a four-lane highway.¹⁵⁶ This conversion was accomplished by the construction of two lanes running parallel to the extant pavement, separated from it by a grassy median. Motorists had limited access to the highway as the state constructed both highway and railroad grade separations at dangerous intersections. In 1956, 59 more miles of divided four-lane pavement were completed. Total cost of the contracts awarded on Route US 66 in 1953, 1954, 1955, and 1956 [were] estimated at \$45,400,000.¹⁵⁷

In 1954, primary highway contracts were awarded for construction totaling \$62,977,261.01; Federal-aid secondary highway construction contracts totaled \$8,003,639.76. These awards included: 16 per cent for reconstruction, modernization, and widening existing highways; 12 per cent for converting two-lane pavements to four lanes; 38 per cent for pavement rehabilitation; 27 per cent for new highways; and 7 per cent for restorations, additions and betterments. Actual primary highway construction completed by the DOH in 1954 "...included 154 miles of concrete pavement, 315 miles of bituminous concrete resurfacing on existing concrete pavement, 34 miles of bituminous surface treatments and two miles of untreated gravel or crushed-stone surfaces."¹⁵⁸

During 1955, the primary system contracts were awarded for \$64,395,004.77; those awarded on the Federal-aid secondary system amounted to \$16,078,539.64. Of the total amount awarded, Route 66 received a large share of the money allocated to primary highway contracts, receiving 31 percent of the total annual budget for the purpose of converting it to a divided four-lane pavement, including relocations of the current route. The other 69 percent was divided among all other construction: 25 per cent for reconstruction, modernization, and widening of existing highways, 18 per cent for pavement rehabilitation,

23 per cent for new Federal-aid highways, and 3 per cent for restorations, additions and betterments."¹⁵⁹

The State continued to collect five cents per gallon on motor fuel and the division of disbursements remained the same as in 1953: "35 per cent to the State for State highway purposes, 32 per cent to the municipalities, 12 per cent to down-state counties, 11 per cent to Cook County, and 10 per cent to townships. Consequently almost two-thirds of the motor fuel tax is allotted for county highways, city streets, and local roads."¹⁶⁰

The Replacement Blues: 1956-1977

The seeds of replacement were sown in every new mile of the new four-lane highway. Its very success pointed to the need for a more modern highway system to provide safer, more efficient travel. In 1944, the Federal Aid Highway Act provided for 40,000 miles of primary highways:

Although it was not initially envisioned as being an entirely limited-access system, increasingly congested roadsides made it evident that any substantial improvements would require separating the road proper from its commercial roadside. With its realization prolonged by high construction costs following World War II, the Korean Conflict, and then Congressional debate over its final form, the Interstate Highway Act didn't become law until June, 1956. Under the new law a self-perpetuating National Highway Trust funded by user taxes ranging from gas to truck taxes would underwrite 90% of the construction costs of the new system with the states picking up the other 10%.¹⁶¹

Originally, Illinois highway engineers requested a total allotment of about 3,500 miles on the 42,500 mile nationwide network of expressways.¹⁶² Illinois was eventually allotted 1,625 miles, ranking third in the nation, behind Texas and New York, in total mileage. Later, additional mileage was awarded to Illinois to provide for Interstate 24 in southern Illinois, Interstate 72 between Champaign-Decatur-Springfield, and Interstate 180, a spur off Interstate 80 east of

Princeton."¹⁶³ In the final allocation, Illinois received an additional 1,000 miles, a total of 1,725 miles.¹⁶⁴

As a result of the tremendous growth of motor vehicle ownership and travel after World War II, a serious accident problem faced the nation. The National Safety Council proposed, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower endorsed, a Safe-Driving Day in December of 1954 in an attempt to demonstrate the dramatic reduction of traffic deaths which could be achieved through an awareness campaign. "The decline in deaths achieved on the one day would have amounted to about 6,000 if applied to the entire year."¹⁶⁵ "During the first eight months of 1955, there were 23,470 motor vehicle deaths in the United States, an increase of 5% over the comparable period of 1954. On a mileage basis the traffic accident picture was much more favorable. Mileage was up about 7% resulting in a mileage death rate (deaths per 100,000,000 mi[les]) of about 5.8--a record low for the period."¹⁶⁶

Car production was in full gear in 1955 and was setting records. "As the car makers swung into full production of their 1956 lines in October, it appeared certain that the record total of 6,665,863 achieved in 1950 would be eclipsed early in November and that the 1955 final figure would approach or exceed 8,000,000."¹⁶⁷ It was anticipated that 1,250,000 commercial vehicles (buses and trucks) would be produced, putting the grand total of U.S. vehicle production for the year at more than 9,000,000. "More than 150,000,000 vehicles had been produced by the industry in its 56-year recorded history, about 62,000,000 of which were still in service at the end of 1955."¹⁶⁸ Motor vehicle registrations grew in tandem with automobile production, from 458,377 passenger cars in 1910, when motorists were required to register their vehicles, to 48,323,909 in

1954. The corresponding total of all motor vehicle [bus and truck] registrations rose from 468,500 in 1910 to 57,908,306 in 1954.¹⁶⁹

The early- to mid-1950s saw an increase in driving conveniences and luxuries, such as automatic transmissions, power brakes and steering, air conditioning, power adjusted seats, windows, tubeless tires, and the increased performance available from 8-cylinder engines.

Automatic transmissions were in great demand, with "...69% of the new cars sold [in 1955] being equipped with this feature. Total sales of the 'automatics' increased from 3,200,000 in 1954 to about 5,500,000 in 1955....The automatic transmission, first in the parade of recent developments designed to lighten the driver's work, made its first appearance in the late 1930s. As late as 1949, only one new car out of four was an 'automatic,' but by 1954 the proportion had risen to 58%, and the 69% for 1956 indicated that predictions of 100% automatic transmissions in the future might not be far wrong. Even the Chevrolet-Ford-Plymouth group installed automatic transmissions in more than half of their output. The average for the rest of the industry was close to 90%."¹⁷⁰

Other luxury items were requested during 1955, continuing a trend that had been evident since the end of World War II. These items included power brakes, air conditioning, and power adjusted seats and window lifts. Approximately 24% of new car buyers asked for power brakes and 25% requested power steering, up from 18% and 19% respectively a year earlier. Air conditioning, a relatively recent option, was in great demand. More than 175,000 of the units were installed in new cars purchased during the year, more than triple the 1954 sales of automobile air conditioning. Power adjusted seats and power window lifts were installed in more than 500,000 cars.¹⁷¹

Also, during this time period, demand increased for eight-cylinder engines. In 1940, 32% of new cars produced were eight-cylinder, rising only slightly to 35.7% in 1947. However, both 1954 and 1955 reflected a dramatic post-war demand for more powerful cars. New car sales in 1954 were dominated by eight-cylinder models, with 61% per cent of the market, while 75% of new cars sold in 1955 were eight cylinder.¹⁷² This quest for large, powerful cars would continue unabated until the oil crisis of the 1970s.

Highway construction records were broken in 1955 when the United States anticipated completion of approximately 33,000 miles of principal highways at a cost \$1,532,000,000 and construction of an additional 75,000 miles of local and other roads and streets at a cost of \$1,532,000,000. "More than 80% of the construction on principal highways represented resurfacing and reconstruction of worn-out and obsolete highways.¹⁷³

The annual authorization rate for the federal-aid highway program increased from \$575,000,000 to \$875,000 and because of an early apportionment of the 1956 funds, "...more than 3,500 mi[les] of expressways were completed or under construction in the United States. At mid-year 1,471 mi[les] of toll highways were in service and 1,527 mi[les] were being built; it was estimated that expenditures for these roads would amount to \$2,500,000,000."¹⁷⁴

Vacationers accounted for much of the increased road traffic in 1955. "It was estimated that at least 80,000,000 persons made at least one journey and that their combined expenditures totaled between \$15,000,000,000 and \$20,000,000,000....About 85% of all trips were made by private passenger car."¹⁷⁵

Although most people happily anticipated and whole-heartedly welcomed the ease and convenience of travel on the new interstate system, others were

more skeptical of the impact on their communities or businesses. Early in 1957, a major spokesman for the American Road Builders Association, General Louis J. Prentiss (retired from the Army Corps of Engineers) writing in the organization's monthly magazine, encouraged members to respond to citizens concerns about the Interstate system by mounting a public relations campaign. Although he acknowledged that the Highway Act of 1956 authorizing the Interstate System provided that each state would hold public hearings wherever the route bypassed or went through a community, so that the interests of the local people could be taken into consideration prior to making a final decision on the location, he wrote that the people were "...not entirely aware of their best interests. They do not know for sure just what the new highway will mean to them. That is why those who oppose a proposal usually appear in large numbers and talk longer and louder than do those who favor the project." Prentiss recommended that ""...a softening-up or pre-selling public relations campaign must be waged in those communities before the public hearing is held. The citizenry must know that their gains will offset many-fold the small loss of a few dissenters who for personal reasons resist the proposal."¹⁷⁶

Local citizens were right to be concerned. Replacement of Route 66 meant more than a widening of the road. It meant a realignment and a second bypass of towns and cities. The new, separated limited-access road eliminated entire commercial strips from travelers, requiring businesses to relocate along the new road, rely solely on local business, or to somehow lure traffic off of the interstate, without the use of billboards, which were forbidden along the interstate right-of-way.

The Route 66 Association and local booster groups tried to respond to the plans. Some efforts, such as booklets and postcards equating Route 66 with [I-55], implied that the new road presented a marriage between old

and new. Other efforts, such as the anti-bypass movement sought to mitigate the damage merchants felt a drastic realignment would create by working with engineers to route [I-55] close enough to the towns so that motorists would still use the services they offered.¹⁷⁷

To add insult to injury, Route 66, which had enjoyed a strong identity, would soon be removed from all official maps. When the formerly important highway was referred to at all, it was called "Old Route 66," reduced to the status of frontage road, or worse. In Illinois, the black and white US 66 shield yielded to the red, white and blue Interstate-55 shield.

Regardless of any controversy associated with highway construction, Illinois moved forward with its plans, establishing new records during 1957-1958. "The 1957 program called for total expenditure of \$220,000,000 while the 1958 schedule totaled \$270,400,000 for a two year spread of \$490,400,000."¹⁷⁸ During 1957 Illinois built, widened or reconstructed a total of 837 miles of various types of pavement surfacing under contracts awarded by the DOH. That year, 97 new bridges and 15 grade separation structures were completed, and 30 bridges were widened. When two bridges over the Des Plaines River south of Joliet were completed and opened to traffic, Route 66 from Chicago to St. Louis was considered completely modernized.¹⁷⁹

Highway plans for 1958 emphasized construction of the interstate highway system throughout the state, including continued construction of the interstate route from the Veterans Memorial Bridge at East St. Louis to a junction with US 66 west of Troy, construction of a route from US 66 to a point about eight miles west of Morris, conversion of US 66 to interstate standards by constructing a section from the Will-DuPage county line to the proposed Southwest Expressway in Cook county, and beginning construction work on the Springfield US 66 bypass.¹⁸⁰

Because of Governor Stratton's commitment to road construction, he earned the title of "Illinois' Greatest Road Builder" and the DOH won national recognition for the speed with which the State completed its construction program throughout 1959 and 1960. During Stratton's eight-year administration contracts for construction almost doubled the combined total of all previous administrations in the State's history.¹⁸¹ Between 1913, when the improvement of roads by the State started, through the year 1952 Illinois placed \$851,115,207 worth of work under contract. "In the seven year period since Governor Stratton's inauguration in 1953 through 1959 the State placed \$1,439,089,817 under contract, [W]ith approximately \$200,000,000 worth of construction under schedule for 1960"¹⁸²

Throughout 1960, construction continued to replace Route 66, concentrating on interstate projects that provided usable sections in conjunction with existing highways. Projects that affected Route 66 included further construction on Federal-aid Interstate Route 70 from Veterans Memorial Bridge at East St. Louis to a junction with U.S. 66 west of Troy, continuation of construction of structures on Federal-aid Interstate Route 55 (Springfield Bypass U.S. 66), and conversion of U.S. 66 to interstate standards by further construction from the Tollway in Cook County to Gardner.¹⁸³

Nationwide, during 1961-62, there were more than 70,000,000 motor vehicles in operation and more than 60,000 new and used car dealers. One out of every six businesses in the United States was in the automotive field and one out of every seven Americans was employed because of the automobile.¹⁸⁴ Automobile manufacturers predicted that there would be at least 100,000,000 motor vehicles in operation in the United States by 1970, estimating that the number of registered drivers would climb from 87 million to about 120 million.¹⁸⁵

Illinois sent its share of vehicles onto the road. "Motor travel in Illinois during 1961 exceeded 37 billion vehicular miles which average[d] more than 100 million miles of travel per day. The total mileage for 1962 [was] expected to approach the 40 billion mark in the state. About 4,000,000 passenger vehicles and trucks were licensed in the state. A motor vehicle use study by the Division of Highways in Illinois showed that three out of every four households in the state [had] at least one motor vehicle and 16 per cent [had] two or more automobiles."¹⁸⁶ The study clearly indicated the economic importance of automobiles and the highway system to residents of Illinois, showing that:

...two out of every three persons who travel to work use private automobiles and that 44 per cent of all trips involve earning a living. Only 13 per cent are for social and recreational purposes. Establishing that almost 60 per cent of all automobile travel is done in cities throughout the state which contain less than 20 per cent of the road mileage, the study points up the increasing traffic problems facing Illinois cities.¹⁸⁷

By the close of 1962, engineers of the Illinois Division of Highways expected to open to traffic close to 700 miles of the 1,586 allotted the State on the Interstate system.¹⁸⁸ This included Interstate-55 around Springfield.

To stay on target for timely completion of the interstate system, each state had been asked to have one-half of its Interstate mileage completed by the end of 1964, the half-way mark toward the anticipated 1972 completion of the entire Interstate System. It was anticipated that Illinois would have an additional 100 miles of Interstate completed and opened by the close of 1964, putting Illinois well over the half-way mark in its allocated mileage. "At the start of 1964 Illinois had 711 miles of its portion of the Interstate system open to traffic. An additional 44 miles had been completed, but not opened to traffic, and 77 more miles were under construction."¹⁸⁹

At this time, the DOH in Illinois faced three problems: juggling the completion of the interstate system on schedule, upgrading many inadequate miles of state highway, and relieving urban congestion. The DOH anticipated that more than 20 per cent of the motor vehicle travel in Illinois would use the interstate system, which comprised a little more than one per cent of the state's total road mileage. Thus, it was of great importance not only to stay on schedule but to aim for early completion. The existing state highway system consisted of more than 13,000 miles of rural and 2,000 miles of urban highways, most of which was constructed prior to 1940.¹⁹⁰ Safety experts predicted that the interstate system, in full operation, would save the lives of 5,000 or more motorists annually. They backed their claim with statistics that proved travel was safest on expressways and Interstate routes where access to the highway was controlled.¹⁹¹

In the mid-1960s Illinois rushed to complete mileage allotted on Federal-aid Interstate highways. At the beginning of 1965, 798.5 miles were completed and opened to traffic; in 1966, Illinois neared the 1,000 mile mark of the 1,631 miles of expressways allotted¹⁹² Construction continued on the Interstate throughout the 1960s, however, one year stands out from the others as Illinois spent \$320,000,000 in 1968 for acquisition of right of way and highway construction in the largest program to-date in the history of road building.¹⁹³ By the end of 1968, engineers estimated that Illinois would have about 1,100 miles of interstate highways open to use. Another 253 miles were under construction and engineering or right-of-way acquisition would be authorized on an additional 280 miles. That left only 18 of the 1,642 miles on the interstate system in Illinois in a preliminary status. Thus, Illinois was on target for completion of its portion of the interstate program by the 1972 deadline.

However, by 1968-69, a fourth problem faced the DOH. Added to the

problems encountered in 1964 was a concern about finding adequate revenues to finance the program.¹⁹⁵ Fortunately, the state was about to undergo an unprecedented highway improvement program in the history of Illinois, under the guidance of Governor Richard B. Ogilvie, (Republican, 1969-73). "Valued at \$575.8 million, the 1970 program exceeded by more than \$200 million the previous Illinois road building record established in 1969. Of the total amount \$220.7 million was earmarked for work on interstate highways and \$355.1 million to finance work on non-interstate roads, including \$142 million for projects in Governor Ogilvie's Immediate Action Program to improve old, worn out highways throughout the state."¹⁹⁶

The 1970 resurfacing work alone exceeded by six times the amount accomplished in the 1961 to 1969 period. As part of the resurfacing work, pavements less than 22 feet wide were widened to 24 feet to provide safer highways¹⁹⁷ In February 1970, a 21-mile section of Interstate 74 was opened between Knoxville and Brimfield in the Galesburg area. Now, Illinois had more than 1,200 miles of interstate highways open to traffic and engineers of the Division of Highways expected to open another 100 miles of interstate routes to traffic before the close of the construction season. That brought the completion total to 1,300 miles of the state's total 1,725 mile allotment on the 42,500 nationwide system.¹⁹⁸ The DOH anticipated that most of the construction on the remaining miles of the interstate system in Illinois would be completed by 1975.¹⁹⁹ Some of the major projects affecting Route 66 were underway at the beginning of the 1970 construction season, including a four-mile section of Interstate 55 extending from the Illinois National Guard Depot south of Springfield south to Chatham

Road south of Lake Springfield. This section was completed and opened to traffic late in 1970; the cost was \$5.8 million.²⁰⁰

Even as sections of the road opened up, vehicles streamed out onto them. In 1971 Illinois had about 6,000,000 vehicles registered, including 5,000,000 passenger cars, traveling an estimated 57 billion miles, and getting 12.5 miles per gallon, on average.²⁰¹ Perhaps most telling in this statement is the low gas mileage expected by the average driver. This can be attributed to the larger, gas-guzzling cars which predated the oil crisis of the mid-1970s. The oil crisis resulted in the increased sales of smaller, imported cars, and produced a reaction by American car manufacturers who, for the first time, began to manufacture small cars.

Most significantly, 1972 saw a restructuring of Illinois transportation administration when the Department of Transportation was created by legislative action of the 77th General Assembly. The legislation accomplished two important steps to strengthen the State's transportation systems and activities. It approved \$900 million in bond issues to finance new highway construction, capital expenditures for mass transportation, and development of aviation facilities throughout the State. The Department of Transportation was also formed to unify the State's vital transportation responsibilities, provide for efficient transportation planning, and administer financial matters relating to development of the State's transportation systems.²⁰² To achieve Governor Ogilvie's goals, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) worked to complete the Interstate System, to implement the Immediate Action Program to improve older primary routes, and to get a 1,950 mile highway network supplementing the Interstate system underway.²⁰³

Illinois was a leader in Interstate construction, averaging six percent more pavement completed and opened to traffic than other states:

As 1972 began Illinois had completed and opened to traffic almost 1,400 miles of its total allocation of 1,725 miles on the nationwide 42,500 mile Interstate Highway System. Additional mileage was scheduled to be opened during the year. The Interstate mileage opened to traffic made up more than 81 per cent of the state's total allocation. On a nationwide basis about 75 per cent of the mileage was open to traffic.²⁰⁴

Illinois' Interstate comprised 1,400 miles of the 32,000 total Interstate miles open nationally.²⁰⁵

Although the interstate program was scheduled for completion in 1972, numerous delays and cutbacks in the allocation of federal funds meant that the completion date was set back on several occasions. IDOT anticipated that it might be 1980 before the final sections of the system were completed in Illinois and the United States.²⁰⁶

The Once and Future Road: 1977 to the present

Although construction on the interstates continued and the road was gradually replaced by five different interstates, it wasn't until 1977 that U.S. 66 was officially decommissioned. Since then, many people have attempted to honor the spirit of the old road and to "resurrect" the road and its roadside structures. One of the most successful grassroots efforts has been that of the statewide Route 66 Association of Illinois, formed in 1990. This group of preservationists and educators works to retain the pavement, buildings, and artifacts associated with Route 66 and in the process to preserve an important part of American popular culture, while educating people about the history and meaning of the road. There are many buildings along the road, many of which can be dated from the 1920s through the golden years of the road. Many of these structures have undergone physical alterations and changes in their use; some have remained un-

changed. Both contribute to the cultural landscape that comprises Route 66. It is this roadside architecture that provides the framework for a comprehensive study of Route 66.

NOTES

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CHAPTER IV

FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT: MATERIAL CULTURE MEETS POPULAR CULTURE

It is difficult to imagine a time when America's roads were not clogged with automobiles. Almost before the concrete set up on the new hard roads, Americans piled into their cars, going somewhere--sometimes anywhere. Although early calls for good roads focused on the economic importance of hard-surfaced roads, it soon became apparent that American drivers sought something more, and thus was born the recreational use of the paved roads, as they drove for the pure joy of driving. Poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson anticipated this wide-spread and seemingly uncontrollable urge which continues to consume the American driver: "There are three wants which can never be satisfied; that of the rich wanting more, that of the sick, wanting something different, and that of the traveler, who says, 'anywhere but here.'"¹

The automobile has changed forever the way Americans interact with each other. No longer bound by geographic constraints, drivers seek (and usually find) an adventure each time they start their cars and head out on the road. Indeed, there are apocryphal tales of more than one husband who left home with a shopping list, only to return years later, grocery bag proudly clutched in his arms. There was a time in the not-too-distant past when driving was a joy, valued as much for the personal mobility it provided as for the distances it allowed one

to cover. The development of car culture allows us a unique perspective on our world, from the driver's seat:

In our car we come into contact with every level and aspect of life in this country; there's no place we can't drive to, very little we can't see, or do, from within our automobile. In fact, as we know, the very way America physically looks, the shape and feel of our cities, the layout of our rural communities, the very look and behavior of a neighborhood, is shaped by the car.²

Much has been written about this American obsession with cars, and some attempt has been made to develop psychological profiles of car owners based on make, model, color, size, and shape of the vehicles driven. K.T. Berger, described as a "car biologist," may only have his tongue slightly in cheek when he intones: "Living in America without a car is worse than being single. At this point in our history, the car is practically braided into our genetic code."³ He continues: "Quickly imagine everything you know about a particular person and I bet you will include his or her car. It's who we are; it's how we function; it's more than a convenience, a mere possession, or a symbol of social status or identity."⁴ Berger sees this symbiotic relationship between human and car as having a biological basis, resulting in evolution of a sort:

Our need to move over good distances is part of our innate makeup....Our instincts to hunt, to work, to forage, to shop, to explore, to vacation--all these instincts are incorporated in the basic impulse toward movement. In a classical biological sense, this impulse toward movement is a "force." It's a force that drives us, and in the natural course of human development, it has led to the car. Raised in a world of perpetual motion and gadgetry as we are, the desire to drive is no more unnatural to us than the desire to walk. We used to walk, now we drive. That's evolution.⁵

Berger postulates an evolution that involves a physical and psychic merger between driver and car and suggests a new word for this species: *hucar* (half human, half car):

Cars have become a second skin. When we climb into our cars and cinch ourselves into the seat belts it's as though we're literally putting on our cars, as we would a suit of clothes. The car responds to our every move: its fenders, bumpers, and tires are extensions of our body; it brakes and accelerates and turns as a result of something *we do*, not on its own. Our awareness and experience of driving flow out of a place other than the one reserved for walking or running: we think and act as something different. We *are* different.⁶

When Americans entered the twentieth century, they desired a stage upon which to act out their new-found freedom and mobility; the ability to control their movement and direction contributed to the sense of unrestricted movement and uninhibited freedom that began to permeate American culture. "Driving, for many Americans," according to John Jakle, "became a testing of skill, of finding one's limits in handling the ultimate machine. Automobiling as a sport was often destinationless. The landscapes through which drivers moved meant little. Places could be taken for granted. The only environment that counted was the highway and the automobile itself."⁷

Susan Croce Kelly and Quinta Scott declare that: "The miracle was not the automobile. The miracle of the early twentieth century was the construction of a vast network of highways that gave automobiles someplace to go."⁸ The twentieth century saw a phenomenal growth in the number of hard-surfaced roads as they increased "from about 150,000 miles at the beginning of the twentieth century to almost 700,000 miles in 1930; 1,400,000 miles in 1940; 2,000,000 miles in 1950; and 2,800,000 in 1965."⁹ Automobile manufacturers were keeping pace with paving as "...between 1900 and 1910 motor vehicle production in the United States mounted from 4,000 per annum to 187,000. Total car registrations grew from 8,000 to close to half a million."¹⁰ By 1929 the United States manufactured 85 percent of all motor vehicles built anywhere; 26,500,000 cars, trucks and

buses filled the American road but, as might be expected, fewer new cars were sold during the Depression.¹¹

In an effort to create jobs and put people to work, Work Projects Administration (WPA) projects ensured that highway construction continued at or above the record-setting pace of the 1920s. During World War II, highway construction virtually ceased due to a shortage of both materials and manpower and to the rationing of gasoline, tires, and the unavailability of spare parts; the only vehicles on the road were those considered essential to the war effort. However, the burgeoning economy and the consumer culture that engulfed post-war American society resulted in more private car ownership. The fact that many Americans were, for the first time, enjoying two-week paid vacations, led to an increased use of the roads. "Nineteen fifty-five proved to be a vintage business year for the entire American auto industry and broke all records with production exceeding 9,200,000 vehicles, almost 8,000,000 of which were passenger cars."¹² The Federal Highway Act of 1956 ensured the expansion of highways in the form of interstates. The frantic pace of automobile production and highway construction and repair continues, as Americans continue to seek the unique freedom of movement offered by automobile ownership.

Material Culture

The highways welcomed people with varying motives for traveling. Some traveled to and from work, some sought recreation or a better life, some fled unsuccessful or criminal pasts, and some used the novelty and solitude of the road to "find" themselves. Services grew up along Route 66 to accommodate the motoring public, including gas stations, truck stops, and garages; a wide-range of eating

establishments (cafes, diners, fast-food restaurants, and drive-in restaurants); and a variety of overnight accommodations (camp sites, tourist camps, and motels). In addition, billboards and neon signs sprouted along the way to alert travelers to the necessities and creature comforts available in one town or another. The physical remnants of the road are "material culture," worthy of study. While scholars continue to expand and contract the definition of material culture, anthropologist Melville Herskovits provides this definition of material culture: "...the totality of artifacts in a culture, the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning."¹³

As historians attempt to research, document, analyze, and communicate the past, Thomas Schlereth emphasizes the importance of using artifacts: because they may be the only evidence available; they may be used to supplement written evidence or statistical data, or they may test already established interpretations or newly argued hypotheses about the past.¹⁴ Schlereth defines material culture studies as "...the most generic name to describe the research, writing, teaching, and publication done by individuals who interpret past human activity largely through extant physical evidence."¹⁵

Gas Stations

To the motorist, the highway was more than simply a swath of concrete; it offered a wide variety of services, provided exclusively for the traveler. As Jakle observes, "Well-traveled highways generated new, distinctive landscapes as commercial strips grew in urban areas, spreading cities outward into what had been countryside."¹⁶ The most numerous services encountered by early

motorists were gas stations and garages; they provided the lifeblood of early travel. In the early days, at any rate, gasoline and oil were cheap, practically demanding that people travel.

In The Gas Station in America (1994), John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle define gasoline stations (filling stations or service stations) as "...roadside facilities specially designed to sell gasoline and other closely related products, such as lubricants, tires, and batteries, for the automobile. Many gasoline stations also offer minor repair services, such as motor tuning and tire alignment."¹⁷ The study of gas stations as part of the American landscape is a relatively recent phenomenon. Bruce Lohof finds a number of reasons for learning about them, now and for the future:

As do other examples of the tradition the service station speaks instructively of its intrinsic economy, simplicity and flexibility. And yet the lessons as always are not merely architectural but social and historical. The service station in this higher sense is an index of its culture. The service station's evolution and growth...is a lecture on the growth of mechanization and mobility.¹⁸

There was no attempt to engender brand loyalty to gasoline in the earliest days of motoring; prior to 1900, one station might sell gasoline from several different oil companies. In fact, motor oil was branded before gasoline. It was only when corporations began to establish clear identifiers of their regional and national products and began marketing them with an implicit promise of superior quality to local brands, that consumers began to respond by purchasing one brand over another.¹⁹ "Place-product-packaging was an integral part of corporate advertising campaigns. It was itself an advertising strategy. With the image of a corporation firmly established in chains of look-alike or similar gasoline stations spread across sizable trade territories, customer loyalty was excited through regional and national advertising campaigns."²⁰ One of the largest and best

known was Standard Oil; through 1911, it controlled 85 percent of the nation's total petroleum market. It was not until the breakup of the Standard Oil Trust in 1911 that other brand names and trademarks entered the marketplace.²¹ "After the end of Standard Oil's monopoly, gasoline consumption soared from 25 percent of the petroleum market in 1909 to 85 percent only ten years later. Existing retail outlets, primarily grocery and hardware stores, added gasoline to their inventories, as did the new automobile repair and storage garages."²²

Station owners soon realized that they would be at a great disadvantage unless they aligned themselves with a nationally-known oil company who could afford the advertising necessary to promote brand loyalty in customers, who drove by unknown, unbranded stations to one associated with a big oil company. By linking up with such companies, retailers also could offer free maps to customers and premiums (free dinnerware, glassware, or flatware), or they could distribute trading stamps with purchases. Customers eventually had the option of using a credit card provided by the oil company to purchase gasoline and services at stations nationwide. "To not engage in games and gimmicks was to court permanent market loss to competitors. There were some 3 million credit cards in circulation in 1957, but ten years later Gulf, Shell, Standard Oil of Indiana, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Texaco had outstanding about 10 million credit cards each."²³

The large oil companies dominated gasoline sales by 1920. A survey conducted by S. F. Bowser and Company, a manufacturer of gasoline pumps, found that of gasoline stations along 600 miles of highway in four states, "eighty-two percent of the 719 outlets handled only a single brand of gasoline. There was a gasoline station (with off-street driveways) on average every 0.74 miles, and a

curbside pump (in front of garages and other businesses) on average every 0.46 mile.²⁴ Standard Oil was still a major player as the stations offered diverse services: "Gasolines of the various Standard Oil-descended companies were sold in 42 percent of the locations. Some 37 percent of the total outlets handled food items, 14 percent sold automobile supplies other than greases and lubricants, 8 percent provided repair service, and 6 percent were linked with automobile sales agencies."²⁵

Gasoline taxes increased the amount of money motorists, and ultimately, station owners, had to pay to the state and federal government. "In 1926, gasoline averaged 23.26 cents per gallon, with 2.34 cents going to taxes. In 1933, the price had fallen to 19.64 cents per gallon, but taxes took 5.64 cents. During 1934 and 1935 prices fell to 13 and 14 cents a gallon. Many independents began to mix nontaxable fuels, such as kerosene, naphtha, and furnace oil, into gasoline in order to cut prices further."²⁶

The independent station owners were not completely out of the picture, however, as they attracted customers more interested in cut-rate gasoline than in brand names or premiums offered. Corporations met this challenge by broadening the services offered at individual stations and by offering new products. "Service bays were added to gasoline stations to handle increased repair work. Office spaces were enlarged to accommodate the sale of accessories--tires, batteries, and accessories comprising the so-called TBA line. Emphasis was placed on service and the term 'gasoline station' gave way to 'service station.' Some corporations built large complexes, dubbed 'super service stations,' with large repair, lubricating, and washing floors tied to sales offices."²⁷

During World War II, oil companies temporarily lost their individual iden-

tity as the Petroleum Industry War Council oversaw the pooling and delivery of gasoline "...from bulk plants to the nearest gasoline stations irrespective of brand or company linkages."²⁸ In addition, "Many bulk plants and over one-quarter of all gasoline stations were closed. Retail sales through the war years stood at less than 70 percent of 1941 levels, the result of strict gasoline rationing..."²⁹

America emerged from the war with a new "consumer" mentality and an insatiable demand for automobiles and gasoline. "The number of registered motor vehicles had dropped by some 4 million, down to 30 million during the war. But by 1955 registrations had redoubled. Between 1945 and 1957, the demand for all petroleum products soared some 80 percent."³⁰ The 1950s saw a "...rapid expansion for most petroleum firms. Corporations scrambled to enter new marketing areas and to penetrate more effectively old territories. There came a shift to gasoline stations with larger tank capacities and thus higher potential gallonages. Bulk plants were enlarged in storage capacity and reduced in number to serve larger areas. Companies began transporting gasoline by truck directly from refineries to gasoline stations."³¹

In the 1960s and 70s, "Motor vehicle registration grew by 31 million and with it motor fuel usage by 30 million gallons. Compact cars came to the fore and, although they consumed gasoline more efficiently, they did not represent substantially new engineering."³² Gasoline retailers tried gimmicks, and "driven by massive advertising budgets, made the marketing campaigns of previous decades pale in comparison. In 1955, the industry had spent \$42 million on driveway premiums, but by the late 1960s it was spending \$150 million on trading stamps alone."³³ Self-service gasoline sales had been experimented with as early as the 1930s; by the 1960s, it emerged on a large scale. Motorists who had been used to

having their gasoline pumped, their windshields washed, and their oil checked, now had to perform these services themselves. To add insult to injury, they would soon see gas prices soaring out of control.

A dark cloud waited on the horizon for Americans and their car "habit" with the impending oil crisis of the 1970s. "American corporate share of the world crude oil market, which stood at nearly 60 percent in 1957, would be whittled down to 7 percent by 1982. The United States imported 6 million barrels per day in 1973 (about 1 million barrels coming from Arab sources). Imports supplied approximately 35 percent of the nation's petroleum needs."³⁴ Americans watched anxiously in October of 1973 as "...the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) authorized an embargo of oil shipments to the United States in retaliation for America's military support of Israel. The next day, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed a 70 percent price increase from \$3.01 to \$5.12 per barrel of crude oil. By the end of the year the price had risen to \$11.65, and would continue to soar as high as \$40 before the end of the decade. Shortages plagued American motorists now forced to queue at gasoline stations."³⁵ The 1970s saw the permanent closure of a number of gasoline stations and, although a few new stations opened, they were "...larger in size, engendering higher gallonage and greater cost savings per unit."³⁶

Jakle and Sculle identify nine types of gasoline stations that evolved between the 1920s and the 1990s to serve the needs of the motoring public: the Curbside, the Shed, the House, the House with Canopy, the House with Bays, the Oblong Box, the Small Box, the Small Box with Canopy, and the Canopy and Booth.³⁷ I would add a tenth design for the 1990s, the Mega-Oblong Box with Canopy.

The earliest sites where motorists could purchase gasoline were usually connected to livery stables or general stores; the fuel was stored in barrels, a bucket scooped up the precious liquid, and an attendant or the motorist him/herself poured it through a funnel into the automobile, filling their tank and giving rise to the term "filling station." In an effort to address the communities' and motorists' concerns arising from handling a highly-volatile fuel, as well as the motorists' concern with receiving a full measure, a single pump was installed at the curb in front of the business. In 1905, Mr. S. F. Bowser invented a self-measuring pump with a storage tank separated from the hand pump for safety reasons.³⁸ Thus, the earliest stations literally were Curbside, utilizing the related business for transactions, and requiring no separate building. As early as 1920, many cities cited safety concerns as they passed ordinances closing curbside stations. After that time, the only curbside stations which survived were those operated in rural areas in conjunction with general stores and other roadside businesses.³⁹ Communities and motorists were also concerned about the safety and traffic problems associated with stopping their automobiles at the curb and on the street in order to fill their cars with gas. The Shed was an attempt to address this concern by providing off-street service. These buildings were very small, usually containing only space for an attendant and some storage of lubricating oils, greases and equipment.⁴⁰ Cars were not enclosed, so driving was essentially a fair-weather activity; there was no need to provide shelter for motorists who, more than likely, stored their vehicles during inclement weather anyway.

Both the Curbside and Shed were primarily located in urban areas. By 1925, oil companies began to locate their stations in residential areas; the ideal location was on the corner of two busy streets, ensuring easy access for the maxi-

mum number of motorists. There was some resistance to this movement into neighborhoods and it became evident that whatever stations were built would have to blend into their surroundings. Thus, the next station to evolve was that of the House, built to look like a small house with a low, hip roof.⁴¹ Many were prefabricated, selected from standardized plans. This helped to keep the costs down since with the change of traffic patterns, a station could be disassembled and moved to a new location.⁴² The house usually contained office space and restrooms, although access might be gained to the latter from outside the building, behind a strategically-planted bush. Sometimes a canopy was added to the house, especially in areas of extreme weather conditions, to provide protection for customers and attendants.

By the mid-1920s, most stations had a grease pit and car washing floor, usually a concrete slab on the side of the House. Soon, however, stations added two or more bays to cover this work space, becoming the House with Bays. Some of these additions had pitched roofs to match the style of the house to which they were attached; others simplified the bays, making them flat-roofed boxes.⁴³ By this time period, "there were approximately 15,000 service stations in the United States--an increase of approximately 1,200 stations per year."⁴⁴ The earliest stations were dealer owned, providing flexibility in procurement of petroleum products from one or more oil companies. The number of stations increased rapidly as more and more oil companies began to build their own uniquely-designed stations, leasing them to dealers who were required to sell the company's brand exclusively.

The Depression era changed gas station design forever. In the 1930s, oil companies began to emphasize automobile repair; they needed larger display

areas to sell tires, batteries, and accessories. The hip and gable roofs were replaced by flat roofs as offices enlarged and became integrated with the service bays. One clear indicator of stations built during this time period is the modern, functional look of the Oblong Box, which used more plate glass and less exterior decoration.⁴⁵ At this time, too, oil companies began to modify their stations to ensure customer recognition by sight--a specific silhouette, color, and signage became even more important as companies worked to engender customer loyalty. Prior to 1950, most Oblong Boxes were prefabricated steel covered with porcelain enamel; after 1950 cinder- and concrete-block construction dominated. By 1960, acrylic vinyl and translucent Plexiglas had become popular; after 1960, plastic was used to simulate the natural materials of wood, stone, and brick.⁴⁶

While S. F. Bowser is credited with designing the first pump in 1905, many companies soon would join in manufacturing pumps of various designs and styles. Large oil companies wanted their pumps to "stand out" from those of their competitors. The Gilbert and Barker Manufacturing Company sought to meet this challenge as they designed:

...the globe surmounting the pump as a place for retailer labeling in 1912, [but] the suggestion seems not to have been widely adopted until the late teens and early twenties. Corporation logos silk-screened to the inside of glass globes for protection from weathering, however, became common by the mid-1920s. About 200 gasoline pump manufacturers were in business by 1925. By then the "visible pump" was standard with a glass cylinder atop the pump as guarantor of honest marketing. Fuel pumped into the cylinder with gallon indicator was held in place for customer viewing before being released into the customer's fuel tank.⁴⁷

During the Depression, fuel pumps were redesigned for visual appeal to motorists. "Flashing pump panels, clockface meters, and a bell that sounded after each gallon sold were added for visual and auditory confirmation of an honest sale. Tokeheim Oil Tank and Pump Company took advantage of the pure display value

inherent in these devices and assumed leadership in the pump manufacturing field in the 1930s.⁴⁸

If the station of the 1920s was built to blend in, the 1930s was a time for oil companies to try to stand out from other companies. They were less concerned with fitting into a neighborhood as they scrambled to earn their fair market share. With this constant attempt at one-upsmanship, it is no wonder that the oil companies ran afoul of zoning and planning commissions in the 1960s. In an attempt to appease various local constituencies, oil companies modified the Oblong Box to blend in with their surroundings, adding cupolas and recognizable architectural features of colonial and ranch houses. These "blend in" stations were re-roofed or had a facade added so that they had a house-like appearance. They were much more likely to include brick and cedar shakes than the plastic that other stations might be using at this time.⁴⁹

With the rise of independent stations in the mid- to late-1960s, a new station emerged: the Small Box. Much more closely aligned with the early Shed than the Oblong Box, these space-challenged buildings had room for a small office, an attendant, and restrooms. They made no pretense of servicing cars, selling only gasoline and oil, cigarettes, and soft drinks. And, they offered no promotional gimmicks, credit cards, or premiums.⁵⁰

Even this stripped-down station expanded visually as station owners added canopies over the pumps for the comfort of customers, particularly in areas of extreme weather conditions. The Small Box with Canopy showed some variation as the canopies could be attached to the station, extending up and over the pumps, or could stand alone covering only the pumps.⁵¹

The last type of gas station described by Jakle and Sculle became even more "lean" in design as the Canopy and Booth began to dominate the landscape. By 1970, new gas stations consisted of large canopies, with a small booth, located on an island in the middle of the pumps, housing an attendant and a small office. Restrooms and vending machines were sometimes located in separate, shed-like buildings along the edge of the driveway.⁵²

In the 1990s, the dominant style might best be described as Mega-Oblong Box with Canopy, as large corporations vie for business using large, one-stop markets selling liquor and lottery tickets, and often containing a fast-food facility and an Automated Teller Machine. Many of these stations have a separate, free-standing car wash. A dozen or more pumps huddle under a large, more-than-well-lighted canopy. These pumps squawk directions at customers and accept credit cards; there is no attempt to service vehicles. The Mega Oblong Box has become increasingly popular as EPA regulations requiring removal and replacement of underground tanks have led to the closure of many older stations. Some of the older stations are now abandoned and derelict; some are used for storage and some have a new lease on life as they are reused for everything from dog grooming palaces, to flower shops, to car-rental or used-car lots.

Restaurants

The second most numerous roadside service that evolved and/or was redesigned for motorists' convenience was restaurants; long-distance driving was hard work and motorists had to eat. Some cross-country travelers camped and prepared their own meals; others had no choice but to stop for dinner at sit-down restaurants in downtown areas. During a hard day of driving, however, they had

no desire to delay their trip with the time required to order, be served, and consume a hot meal. At the end of a strenuous day, motorists wanted to avoid the formality of dining in the restaurants available to them. As a response to the large numbers of time-, budget- and comfort-conscious motorists on the new hard roads, the roadside became, according to John Mariani, "saturated, almost overnight, with new kinds of eateries--diners, cafeterias, soda shops, luncheonettes, Automats, barbecue stands, drive-ins, refreshment stands, ice cream parlors, and the new chain restaurants that blossomed during the 1920s and 1930s."⁵³

Probably the restaurant type most closely associated with road food is the drive-in restaurant, evolving in the early 1930s as a quick and easy way for motorists to eat and drink without leaving their cars. The creator of the drive-in, J. G. Kirby, was a Dallas tobacco and candy wholesaler, who, with the help of Dr. Reuben Wright Jackson, designed and opened a drive-in pork barbecue eatery in September of 1921. Called the Pig Stand, it was located on the busy Dallas-Fort Worth Highway.⁵⁴ The term "carhop" was coined to describe the male servers, clad in traditional waiter's garb, who "hopped" on the running boards of cars to take orders, then ran the tickets to the Pig Stand, returning with an armful of paper sacks to speed the hungry motorists on their way. The speed with which carhops completed their task was reflected in the tips they received. Another term which was frequently used to describe the servers was "curbie," in reference to the curb at which cars parked and waited for service.⁵⁵ Much later, female attendants dressed in provocative and/or whimsical uniforms and costumes to attract a different clientele. In many cases the costumes resembled that of a majorette, sporting sequins, a plumed hat, and calf-high boots. Or, the costume might

be fringed, cowgirl style, with a cowboy hat worn rakishly back on the head. Later, carhops would begin to wear what looked like military uniforms, a style that would endure until the end of the drive-in and carhop era. Carhops made good money. "Standard practice for car hops," Jim Heimann notes, "was to work for tips only. This, in effect, made them independent vendors whereby they purchased the food from the restaurant and then re-sold it to the customer."⁵⁶

The second event of 1921 that forever changed the way Americans ate out was the opening of a hamburger stand in Wichita, Kansas, by fry cook Walter Anderson and real estate and insurance man Edgar Waldo "Billy" Ingram. Anderson had perfected a slow-cooking method for preparing a ground beef patty with onions. Anderson and Ingram opened four hamburger stands featuring a small five-cent burger; customers were encouraged to purchase them by the sack full. The physical structure of the building was unusual--giving the impression of a castle. They named the stand "White Castle," white signifying purity and cleanliness, and castle signifying strength, permanence, and stability. They must have done something right since within ten years, the partners had opened 115 units.⁵⁷ The thing customers could count on was the fact that there would be no surprises, no variations, no deviations, no unfamiliar tastes, nothing to disturb one's peace of mind or palate.⁵⁸ Today, this sameness and predictability is both praised and criticized for these characteristics; but as witness to the desires of the American public, fast food restaurants continue to proliferate.

A. H. "Gus" Belt originally opened a small restaurant, called the Shell Inn, in conjunction with the gas station he owned on South Main Street in Normal, Illinois. By 1934, he was working on perfecting the "steakburger," using cuts of T-bone, strip, and sirloin. Belt opened the first Steak 'n Shake drive-in restaurant

at 1219 S. Main Street, in Normal, adjacent to the site of his first restaurant. He appealed to the needs of individual customers by providing four way service: patrons could eat in their cars, at a table in the restaurant, at the counter, or they could get a meal to go. The chain spread throughout the Midwest and became well known for its white-tiled buildings edged in black. The motto "In Sight, it must be Right," referred to the fact that all stages of food preparation were visible to patrons. Michael Karl Witzel explains that, "Spotless kitchens draped in stainless steel were designed in such a manner so that those in the dining room could see grill men frying and shake men mixing. Strategically placed windows allowed customers parked in their cars to view the preparations."⁵⁹ This reassured customers of the overall cleanliness of the restaurant and the safety of consuming food prepared in full view. Curb service was soon introduced and quick, wiry curb attendants literally ran from car door to order window and back to serve sandwiches, chili, and milkshakes on a metal tray which hooked over the car window. This chain of restaurants has proven very successful, primarily in Florida and the Midwest, and is now owned by Consolidated Products, Inc., still preparing favorites "in sight" of customers.

Curb service at drive-in restaurants was a victim of its own success. The easy entrance and exit encouraged teens to drive their own cars or to borrow the family car to cruise through the lot and to park for extended periods of time while waiting for something to happen or for their friends to drive through. This cut down on the number of customers who could be served and, thus, on revenue, as well as the number of families willing to endure the noise and rowdiness of what became a teen social club. Today, of course, we substitute a drive-up speaker and

take-out window for the friendly curb attendants who took our orders at the car door.

The McDonald's chain evolved from the earliest attempts at fast-food technology, designed to increase efficiency, and maximize profits. Few people are alive in the United States today for whom the name, "McDonald's," does not evoke an image of the golden arches. The origin of the restaurant chain, however, begins long before Ray Kroc became associated with it. Just before World War II, two brothers, Richard and Maurice ("Mac") McDonald, opened a drive-in restaurant in San Bernardino, California, featuring "twenty carhops in satin uniforms...on weekend nights, 125 cars touched fenders in the parking lot! By 1948, revenues from the wonder topped \$200,000."⁶⁰ By the end of 1948, the McDonalds introduced the "Speedee System" by firing the carhops and cutting their menu from 25 items to nine, doing away with china and metal flatware, and passing the savings on to their customers. Customers walked up to the service window, ordered the food, and returned to their cars to eat the low-priced fifteen-cent hamburgers (half what they'd previously cost), ten-cent French fries, and twenty-cent milk shakes.⁶¹ By 1952, the brothers were "selling more than a million hamburgers a year, as well as half a million shakes, French fries, and soft drinks each."⁶² Richard McDonald is credited with adding two golden yellow arches to the tiled roof, large windows, and red-and-white horizontal tile building, designed by architect Stanley C. Meston. The brothers also designed their own kitchen to eliminate wasted movement during food preparation.⁶³ Ray Kroc, a milk shake machine distributor, visited the McDonald's restaurant in 1954 and became a franchise agent for the brothers. In addition, he opened his own McDonald's in Des Plaines, Illinois, on April 15, 1955.⁶⁴ "In 1961--the year

McDonald's sold its 500 millionth hamburger--Kroc bought out the McDonald brothers for \$2.7 million..."⁶⁵

Motels

Auto travel was strenuous in the 1920s and 30s and those who ventured more than a day's round trip from home had to have some place to spend the night. Hotels, which were primarily located in the hearts of cities to accommodate those who traveled by train, were not suitable for the automobile traveler. Besides the fact that hotels were primarily in congested business districts or downtowns with limited parking for automobiles, they were sometimes too formal for the cost-conscious automobile traveler who merely required a place to sleep and a meal before continuing his/her trip the next day. Initially, this meant that the traveler was required to bring camping equipment and camp alongside the road, on municipally-owned rights of way or on private property, with or without the owner's permission. This evolved into formal auto camps where municipalities and entrepreneurs provided minimally-improved camping sites at a modest price. The result was a more orderly regulation of campers. "Early automobile travelers, Jakle states, "were satisfied to find roadside lodging under dry cover (a tent in some places), sufficient bedding, bathing facilities, and personal security. The fifty cents to two dollars charged per night for these first commercial lodgings through the 1920s and 1930s was a considerable bargain."⁶⁶ Most sites provided the basics such as running water and firewood and some even provided public toilets and showers. Some campgrounds had amenities that would later be associated with motels--a cafe and gas station, a playground for children, and limited grocery items available for those who planned to cook their own meals or who needed

food for the continued trip. In fact, autocampers took great pride in their thrift and innovation:

Most autocampers cooked bacon and eggs, canned beans, and fried meat and potatoes, supplemented by fresh produce and milk purchased from farmers at cheap prices...The culinary equivalent of camping anywhere was opening a can and eating without elaborate preparation. A can took only a minute to heat up on the car radiator or over a small fire. Bacon and eggs or fried steak took only five minutes.⁶⁷

Those who used the auto camps were sometimes referred to as "tin can" tourists, a reference to the origin of their meals as well as the trash they left behind.

Primitive camping gave way to some roughly-built cabins, to accommodate travelers. In many instances, the buildings were brought to the site to be reused as housing for tourists. Some of these buildings had formerly held farm animals, serving as chicken brooders, for instance, prior to providing an overnight accommodation. This was only one step up from primitive camping but it was a bit more secure in case of inclement weather; some sites even advertised heated cabins.

In addition, some communities had tourist homes which accommodated travelers. These were private homes, providing a bedroom for the night.

Historian Warren James Belasco observes, "Their role increased markedly in the 1930s as hard-pressed families sought new income opportunities. With so many clustered along highways and main streets, tourists could simply drive in and park outside. Most rooms had free linen and a hot shower down the hall."⁶⁸ A forerunner of the recently-popular bed and breakfast, these were often run by respectable, middle-class women who found themselves short of money. Taking in guests allowed them to earn an income while filling the needs of travelers.

Some people even built cabins in their back or side yards as a way to provide rooms and generate income. Although the design of the cabins was individual in nature, built by the owners or a local builder, there was usually no attempt

to provide anything but a purely functional space. Belasco notes that "Many cabins were little more than wooden tents with dirt floors. Autocampers still provided their own cots, chairs, and camp stoves. Other facilities differed little from regular camps: community toilets, showers, and occasionally, a central kitchen."⁶⁹ These free-standing units were box-like with room for a bed, table, and chair. Later, space was provided for a private bathroom but in the earliest days, cabin occupants shared bathroom and shower with the other guests in a public building. Cabin owners, of course, had to provide a parking space for the automobile, usually directly in front of the room. However, some owners built a carport onto the side the cabin; others built their cabins in a row and provided a covered canopy between them. After 1930, attached garages were a popular feature.⁷⁰ Thus, cabin camps became recognizable by their limited variation of layout. These accommodations appealed to travelers because, among other things, the cabin camps were convenient, economical, and private.

While many roadside cabins catered to weary travelers and families, others cashed in on money to be made in "by the hour" rentals. This policy sometimes attracted unsavory characters and travelers were warned to avoid places which encouraged such behavior as "drinking parties...[or]...dance halls of the questionable type...."⁷¹ Some owners blatantly admitted that they catered to such trade realizing that collecting a one-night rental could not compete economically with the multiple rents to be had from couples in search of a temporary "rest" for the night; owners blatantly catered to the "hot pillow trade." Even J. Edgar Hoover condemned the tourist camp industry in 1940, declaring them to be dens of vice and corruption, gathering places for criminals and a base from which gangs operated illegal operations such as marijuana trafficking. As such, the tourist camps

were dangerous to the communities in which they were located, as the temporary residents preyed on fellow motorists and community members alike.⁷²

Next in the evolutionary line came motor courts which were similar to cabin courts but which were built as a single building with a single roof line. These buildings were more likely to include a full restaurant or cafe. These pre-chain, pre-franchise facilities eventually evolved into free-standing motels. These were generally small operations, perhaps 10-20 rooms and a complex which sometimes included a restaurant and gas station. These structures were called auto-tels or mo-tels, a clear indication of the importance of the automobile to their existence. The first use of the term motel, according to motel historian, John Margolis, "was apparently in the name of Arthur Heineman's Milestone Mo-tel, opened in San Luis Obispo, California, in 1926. The word was a contraction of motor and hotel, with motor hotel the implied full form."⁷³ The "Moms" and "Pops" who operated these motels, lived on-site and worked seven days a week, 24 hours a day. In addition to the role of motel clerk, owners had to clean rooms after check out and ready them for the next guests. There were also daily duties such as laundry and bookkeeping and seasonal duties such as landscaping and lawn care or snow removal.

Motels were first located at the edges of towns and were single-story units, providing a bedroom which may have had a kitchenette, bedding, and kitchen utensils. The motel rose in popularity as more and more Americans owned automobiles and used them for trips which required an overnight stay. Paid vacations contributed to the use of highways and, thus, the use of motels. According to Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, "A few of the accoutrements of home, along with much of its sense of privacy, familiarity, and security could be had in a motel. If auto-

mobiles were private containers for movement, motels were places for pause where travelers re energized in order to move on. The motel followed from the automobile as night followed day.⁷⁴

In their 1955 book, Motel, Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro gave practical advice to current and prospective motel owners. They described the motivation of most travelers who stayed at motels at that of a transient, enroute to visit family and friends. They provided a profile of the motel patron as one

...who prefers the motel [and] is willing to unload his own baggage, rather than pay ransom to a bellboy. He does not want to be forced into complete unloading of his car-become-trunk. He does not want to pay extra to have it taken away to a garage. He wants the privilege of nicking his own fenders. And he wants the car ready for a quick and early getaway in the morning. He does not consider it an insult when he is asked to pay his night's lodging in advance. For he knows that this is all that he will be asked to pay; there will be no tipping or extras.⁷⁵

Although Baker and Funaro believed that the motorists' route patterns were predictable, they cited the location of a motel as a very important consideration in serving the travelers' needs. Although the car provided great mobility, flexibility and range,

...the long-distance motorist will in practice follow the best available road, and hesitate to leave it for even a short detour. Consequently, his pattern of movement is actually more predictable than might at first appear. Moreover, the growing network of limited access highways, toll roads, freeways, parkways, etc., which generally provide the most desirable route for fast long-distance traffic, are making the motorist's pattern of movement ever more fixed and evident.⁷⁶

Both siting and motel design became worthy of scientific study of serious use of space:

The complete rental unit plan will usually have to provide space for sleeping and sitting, for a bathroom, for some dressing and storage area, for a carport, and sometimes also for cooking and eating and for sitting outdoors. The designer will normally attempt to have these various areas

overlap and intermingle to some extent, as in any modern house plan, so that there will be an over-all saving of space.⁷⁷

Once a floor plan was decided upon, the builder then had to make decisions about materials to be used for bed and floor coverings, and surfaces such as tables and desks. In 1955, owners were advised to provide a comfortable bed and a good reading light, a night table with a radio, electric alarm clock and a telephone. In addition, there should be a table or desk for writing and a clothes storage area. The owner had to decide whether to install a shower or a tub and shower unit; this decision was not to be lightly made since Baker and Funaro point out that: "In cost per square foot the bathroom represents by far the most expensive part of the rental unit."⁷⁸ A good design separated the toilet and bath from the make-up table and dressing area so that two people could use it at the same time. As late as 1955, architects also kept in mind the possible necessity of converting motel units in case of gasoline rationing due to a future war. If this happened, the motel owner might combine two or more of the one-room units into a single housekeeping apartment for use by defense workers.⁷⁹

In the 1970s, Mom and Pop motels decreased in number: "By 1972 mom-and-pop motels still made up 59 percent of motels, whereas they had represented 98.2 percent in 1948. But they came to provide the least number of units as well as the least-desired form of lodging after 1945. Mom and Pop found themselves victims of the very consumer culture in which their hopes and industry had taken root."⁸⁰ As a response to consumer demand, motels became increasingly affiliated with chains or franchises:

In 1962 fewer than 2 percent of all motel establishments were affiliated with referral and franchise lodging chains. By 1987, however, 64 percent of the country's motels were part of these lodging networks. Chain-affiliated establishments accounted for nearly three-quarters of the total

revenues earned in the lodging industry. More than half of America's motel and hotel rooms were owned or managed by the twenty-five largest lodging chains, the top five chains providing nearly 30 percent of the nation's rooms.⁸¹

Gone were the days of the one-story strip motel where travelers parked at the door and unloaded their trunks directly into the room. From the 1960s to the present, motels have evolved into multi-story, secure buildings with an interior entrance. In fact, consumers have come to rely on standardization. As a Holiday Inn advertising campaign stressed, "At Holiday Inn, the best surprise is no surprise at all."

John A. Jakle describes this change as the common life cycle of a motel:

Motels often experience a common life cycle. Launched optimistically as exciting new investments, in time they fall to owners who manipulate them exclusively as profit-making schemes. When traffic patterns almost invariably shift in the national culture of frenetic automobility, they rush to squeeze out the maximum profits from declining rates in expectation of short-term ownership. Motels that are not abandoned and do not fall into physical disrepair and social reprobation gain new life as housing for the elderly, small office space, or stores. A few invite the respectable, long-term occupancy of general residents. The economic system abhors idleness. Survivors, secured against vandalism, strangely, wait in limbo.⁸²

Some motels also have found a new lease on life as they are converted to efficiency apartments or strip malls, for example. Some motels along Route 66 have found themselves respectable and even "venerable" the second time around, as people specifically travel the road and eschew the chain motels for the "authentic" experience of staying in a Route 66 motel.

Drive-in Theatres

Another easily-recognized roadside structure was the drive-in theatre. The motion picture came into being shortly after the automobile; it was just a matter of time before these two would meet and merge at the local drive-in movie theater.

In 1933, Richard M. Hollingshead, a Camden, New Jersey businessman, was granted patent number 1,909,537 for a Drive-In Theater; later his patent would be declared void since the subject matter itself was determined not to be patentable. This allowed unregulated drive-in movie theaters to spring up around the United States and circumvented royalties for Hollingshead. His initial idea was to supplement slow nights at a gasoline station that he contemplated building. Although he didn't build the station, his drive-in radically altered the American landscape and society.⁸³ In the Midwest, the idea didn't catch on until after World War II and, for obvious reasons, most theaters were located in milder climates to take advantage of a longer operating season.

Drive-ins appealed to large numbers of people, from young couples seeking privacy unavailable elsewhere, to families with small, pajama-clad children, who avoided the cost of a babysitter. While watching a movie, it was possible to dine informally in the car and smokers didn't have to delay oral gratification; the car essentially became the living room, the dining room, and, in some instances, the bedroom.

The drive-in theater owner made it as easy as possible for the customer: patrons purchased a ticket at a drive-up box office; promotions often included "buck" night where all occupants of a vehicle were admitted for \$1. They then drove around to the fan-shaped and angled viewing area. In the earliest days, the sound was blared from multiple speakers behind the screen; patrons had no control over the sound quality or volume. After years of complaints from both patrons and theater neighbors, an adequate sound system, in the form of box speakers, was finally developed by RCA. The movie-goer removed the speaker from the post, checking to see if the sound worked. (In later days, the patron might

have to try two or more before finding a functioning speaker.) Once a working speaker was found, the car was parked on the slight incline facing the screen tower, the speaker was hung on the inside of the car's window, providing sufficient, if somewhat tinny, sound, and the patron settled in. Later, drive-ins used a low-power technology which allowed patrons to tune their radios to an AM station and receive the sound over their own speaker system; this would prove to be too little, too late for drive-ins.

Basic food stands were de rigueur at the drive-in, and intermission always began with showing larger-than-life size treats on the screen, encouraging patrons to purchase snack items at the concession stand, and contributing to the drive-in's profit margin. The food quality varied, along with the service, as long lines of customers waited to order, then carried their purchases in small, cardboard trays back to the car for consumption. Or, they could stake out one of the picnic tables provided and battle flies and mosquitoes while alternately watching the screen and their children' antics on the playground.

The demise of the drive-in theater had as much to do with the quality of the movies it showed in later years as it did with changing American society. By the late 1960s, with competition from television, attendance at drive-in theaters dropped drastically. As American society changed and people were less formal even at indoor theaters, some of the attraction and much of the reason for attending outdoor movies began to wear off. Drive-in theaters tried to survive by showing R- and X-rated films and their reputations sank to an all-time low; long known as "passion pits," the action moved from the back row to the screen, flickering images of flesh against the sky for even the most casual of passersby. This, combined with the lack of sufficient income to maintain and repair drive-in

speakers and screens, discouraged patronage even from those who had previously attended drive-ins on a regular basis. One by one, the drive-ins closed for lack of business. Ironically, today, the 30-40 acres upon which a drive-in sat, have become valuable property as towns grow out to meet the site of the "passion pit." Those owners of the few drive-ins that survive have choices to make: retain the tradition of a family business or sell out to a strip-mall developer for more money than they could possibly make in several life times as a drive-in owner. The choice is almost made for them.

Signs and billboards were ubiquitous and useful artifacts encountered by motorists, a simple form of public communication. "Motorists encountered incredible variety in roadside signage. At first, there was little consistency in official signs regulating traffic, although by World War I most states and provinces had adopted set styles for traffic signs. Standards changed as speed and volume of traffic increased. Generally, signs became simpler and larger."⁸⁴ Such signs alerted motorists to location, destination, and road services. Billboards became the perfect medium for a newly-mobile society as they

...lined the most heavily traveled routes, especially at the fringes of cities. ...Large billboards were not the only commercial messengers by the roadside. Small 'snipe signs' were nailed onto trees, fences, and buildings to advertise soft drinks, cigarettes, motor oil, baking powder, shaving cream. Almost all tourists found such signs of some comfort in the search for roadside services. Some tourists even welcomed them as a form of visual relief, especially on monotonous roads otherwise lacking in visual interest.⁸⁵

Travelers could expect billboard advertisement in the form of paintings on the walls of large buildings and on the walls and roofs of barns. Some of these early attempts at advertising exist as "ghost" signs, faint and fading shadows of the early ads. The Meramec Cavern and Mail Pouch Tobacco barn signs are two

very familiar advertising signs which can still be spotted along the roadside. Criticism of outdoor ads and complaints about the "uglification" of the American landscape led to the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, strictly regulating their use.

A real attention-getter for roadside businesses was the use of neon signs. Neon gas was discovered by Sir William Ramsey in 1898. Luminous tube lighting, as neon is more accurately called, is simply a vacuum glass tube fitted at each end with a metal terminal or electrode. Inside the tube is a small amount of rare gas. Connected to the two electrodes is a source of high-voltage electrical power. In this ideal condition, a neon sign can have a life span of about 30-40 years.

Neon was first introduced into the United States in the early 1920s. By the 1930s virtually every city and town could boast of at least one neon sign. It is ideal for signage because it shows up in even the worst weather; a neon light has five times greater visibility but requires less wattage than an incandescent lamp. Neon signs glowed in the night outside restaurants, motels, and other roadside services. Many factors lead to the decline of the neon sign, including attempts at highway beautification, and sign control ordinances passed by most cities in the 1960s.⁸⁶ Some of these signs have been refurbished, finding a new life as decorative elements in nostalgia-themed establishments. A few, still in place along the road, have been restored to their former glory.

Popular Culture

The material culture left along Route 66 stands as silent witness to the passage of people and time. Gas stations, motels, drive-in movies, and signs are a

few of the physical remnants of an earlier culture. The study of Route 66 and its related phenomena are, by definition, a study in popular culture. When it was originally commissioned in 1926, it would not have qualified as popular culture; pavement is merely a way to move people and freight from one place to the next with the greatest efficiency. It is through the media that the pavement of Route 66 has become impressed with a larger meaning. Through advertising, books, film, music, and television, the road has become an icon, representing many things to many people. Many people now see Route 66 as the essence of everything that is good about America; it represents freedom and limitless travel and opportunities.

In order to develop a comprehensive definition of popular culture, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the individual words. The American College Dictionary defines popular as "pertaining to or representing the common people." Culture is defined as "ways of living built up by human beings, passed from one generation to the next."⁸⁷ Neither of these words alone conveys the meaning achieved when the phrase "popular culture" is used. In order to develop a workable definition, I will rely on the words of Ray B. Browne, considered the "godfather of popular culture," as well as popular culture scholars Marshall W. Fishwick, Russel B. Nye, and to some extent, Herbert J. Gans.

In a 1983 essay addressing the status of popular culture, Lawrence E. Mintz credits Browne with starting the current popular culture movement at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and confers "godfather" status on him in relationship to it. "Beginning in 1967, with the Journal of Popular Culture, Browne has been godfather to a Center for the Study of Popular Culture, the Popular Culture Association, the Popular Press, degree granting programs, jour-

nals and newsletters....⁸⁸ Browne, in a 1969 book introduction, discussed the fact that until the current century the only difference between folk and popular arts was between rural and urban. The wedge which some critics insist has been driven between folk and popular arts and high arts, Browne says, is the result of mass communication.⁸⁹ In a Fall 1995 essay published in the Journal of Popular Culture, Browne says that "Popular Culture (his capitalization) is the voice of the world--spoken in a thousand languages."⁹⁰

Russel B. Nye was one of the most prolific, early writers about popular culture. In an early, undated pamphlet published by the Popular Culture Association. "Notes on a Rationale for Popular Culture," he explained that the current concept of popular culture is a relatively recent development brought about as a consequence of the Industrial and Democratic Revolutions. He gave three reasons for the rise of popular culture:

1. ...the late eighteenth century great explosion of population in Europe and the Americas, and its subsequent concentration into urban or semi-urban units which possessed unifying common social, economic, and cultural characteristics;
2. emergence at about the same time of a middle class, rapidly democratizing society. This mass society had leisure time, money, and cultural unity;
3. modern technology, wholly dependent for its dissemination on modern techniques of duplicating and multiplying materials. Today's mass media have obliterated the boundaries between cultural classes; literacy is no longer a sole prerequisite for cultural diffusion.⁹¹

By 1993, Nye stated that there is such a broad definition of popular culture, and because it permeates our society, it is difficult to describe:

Popular culture...is everywhere about us like the air--in advertising, recreation, print, film, music, and in those other elements that surround our lives. It depends on a mass audience for its existence and on the mass media for its dissemination. The people who create popular culture for sale

in a competitive market therefore must have something to say that will reflect the values, concerns, and myths of society, or society will not buy what they produce.⁹²

In Why Pop? A Conversation about Popular Culture with John Cawelti (1969), Nye also developed a method of recognizing those activities that are considered popular culture. These identifiers are especially important when relating popular culture to the study of Route 66:

1. It must be open and available to more than a specific class: educational, economic, social, etc. Restrictions are imposed from the inside, not the outside, on the grounds of interest, competencies, etc. (An example might be fox hunting and rabbit hunting.)
2. It must not be specifically work-related, i.e., not primarily to make a living. (The auto mechanic, for example, may race stocks, but so may the non-auto mechanic. The necessary skills are not specifically job-related.)
3. It is primarily a leisure-time activity, done by choice rather than necessity, willingly, for enjoyment or [for] some degree of self-fulfillment. (There is a distinction between what people do when they're not fighting for survival or avoiding pain--and what they do for the purposes of play.)
4. It must have general social as well as group approval, usually within relatively narrow parameters. (A group whose leisure time activity is dynamiting fish, or collecting pornography, or stealing hubcaps, does not qualify as popular culture. These may be available to all, self-fulfilling, and not work-related, but they lack general approval.)⁹³

Marshall W. Fishwick, in his 1974 book, Parameters of Popular Culture, generally agrees with the definitions of other writers about popular culture, defining it as:

...those works and events (both artistic and commercial) which are designed for mass consumption and the taste of the majority. Entertainment is the key, and money is the spur. The word 'mass,' linked to media like television, radio, film, and records, is often carried over to the audience. The tacit assumption is that popular (or mass) culture reflects the values and aspirations of Everyman.⁹⁴

Herbert J. Gans defines mass or popular culture as "symbolic products used

by the uncultured majority."⁹⁵ This seems a rather pejorative way to look at the movement since he is, in effect, denying culture to the majority. He does, however, make a case for cultural democracy. It is possible, he believes, for high culture and popular culture to coexist and people have the right to choose which culture they prefer.⁹⁶

While early critics of popular culture studies questioned its validity, by 1983 it had become clear that the study of popular culture occupied an increasingly important place in academia. Mintz identified the problem for the 1980s as "...not how to justify this activity as worthwhile, but how to avoid being intimidated by its richness."⁹⁷ Perhaps the critics' concern had more to do with the changing model of the scholar. This evolution from "...the scholar as 'expert' whose knowledge of a field is complete and stored in his head is giving way to a new model of the researchers who know where and how to get information and how to employ new intellectual systems to understand and to use the information."⁹⁸ Mintz describes the new popular culture studies as demanding "a more complex reading of the text and artifacts...Popular culture is not a thing or entity; it is a process involving those who bring it into being, those who are responsible for its being available and those who use it...."⁹⁹

Ray B. Browne chastises those who call for a one-size-fits-all theory and methodology for Popular Culture Studies. In a 1995 essay, appearing in the Journal of Popular Culture, Browne discusses the future of Popular Culture Studies. He compares popular culture to family dynasties that take

...three generations to go from rags to riches and back to rags" and claims that "academic ideas and organizations go through three states before they wither and fade away or continue to transform themselves with the needs of their undertaking. Surely Popular Culture Studies, the Journal of Popular Culture, and the Popular Culture Association should take caution

and learn from the lessons of history. The three stages are revolution, conformity, and bureaucracy (ossification and decline).¹⁰⁰

Browne seems secure in his assertion that: "...I think we need not worry about going back to scholarly rags in the next generation. In fact, our wardrobe grows richer and more varied every day."¹⁰¹ Browne makes a strong statement when he declares that "Popular Culture is the voice of this world, spoken in a thousand languages. Popular Culture Studies are therefore the New Humanities, intended to take up all the subjects singly and collectively and bring some order and understanding to the seeming chaos."¹⁰² And, Browne has the last word as he declares about popular culture that:

In the broadest sense, the term, over which we have shed so much sweat and blood, is the language of the land. It occurs in all the media, and without any self-consciousness: people no longer put quotation marks around it, or even explain what it means. Generally, except for journalistic brevity the term *pop* is giving way to the more dignified word *popular*.¹⁰³

Popular Culture and Route 66

Route 66. The name rolls easily off the tongue and conjures up different images for different people. For those who remember the terrible days of the Great Depression, the road may represent a flight to the west by defeated people, in search of any work to be had, desperately trying to escape extreme poverty. For others, Route 66 brings memories of a two-lane highway full of station wagons loaded with happy families headed to the west coast, a magical destination with limitless possibilities. For most people, Route 66 has become a symbol of the ultimate travel experience, something so uniquely American and individualistic and yet capable of being shared cross culturally. There are other highways of equal importance in the development of America, others which are older and as

scenic as Route 66, yet this highway seems to represent the uniquely American feeling of complete freedom and adventures to be had on the open road. How did this highway come to occupy such a prominent place in American popular culture? Are we merely nostalgic for a simpler time, when mom and pop gas stations and restaurants dominated the roadside and corporations had yet to establish the cookie cutter blandness of fast food along impersonal interstates? Do we want to relive the time when the pace seemed a little slower and talking with a stranger along the road was the way you found out about the weather you were likely to encounter or road repairs which might delay your journey?

Americans typically do not spend time in deep and serious reflection about their motives; they are action-oriented, too busy "doing" to give much thought to the reasons why. Thus, it is difficult to speculate about the reasons Route 66 has become an icon. But, talk with anyone who has ever traveled Route 66 and you will detect pride of ownership, pleasure in a shared experience. The road belongs to everyone and traveling it has become a rite of passage, something to be experienced before being allowed into the inner circle of those who have "gone before."

When Route 66 was proposed and built, it would not have qualified as popular culture. Indeed, the term did not even exist. But it has transcended its original purpose and with the closing of the last section of the road in 1984, it has been elevated to icon status. Pavement only allows one to get from one place to another with minimal inconvenience and in optimum conditions and is not capable itself of being designated "popular culture." People provide the meanings necessary for popular culture to exist. What is remarkable about Route 66 are the layers of meaning which have been imbedded into its surface. It has transcended

its original purpose and has become a metaphor, representing many things to many people: America itself, freedom, a simpler way of life, everything that is good about America and its people, adventure, the ultimate traveling experience, etc. How did this road acquire these characteristics? Possibly with the consent of the majority of people who have traveled the road and experienced one or more of these things as well as by people who have experienced these things vicariously through popular culture.

Route 66 fits perfectly within the definition provided by Russel B. Nye for qualification of popular culture status: Study of and enjoyment of Route 66 is open to all classes, and restrictions are imposed from the inside, on the grounds of interest; it is not specifically work-related; it is primarily a leisure-time activity, done by choice rather than necessity, willingly, for enjoyment or [for] some degree of self-fulfillment; and, especially in recent years, it has general social as well as group approval.¹⁰⁴

Perhaps the major difference between Route 66 and other roads is the popular culture associated with it which continues to keep it alive in imagination and dreams. The road has been immortalized in print, film, literature, music, advertising, and television, permeating how we perceive not only Route 66, but ourselves, and how we are perceived by others. Through the quirky Burma Shave and painted barn signs, John Steinbeck's book, The Grapes of Wrath (1939), and the film based on it, the song "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," by Bobby Troup, covered by numerous others, and the 1960s television series, "Route 66," we have managed to create a living, breathing highway which refuses to die.

One important early advertising effort that quickly became associated with Route 66 was that of the Burma Shave Company which, in the late 1920s, adver-

tised its brushless shaving cream by the unique marketing technique of placing a set of six rhyming 1' x 3' signs at 100-foot intervals along Route 66 and other highways. They were designed to be read for 18 seconds each while traveling 35 miles per hour. The literary quality varied, but they were generally light-hearted and corny, utilizing folk humor and wit. For almost 40 years, 7,000 sets or 42,000 individual signs were posted between Maine and Texas. Contests were held beginning in the early 1930s, with a prize of \$100 for a rhyme selected for use by Burma Shave.¹⁰⁵ This literary form has imprinted itself in the American consciousness. It would be hard to find anyone who traveled Route 66 between the early 1930s and the early 1960s who doesn't remember Burma Shave signs. Many travelers can still quote their favorite sets. In the summer of 1997, Burma-Shave tried to make a comeback as its parent company, the American Safety Razor Company, heralded a new line of Burma-Shave products. The company launched television ads and erected signs using some of the old rhymes while adding new ones to the mix. A company spokesperson admitted to capitalizing on the nostalgia induced by Burma-Shave's relationship to the road: "The target audience...is men 45 years and older who make \$75,000 a year. They are the guys who were children when they first saw the Burma-Shave signs...It was a time of happy memories, family vacations and playing games in the back of the car, trying to guess what the next line would be."¹⁰⁶ A television commercial developed by the company's ad agency, shown on ESPN or CNN, appealed to this target group by showing a couple driving past the following set of new signs: "You don't have a care/You don't have a worry/You've reached a point/Where you don't/Have to hurry/Burma-Shave."¹⁰⁷ (See Appendix D.)

Another advertising effort which became an icon was the Meramec

Cavern signs painted on barns along well-traveled roads. "There were once 350 barns in America whose roofs or sides carried the simple, black-and-white message: 'Meramec Caverns, Stanton, MO' (the red and yellow colors and the highway numbers were added in later years). Most signs were in the Midwest and the South. Illinois alone had 95 barn signs, of which nine were along Route 66."¹⁰⁸ In 1933, in the middle of the Great Depression, Lester Dill opened Meramec Caverns, adjacent to the new Meramec State Park in Stanton, Missouri. Jim Gauer has been the official sign painter since 1956. A 1994 magazine article describes the tools required to paint a barn: "...200 gallons of paint, 300 feet of hose and an air compressor. One sign takes between five and ten gallons of paint, depending on its size. To reach the signs, Jim carries two ladders, including a 36-footer."¹⁰⁹ The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 has had a detrimental effect on the barn signs. The cavern is still open but fewer and fewer signs remain to point the way. "The old signs were grandfathered in by the law, but that has been no guarantee of longevity. When a tornado or other natural disaster takes an old barn, a new barn can go up, but not with a Meramec sign on its roof. State departments of transportation even get federal money to buy barns and other 'non-conforming' signs and take them down. It is still strictly legal for Meramec to paint a new sign today. It just can't be visible to folks driving by."¹¹⁰

The Grapes of Wrath, published in 1939, won a Pulitzer Prize for author John Steinbeck, and gave us the Joad family and their desperate migration along Route 66 from Oklahoma to California in search of employment. He describes Route 66 to the reader as

...the main migrant road. 66--the long concrete path across the country, waving gently up and down on the map, from the Mississippi to Bakersfield--over the red lands and the gray lands, twisting up into the mountains, crossing the Divide and down into the bright and terrible

desert, and across the desert to the mountains again, and into the rich California valleys.¹¹¹

Steinbeck vividly portrays the desperate situation of the Joads and others as he describes the road as

...the path of a people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land, from the desert's slow northward invasion, from the twisting winds that howl up out of Texas, from the floods that bring no richness to the land and steal what little richness is there. From all of these the people are in flight, and they come into 66 from the tributary side roads, from the wagon tracks and the rutted country roads. 66 is the mother road, the road of flight.¹¹²

It is probably the movie based on the novel, however, that has fused the image of the fictional Joad family with that of the very real Depression. The John Ford directed movie prominently featured Route 66, presenting the road as one of the main characters. Both the book and the film were criticized for their harsh depiction of Depression-era America but both provided a realistic portrayal of the experiences of many nameless, faceless others who traveled the road in search of salvation for themselves and their families.

Immediately after World War II, Route 66 experienced a heyday as ex-GIs returned and used the route in a westward migration to plentiful jobs in California. Bobby Troup was among those who traveled to California as he and his first wife, Cynthia, drove a 1941 Buick on a ten-day trek. Along the way, Cynthia suggested the catchy title and Bobby wrote the words to the famous "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," a lyrical travelogue of the road. Soon after their arrival in Hollywood, the song was recorded by Nat "King" Cole and became an American classic.¹¹³ The song has since been covered by a diverse group of artists, including the Rolling Stones, Asleep at the Wheel, Perry Como, Buckwheat Zydeco, and, in the footsteps of her father, Natalie Cole. (See Appendix C for an updated list of those who have recorded the song.) The song

continues to be popular and most people who travel Route 66 have at least heard the song; many people know some, if not all, of the words. It has become a form of a quest for travelers who take pride in the fact that they have visited each of the towns mentioned in the song. And, many international visitors mention that their interest in the road began when they heard the song on the radio and were intrigued enough to seek information about traveling the road in person. The song seems to provide both the vicarious experience of traveling the road and to create the desire to do so.

Television profoundly affected Americans in the 1950s as Route 66 saw even more use by travelers who took to the road for vacations during these prosperous and consumer-oriented times. Americans were encouraged, if not required, to "See the USA in their Chevrolet," and other automobile ads promoted the idea of traveling freely and roaming afar, in some cases, aimlessly, in search of adventure. Perhaps the television series, "Route 66" best illustrates this theme. In the early 1960s, Sterling Silliphant produced a television series featuring two young men who traveled around America in a Corvette, looking for adventure. Silliphant chose not to use Troup's song as a theme but commissioned Nelson Riddle to write an instrumental, "Route 66," which made it onto the Hit Parade. Although the series only aired from 1960-64 and very few of the episodes were actually shot along Route 66, Tod and Buz can still be seen cruising around in a 1960s America, seemingly ageless, courtesy of syndication and video.¹¹⁴ There was a short-lived attempt to revive the series in 1993, when NBC produced an hour-long show by the same name, featuring two young men who emulated the original; it was a commercial failure.

Originally proposed during President Eisenhower's administration, the

Federal Highway Act of 1956 took five different interstates to replace Route 66: Interstate 55 from Chicago to St. Louis, Interstate 44 from St. Louis to Oklahoma City, Interstate 40 from Oklahoma City to Barstow, Interstate 15 from Barstow to San Bernardino, and Interstate 10 from San Bernardino to Santa Monica. The last stretch of Route 66 was finally bypassed in 1984 near Williams, Arizona, by a section of I-40. This, however, was not the demise of Route 66. It appears that the way to ensure that a road will have a second life is to decommission it. Declaring the road "dead," it seems, brings a deeply-felt and emotional response from those who remember it, either from traveling it or from experiencing it vicariously through popular culture. A road that provides its own popular culture will not easily disappear.

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CHAPTER V

A LOCAL HISTORY FRAMEWORK: ORAL HISTORY AND IMAGES

In order to conduct a study of Route 66, one must depend upon local history sources, allowing them to serve as the umbrella under which to organize the project. The recollections of eyewitnesses to events, collected in oral histories, provide vital information, usually missing in written historical accounts. Images, in the form of photographs and postcards, provide visual clues to help elucidate the topic. Both oral history accounts and images provide breadth and depth to the topic of Route 66.

Local History

It is impossible to separate location from history. For too long, local history, also referred to as community or nearby history, was relegated to second-class (or worse) status among historians. With few exceptions, local history was considered to have been compiled and written by naive and incompetent people, for whom recounting names and numbers was the only goal of their less-than-academic writing. According to Fay D. Metcalf and Matthew T. Downey, authors of the text, Using Local History in the Classroom, "A great deal of local history has been written over the years that has little redeeming social or intellectual value....Too often, amateur local historians drone on for hundreds and hundreds

of pages, providing neither analysis nor interpretation.¹ And, for good measure, writers of local history might throw in an unsubstantiated "fact" or blithely and unquestioningly repeat a flattering story about a leading citizen, combining myth and conjecture in equal parts, allowing it to pass into local lore as undisputed fact. Particularly suspect were worshipful biographies of early local leaders in which unsupported tales of "derring do" were allowed to pass into oral tradition as fact. Some early practitioners did some real damage to the field of history, but also allow a look at their value system and the importance they attached to place of origin. It is very important to point out, however, that early collections of local history can help us understand the time in which it was collected as well as what was important to the society at the time. From these collections, an academic rigor and professionalism unknown to earlier local historians has evolved. Thus, early local history practitioners have had a vital part in preserving the past. The artifacts and documents they collected can now be examined under rigorous, academic standards by historians who critically weigh evidence, analyze, and interpret the past, setting it into a broader historical context.

Perhaps the most useful way to view the importance of local history to the larger context of American history is that of an English local history specialist, H.P.R. Finberg, who sees history as a series of concentric circles, moving from the innermost circle of family outward to the community, state, nation, and world. He declares that all of history is a set of perfect circles, each affected by the circles which surround it and vice versa; none of the circles is any less important because of its size, since they are all perfect circles: "Each [circle]," Finberg states, "requires to be studied with constant reference to the one outside it; but the inner rings are not the less perfect circles for being wholly surrounded and enclosed by

the outer."² Understood in this manner, the importance of each circle is easily understood, as its influence spreads both outward and inward.

Of course, history does not exist in a vacuum. As David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, co-authors of Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You, state:

A much better appreciation of any particular subject can be attained by considering related matters, both the history of comparable phenomena and simultaneous developments in other areas which may affect the object of interest...any historian of the nearby past is wise to consider the questions, methods, and insights of other historians concerned with related times or topics. As a result, some of the links between the personal and the commonplace, the particular and the universal, may become evident.³

As early as 1885, Herbert Baxter Adams was an advocate for studying community history, in order to interest students in a topic, and to enable them to connect what they discovered locally to the larger world.⁴ Adams was a professor at Johns Hopkins University and a former school teacher who wrote one of the first teaching methods books. Curriculum reformers of the 1890s tried to introduce the "source method" into public schools, teaching students to use primary sources to study local history, with only limited success. Metcalf and Downey indicate that these reformers were unsuccessful, in part because of the resistance of main-stream historians.⁵ It wasn't until after World War II that local history was again vigorously advocated and a limited number of schools began to implement the study of local history as a viable, legitimate method of organizing "larger" historical events into manageable and more easily accessible areas. This second wave of reform was again met with little enthusiasm because of resistance from the history profession who saw the study of local history as a compilation of facts and data by amateurs and antiquarians, who made no attempt at analysis or synthesis.

In preparing their text, Kyvig and Marty were:

...conscious of the distinctions frequently drawn between amateur and professional historians. The conventional wisdom says that amateurs rework the local past, while professionals are more concerned with national and world history...the concerns of amateurs are relatively unimportant and frequently too personal to be taken seriously; professionals work on important issues with a sense of detachment and clinical skills that deserves respect; amateurs are driven by nostalgia, professionals by a use termed cosmic in character and part of a universal language.⁶

The concern of historians was understandable and not without merit, according to Metcalf and Downey: "The major and most serious reservation that historians have had about local history is the ease with which it becomes either parochial or filiopietistic [ancestor worship]."⁷ They describe the pitfalls that teachers of local history must avoid:

...the celebration of locality, ethnicity, or family, indulged in more for therapeutic purposes than for the purpose of historical understanding.... [Local history] does seem to contain elements of nostalgic retreat from that larger, national community to which we belong toward a simpler and partly mythical past in which local communities played a larger role in people's lives.⁸

They further acknowledge that "Local history in the classroom is as susceptible to irrelevance and distortion as local history published in books. It can be put to uses that have no intellectual value and that misrepresent the historical truth."⁹ And, they admit, "Local history activities and projects do have a tendency to become narrow and parochial...when any historical event is viewed in isolation, it is essentially meaningless."¹⁰ It is necessary and possible, Metcalf and Downey say, to guard against parochialism and filiopietism while conducting local history studies by applying the same rigorous historical standards as one would in any other study: "The only certain formula for avoiding ancestor worship is to make sure that every local history investigation is governed by that spirit of critical

mindedness and intellectual honesty central to any kind of scholarly endeavor."¹¹

Some of the data that has been collected and continues to be collected might be considered worthless. However, the purposes to which the collections are put and the conclusions drawn may be entirely different than the intended purposes. The endless lists of names, dates, and places can now be analyzed by rigorous historical application of new quantitative methods to provide new qualitative understanding of the past. By questioning the sources, one can arrive at conclusions that will stand up to the scrutiny of the most demanding scholar.

A very important reason to study local history is that it provides a good foundation for future history studies. Kyvig and Marty use the term "traces" to describe resources available to historians:

Traces are the remains, tracks, marks, records, remnants, relics, and footprints of events. Historians need to know how to find the traces, how to sort them out, how to establish their authenticity, credibility, and importance, and how to assemble them to reconstruct events.¹²

For ease in sorting out events, the traces have been divided into nonhistorical and historical categories:

...Nonhistorical traces are those that historians regard as no use in probing or reconstructing events of the past...Without the ability and willingness to draw distinctions and make selections, a would be historian is paralyzed. If everything is pertinent to a story, it is almost as if nothing is. Selecting historical traces for their authenticity, reliability, accuracy, credibility, and usefulness in relation to the topic under consideration is the most important task we must face after choosing a topic for research. Dismissing nonhistorical traces allows us to proceed with our work.¹³

The historical traces are further divided into four categories: immaterial, material, written, and representational. "Immaterial traces are intangible but clearly apparent remnants from the past, such as institutions, customs, traditions, beliefs, principles, practices, superstitions, legends, and language. The history we study--that

is, the past as it has been processed by historians--is itself an immaterial trace.¹⁴

The easier-to-grasp material traces:

...consist of objects, things, artifacts of the past, products of human doings. In the sense that they are the culmination of a series of activities, they are themselves events. Their sale or exchange is an event which might leave another trace, such as a bill of sale or a title. Some material traces are still in use, even though they may be 'antiquated.' ...Buildings and landscapes, for example, are material remains of events and sequences of events. So are such things as tools, machinery, vehicles, paintings, sculpture, clothing, and furniture.¹⁵

"Written traces," according to Kyvig and Marty, "come in many varieties.

Some may be handwritten, such as letters, diaries, journals, and manuscripts.

Newspapers, books, magazines, and pamphlets are printed traces. Some may be partly printed and partly handwritten, such as immigration papers, birth and marriage certificates, report cards, and business and financial forms. Sometimes written traces are a part of material ones, such as inscriptions on tombstones, engravings on jewelry, and labels on clothing.¹⁶

The fourth kind of trace, representational, is "...both a real thing, having tangible, sensory presence, and representation of something else."¹⁷ A photograph is an example of this:

It is itself a trace, and it captures and preserves other traces... Representational traces are also found in ballads, folksongs, and folktales. They are immaterial in one sense, but they are perceived sensorily, capable of being written down or captured on tape or disc recordings. Like photographs, they convey information, ideas, or sentiments; they are of inherent interest, and at the same time they represent something else.¹⁸

Metcalf and Downey emphasize the use of local history primary sources to teach social history, believing that it "...has added still other dimensions of meaning, bringing questions of social structure and social processes more sharply into focus."¹⁹ The pair make a valid point when they argue for the use of local history as a means to learn about issues on a larger scale. The study of local history,

while being of interest to residents of an area, also helps them connect to the larger world and helps them fit themselves within a meaningful framework. Understanding the past can help bind the members of a community together, help them to understand the present, and help them to make informed decisions about the future. By placing themselves in this larger context, individuals and communities gain an understanding that as human beings we are more similar than dissimilar. This feeling of connection and continuity makes for good citizens, of the community and of the world:

This new social history--or 'history from the bottom up,' as it is sometimes called--represents both a methodological and philosophical break from traditional historiography. It is a deliberate attempt to shift the traditional focus of historical investigation from the influential elite to the ordinary Americans who did not 'make history' in the traditional sense. The new approach has been able to bring these faceless Americans into sharper perspective by utilizing masses of quantifiable data.²⁰

To study social history, students should research such diverse institutions and social constructs as public schools, social structure and social mobility, social geography, and ethnic history.²¹ Other recommended sources include written records, people, and material culture. The written records may be difficult to find since there has been no standard method for storing records and the researcher may be required to search everything from attics to public agencies, local and state libraries, historical societies, and the files of local historians. Some sources worth consulting include village, city and county histories, state or regional histories, WPA (Work Projects Administration) American Guide Series and county surveys, explorers and travelers' accounts, novels and short stories, business histories and anniversary booklets, club yearbooks and school annuals, public school records, city and household directories, business directories, and telephone books, local newspapers, town, city, and county records, state and federal census

records, maps and bird's-eye views, lithographs, prints and photographs, diaries, letters, journals, and genealogies, broadsides, ephemera, and memorabilia, and people.²² Tangible artifacts are particularly helpful in conveying to students a "...time period and the ideas, assumptions and attitudes of the people who fabricated them."²³ These artifacts are especially useful since written records reflecting the life experience of most people are nearly non-existent:

Introducing history into the curriculum helps to redress a serious imbalance in the way history has traditionally been taught...The everyday experiences of ordinary men, women, and children in countless towns and neighborhoods also helped give shape to the past...Students seem to find that kind of history interesting. It is less remote from their own interests and concerns, more concrete, easier to grasp.²⁴

Metcalf and Downey recommend studying folklore, cultural geography, historical and industrial archaeology, environmental and social psychology, and museum holdings. Some of the material culture to be studied includes the physical city, neighborhoods, buildings as both structures and architecture, and cemeteries.²⁵

The reason for organizing a local history course is that it "...provides training in critical thinking, and it is an avenue into larger areas of historical experience...local history helps students understand larger historical developments and that it is useful for developing skills."²⁶ Kyvig and Marty expand upon the idea of local or nearby history as a way for students to develop critical thinking skills and further declare that:

...beyond the serious importance of examining the past of our immediate world to extend memory, understand the contemporary situation, sharpen social, political, and economic generalizations, or facilitate intelligent policy making, nearby history has a further intangible appeal which may be its most notable quality. The emotional rewards of learning about a past which has mainly and directly affected one's own life cannot be duplicated by any other type of historical inquiry.²⁷

To develop an effective local history course, it is important that it function as a research seminar, with class time spent "...teaching students how to use bibliographies and indexes before they go to the library...Class time is also needed to give students individual attention as they define their research topics and develop a strategy for research."²⁸ Much of the responsibility for student success in a course such as this falls to the teacher who must devote sufficient time in order to help students "...with writing skills when [they] submit the early drafts of their written reports."²⁹ It is recommended that a local history course be a one-semester elective and that it "...provide sufficient time for the students to learn about the history of the community in some breadth while also investigating one topic in depth."³⁰ On the other hand, if local history is to be used as a component of another course, the principal purpose..."is to illustrate some aspect of course content. Teachers have discovered a great variety of ways in which local history can be used for that purpose. The most obvious use is as a source of illustrations for courses in United States history or state history."³¹

The organization of a local history course or a component of local history to be used in another course requires thorough and extensive preparation on the part of the teacher. Some steps teachers must take to prepare the course include:

1. Providing a comprehensive list of topics for student research.
2. Providing a comprehensive list of community resources, including the type of historical information that students can expect to find in libraries, museums, local historical societies, and public agencies.
3. Displaying projects completed by previous students, to serve as models, along with a thorough discussion of the pitfalls that other students have fallen into.
4. Planning an attractive culminating activity as a goal toward which students can work and as a device for sustaining motivation. These activities include presentations, local history displays, markers for local historical

buildings, self-guided historical walking tours, or historical markers for hiking trails, all of which make a lasting contribution to the community.³²

In order to facilitate student success in the course, the teacher must survey and collect local resources, visit a number of agencies to inventory their holdings, set up an arrangement for students to visit or do research at the agency, and provide an introductory unit to give breadth and provide an overview, introducing students to potentially interesting aspects of the community's history. Teachers are also responsible for establishing the proper learning environment for a local history course.³³

There are some inherent difficulties in evaluating a local history course. As in other courses, students must have a clear idea of the requirements of project work. Once goals have been defined, a teacher would use a checklist to evaluate students' work. This checklist should resemble a college course syllabus in that it would list possible points and provide a space to indicate points earned, as well as a grading scale. Some division of points between mechanics and quality of content is recommended in order to fairly evaluate student work. In an attempt to gather as much information as possible, teachers must develop a form for evaluating students' written projects and organize it so that students are required to make periodic reports describing their progress on the project. The students' reports would describe:

...the progress made toward a definition of the project's contents, describe the methods of research they have used, list materials examined to that point, and note difficulties encountered in finding source materials and methods used to overcome these difficulties. After teachers have read these progress reports, they will know which students need more individual guidance and which students need only a suggestion or two to keep them working productively.³⁴

There is a subjective element to evaluating a local history project of which teachers must be aware:

There is also the question of how much each student learned in the process of doing it....One should be equally concerned with individual students' growth. How one deals with that issue depends a good deal upon the level and the capacity of the students in the particular course and upon the teacher's own goals and philosophy of teaching.³⁵

Oral History

One important component of any local history project is the collection of oral testimony. Metcalf and Downey propose that the "...most important source for working with local history projects is the people of the community itself. The recent past can be studied through interviews with parents, neighbors, and 'old-timers' in the community."³⁶ The collection of oral testimony is, indeed, an important component of any local history project and adds an important dimension to any project.

In pre-literate cultures, an oral tradition of storytelling and epic poems arose as a means of preserving history beyond living memory. Eventually, these oral accounts were written down and are now studied by linguists and historians, among others. These written accounts of oral sources have become oral documents:

It may appear unusual to refer to something as an 'oral document,' but only until one recalls that 'document' derives from the Latin *docere*, 'to teach.' Not everything that teaches by words is written down, at least not in its original form.³⁷

Great care must be exercised in studying oral sources and historians are particularly reluctant to accept them as an accurate accounting of the time period they purport to record. John Tosh, author of The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History, says that "The fact

that oral techniques have made any headway at all among professional historians is due almost entirely to the reticence of conventional written sources on a number of areas which are now engaging scholarly attention.³⁸ Tosh believes that oral sources merit more attention than they currently receive, and although they share the strengths and weaknesses of written sources, they are: "...particularly appropriate materials for the exercise of the historian's traditional critical skills. And they have the future attraction of affording a unique insight into the formation of popular historical consciousness--something which should be of abiding interest to all historians."³⁹

"Oral history" is a relatively recent term coined to describe a systematic gathering of eyewitness accounts, usually by means of tape recording. While practitioners offer differing and sometimes conflicting definitions of oral history, all emphasize that it is a method of collecting history. Elizabeth Bryant Merrill, an anthropology professor who set up the Idaho Oral History Center under the Idaho State Historical Society in 1978, quite correctly states that oral history is easier to talk about than to define. After much discussion at the first national colloquium on oral history in 1966, participants provided this all-encompassing definition:

...a systematic collection, arrangement, preservation, and publication (in the sense of making generally available) or recorded verbatim accounts and opinions of people who were witnesses to or participants in events likely to interest future scholars. It is basically an information-collecting technique, the results of which may be found in loosely coherent collections of tapes and typewritten transcripts or in use as source material for a film documentary or other published work.⁴⁰

Cullom Davis, Kathryn Back and Kay MacLean, co-authors of Oral History: From Tape to Type, define oral history as:

...nothing more than a branch of historical research...the offspring of history's most ancient technique and its most modern technology. Its technique is the collection of eyewitness accounts to history; the ancient Greek historians did this more than two thousand years ago. Its technology, the compact tape recorder, is as modern as the space age.⁴¹

Donald Jay Cavallini, a high school history teacher from Lexington, Illinois, concludes in his 1979 Doctor of Arts dissertation entitled, Using Oral History in College and High School: a Model for Studying the Great Depression, that: "...oral history needs to be seen first in its restricted sense as a methodology in which the spoken word creates oral evidence or verbal testimony. This, in turn, is utilized as primary source material in the form of transcribed documentation.⁴²

Tosh adds that oral tradition and oral history both give voice to those who have been left out of traditional written historical accounts and describes oral history as "...a new *technique*--a means of bringing into play new sources to be evaluated alongside written sources and material remains."⁴³ He further states that oral history provides a democratic alternative to more elite historical sources, saying that "Ordinary people are offered not only a place in history, but a role in the *production* of historical knowledge with important political implications."⁴⁴

Even advocates of using oral history to recover otherwise lost accounts, have to admit that there are problems with acceptance of individual stories as accurate depictions of the past. According to Tosh, "It is naive to suppose that the testimony represents a pure distillation of past experience, for in an interview each party is affected by the other....historians must accept responsibility for their share in creating new evidence."⁴⁵ He further declares that removing the historian from the interview does not guarantee an accurate account since even the informants' memories are filtered, and possibly contaminated, by other sources or by

nostalgia: "Whatever the evidence it rests on, the notion of a direct encounter with the past is an illusion, but perhaps nowhere more than in the case of testimony from hindsight. The 'voice of the past' is inescapably the voice of the present too."⁴⁶

Cavallini agrees that oral evidence is:

...as useful as any other type of evidence, so long as it is subjected to the same critical evaluation as are other sources. No oral memoir should be accepted alone, even as written memoirs in general must be substantiated by corroborating evidence. The human memory is subject to lapses, mistakes, doubts, and misrepresentations.⁴⁷

The rationale for using oral history in a high school or introductory college level American history course is the same as that for using local history: immediate engagement of student interest and skill-building in the areas of research, writing, critical-thinking, and public speaking. Acquiring the skills necessary to complete successfully an oral history project provides students with skills that will be useful to them in the future. A study completed by Cavallini revealed that students who were trained in oral history collection felt that they had increased their skill levels in researching, writing, and analysis. If a class presentation is required, summarizing the results of the oral history project, the additional benefit of public speaking can be added to the list of skills gained or strengthened. In addition, students learn to use primary sources to check the veracity of the narrator's story.

On a more personal level, many students "bond" with the narrator, who is usually an older person. This can be a life-changing experience for both parties. The student becomes more empathetic and begins to understand how both major and minor historical events affect the lives of ordinary people, themselves included. Students, especially at the introductory level, need to be engaged in

learning, not passive receptors of information. Oral history provides a way for them to feel immediate connection with the past, as they talk with eyewitnesses to history. Cavallini's study revealed that both high school and college-age students felt that oral history humanized what had been traditional textbook learning. It is important for students to observe the human condition, to see human foibles, frailties, weaknesses, bad decisions, regrets and struggles, just as it is important to relate the strengths, joys, and triumphs of humans. To track the life course allows others to understand the importance of cyclic events and life passages. As Kyvig and Marty point out:

...because the persons interviewed are often elderly, interviewers develop a sense that time is running out. Libraries and archives will always be there, but people die. Someone has said that doing oral history is like climbing a down escalator--there is no time to rest. Enthusiasm for oral history is fine, but what really counts is the potential of oral history for accomplishment, for a contribution to the historical record.⁴⁸

If done well, oral interviews will add to our knowledge of history as well as reveal the commonality of human existence. The project will go beyond its original intention and allow individuals and communities to bond together. For instance, one student who took a course on Route 66 interviewed her father, an Illinois State policeman who spent his entire 27-year career on Route 66. During the interview, she gained an insight into his life as well as her own:

...I learned about Route 66, but I discovered something about myself as well....I know how much his life was affected by his experiences on Route 66. As a child, I remember my father being gone on Sundays, holidays, at night, and in bad weather. I know about the nights he didn't sleep because he had witnessed a bad accident. And now, I understand.⁴⁹

There is an additional benefit for the teacher; Cavallini described a personal satisfaction in working with students on oral history projects:

One of the most satisfying results of conducting oral history projects for me has been to witness the incredible growth of students from the

beginning of the project to the end. There is often a dramatic change from a student who is "sort of interested" in history to one who wants to continue the conversation with additional interviewees to discover the human aspect behind historical events.⁵⁰

In seeking to balance oral history with other teaching/learning techniques, it is important to remember that oral history is a method for collecting history, not the subject area of the course. It cannot dominate the course but must be integrated with other teaching/learning techniques. Every student can benefit from acquiring interviewing skills, so one class period should be devoted to a workshop on oral history, allowing students to self-select whether they want to participate in this project or a more traditional one, such as writing a paper. It would be unreasonable to expect everyone to want to participate, and since Cavallini's study also found a higher success rate with students who self-select the option of an oral-history project, it may be wise to offer it as an option, an alternative to a more traditional project. Some students who might not understand what is involved in oral history may be convinced to try it, once they are exposed to a general overview and some training. Expectations for the oral history component must be clearly communicated to the students, including appropriate topics for the interviews, how many interviews must be completed, how and when tapes must be transcribed, how to edit the transcriptions, and how the final product will be shared with the class and/or community. Students who participate must understand that they have a responsibility to collect this oral history, consider raw data, and to transform it into a usable form for future researchers.

Additional time must be set aside to meet with students outside of class to check the progress of their projects. The biggest problem for the teacher, of course, is the extensive amount of time involved in working individually with

these students, helping them select an interviewee, listening to tapes, reading the drafts, and coaching them through the project. Many students do not realize how difficult it is to conduct a meaningful interview, transcribe it, check it for accuracy, and then to write a paper, setting the interview into historical context.

- . The complexity of the process requires that the teacher serve as coach. Students are learning by experience and in some instances they will try and fail. The best thing the teacher can do for them is to provide the materials and information they need and then to encourage them by coaching them along.

The collection of oral histories associated with Route 66, the stories of the people who lived or worked along the road, as well as those who traveled it for work or vacation, gives a voice to the crumbling pavement and the falling-down or demolished buildings which hugged the highway in earlier days. Also, this collection allows others to vicariously experience the road and provides a record for those who will be around in the very distant future when the road may be completely gone. The collection must be subjected to internal and external criticism by verification of the narrative in written sources as well as by visual verification of sites.

As an oral history course component is designed, a teacher should refer to a standard work on the topic, choosing from among such classics as Willa K. Baum's Oral History for the Local Historical Society, Cullom Davis, Kathryn Back, and Kay MacLean's Oral History: From Tape to Type, or Elizabeth Bryant Merrill's Oral History Guide. In general, an oral history project will begin to evolve as the teacher addresses such areas as topic, organization, and available/accessible resources.

The topic is the first consideration. One must consider the importance of

that topic to the local community. How strong is the connection and what can be learned from it? How does it fit into the larger picture? Who are the potential interviewees and how will they be affected? Are there sufficient other primary sources to support the veracity of the interviewees?

While one can organize an oral history project in several ways, Route 66 should be treated as a single, topical theme, combining interviews that are autobiographical, supplementary (filling in gaps in information that may or may not be documented elsewhere), and process oriented (describing change or development in people and places).

What resources are accessible/available to support the oral history? Many of these resources would have been uncovered during a search for local history resources. It is important to seek the support of the local community for the project, involving the local historical society, if possible, in order to insure a successful project. The teacher must envision the project from beginning to finished product. How will the interviews be used? Where will they be stored? Who will have access to them? For what purpose? How will the results be shared? How will costs be covered? (Some costs to consider include tape recorders, tapes, Xeroxing, and postage.)

Once these questions have been answered, the teacher will prepare a timeline in order to ensure adherence to a schedule. If the topic is memorable or important enough, the local media will likely advertise the project. Some other questions to consider: Who will answer queries and compile the list of potential interviewees? Who will coordinate and match up interviewer and narrator? While many students may have family members, neighbors, or friends who might be interviewed, the teacher should be prepared to assign a narrator to a student.

It is important to match the interviewer to the narrator. Also, to get the broadest range of experiences, it is important that the pool be expanded to get different viewpoints on places or events. If interviewing one gender, age group, race, etc., the results will be skewed. Interviewing the restaurant owner, waitresses, cooks, dishwashers, delivery people, and customers provides a more complete and honest story than limiting the interview to the owner alone. Interviewing the restaurant's competitors will also help to understand the significance of the topic. There is considerable debate about the extent to which age/experience influences the interview. If the interviewer is well prepared and has done the "homework," a good interview will result. Probably the most important traits of a good interviewer are sensitivity, flexibility, and empathy. If he/she can establish a rapport with the narrator, an excellent interview will result. Sometimes the difference in age and experience creates better interviews because the narrator does not assume that the interviewer understands what is being described, so gives much more technical detail or description. On the other hand, the narrator may not reveal more personal information because there is no shared background.

Before students select or are assigned a narrator, they must have a sufficient amount of information about the topic as well as training on interviewing in general. Part of this training involves assembling a list of questions to elicit answers to a common set of questions (see Appendix C). This makes the oral history project more meaningful and potentially verifiable. For instance, if no primary sources exist, the weight of similar answers can serve as "truth." The questions depend, of course, on the purpose of the research. Ideally, students will exhibit empathy, curiosity, and knowledge of the topic as they ask questions of respondents.

Of course, it is crucial that students use a tape recorder during the interview and that they practice using it. While some students may feel that they already know how to operate a tape recorder, it is vital that they practice under the guidance of the teacher before they conduct their first interview. Metcalf and Downey recommend dividing the class into groups of three, sharing one cassette recorder among them and that the teacher:

...have one person interview another, while the third member of the team observes the process and jots down notes on good techniques for asking questions. Each person should have an opportunity to be interviewed, to interview, and to act as critic. The teacher should listen to the tapes and pick out sections for the class to listen to the next day. The teacher should make critical comments...⁵¹

And, students must obtain permission from the narrator to use the recorded information. They should bring a release form to the interview, explain its purpose, and ask the narrator to sign it. No interviews can be conducted without a signed release form (see Appendix C).

The reality is that some students will bring back useless tapes. The teacher needs to monitor the project by listening to portions of the tapes. Ideally, each student would interview the narrator more than once to fill in gaps. And, of course, each student will audit their own tapes, making notes and corrections, and a list of follow-up questions to ask the narrator.

Because students will be transcribing their own tapes, teacher-prepared guidelines for the production of the manuscript are very important. The tapes are not a finished product and students need to learn not only how to audit and transcribe their tapes, but how to edit and index the tapes, insuring that they will be accessible to others. Once the mechanical jobs of auditing and transcribing are completed, students must begin to analyze and interpret the tapes in light of what

they have learned about the topic. As Tosh says, "Transcriptions of testimonies...are not 'history,' but raw material for the writing of history. Like some other primary sources, they often display evocative and expressive qualities which make them well worth reading for themselves, but they are no substitute for the work of historical interpretation."⁵²

The importance of using oral history in teaching is best illustrated by Cavallini, whose study of the use of oral history to teach college and high school classes about The Great Depression allowed him to evaluate student knowledge about the 1930s and oral history by both traditional and nontraditional tests, while also measuring the effectiveness of the students' experience with oral history as a teaching strategy. A post-project survey revealed statistical data about students' reaction to the use of oral history to promote greater interest in history, improve selected skills, and to present different approaches to history. An individual interview was conducted with each college student who participated in the project in order to expand upon student perceptions by drawing them out verbally and allowing them to explain in detail precisely what they experienced while undertaking the oral history project. High school students were interviewed as a group to determine their perceptions.

Some conclusions drawn by Cavallini from the surveys were that, first, the oral history project was more successful in terms of increasing student interest in history on the college level than on the high school level. Cavallini explains some of the difference with the fact that the college students volunteered for the project; the high school students did not. Thus, he concluded that oral history is most effective when students volunteer for the experience.⁵³ Second, that for some students, oral history can sharpen some skills important in the study of his-

tory. Seventy-five percent of the college students in Cavallini's study listed their top three skill improvements in the areas of research, writing, critical thinking, oral communication, data collecting, data interpretation, listening, and inductive thinking. Seventy-five percent of the high school students listed their top three skill improvements in the same areas, with the exception of writing. According to the survey, high school students believed that oral history could only moderately improve those skills.⁵⁴ And, third, that oral history can affect some students by encouraging those behaviors that can assist in making history a more affective or emotional experience. By bringing students face to face with their relatives or friends who lived through the Great Depression, almost all students believed that this experience helped them to better understand the place of the ordinary man in history. Most also indicated it allowed the opportunity to see their relatives or friends as they were, and to see themselves as they will become. Even those high school students who were most critical of oral history believed that it added a human dimension to their study of the past.⁵⁵ The study concluded that:

For teachers hoping to find oral history as a magical panacea for apathetic students, this study has indicated both its strengths and weaknesses. It appears to be no worse or better than other types of methods used by classroom teachers. It is, however, one more tool in the arsenal, and may for some bring needed variety into otherwise routine teaching patterns.⁵⁶

Assessing student success in the use of oral history in a course can be difficult, although there are some objective standards to be applied. If exams are written ones, a teacher might expect that those who are completing an oral history would have more insights into a specific topic. A teacher will expect to use the same rigorous academic requirements for grading the end project as for any assignment: The interview will contain information of some historical significance, it will be typed and free of typographical errors, the student will verify

statements made by the interviewee and footnote areas which need clarification, and the student will analyze the interview, setting it into historical context. There might also be some minimum length requirement. These are all clear-cut expectations, communicated to the students in written form at the time of the assignment.

In addition, there will be an assessment, wherein the teacher will determine the amount learned by the student in the process of completing the assignment, how hard the student worked to conduct the interview and to transcribe it, how much extra effort might have been put into the project, etc. It is also possible to compare the interviews against the projects undertaken by other class members. Also, Cavallini suggests one-on-one interviews with students to assess their level of understanding and to provide additional information to factor into the evaluation. Through these methods, a teacher will determine whether the oral history aspects of the course have been successful in helping students learn about a specific topic, while gaining personal insights.

Images

Students will want to include images to supplement and enhance the oral histories they have collected. Metcalf and Downey praise the use of photographs because:

They can recreate the atmosphere of a main street, show the manner in which tasks were performed at some time in the past, illustrate particular architectural detail, indicate styles of clothing in a particular era; and, when used in conjunction with other sources, they may even be used to illustrate social class or sex roles at some particular time or place.⁵⁷

While early practitioners of photography encouraged the concept of the photograph as a mirror of reality, James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, co-authors of After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection, point out that the

mirror is silvered on both sides, revealing both the subject and the viewer: "On the surface, certainly, photographs provide the historian with a wealth of concrete detail. In that sense they do convey the reality of a situation with some objectivity."⁵⁸ Sometimes the choice of what images were produced says as much about the values of a society and the photographer as it does about the actual image. The image is a "frozen moment," and does not portray what happened both immediately before and immediately after the picture was taken, so should not be mistaken for real life.

Nor should one mistake the photograph for the thing it represents, according to Fred Ritchin, author of In Our Own Image: The Coming Revolution in Photography.

The common error is to confuse, in the static and apparent certitude of visual realism, the representation with the thing itself: the frozen instant, the slice from space with the more fluid, interconnected life to which it merely refers....And despite the photograph's promising profusion of visual details, it remains bound to represent that which exists in discrete, decontextualized moments. The photographer is assured only of snaring momentary appearances; a situation's essence, its deeper meanings, may remain elusive.⁵⁹

Davidson and Lytle comment on the reaction of early observers of a seemingly completely objective medium: "So faithful was the camera that people often commented that the photographic image recorded the original with an exactness "equal to nature itself." Indeed, reproductions were so faithful to the original that close observation with a magnifying glass often revealed details in the photograph which had been invisible to the naked eye.⁶⁰

But, how much credibility can one give this "mirror with a memory"? Ritchin's assertion that researchers need to guard against confusing photography with truth effectively conveys the major problem encountered when attempting

to use photographs as historical evidence. He rightly points out that it is difficult to bring sufficient objectivity to this pervasive medium:

One hundred fifty years after its invention, photography is nearly omnipresent, informing virtually every arena of human existence, comparable to the printing press in its impact on the ways in which we view the world. Moreover, due to its mechanical, apparently objective nature and to its near replication of human sight, we often confuse photography with truth: "The camera does not lie."⁶¹

Davidson and Lytle expand upon the problem of equating photographs with reality, saying:

...it is important to explore more precisely the limits of the camera's seeming ability to record "reality" in its pure and undoctored state. Any modern amateur photographer who is familiar with the features of a single-lens reflex camera will appreciate immediately how deceptive the camera's claim to mirroring reality can be. Merely to sight through the viewfinder reminds us that every photograph creates its own frame, including some objects and excluding others. The problem of selection of evidence, which is at the heart of the historian's task, remains of paramount importance in photography.⁶²

Ritchin is concerned about future uses of technology which include the creation and manipulation of images by the use of computers. He gives the example of composite photos printed by newspapers and magazines to make interesting but false or misleading images. Ritchin worries that this practice will continue to escalate and degenerate at the same time, making one believe that "all photographs lie" as opposed to the previous idea that "photos don't lie." He is concerned about safeguarding the integrity of the photograph, a concern that is ironic as he simultaneously declares that "...photography is already as unreliable as any other medium, even without the addition of electronic technology."⁶³

In a 1978 article entitled, "Do Photographs Tell the Truth?", Howard Becker provokes thought about whether photographs can be used to arrive at truth. He says that one can not ask the question, "Is this photograph true?" but

can only address questions to the photograph and extract verbal statements from it to determine the meaning, if any, of what one is being told the truth about and what that truth is:

...The first step in deciding whether pictures tell the truth, then, is to decide what truth they assert by seeing what answers we can extract from them to questions either we or they have suggested. This way of looking at things emphasizes that pictures do not simply make assertions, but rather that we interact with them in order to arrive at conclusions--in short, that we play an active role in the process....⁶⁴

One must keep in mind that only partial information will be gleaned from the image and that one can not expect to gain truth from a single image: "We generally decide important questions on the basis of an assessment of all kinds of evidence, balancing all the fragments of fact we can assemble to arrive at the best judgment we can make about a proposition. Those fragments will ordinarily include other photographs besides the one we are working with, and a variety of textual materials: documents, interviews, and so on."⁶⁵ And, different sectors of society require various standards of proof of validity:

Some groups are more skeptical than others, in part because of professional biases (i.e., psychologists are probably more skeptical than anthropologists)....Further, we demand a higher standard of proof if we are going to base some important action on our conclusion. (One reason we are less skeptical about photographic materials may be that we seldom take any important action on their basis.)⁶⁶

Even when one believes that he/she knows what is being shown, it is still not possible to assert the complete truth of the photograph. New evidence, in the form of additional photos, documents or verbal testimony may surface later to refute the "truth" one has elicited from the photo. This problem, of course, is not unique to photographs; all new information causes a constant reinterpretation of history and a redefinition of what may have been considered undisputed truth. For example, something which has been "fact" for many years can be proven false

with the discovery of a previously hidden or missing document. And, the "truth" one is able to discover may not be the whole truth "...pictures often contain a wealth of information [and] it is not surprising that more than one true thing can be said on the basis of a single image. When this happens, it only means that we are asking different questions which deserve and get different answers."⁶⁷

Once one has considered the above restrictions, one can begin to think about how to tell whether the assertion drawn from a photograph is true. And then one can decide:

...whether a proposition is true (or, perhaps better, whether one ought to believe it) by thinking explicitly of all the reasons one might have to doubt it, and then seeing whether the available evidence requires that those doubts be taken seriously. If the evidence suggests that we need not entertain these doubts, that these threats to the validity of our area are not sound, then we can accept the proposition as true.⁶⁸

Becker echoes RITCHIN's concern about photographs that have been altered by use of computer or other means. Any alteration threatens the validity of the conclusion based on photographic evidence; viewers are becoming increasingly suspicious that the photograph they are observing has been "faked" or tampered with by retouching the photograph, by production of a composite photograph using multiple negatives, or even that the people or things have been deliberately arranged in the photograph by the photographer or someone else in order to influence or manipulate the viewer.⁶⁹ Another way the photograph might be called into question involves a desire to make art on the part of the photographer, who may alter, select, or exclude details that interfere with the artist's conception or aesthetic values.⁷⁰ Or, the photographer may have inadequately sampled the events that are being depicted, often a matter of insufficient access to the events. To determine if this was the case, it is important to ask these questions, "Can we get access to the full range of relevant activities and, if we

can, on what terms can that access be negotiated? What do we have to give in return?"⁷¹ An inadequate sample can lead one to feel a serious threat to the validity of the assertion one wants to make based on the photographs. Sometimes, too, one may suspect that some form of censorship has prevented the viewing of additional photographs, and that the ones that have been withheld would have changed our view substantially and perhaps even altered our conclusions:

...There will always be reasons good enough for some people not to present all the material they might, whether the reasons are matters of ethics, politics, or just good taste. In seeing what we can conclude, what questions we can answer plausibly, we must take into account whatever we know or suspect about the degree to which this kind of selection occurred.⁷²

While acknowledging that there is a limit to what photographs can tell one, students must be taught how to analyze or "read" the photographs, extracting the information they need for their study. Kyvig and Marty, Metcalf and Downey, and Robert Levine all offer guidelines for reading photographs, suggesting an intensive scrutiny of them, combined with a practical knowledge of the technical aspects which have been used to produce the images. They each stress reading beyond the photograph, trying to resurrect what might lie outside the frame of the photograph, and speculate about the motives of the photographer.

As Kyvig and Marty pointed out in their references to local history, a photograph is both a tangible, sensory presence, and a representation of something else. They emphasize that these visual traces are important to present a full and accurate portrayal of history, offering

...good testament to changes through the years--in the skyline, the landscape, or the texture of a neighborhood, for example, or in the appearance of individuals....They reveal customs, preferences, and styles and permit us to observe celebrations of past holidays and special occasions; to watch people at work, at play, and at home; to see how they courted, married, raised children and moved them through the rites of passage, and coped with stress, disruption, hardship, and the changing seasons of their lives....Such documents offer evidence of communities taking shape, institutions forming and growing, agencies serving and struggling, and businesses prospering and declining.⁷³

The meaning of a photograph depends on how the document was created and how it is presented for viewing. The nature of photographs depends on how their creators make them. But, once they are made, they become independent documents, existing on their own, but susceptible to various uses by their viewers. Just as visual documents that represent the same subject but were produced by different creators are quite different, so a single document may be seen differently by the persons who look at it.⁷⁴

A photograph is first and foremost a mediated document. "The relationship between the media and the user is a unique one, for the media function to a large extent mechanically. The camera is thus both something more and something less to the photographer than the brush to the painter. The film is something more and something less than clay to the sculptor...."⁷⁵

The first step in "reading" a photograph is to first look at it, forming an impression, and then systematically address these questions to it:

What did the photographer see when he took the picture? What is in the picture that he possibly did not see? What were his purposes? What were his biases? Why did he pose people as he did? Why did he shoot from the vantage point the picture indicates? How did the circumstances in which the picture was taken limit the photographer's choices?⁷⁶

Next, one might isolate a section of the photograph, drawing an arbitrary boundary around a section of the field of vision, and asking "What was omitted

from the picture that the eye would have seen? What effect does the framing have on one's sense of having been there? How would one's reaction to the picture change if the picture were to be cropped--that is, to have its frame reduced further?⁷⁷ This examination naturally leads to paying attention to the location of the photograph. "Was it taken indoors? If so, what effect did the indoor setting have on the picture? Was it contrived or artificial? What clues does the picture provide to the cultural landscape? To the natural landscape? If the camera could have caught sounds and odors how would the image of the photograph have been enhanced?"⁷⁸ "By freezing the scene for the instant that the camera's shutter is open, the photograph directs the reader's attention to questions of time. How does the photograph reveal the time of day or year? What preceded the taking of the picture? What followed it? How does the picture reveal the stopping of time? What is caught in motion? What does the picture reveal of the times in which it was taken?"⁷⁹ It is important to pay attention to details of a photograph and the artifacts in it and to ask such questions as:

What do the parts contribute to the whole? How does the picture enable you to interpret the details in it? How do the details help in drawing conclusions about the time and place of the event portrayed in the picture? What is revealed about the occupations, social class, tastes, beliefs, or values of the persons shown? What conclusions can be drawn about the culture of which the setting in the picture is a part?⁸⁰

It is futile to attempt psychoanalysis of individuals or groups in photographs but one should pay attention to poses and facial expressions, noticing:

...whether people in a picture are touching one another or how they have arranged themselves in relation to others in the picture or in a series of pictures of the same group taken through the years. Consider also the kinds of emotions projected by persons in the picture...shy, compliant, aloof, proud, fearful, mad, suspicious, introspective, superior, confused, happy, anxious, angry, weak, pained, suffering, bright, curious, sexy,

distant, blank, bored, rigid, arrogant, content, lonely, trusting, strong, crazy, involved, frustrated, attractive, docile, bemused, correct, friendly, hurt, spontaneous, satisfied, depressed.⁸¹

The more one knows about the topic depicted in a photograph, the more information one can extract from it. Metcalf and Downey offer a worksheet for studying and "reading" photographs which provides a starting point for the inexperienced student, beginning by identifying and listing various categories of the items portrayed in each image and then making comparisons to other images. This is an attempt to quantify, on a rudimentary basis, and to make sense of the photographs.⁸² The worksheet follows:

Studying a Photograph

Complete this chart and attach the photograph you have studied.

1. First reactions: Jot down whatever first impressions you get about the photograph itself, the persons or objects in the photo, or your feelings.
2. Detailed examination: List all the facts about the photo you can see.
Photograph itself: People Objects Interior Exterior
3. Facts known from other sources: Indicate here the actual place and date of the photo if not on the photo itself, the names of the people, etc.
4. Characteristic expression or spatial relationships of persons or objects in the photo.
5. Describe the mood of the photograph: Formal, candid, happy, unhappy, indifferent, etc.
6. Considered reactions: Jot down how you feel about the photograph now that you have studied it and what unanswered questions you may have.

While various historians have presented practical suggestions for reading photographs, there are no hard-and-fast rules. Robert Levine, author of Images of History: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as

Documents, says that "...some guidelines can be offered, especially if we see photographs as pieces in a larger puzzle, not as facts in themselves. Preserved visual images complement the historian's effort to reconstruct the past. They illuminate special qualities inherent in the subject or in the mind of the photographer, or in the relationship between the two.⁸³ He offers one of the most thought-provoking and useful approaches to reading photographs, believing that photographs can be used to glean historical information but that one must use caution when attempting to extract meaning from them. Photographs are provocative but not definitive, being both spatial and temporal.

And, since one sees what one is predisposed to see, one must understand the social context in which the photograph was taken in order to make meaning of it. These guidelines are of particular use to those who attempt to use photographs to make cultural and historical deductions. Levine suggests ten general themes; each is elaborated by specific questions, designed to transport the viewer into the photograph. Some of these questions overlap, others stand alone, valuable for one kind of scrutiny, less useful for others. The ten themes are: (1) photographs as evidence, (2) the photographer's intention, (3) society's values and norms, (4) probing unstated norms, (5) depiction of social relationships, (6) everyday life, (7) unexpected or suppressed information, (8) romanticization, (9) satire and irony, and (10) change over time." A brief overview of the themes follows:⁸⁴

1. **Photographs as evidence.** It is necessary to apply historian's questions and academic rigor to the image in order to evaluate whether it is of historical significance and whether it can be used as evidence in writing history. Questions asked of the photograph include, "Is the image representative or anachronistic?," "Is there corroborative evidence beyond the visual image?," and "Were photo-

graphs taken a certain way to achieve a desired effect?"

2. The photographer's intention. The first question we must ask is "What was the photographer trying to say?" Additional questions are about how the photographer approached his subject matter., as well as the meaning he/she attached to the image. This is very difficult since few photographers leave notes about their intentions, even if they are conscious of them.

3. Society's norms and values. This is one of the most complex questions to be answered. We can begin by asking, "What does the photo tell us about the society which is portrayed?" Levine suggests additional questions having to do with societal values and norms and reinforcement of the status quo. It is important to know the cultural background of the photographer as we consider how his/her view of the society being photographed might affect the resulting image.

4. Probing unstated norms. Those who attempt to "read" photographs must look for such things as the status of various racial and ethnic groups portrayed. A photo might provide background details which reveal the schism between rich and poor or between the dominant culture and "others." In particular, we might ask "Does the photograph reveal something society chose to deny?"

5. Depiction of social relationships. It is necessary to determine how the society perceived itself and what relationship they had with the photographer before we can interpret a photograph. In addition, one must attempt to determine how members of different social groups related to one another and what relationship existed between leaders and followers.

6. Everyday life. One needs to look beyond the formality and foreground of a photograph--to discover background details of material culture, which often

reveal how people actually lived and died. Some questions one might ask are, "What is the evidence of material culture?," "How did people pose for the camera?," and "Do individuals captured in a relaxed state show behavior or a frame of mind differing from socially expected traits?"

7. Unexpected or suppressed information. This can be very telling if a photograph appears to be deliberately shot to screen disturbing details of a landscape, poverty for instance, while focusing on an idyllic location. Being sensitive to this possibility means that one can look for the presence of details that the photographer may not have intended to include. For instance, one might ask, "Does the photograph reveal harsh working conditions?," or "Do photographs capture misery and suffering?"

8. Romanticization. Posing of idealized forms can tell one much about the society and even more about the photographer. For whom are these photographs being made? To what purpose will they be put? Specifically, one can ask "How did photographers translate social values?"

9. Satire and irony. The deliberate use of clichés in photographs reveals much about the society and the level at which it functioned. This is another difficult piece of information to extract from a photograph since satire and irony is usually specific to a particular culture and time period. Sometimes removal from the context of place and time negates any possible interpretation of the photographs as satiric or ironic, or even whether the photographer intended them to be.

10. Change over time. Photographs taken over time of the same subject or location can reveal a sequence and evolution which can be invaluable in establishing changes in society. By asking "What changes show in sequences of im-

ages photographed over time?" those who attempt to "read" photographs can "form a more intense comparative view based on similarities and differences. This in turn permits us to see cultures on their own terms."

The end result of learning to ask the right questions of a photograph in order to "read" it provides the historian with information required to determine whether the photograph can be used as an historical document. Levine says that:

Photographs unfailingly reflect the values and priorities of the photographer and society at large. If photographs reduce truth to fact, as critics argue, then these facts are potentially documents to serve as the basis for historical analysis. All varieties of photographs are inherently valuable. Contrived poses to some degree must reveal the mind of the cameraman; random or accidental images help correct interpretative disparities and add further dimension to the world of images.⁸⁵

He continues, "When we use photographs as documents we acknowledge the assumption that believable history involves an imaginative ordering of material in the pursuit of recreating experience."⁸⁶ A photograph becomes a historical document

...when it suggests ways to examine people's lives or when it captures the texture of daily life. Obviously, it is one thing to extract material evidence from a photograph and very much another to attempt to extract emotional, psychological or personal inferences from mute images for which we lack supplementary data.⁸⁷

Kyvig and Marty believe that historians will find photographs useful as both traces representing events from the past and as artifacts, and as records of information gathered in fieldwork:

The line between the two forms is neither clear nor inevitable, but it is helpful to be aware than an old picture of an old house differs from a contemporary picture of the same house taken for comparison. A variation in the latter form is created when one takes a picture of an old picture to ensure its preservation or for some other purpose.⁸⁸

Some important principles apply in using photographs for historical research: "...photographs must be treated according to the same standards, particularly where accuracy is concerned, that are applied to other documents or artifacts when they are identified, authenticated, described, evaluated, and interpreted."⁸⁹ It is important to include extrinsic data:

Notes on the back of the pictures or in albums in which they are mounted often provide some such information, but unfortunately it is sometimes misleading or just plain wrong, and it must always be verified before it is relied upon. Conversations with persons shown in the pictures provide more information.⁹⁰

Using photographs in a story requires that they "...relate to the story being told, offering some evidence that completes or clarifies it."⁹¹ It is also important to use the best possible technical reproduction of the photographs and to caption them sufficiently and succinctly. "Just as care is given to honing sentences into precise form and to fitting them neatly into purposive paragraphs, so care should also be given to the presentation of photographs used."⁹²

Those who attempt to read photographs should be aware of the limitations imposed on their use by the fact that photographs never represent more than a small part of larger scenes. And, Kyvig and Marty point out that because photographs deal in single rather than repeated moments, it is impossible for them to convey a sense of the routine that is so much a part of life. Because crucial moments ordinarily elude photographers' attention, they are often recreated strictly for the benefit of the camera. The contrived character of such moments is ordinarily apparent in the photographs that record them, depending on the skill of the photographer.⁹³

The use of photographs by historians is further complicated by a number of seemingly contradictory circumstances, according to Kyvig and Marty:

On the one hand, there is such an abundance of photographs available--sometimes in family archives--that historians must make hard choices to use the right ones in their research. On the other hand, this abundance of material is collected unsystematically, preserved indifferently, and identified and cataloged scarcely at all. While there is an abundance in quantity, not as many significant photographs of good quality have been preserved and filed as historians would like or could use.⁹⁴

Another limit to the usefulness of photographs involves the problem of color photographs that are losing their original colors and will eventually lose their images because of the instability of the materials and processes used to develop and print them. "The massive transition from black and white to color photography was encouraged by the popular appeal of beautiful pictures *for now...* Although technological changes may soon improve color stability, those who wish to ensure the leaving of a record or the preservation of visual remembrances of events must insist upon doing so in black and white."⁹⁵

Using the guidelines and suggestions of Kyvig and Marty, Metcalf and Downey, and Levine allows sufficient awareness on the part of the researcher to permit reasonable conclusions to be drawn from photographs. In particular, keeping Levine's guidelines at the forefront of any photographic investigation will help to ensure that the researcher is controlling his/her own biases as much as possible. The awareness and sensitivity to the issues raised by Levine will make important contributions to the study of history through the use of images.

While acknowledging the difficulty inherent in evaluating, analyzing, and interpreting photographs as historical documents, one can, through awareness of the limitations one brings to the photograph and the conditions under which it was produced, at the very least consider the photograph as accurate as a written document. Of course one must apply rigorous historical standards in the evaluation. One would never, for instance, draw definitive conclusions from one docu-

ment, without seeking additional information to support the interpretation.

Alan Trachtenberg, author of Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans, believes that the task of the historian and the photographer are similar: to extract meaning from random, fragmented, every-day events without sacrificing the detail to abstraction. He says:

But while the camera has undeniably altered our sense of the past by showing us the actual look of things and persons (within the limits, of course, of adjustments of lens, light, and perspective imposed by the photographer), there is still the question of how we make sense of what we see. The historical value of photographs includes depiction but goes beyond it....To serve as history facts must be made intelligible, must be given an order and a meaning which does not crush their autonomy as facts.⁹⁶

The historian, Trachtenberg says, uses words, narrative, and analysis while the photographer uses the viewfinder to tell a story:

Both seek a balance between "reproduction and construction," between passive surrender to the facts and active reshaping of them into a coherent picture or story. Ordering facts into meaning, data into history, moreover, is not an idle exercise but a political act, a matter of judgment and choice about the emerging shape of the present and future. It may be less obvious in the making of a photograph than in the writing of a history, but is equally true: the viewfinder is a political instrument, a tool for making a past suitable for the future.⁹⁷

There are three types of photographs or photo-derived images one might encounter in a study of Route 66: those produced by commercial photographers, those produced by amateurs (often referred to as "snapshots"), and a combination of these two.

Commercial photographs include those taken by newspaper photographers and those taken by professional photographers for use in advertising, as well as the photo-derived images of post cards. Generally, local newspapers maintain photographic files to which one might gain access. Professional photog-

rappers, in particular, were hired by various local businesses to produce black-and-white or color photos which were then used for advertising. Photographers maintain extensive negative files for the purposes of reordering. And, if the photographer has been in business in the community for an extended period of time, it will be easy to show change over time.

Private collections of postcards related to Route 66 are in the hands of serious collectors. These provide visual as well as textual information, with the added bonus of the inclusion of personal messages written on the cards, which then become primary source material. The Curt Teich Museum in Crystal Lake, Illinois, has a collection of postcards, and has sorted them into topic areas: Route 66 forms a large collection within their archives.

Susan Brown Nicholson, author of The Encyclopedia of Antique Postcards, provides a brief history of American postcards, defining a postcard as a card produced with the intention of being sent through the mail or kept as a souvenir. It has always been possible to mail any piece of paper by affixing the proper postage and although there were early photographs, album trade cards, and greeting cards mailed in this manner, they have not achieved the status of postcard. Today's postcard evolved from holiday cards sent to family and friends as well as colorful letterhead which was in vogue from the mid-1800s. By 1861, John P. Charlton, a Philadelphia businessman, obtained a copyright on a private postal card. Because his patent application was refused, he sold his copyright to H. L. Lipman of Philadelphia, considered the father of modern postcards. He produced and sold the Lipman's Postal Card, a non-pictorial message card with a stamp box and address line on one side and a blank message space on the other.

Advertisers used Lipman cards to distribute messages and illustrations; the cards were immediately and enormously successful.⁹⁸

This type of postcard was used until 1873 when the United States issued what was called a government postal, containing pictorial advertisements, Christmas, and New Year's greetings. These early cards were called pioneers, carrying instructions such as: "Write the address only on this side--the message on the other." Later they read, "Nothing but the address can be placed on this side," and "This side for the address only" or similar words.⁹⁹ By the late 1880s, many local photographers and large-scale postcard producers competed for customers to buy their scenic postcards, showing local streets and monuments. In 1889 Curt Teich opened his Chicago business, mass producing postcards. Teich quickly became the largest postcard company and was the first to produce color postcards using the photo offset method. The postcard became popular with the invention of machines that would produce them in mass quantity for a minimal cost. For instance, in the beginning, Curt Teich sold his postcards for one cent each, making them an affordable souvenir for everyone. Also, the cost of postage was low; one- to two-cents would deliver the card. Color offset printing made postcards visually exciting for purchasers and recipient alike. In addition, expanding and inexpensive transportation systems allowed more people to travel. Once people began to travel even short distances, it was important to take back some memento of the trip or to send a card home to those who were not able to accompany the traveler. Postcard companies took advantage of this desire by producing sets of postcards that people began to collect, thereby increasing their sales. Another thing that contributed to the popularity of the postcard was their portability and their forced brevity. Prior to the postcard, people had to take time

from their holidays to write letters. Contemporaries of the postcard craze complained that it was not possible to go anywhere, no matter how remote, without encountering someone selling an image of it, intended to be mailed or taken home as a souvenir. The postcard allowed people to dispense with letters altogether in favor of a scrawled "Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here."¹⁰⁰

In 1898, Congress provided for privately published postcards using the same standards and rates as government postals. These postcards were inscribed, "Private Mailing Card--Authorized by the Act of Congress, May 19, 1898." Eventually the regulations eased and the words post card could be used to distinguish the private cards from government postal cards. By 1907, the post-card back was divided, allowing one half for the message, the other for the address; the entire front of the card was now used for advertisement or design.¹⁰¹ As important as the mail regulations were, it was the establishment of the Rural Free Delivery System in 1898, that made the post card universal. Before this act, only homes in towns of ten thousand or more had free delivery. All others had to travel great distances to post letters and rarely had an easy way to receive mail.

Another impetus to the sale and mailing of post cards was The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Several sets of picture postcards, featuring the Fair's attractions, were printed on government postal cards. The years 1893-1913 are considered the Golden Age of postcards in America. "Both adults and children were obsessed with buying, sending and collecting postcards. Billions were mailed throughout the world."¹⁰² Postcard publishers worked day and night to meet the demand for cards. Postcards were sold in drugstores, news stands, dime stores, souvenir shops and even specialty shops that sold only post

cards. Postcards of tourist attractions in major cities were sold by the thousands on every street corner.¹⁰³

Publishers wanting to benefit financially from the postcard collecting craze, used an ingenious idea, producing sets of cards, to persuade the public to buy multiple cards rather than just one. Sets provided the publisher and retailer with bonus sales. The postcard became highly successful as an inexpensive way to send short messages. Mail was collected and delivered as often as three times a day.¹⁰⁴

Many local photographers got into the act as they issued their own cards, capturing scenes of localized interest that larger publishing houses ignored:

The local photographer would go out and about in his neighbourhood taking photographs of back alleys as well as high streets and market squares, of the post office and village stores, and of children playing in the street. In fact, the animation of the local people would often prove to be a feature of the photograph, some proudly posing, others shy yet curious of the camera, and those captured while carrying out their trade or profession.¹⁰⁵

The photographer produced a limited number of these cards, hand printing the location on the negative (The printing appears to be white on the finished postcard.) and offering them for sale in local businesses¹⁰⁶ (See Appendix B.)

Apparently those who observed the early postcard craze weren't always enamored with it. Nicholson provides an extended quotation by James Douglas, a London journalist, author, and critic of postcard use.

... nobody need fear that there is any spot on the earth which is not depicted on this wonderful oblong. The photographer has photographed everything between the poles. He has snapshotted the earth. No mountain and no wave has evaded his omnipresent lens. The click of his shutter has been heard on every Alp and in every desert. He has hunted down every landscape and seascape on the globe. Every bird and every beast has been captured by the camera. It is impossible to gaze upon a ruin without finding a picture postcard of it at your elbow. Every pimple

on the earth's skin has been photographed, and wherever the human eye roves or roams it detects the self conscious air of the reproduced...¹⁰⁷

Route 66 postcards have become especially collectible in recent years.

The most popular cards seem to be those that depict businesses along the road and allow collectors to compare buildings and scenery. Laura and Jeff Myers, two postcard collectors and self-named "roadologists," say that the current price of a Route 66 postcard depends upon "...its age, as well as the condition of the card...the subject of the landmark...and how savvy the owner is to the resurgence of America's Main Street."¹⁰⁸

They describe the postcard as illuminating human history and as "...the vehicles we ride as we view the human landscape. The entire length of Highway 66, as it winds its way across America through eight states, can be traced by postcard from the shores of Lake Michigan to its terminus in Santa Monica, California."¹⁰⁹ Contributing to the enjoyment of collecting postcards is the thrill of reading the message scrawled across the back.

"This country is the prettiest we've seen," or "The coffee was great here," or "We made it this far last night." The card also carried a selling message: Diners and cafes claimed, "Best food anywhere on Highway 66." Motels assured, "Lowest rates, excellent beds," while the message on a card promoting a service station generally announced, "Cheapest gas and cleanest rest rooms on the Route." And, when you received one of these picture greetings from somewhere along the road, no one had to write, "Wish you were here," the postcard image made sure you were.¹¹⁰

Amateur-produced images, or snapshots, are particularly interesting for a study of Route 66 since they were made primarily for commemorative purposes, not for sale. Individuals kept photo albums and journals during cross-country tours. They may reflect the travel adventures of a 1930s honeymooning couple who made the trip in a home-made camper, a 1950s move along the road, or a

family vacation. James E. Paster, author of "The Snapshot, the Automobile, and The Americans," defines a snapshot as "...a photograph that has been taken by the photographically untutored, motivated by the simple wish to record and perpetuate their life and times."¹¹¹ It is because of this lack of photographic sophistication that the untutored photographer is able to produce some of the most useful and visually complex images recorded. After examining a large number of collections, Paster has concluded that one of the most recurring subjects is the automobile. He links this with the American passion for freedom, mobility, and the status that an automobile brings.¹¹² While studying photographs containing automobile images, Paster identified five categories: 1) automobiles as the main subject of the photo; 2) go-stand-by-the-car portraits; 3) people shown either arriving or departing by car; 4) photographs taken from inside the automobile; and, 5) photographs that contain automobiles only incidentally.¹¹³ The categories are helpful as one studies the images presented in Route 66-related snapshots.

A third, and hybrid, type of collection is that combining commercial and amateur. Local historical societies located in towns along Route 66 often have a number of both commercial and amateur-produced photographs of Route 66. Often they are not easily accessible, being scattered throughout their collection, but an examination will generally locate useful images. Occasionally, one can locate a retired professional who worked along Route 66, such as a state police officer, who may have kept his own scrapbook, documenting his years along Route 66. The scrapbook may contain his own snapshots as well as photographs taken at accident scenes by commercial photographers hired to document the damage. These images and those of the apprehension of criminals provide an insight into a side of Route 66 not seen in other collections.

A study of Route 66 would be incomplete without oral history interviews and the use of images, including both photographs and postcards. Information contained in both of these sources adds to the written documentation and material culture to form a more complete picture of the topic. Local history, as the umbrella under which the project is organized, helps to provide a framework upon which to build the project.

NOTES

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CHAPTER VI

GUIDEBOOK TO ROUTE 66 IN McLEAN COUNTY

Once students have collected and transcribed oral interviews, and collected and interpreted images as part of a local history study, they can use the collections to create a guidebook to traveling the road in their own area or an area selected by the teacher. Although oral history interviews will be completed before the guidebook is begun, during the course of the research students may discover others who will need to be interviewed to supplement the information they have collected. The same is true of images collected prior to putting together the guidebook: during the research other images will be discovered that will need to be inserted.

There are many things to be considered when preparing a guidebook. The purpose of the tour is educational and the goal is to permit the traveler to see Route 66. It is also important to get the travelers out of their cars and into the town so that they can get a sense of what life was like in that area during the time that Route 66 passed through and what life is like post-Route 66. Not everything collected can be included in the book. The teacher and students will need to consider the relative importance of each item and the contribution it will make. Items left out of the book can be the basis for essays, articles, presentations, displays, and museum exhibits.

Depending upon the area to be covered (town, county, state), a route

needs to be determined that will include not only the road and structures along it, but structures of historical significance and nearby geographic and cultural features, with one or two structures per town as the minimum. Popular culture references and images will also be incorporated into the book.

It is important to use sidebars to highlight general information associated with the road. Sidebars should be placed in the book before the topic is mentioned in the text. For example, if one wishes to provide a brief history of grain elevators, that should be done before the reader/traveler has encountered the first elevator structure.

Next, prepare an outline of the contents of the book, keeping in mind that the order of presentation may shift as it is being written. As one has collected information, a list will have been kept of those who have contributed to the project so that they can be acknowledged. This is very important in local history projects. Other important points to remember are that the book be written in casual, easy-to-understand language, with clear directions. Travelers should be told the exact mileage of the tour and driving instructions should be in bold print, including where to turn, where to pull over, and when to reset the odometer. In addition, drivers should be oriented to structural and natural landmarks or to any posted directional signs.

Prior to the final draft, at least two people will need to drive the route several times, taking turns reading the directions and driving, making sure that the directions are clear, concise, and accurate; guidebook users will not be amused at being directed to turn right when they should have turned left, for instance.

Outline of guidebook:

Title page
Dedication page
Acknowledgments
Route 66 Overview
Early Illinois Transportation
Railroads
Hard Roads
Origins of Route 66
Future of the road
McLean County Tour
 Chenoa
 Lexington
 Towanda
 Normal
 Bloomington
 Shirley
 Funk's Grove
 McLean
Endnotes

Information gathered in the process of preparing the guidebook can be used in many other ways. It can serve as the basis for walking or bus tours. Essays and articles can be written, including materials that may have been left out due to space and/or time constraints. There are a number of newsletters and magazines interested in publishing articles about Route 66, including the Route 66 Magazine, published in Williams, Arizona. In addition, students should be encouraged to make oral presentations in the community, and to produce public exhibits and displays. The teacher might choose to organize a panel discussion with some of the people who have been interviewed for the project. All of these projects give students additional practice at new-found skills and enable them to gain confidence as they apply what they have learned in a variety of circumstances.

The guidebook that follows is an updated and expanded version of a 1995 guidebook, Route 66: Goin' Somewhere (The Road in McLean County), to which the author holds the copyright. The book was produced for the McLean County Historical Society in conjunction with a Route 66 exhibit of the same name for which the author served as guest curator. The book won a Superior Achievement award from the Illinois State Historical Society in 1996. The guidebook synthesizes much of the information already presented in Chapters I through V, applying it to a tour of McLean County along Route 66 and the towns through which the road passed.

**Route 66: Goin' Somewhere
The Road in McLean County**

by

Terri Ryburn-LaMonte

**"For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go.
I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move."**

**Robert Louis Stevenson
Travels with a Donkey, 1878**

Acknowledgments

Nothing is ever accomplished without the help and effort of many people. That statement is very true of the "Route 66: Goin' Somewhere" exhibit and book. Special thanks to the following people who generously shared their time and information, and gave their much-appreciated support. Those who love history and the road are very special people.

Bloomington-Normal Antique Mall
Bloomington-Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau
Bloomington-Normal Building Trades and Labor Assembly
Ronald Morehead, Mike Matejka
Amy Ryburn-LaMonte
Stacie and Jessika Ryburn-LaMonte
Bill Sanders
Elaine Augspurger
Victor Bell
Chuck Benedict
Ruth Carpenter
Ralph Dunbar
Philip Edwards
Gloria Ekberg
Doug Freed
Barbie Whitman Freed
Glaida and Steve Funk
John Geske
Illa Grannacher
Chester Henry
Myrtle Hensley
Illinois State Police
Roger Keirsey
Sandra Kidwell
Susan Funk Kirby
McLean County Antique Automobile Association
McLean County Historical Society staff and volunteers
Greg Koos, Susan Hartzold, Patty Wagner, Joyce Burns,
Michelle McNabb, Amy Vandegrift
Ann Malone
LaWanda Henry Matson
Skip Nelson
Elmo Page
The Pantagraph
Carolyn and Merle Parry
Elmo Quinn
Anita Revelle
Route 66 Association of Illinois
Jeri Ryburn
Tom Teague
Bill Walters
Barb Whitman
Arlene Winterland

Route 66: Goin' Somewhere

The Road in McLean County

Route 66 Overview

In 1926 construction began on a highway that eventually stretched from Chicago to Santa Monica, California, a distance of approximately 2,500 miles. An important all-weather transportation corridor, Route 66 connected the Midwest to the West Coast and all points in between. Route 66 left Lake Michigan in downtown Chicago and cut a southwest, diagonal route across Illinois, through Joliet, Dwight, Bloomington-Normal, Springfield, and Litchfield on its way to St. Louis, Missouri. There it turned west through Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and the spectacular views of New Mexico and Arizona, before ending at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, California. Some concrete pavement already existed across these states prior to 1926; new sections were poured to connect them, forming a continuous ribbon of highway. The road was considered completed in the late 1930s as it sliced its way through the middle of small towns and large cities alike, thus earning the nickname of "The Main Street of America," a phrase coined by Cyrus Avery of the U.S. 66 Highway Association shortly after the road was designated a national highway.¹

The concrete had barely set up on the new "hard road" when people began to complain about the dirt, noise, traffic congestion, and delays as traffic crawled along the narrow, two-lane road through their town, clogging residential streets and downtown business districts alike. Americans demanded roads which would allow them to travel more quickly and safely, and by the late 1930s the

first two-lane alignment was being replaced by a four-lane highway which swept around towns in far-flung arcs called bypasses or beltlines. Thriving roadside businesses dried up, almost overnight, with the changed alignment of the road. Not even newly-erected billboards and "Business Route 66" signs could lure enough traffic off of the four-lane and into their establishments to ensure their survival; many entrepreneurs moved to the new road and its increasing traffic.

The new, four-lane road served as a major military corridor during World War II, although a lack of money, materials, and manpower meant that even routine maintenance of the road was suspended and the pavement deteriorated, requiring its eventual replacement. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces and soon to be President of the United States, was reported to have been so impressed with the speed and efficiency of traffic on the German Autobahn that he determined to replace American highways with superhighways.² His purpose may have had more to do with movement of military troops and convoys in the event of an attack by Cold War enemy superpowers than any concern for the convenience of every day drivers, but the end result is our present-day interstate system. Originally proposed during Eisenhower's presidency, the Federal Highway Act of 1956 took five different interstates and more than 20 years to replace Route 66: I-55 from Chicago to St. Louis; I-44 from St. Louis to Oklahoma City; I-40 from Oklahoma City to Barstow, California; I-15 from Barstow to San Bernardino; and I-10 from San Bernardino to Santa Monica. The last stretch of Route 66 was bypassed in 1984 by a section of I-40 near Williams, Arizona.³ Some towns along Route 66 watched the traffic and their businesses dry up without much hope of being able

to compete with the large corporations which continue to dominate business at interstate exchanges.

Since the early 1990s, Route 66 has enjoyed a renaissance and all eight states through which Route 66 traveled have associations whose members travel the road and work for preservation of those sections which survive.⁴ Also, many people now travel the road as a destination in and of itself. For example, the Route 66 Association of Illinois sponsors an annual two-day motor tour between Chicago and St. Louis, involving 200-300 cars and several hundred people, stopping along the way to visit historic sites and some of the people who have given the road its unique character.⁵ Many international visitors join the tour or come for self-guided tours throughout the year.⁶ The Association also maintains a Hall of Fame at the Dixie Trucker's Home in McLean into which it annually inducts those people and places in Illinois which best exemplify the Route 66 spirit.⁷

Early Illinois Transportation

Glaciers are the most important factor in the settlement and subsequent development of the transportation system in Illinois. Four glaciers, occurring over a period of thousands of years, covered the state to various degrees. The Illinoian glacier, occurring between one hundred to one hundred fifty thousand years ago, flattened land, leaving a surface which roads and railroads would later traverse without encountering steep grades (see Appendix A). Illinois landforms and their topographical features shaped the north to south diagonal pattern of Illinois' transportation corridor as rudimentary paths became early roads. The geology of Illinois meant that early road builders had to adapt to a range of soil types and in many areas of Illinois, clay, gravel, and limestone were readily

available. In areas where these building materials were not available, residents and road builders struggled through the mud with no solution in sight. In their desperation, they experimented with roads of rough-hewn logs, planks, or large rocks, only to see the materials engulfed by the thick, soupy Illinois mud with its voracious appetite. The glacier also left rivers and lakes by which the earliest explorers traveled. Most importantly, however, it deposited a thick and fertile layer of topsoil, known as loess, over the state which in future years made Illinois a leading agricultural area, drawing settlers who required adequate roads for travel and transport of their agricultural products, unlocking the natural resources of Illinois.⁸

European settlement in Illinois began in the southern part of the state (see Appendix A). When Illinois was admitted to the Union on December 3, 1818, as the 21st state, early pioneers, accustomed to living and farming in wooded areas, clustered in the scattered groves of Illinois, rather than on the expansive prairies. Life was much easier for settlers who had access to trees for building materials and fuel, as well as a water supply from the creeks and rivers which wound their way through the groves. Although some crops could be planted in "hills" by drilling holes in the ground, settlers were unable to plow the prairie because of the tangled root system of the thick and tall grasses. This difficulty was also the reason the prairie soil was so fertile.

It wasn't until the 1830s that technological developments allowed large numbers of settlers to move onto the prairie, to build houses and plow extensive acres of land for farming. Still, raising a corn crop was a difficult, labor-intensive task. The most important technological advance which affected farming was an invention by John Deere, a Vermont blacksmith, who came to Illinois in 1837. His

self-scouring steel plow, mass produced at Moline by 1847, quickly revolutionized farming. Land could now be cleared and planted more quickly and efficiently. Deere's invention brought about the need for another: the increased crops which resulted from use of the improved plow would have rotted in the field if it had not been for the invention of the reaper. Cyrus Hall McCormick, frequently given credit for the reaper's invention, actually only perfected an earlier reaper, however, he was able to produce the reaper in quantity. Other technological advances in the 1840s were the cultivator, which loosened the ground around the plants, enabling them to grow, and the thresher, a machine for separating crops into grain, or seeds and straw. Wheat soon became the most important cash crop and by 1859, Illinois led the nation in its production. Corn was an equally important crop during this early period, consumed by farm animals and pioneer families: "We know [settlers] made corn into hasty pudding, johnny-cake, hot cakes, Indian mush, Indian meal gruel, corn bread, corn cake, corn biscuits, corn crumpets, hominy, green corn dumplings, corn porridge, and summer succotash."⁹

None of the improved technology benefited the farmer financially unless he could efficiently and inexpensively transport his crops to market. Farmers found it difficult to travel within the state because of a lack of even rudimentary roads. The rich, black prairie soil so important for growing grain, turned to mud during the rainy season, becoming impassable to farm animals and wagons. As the demand increased for better roads and railroads to move agricultural products from farm to market via roads connecting the Illinois River to the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes, the Illinois General Assembly approved The Internal Improvements Act of 1837. This was an optimistic bit of legislation, given that it

"pledged the 400,000 poverty-ridden inhabitants of the frontier state to spend more than \$10,000,000 on a network of railroads and canals which would criss-cross in every direction."¹⁰

Railroads

The biggest project proposed by the General Assembly in 1837 was the Illinois Central Railroad (ICRR). The act unfortunately coincided with the Panic of 1837, a national economic downturn that delayed most of the improvements planned by the General Assembly. The ICRR was again approved by Congress in 1850 and Illinois received 2.5 million acres to be used in financing a railroad from Cairo to Dunleith (East Dubuque), with a branch to Chicago. The ICRR sold land to 35,000 families, changing settlement patterns and the ethnic makeup of Illinois as Irish, German, and Scandinavian immigrants came to the area; many farmed, others came to work on the railroads themselves. Y-shaped, the Illinois Central filled the central eastern prairie region with prosperous farmers, linked by rail to Chicago markets (see Appendix A). At 705.5 miles it was twice as long as any other railroad, becoming a marvel of the transportation industry.¹¹

The results of the arrival of the railroad were felt immediately in the cost of transportation and the growth of towns on the prairie, many of which began as stations on rail lines and prospered by their very location. Much wrangling and behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing occurred as entrepreneurs ensured that the railroad would pass through towns in which they already owned land or planned to buy land through which railroad tracks might be routed. The resulting towns generally had two things in common--a grain elevator and the railroad--as they dotted the prairie approximately every five miles or so along the rails. The

railroad became the primary method of transportation for both people and freight, since trains made stops at each town, avoiding the muddy and often impassable roads; they proved to be a faster and less expensive method of travel.

Hard Roads

The railroads did not solve the problem the farmer faced in getting crops from his fields to the railroads. Farmers and rural residents were losing money on their produce as well as suffering wear and tear to their horses and wagons, while town residents paid higher prices for goods which were delayed by poor road conditions. Three primary road conditions restricted travel: mud, dust, and roughness. While dust was a serious annoyance in dry weather, it usually did not impede traffic. Mud, however, brought traffic to a halt by entrapping horse, wagon and driver in a seemingly bottomless pit. The rough condition of the roads also affected speed and safety of travel. In addition to their hazards, mud and rough roads could also result in additional expenses, such as repairs to broken wheels and axles. Paving country roads was of utmost concern to both rural and urban residents.¹²

This problem was discussed for many years, beginning in the mid-1800s, as committees of leading citizens met to discuss permanent or "hard" roads. By the late 1880s, the consensus seemed to be that gravel roads were the best solution and that roads built by a combination of subscription and by a community of labor best accomplished this goal. An 1889 Pantagraph article appealed to each man's ideals of citizenship, manhood and Christian duty to build good roads:

...Good roads not only indicate broad, intelligent citizenship, but more, the status of its actual Christian growth and worth. If we are proud of our house, our farms, our horses, it is somewhat more of manhood still to be proud of our County.¹³

George Bartholomew, an Ohio businessman, lobbied for the nation's first concrete street, which was poured in 1891. This accomplishment earned him the designation of "father of the concrete road."¹⁴ In 1892 concrete paving was an innovation featured at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It became obvious that the most durable solution to the ongoing paving problem was concrete and as a result, short stretches of road were paved in many areas of the country. These roads, however, were novelties and too short in length to provide a permanent, long-term solution.

The coming of the automobile provided the most compelling reason for building good roads. By 1900, when 200,000 cars were produced in the United States, the need for additional pavement reached critical proportions. Even as they became more numerous, in some ways automobiles were still perceived as "toys" for the wealthy. The "common" person complained about the speed at which automobiles traveled dirt roads, stirring up dust, creating ruts, and scaring both they and their animals. This new machine was not only a nuisance, it was downright dangerous, as anyone could get behind the wheel and drive, without any instruction and without the safety features that would be added many years later.

Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company in 1903, producing a lightweight, medium priced car. No longer were the roads necessary just for farm-to-market and rural resident-to-town convenience; now the leisure traveler had to be accommodated. Communities organized automobile clubs to enjoy and promote automobile travel, as arduous as it must have been. In the fall of 1905, the nine cars of the Bloomington Auto Club, one of which carried spare parts for frequent and inevitable roadside repairs, left for Chicago to promote good roads. It

took the group two hours to reach Lexington, a distance of approximately 15 miles, and two more to reach Pontiac, an additional 18 miles. What made the trip so difficult was that the roads were mostly dirt; a few were gravel, but none were paved. Nevertheless, the automobile enthusiasts arrived at Chicago the next day.¹⁵ This event occurred the same year that Illinois government established a commission to study the Illinois road system, with an eye to improvement.

The Model T, appearing in 1908, was Henry Ford's lightweight, inexpensive automobile which was constructed on a moving assembly line. He was able to produce almost 250,000 units per year, at a price of \$500 each.¹⁶ The volume produced and the relatively low price of this vehicle changed both the perception and the reality of automobile ownership, putting a black Model T Ford within the buying power of the average person.¹⁷ The next year, Portland cement was used to pour a concrete test road for a total of one mile in Detroit and land grant colleges began to teach highway construction, although the federal government was still seven years away from involvement in road building and maintenance. In Illinois, real progress began in 1910, when state legislation required state licensing of vehicles with the fees designated for road construction. In 1911, the first full year of the Illinois State Automobile Law, there were 38,269 automobiles registered in Illinois, whose owners contributed \$105,344.00 to the Good Roads Fund.¹⁸ All fees collected were used exclusively for building, improvement, and maintenance of roads. The same year, according to Illinois' Superintendent of Highways, S. E. Bradt, Illinois residents began to realize:

...the condition of our highways as compared to other states and the handicap under which we were working in the marketing of products and the carrying on of that part of our ordinary business which required the use of our highways....the State of Illinois, standing first in agriculture, second in wealth and third in population, occupied twenty-third place

among the states of the union in the matter of highways which were improved.¹⁹

The Tice Road Law passed by the Forty-eighth Illinois General Assembly in 1913, approved state bonds to be used for roadway improvements.²⁰ Under the Tice Road Law, 18 percent of the state's public roads were named "State Aid Roads." The cost was shared equally between the state and the counties; the state agreed to maintain the road as long as the construction was of concrete or brick; if the road was gravel or macadam, the county shared equally with the State in its maintenance. If, however, the road was of earth, the cost of maintenance was left to the counties. Significantly, each county board was allowed to choose the type of construction they preferred, but if they could not agree on the road type, the State Highway Commission selected the type of road to be built in the counties.²¹ The law further stated that the roads were to be laid out to connect the main trading points within counties and to those of adjoining counties.

A. D. Gash, President of the Illinois State Highway Commission, proudly announced: "Thirty per cent of the citizens of the State reside along the system of State Aid Roads, and seventy-five per cent of the people reside along and within one mile of these thoroughfares. There is not a home further than four and one half miles from these State Aid Roads."²² Although the state was to advance half of the money for road building, if businesses and individuals wanted a road through their towns, they could not wait for funding, for which there was fierce competition and no guarantee that it would be forthcoming. It was up to them to build, mark, maintain, and promote local roads, as well as to issue maps. Some communities responded to the perceived need by building their own hard roads which were subjected to constant use by the motoring public. Typically, these roads were short, but they appealed to motorists seeking a respite from the deep

mud that passed for Illinois roads during much of the year. For example, the 1914 Pantagraph reported on the popularity of a local 1-1/4 mile engineering marvel:

The hard road running southwest of Bloomington to Shirley is already beginning to show wear in places. It is no wonder for most any time an auto leaves Bloomington for a joy ride, it is down the hard road. Probably that road has ten times more travel than it otherwise would have had and that very thing shows how much such roads are liked.²³

The Pontiac Trail was among the State Aid Roads funded by the 1913 Tice Law. The earliest road between Chicago and St. Louis, it was christened in 1915. The road followed a much earlier trail left by native Americans and "...began in Chicago, traveled through Lemont, Lockport, Joliet, Morris, Dwight, Odell, Pontiac, Lexington, Bloomington, Lincoln, Springfield, Carlinville, Edwardsville, Collinsville, and East St. Louis."²⁴

Even in 1915, apparently Illinois roads had a dubious reputation among drivers, as Gash voiced his concern that "Illinois will not be spoken of as the 'State of Bad Roads.'"²⁵ Figures for 1915 showed that the United States had 2,423,788 automobiles on the road, more than five times as many as all of the other countries for which records were kept: Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada, and Russia. In 1915, seven states had registered more than 100,000 automobiles each: Illinois, with 180,832, was second only to New York, which registered 212,844.²⁶ Good roads became ever more important as more vehicles took to the roads. By the 1920s, automobiles had become a permanent part of every day life.

Origins of Route 66

In Illinois, Route 4 was the forerunner of Route 66 and followed closely the Chicago and Alton railroad tracks. In 1922, the bed for this 14 foot-wide road

was prepared by horses dragging special equipment. Laborers performed back-breaking tasks and received 40 cents an hour for their efforts (see Appendix B). In 1923 the concrete was poured through Bloomington-Normal, along roughly the same route which the first alignment of Route 66 would take through town.

The following year, Cyrus Avery, of Oklahoma was involved in the preparation of a proposal at the American Association of State Highway officials 1924 meeting which asked that the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture select and designate a comprehensive system of interstate routes. As a result, Avery was chosen to lay out and create what would be known as the United States Highway System.²⁷ One of the main issues the group had to deal with was the numbering of roads. Early roads had been given names, often of only local significance, but with a more complex road system in the works, it was necessary to eliminate confusion for motorists, who were now used to looking for landmarks and signs on posts to direct him/her. The committee assigned even numerals to east-west highways; odd numerals to north-south highways. Routes that crossed state lines were given shields to signify that they were U.S. highways; circular signs indicated state roads. Main highways were given numbers under 100; more important roads, were designated with zero numbers, such as Route 60. Route 66 was originally intended to be numbered Route 60, but there was already a road from Newport News, Virginia to Springfield, Missouri which eastern officials wanted numbered 60. So, after much debate and negotiation, and in a spirit of compromise, the number 66 was proposed in the spring of 1926. On July 23, 1926, Route 66 was officially designated and with the signing of documents on November 11, 1926 by a committee of federal and state highway officials in Pinehurst, North Carolina, Route 66 became an official federal highway.²⁸

By the mid-1920s, the country was already experiencing hard times as economic conditions pointed to the coming Depression. Contributing to the problem was that technology was beginning to revolutionize farming and by 1929, nearly half of all American farmers were tenants, rather than landowners.

- Rural people, in particular, suffered economic hardship during the 1920s. The near-poverty of the era caused them to look for sources of income which were not affected by the ups and downs of the economy. They built gas stations, tourist courts, cafes, grocery stores, bus and truck lines, provided entertainment, or sold souvenirs along the road. Their instincts were right; the service industry boomed and businesses along the road prospered as they watched families from the drought-ravaged Midwest travel Route 66 west to California and the Promised Land. By 1930, Illinois had 7,500 miles of paved road. It was the only state, except for the fifteen miles through Kansas, to have Route 66 completely hard surfaced.²⁹

Americans were in desperate straits after the 1929 Stock Market crash and the problems of the Depression were compounded by the Dust Bowl. On May 10 and 11, 1934, a dust storm blew 300 million tons of topsoil away from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas and Colorado. For two years, many people rarely saw the sun, as the wind blew and the dust swirled in the air. Some people chose to stay on their land, waiting for the inevitable eviction. Others sold out, if they could, and took what few things they could load onto their truck or car and as they drove Route 66 for California.³⁰ The Grapes of Wrath (1939), which won a Pulitzer Prize for author John Steinbeck, gave us the mythical Joad family and their desperate migration along Route 66 from Oklahoma to California in search of employment. For many people, Route 66 became the road to salvation. For

others, it became a road of opportunity and they built businesses along the road to sell food, lodging, and gas to those who were forced to travel the road during these hard times.

World War II (1941-1945) drastically affected all domestic travel. The homefront faced rationing and shortages which included a cessation of automobile production in 1942. Even those who had automobiles had problems getting enough gasoline. Because rubber was scarce, it was difficult, if not impossible to find replacement tires when their frequently-patched ones finally wore out. There was also a shortage of replacement parts if their car broke down. Route 66 thrived, however, becoming a massive artery of military commerce during the war as airplane and truck parts were trucked along the highway. Army convoys and maneuvers used the road between military installations and training bases. In the meantime, more than \$40 billion was invested by the federal government in the west, primarily in California steel plants. A second mass migration, to rival that of the Depression, began as people traveled to fill these new war industry jobs.³¹

Immediately after the War, Route 66 experienced a heyday as ex-GIs returned and used the route in a third westward migration to plentiful jobs in California. More than eight million people moved to the west; 3.5 million of them to sunny California. To assist in their travels, Jack Rittenhouse published his Guidebook to Route 66 in 1946, which became the road travelers' Bible. Advice from the book included this practical, if somewhat ominous advice:

Be sure you have your auto jack. A short piece of wide, flat board on which to rest the jack in sandy soil is a sweat preventer...Include a steel tow-rope, tire tools, tire patches, tire pump, and tire chains. One of those war-surplus foxhole shovels takes little space and may come in very handy. Put new batteries and a new bulb in your flashlight. Carry a container of drinking water, which becomes a vital necessity as you enter the deserts. For chilly nights, and early mornings, you'll find a camp blanket or auto robe useful--it comes in handy if you find inadequate

bedding in a tourist cabin...Hardly a month goes by that some motorist does not die who would have lived if he had such equipment.³²

Bobby Troup was among those who traveled to California after the war. He and his first wife, Cynthia, drove a 1941 Buick on a ten-day trek. Along the way, Cynthia suggested the catchy title and Bobby wrote the words to the famous "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," a lyrical travelogue of the road. Soon after their 1946 arrival in Hollywood, the song was recorded by Nat "King" Cole and became an American classic. The song has since been covered by a diverse group of artists, including the Rolling Stones, Asleep at the Wheel, Perry Como, Buckwheat Zydeco, and, in the footsteps of her father, Natalie Cole.³³ (See Appendix C.)

Route 66 saw even more use by travelers in the 1950s and 1960s as they used the road for vacations during these prosperous and consumer-oriented times. Also, people continued to migrate to California in large numbers. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the interstates began to replace Route 66 and its use began to decline. The last Route 66 signs in Illinois were taken down in the late 1970s.

Future of the Road

Anyone who travels the road today can easily see its sad state of disrepair. Reports are constantly coming in that yet another section of the first or second alignment has been dug up to make way for a subdivision or mall. Venerable old buildings and landmarks fall to the wrecking ball on a regular basis. What or who is keeping this road alive? It is partially those intrepid souls who have somehow been touched by the road and have chosen to chronicle it in some inspired fashion in order to make it accessible to those who never experienced the road in its

heyday as well as to those who wish to relive their early memories of the road.

Route 66 Associations and Information Centers have sprung up in many cases around the issue of preservation of the road. Their activities range from preservation, to education, to motor tours and rallies. The United States Associations, Museums, and Information Centers and International Organizations are listed below:

**Ash Fork Tourist Center
Old Route 66
Ash Fork, AZ 86320**

**Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona
P.O. Box 66
Kingman, AZ 86402**

**California Historic Route 66 Association
2117 Foothill Blvd., #66
LaVerne, CA 91750**

**National Historic Route 66 Federation
P.O. Box 423
Tujunga, CA 91043-0423**

**California Route 66 Museum
16849 D Street/Route 66
Victorville, CA 92392**

**Route 66 Hall of Fame
Dixie Trucker's Home
I-55 and U.S. 136
McLean, IL 61754**

**Route 66 Association of Illinois
2743 Veterans Parkway, Suite 166
Springfield, IL 62704**

**Old Route 55 Information Center
Old Route 66 and Madison Avenue
Box 66
Staunton, IL 62088**

**U.S. Route 66 Association
Central Region
P.O. Box 150
West Point, IN 47992-0150**

**Kansas Historic Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 169
Riverton, KS 66770**

**Missouri Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 8117
St. Louis, MO 63156**

**New Mexico Route 66 Association
1415 East Central
Albuquerque, NM 87106**

**Route 66 Museum
2229 Gary Blvd.
Clinton, OK 73601**

**National Route 66 Museum
Pioneer and Third
Elk City, OK 73644**

**Oklahoma Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 21382
Oklahoma City, OK 74834**

**Old Route 66 Association of Texas
P. O. Box 66
McLean, TX 79057**

Another encouraging sign of the interest in the road is the proliferation of international organizations, many of whose members have traveled to the United States to travel Route 66. Their addresses (in alphabetical order) are:³⁵

Route 66 Association of Belgium
40 General de Gaulle Avenue
1050 Brussels, Belgium

Canadian Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 31061
#8 - 2929 St. Johns Street
Port Moody, BC Canada
V3H 4T4

Friends of Route 66 (UK)
The Drum Inn
Cockington Village
Torquay, Devon TQ2 6XA
England

Route 66
88 rue du Chateau
F. 92600 Asnieres
France

McLean County Tour

This tour is meant to give the traveler an overview of Route 66 in its heyday. Not every building which stood along the road will be described, but a sampling of buildings and interesting information is provided so that the traveler can get a sense of what one would have encountered when driving from Chenoa to McLean between the late 1920s and 1970s when the road was bypassed by I-55. The tour provides the traveler with background information about the landscape through which the road passes to allow the traveler to fully appreciate the beauty and history of the area. Those who take this tour are encouraged to spend some time in the communities through which they will pass; nothing can give you a better sense of the spirit of the road in its heyday.

An attempt has been made to provide accurate, well-documented information from primary sources, including interviews with those who lived or worked along the road.

Although you will be driving primarily on the second alignment from the late 1940s, you will be able to drive or walk along short sections of the first alignment from the late 1920s. The current use of old buildings and odometer readings will be given in parentheses. Although it is only 42 miles between Chenoa and McLean, the tour totals 45-50 miles, depending upon the side trips selected.

Drive carefully, obeying all laws, and pull completely off the roadway if you stop to look and/or take photographs. For the most part, you will be traveling on the northbound lanes of the old four-lane. In some cases, the road has been recently reduced from two- to four-lanes. Please be watchful for those who

have not adjusted to this change. Another word of caution: some railroad crossings do not have protective gates, so be very careful as you approach them.

As you begin your tour, remember that the road is still in use. Some of the buildings are places of business; others have become private residences. Please respect people's right to privacy. Do not trespass, litter, or otherwise damage the property through which you pass. And, of course, you should not remove anything as a memento of your trip. Leave the road as you found it so that others may enjoy it in the future.

Chenoa

(population 1,800)

Chenoa was laid out by Matthew T. Scott in 1856 and grew along the alignments of the Toledo, Peoria and Western, (TP&W) and the Chicago and Alton (C&A) railroads which met at a four-way crossing. The town name is an Indian word for which various definitions are given, including the romantic "white dove," or the intriguingly moody "dark and bloody ground."

Start tour at the north end of Chenoa. If traveling from the north, turn left at County Road 19); if traveling from the south, turn right past an old Texaco Station (Goodins Used Cars). Chester Henry, an Illinois State Trooper from 1957-1984, (1993 Illinois Route 66 Association Hall of Fame Member) recalls that the station served as a hangout for the troopers:

Don and Harry Barth ran that old Texaco station and we were just in there every day....we bought a lot of gas there and he'd take care of our cars and service our cars....Most troopers stopped in there because it was right on 66....You could use any [service station] that you wanted but we knew Don and Harry and it was right on the road, so you'd just pull in there.³⁶

The three metal poles on your left are all that remain of the Texaco station's sign which could have been seen from a great distance and also would have been used to attract traffic from the four-lane. On the left are the remains of the old Chenoa cannery which was an important economic asset to Chenoa. The red brick building stored sugar; the larger building, cans (Union Roofing).

Cross the railroad tracks. Turn left on Hamilton Street. Turn right on First Avenue. Stop at the Matthew T. Scott House. Scheduled tours are available on Sundays from 2-4 p.m. or can be arranged by appointment (815/945-4555). The back part of this house was built in 1855; the front part was added in 1863. (During your tour, be sure to view the sculptures and wood carvings of W.D. Neher, the local photographer.) Not only was Scott important to the development of the town, he gave land which later became the Tourist Park at Morehead and Route 66.

Continue on First Avenue to the stop sign. The Chenoa water tower is visible over the building directly in front of you.

Water towers:

There are two elements to a water storage unit: the storage tank itself and the pump which pumps water into the tower when it falls below a certain point. The purpose of the tower is to use gravity to create water pressure. Some of the oldest water towers are cylinders, which hold 10-15,000 gallons of water. Although this is adequate to supply a small town, such as Towanda, it is inadequate to put out a large fire, since the supply could easily be depleted within half an hour. Thus,

the size of the water tower directly impacts on homeowner's insurance rates. Newer water towers hold 30-50,000 gallons; the largest water towers are oval and hold up to 100,000 gallons. The towers were sometimes built with federal grants in order to upgrade a community water source. They may belong to communities or may be owned by individuals or private businesses. The oldest water tower on the tour is in Fell Park, Normal.

Turn right on Commercial, stop at stop sign, cross Division, turn left on Veto St. into the downtown, crossing the TP&W tracks. The first Chenoa depot burned down in 1918; the second depot, in a sad state of disrepair, is on your right. The downtown area, beset by a disastrous fire in its early years, has many buildings which date to the 1890s. Stop at the stop sign, cross Owsley St., bear left. You are now on Green St. **There were once five grocery stores downtown, so travelers could stop and get picnic supplies. Park your car and go into the Chenoa Pharmacy on your left to view photos of early Chenoa. This building has been in continuous use as a pharmacy since 1889. Continue your tour on Green St. past the Thrane Building, Chenoa's first telephone company (Hair Etc. II) on your left and the early studio of W.D. Neher, a local photographer and artist/woodcarver. Cross W. Lincoln St. and stop at the local Historical Society (306 Green Street) on your right, which shares a building with the fire station.** Call one of the volunteers whose phone numbers are listed on the door for an informative and interesting discussion of town history.

Continue on to the stop sign. Turn left (Route 24), go two blocks and turn left on Division St. The Chenoa Library, a former church building, is located at the corner of Lincoln and Division. Stop at the City Park which allows you a close up look at the water tower, built in 1957. Continue on Division and turn left on Owsley. As you turn left on Veto St. into the downtown area, look to your right to see a mural representing Chenoa's history painted on the side of a building at the site of a small park. Looking straight ahead at the wedge-shaped building, imagine the gazebo which occupied the middle of the street until recent years. Go to the right of this wedge-shaped building on Green St. Stop at the stop sign on Lincoln St. At the second stop sign, on your right, notice the building which was a Cities Service gas station (Embry's Small Engine Repair). It had previously been Wahl Brothers and sold Dixie gas.

Turn right on Route 24, cross the tracks and immediately turn right on Morehead. Find a safe place to pull over. This is still a very heavily-traveled intersection. It was a very accident-prone area in its earlier days and since the stop signs used to be located on Route 24 and many people didn't see them, there were many collisions and fatalities at this crossing, including those between cars and trains. Merle Parry, a lifelong resident of Chenoa, recalls that "Somebody was always getting hit by a train down here at the corner. The Chicago and Alton train would hit somebody. If you come across this way from the east and didn't pay attention...there was no gates or anything..."³⁷ Mr. Parry's wife, Carolyn, also a lifelong resident of Chenoa, adds "...a carload of kids, Chenoa kids and Fairbury kids, were coming from Pontiac and they were racing the train and they went across in front of it and were hit and Manny Streid went over from his gas station right away to see about it and his daughter was in the car. It killed her."³⁸ Mr.

Parry interjects: "He picked up this girl and went to carry her away from the railroad tracks and said, 'My God, it's Sis.'³⁹ Accidents with injuries or fatalities resulted in a call to the local funeral homes which ran ambulances as a courtesy and, according to Mr. Henry, many times lost money when they went unpaid.

You'd have to get a hold of them to get them out, it took a long time. Of course they weren't real professional in life saving support measures or anything like that. You'd get out there and throw [the accident victim] on a cot and wait 40 minutes until you got them to the hospital. In those days there wasn't any doctors in the emergency rooms like they have today.... Of course, [having the funeral home ambulance] was kind of handy when you had a fatal accident....If the undertaker was around, if he was driving the ambulance, he could take...the body to the funeral home and make arrangements for it.⁴⁰

There is a section of the first alignment of Route 66 just across Route 24, behind you. You may want to walk a short distance along the road. As you return to your car, look back down Morehead, picturing a time when this street was called "Gasoline Alley."

Gas Stations

Gas stations evolved from livery stables where gasoline was poured by bucket into a funnel, always a dangerous activity. In 1905, Mr. S.F. Bowser invented a self-measuring pump with a storage tank separated from the hand pump for safety reasons; it was called a filling station, thus later references to the businesses used this term. Later, "Mom and Pop" general stores sold gasoline, in addition to dry goods and groceries. The gas station with which most people are familiar is the service station, often associated with a major oil company, which sold the gas of that particular oil company, as well as provided mechanical and towing services. In order to attract customers and to engender

customer loyalty, company logos and slogans were developed and a standardized station design became associated with a particular brand of gasoline. As these became more than places to fill your car with gasoline, display areas for products expanded, and the inside sales area made room for a customer waiting area. Garage bays were added to offer full automobile servicing and restrooms became standard features.⁴¹

It seems somewhat ironic that gas stations which began their existence as part of a "Mom and Pop" general store have come full circle, becoming places to purchase food and other miscellaneous items from corporate "Mom and Pops" mini-marts.

At this corner, on your left (Porcelain Doll Factory) there have been many gas stations and restaurants. Among the earliest was Sweney's Oil and Restaurant; in later years it was a DX station (see Appendix B).

Motels, Tourist Courts and Camps

Travelers had to have someplace to spend the night when they undertook an extended trip. Entrepreneurs along the road provided camping sites, then some roughly built cabins to accommodate the traveler. These pre-chain, pre-franchise facilities eventually evolved into free-standing motels. These were generally small operations, which usually included a restaurant and gas station. The "Moms" and "Pops" who operated these complexes worked seven days a week, 24 hours a

day. Early postcards featured the services and accommodations provided, and many showed both exterior and interior views of the motel.

On the left (Chenoa Welding and Fabrication, Inc.) was Immanuel (Manny) Streid's Standard station, bus station, and restaurant, leased to Mr. Winters, who ran Winter's Cafe, later the Dutch Apple Pie Restaurant. Mr. Streid also had four cottages, connected by shared carports, behind his business. The Streid family would later become an important name along the Route 66 Belt Line in Bloomington (see Appendix B). On the far side of Streid's was Lanterman's Garage, which had a canopy and Shell gasoline pumps out front. After the canopy was damaged and/or torn off a number of times by careless drivers, it was removed (see Appendix B). On your right was a 1920s Standard station, which was torn down and replaced by this building (Goodins Used Cars), also a Standard station (see Appendix B). Mrs. Parry's father ran this station before opening a restaurant uptown. She recalls childhood visits to the station in the 1930s:

We went about every night to watch the traffic. Sit down there in the car. My mother and usually my grandmother and I. And then Mrs. Streid was across the street. Her husband had a Standard Station across the street catty corner--it was a bus station, too. And, she'd come over with her kids and we'd visit or we'd go over and sit with her, we visited back and forth and then we'd go across the street...Up and down the street, we'd visit all the different gas stations....It was just fun to watch the different cars....⁴²

In the late 1930s, Mr. Parry used to go down to the station at night and hang out with his friends:

We just sat in the station with the proprietor, laughed and told stories, and watched the cars go by....Some of these stations were open all night, some would close maybe at 10 o'clock. It was a wild and wooly place, busy and all lit up and everything. And there was a lot of rivalry....If a customer would pull in one drive and stop at a gas pump, all the other attendants all up and down the street, if they weren't busy, they'd come out and say "On the drive, on the drive, hey, on the drive, Manny, on the drive!" A lot of good-natured shouting back and forth.⁴³

A bulk oil company occupied the land between you and the well-known Steve's Cafe, which was opened by the Wahl brothers (see Appendix B). Steve Wilcox had previously opened a restaurant at Sweeney's before he moved to the location today occupied by Goodin's Used Car Sales, Antiques and Gifts. Steve's Cafe served pie and coffee which are still spoken of in reverential tones by customers. Steve's was apparently the place to hang out in Chenoa, as local young people congregated in the 1940s to dance to records of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and local bands:

In the evening...after [the other customers] left, kids would all gather in the back room. They had a jukebox and for the price of a Coke you could just dance all night....There were two windows at the back, one on each side of the jukebox. Kids would ride all around the building to see who was there, check it out to see if some of their gang was there. We had a lot of fun there.⁴⁴

As you continue your automobile tour on Morehead, note that a 1930s miniature golf course occupied the corner on your right at Ash Street. A Phillips 66 station (The Bank of Graymont) was located on your left. Cross the Southern Pacific tracks. On your left at the corner of Scott and Morehead was a Texaco station (Law and Justice Commission and the Candleberry Creek Company).

Just ahead is Tourist Park, now called Red Bird Park (see Appendix B). Pull over to your right in order to view the old road bed of the first alignment of Route 66 which curved off to the north, ending just about where you began your tour at the Texaco station (Goodin's Used Cars). Across the road is the park

which Matthew T. Scott included in the layout of the town. Originally, travelers could camp free in the park (Thus, the name "Tourist Park."); later the land was leased for a tourist court. The earliest buildings at the court were chicken brooders, converted to lodging for travelers. Eldon "Hip" Pearson operated a lunch stand here. Later, Ralph Wagner leased and operated a restaurant at a site in the park. Mr. Parry recalls that in 1938 or 1939, the American Legion raised funds to pay for a new building by providing entertainment and a fish fry in the park:

...they had home talent shows and WLS [radio] shows, including "The Arkansas Woodchopper," Pat Buttram, Homer and Jethro, etc.....[T}hey'd have a big crowd down there and the Legionnaires would be frying this fish and they had a real good way of doing it....You got a chunk of fish and a slice of bread for so much money. And, of course, they had beer and Coke and stuff like that. And, they'd have the damnedest crowd down there in that Tourist Park you ever saw because it was a bargain to get that fish and to listen to these people from WLS. They only had it for two summers, four times a summer, and they paid for that building up there.⁴⁵

Directly behind the park and to your left were located ponds for the purpose of providing ice to cut during the winter and stored for use during hot weather. Not far from the ponds, west towards I-55, was the Chenoa Tile and Brick Factory.

Tile and brick factories

Tile played an important role in the drainage of McLean County, turning the wet, unusable soil into valuable farm ground. The first tile was shipped into the county until about 1880, when tile factories began to appear: Pike and Castle of Chenoa and Tillbury of Towanda being two of the largest.

Pike and Castle in Chenoa was typical of the factories which supplied cheap, functional tile and brick to rebuild fire-prone wooden business districts. The brick and tile works not only manufactured the brick for much of Chenoa's downtown, it produced the tile which drains hundreds of surrounding acres. The Tillbury works in Towanda not only supplied brick and tile for community use, but also provided paving bricks for Bloomington's city streets.

Proceed to the stop sign. A concrete block Sinclair station stood on your left (Chenoa Dental Clinic) and a very busy Mobil gas station, car wash, and restaurant occupied the abandoned building on your right. Another gas station was directly across the road and a little to the left. Turn left on the second alignment of Route 66 and cross the railroad tracks. The fact that a railroad crossed this four lane highway will give you some indication of the dangers associated with traveling Route 66. It also, of course, led to some frustration since traffic had to wait for long freight trains to clear the highway before it could proceed. Sometimes state troopers set up a detail at this site and pulled over everyone who didn't stop for the flashing red light.

Stop at the stop sign. Caution: this is only a two-way stop; traffic on Route 24 does not stop. A Standard station occupied the corner on your left (Chenoa Family Restaurant); Horne's gas station and restaurant was on your right (Shell station).

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

As you proceed, you will notice some patching of the road and some newly paved segments. Much of old Route 66 has been turned over to the counties to maintain; it is primarily used by local residents to travel from one community to another. Present-day Route 66 travelers have become used to the two-way road and its constant repair work. It is, of course, much more economical and practical to maintain two lanes than four. Note that the old 66 extends from Morehead and would have joined back into the four lane at 0.8.

Agriculture/Farming

Early on, livestock was the basis of farming in McLean County. It would be many years before machinery and tile drainage made farming the prairie possible. In fact, from the 1820s until the mid-1850s, most farmers raised livestock and then drove them to markets in Galena, Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, among others. These drives followed the paths already worn into the prairie by Indians and buffalo, which, in turn, were followed by the railroad, Route 4, Route 66, and later, Interstate 55. In the 1850s, with the invention of the steel-bottom plow, a revolution occurred in McLean County farming. Settlers who originally shunned the prairie land for groves because of the difficulty of clearing and planting the ground, moved out onto the prairie as a result of technological innovations such as the steel-bottomed plow. Corn was one of the first crops to be planted in the area and by the mid-1900s, fertilizers

and herbicides gave them higher yields. The demand for oils during World War II stimulated the production of soybeans, which are still a major crop. This saved McLean County from a one-crop agriculture, a desirable state since this gives some protection from bugs or fungus damage to corn and fluctuation of corn prices. Other grains such as oats, wheat, barley, rye, and hay have been grown in the County but play only a minor role in the economy.

At 3.2, notice the passive restraint system on your left in front of the railroad tracks. This is one of only three in the state, installed by Amtrak as they study the practicality of using this system to separate traffic from high-speed trains expected to travel along these tracks in the future. The camera on the pole on your right is part of the study.

On your left (3.7) is the Ballard Elevator, once the site of a small community (see Appendix B). Elevators were built every three to five miles along the railroad so that farmers could make one to two round trips per day in their wagons hauling grain. This is an early elevator as evidenced by its wood frame and iron-clad exterior, meant as protection from the elements and as protection against sparks from early coal-powered locomotives. When Mr. Parry's father came to the Chenoa area in 1918 to operate an elevator, he was in competition with Graham and Bennion, the owners/operators of this elevator. An attendant lived in a small house on the other side of the tracks. The concrete arches are all that remain of the scale house.

Elevators

The term elevator is applied to both the structure and the device used to transport grain vertically within the structure. To avoid confusion, the transporting mechanism is referred to as the "legs," and the structures themselves as elevators. The workhouse contains the lower floors where the receiving and unloading operations take place on the first story. The headhouse, which is the upper two to five stories, is the head drive of the vertical conveyor system. Together, they are referred to as the mainhouse.

Grain is hauled to the elevator and then elevated to the top of the structure where it is distributed by gravity to either storage bins or a wagon, truck, or railroad car. Elevators also provide landmarks on the prairie horizon, ranging from early wood frame and iron-clad construction, such as the Ballard elevator, to the more recent concrete commercial style, which became the elevator material of choice shortly after Horace Peavey built the first one of this type on the outskirts of Minneapolis in 1900. The cylindrical-shaped concrete structures were an engineering innovation when introduced to the grain industry. The slip form technology used in their construction produces a tank in one solid and continuous piece of concrete without joints or patches. The walls are 6 to 8 inches thick.⁴⁶

The spacing of elevators was sometimes determined by a town that was already established along the railroad route. Ideally, however, railroads wanted elevators as far apart as possible because their profits depended upon the acceleration and braking required of the trains. As a result, Midwestern elevators are spaced irregularly about three to five miles apart. Ironically, today much of the grain is shipped to market by truck, rather than by rail.

Pull over at 6.6 to view the first alignment of Route 66 through Lexington. It is only opened as "Memory Lane" for Lexington's annual Taste of Country Fair on the third weekend in July or by advance special request. (This tour will take you to the other end of this road section where you may choose to walk a short distance on the road.) Notice the posts for close-to-the-road billboards, which greeted early travelers prior to attempts to beautify the roadways by removing or limiting signs. Advertisements are posted on these billboards and Burma Shave signs line the road during Lexington's celebration of the town and the road. A small park has been located here where the road is barricaded.

Billboards

Billboards are a form of public communication; some people even consider cave wall paintings an early attempt at advertisement. It was in 1870, however, that poster art, the forerunner of the billboard, appeared. It was television, bombarding viewers with flickering images, flashed on the screen at a rapid rate, that prepared consumers for billboard advertisements. Once consumers could assimilate this rapid flow of impressions and ideas, they became receptive to concepts

introduced visually. Billboards then became the perfect medium for a newly mobile society.

Travelers could also expect billboard advertisements in the form of paintings on large walls and on the roofs of barns. Some of these early attempts at advertising exist as "ghost" signs, faint and fading shadows of the early ads. The Meramec Cavern and Mail Pouch Tobacco barn signs are two very familiar advertising signs which can still be spotted along the roadside. Soon, however, criticism of outdoor ads and complaints about the uglification of the American landscape led to the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, which strictly regulated their use.

Burma Shave Signs

In the late 1920s, Burma Shave, a brushless shaving cream, was advertised by the unique marketing technique of placing a set of six rhyming 1' x 3' signs at 100-foot intervals along Route 66 and other highways. They were designed to be read for 18 seconds each while traveling 35 miles per hour. The literary quality of the signs varied, but they were generally light-hearted and corny, utilizing folk humor and wit. For almost 40 years, 7,000 sets or 42,000 individual signs were posted between Maine and Texas. They never formally appeared in Arizona, Nevada, or New Mexico because of a lack of traffic. Contests were held beginning in the early 1930s, with a prize of \$100 for a rhyme selected for use by Burma Shave.

The demise of the Burma Shave signs resulted from urban growth and competition from television ads, as well as the fact that Americans were driving too fast to read the ads. Burma Shave finally was sold to Philip Morris in 1963, and in 1964 a set of signs was given to the Smithsonian, which declared "Shaving Brushes/You'll Soon See 'Em/On the Shelf/In Some Museum," a fitting epitaph for a popular art form that provided pleasure for motorists for so many years.⁴⁷

Follow the curve around.

Lexington

(population 1,800)

Lexington was named after the Revolutionary War's Massachusetts battleground. It is one of the earliest towns in McLean County, being settled in 1828 by John Patton whose family spent their first winter in an unchinked cabin near Lexington. When Patton first arrived, the Kickapoo Indians still had villages in the township. Shortly after helping Patton build his own cabin in June of 1829, the Indians left the area, never to return. Patton's cabin was used as a fort during the Black Hawk War, but no Indians attacked it.

The town of Lexington was not officially laid out until 1837 by James Brown and Asahel Gridley, being immediately adversely affected by the Panic of 1837. The village finally prospered when the Chicago and St. Louis Railroad was built through town and it was incorporated in 1855.

Start tour at the north edge of Lexington.

Neon

Neon gas was discovered by Sir William Ramsey in 1898.

Luminous tube lighting, as neon is more accurately called, is simply a vacuum glass tube fitted at each end with a metal terminal or electrode. Inside the tube is a small amount of the inert gas. Connected to the two electrodes is a source of high-voltage electrical power. In this ideal condition, a neon sign can have a life span of about 30–40 years but many do not last that long since they are subjected to severe weather and other conditions that may cause the glass tubes to break.

Neon was first introduced into the United States in the early 1920s. By the 1930s virtually every city and town could boast of at least one neon sign. It is ideal for signage because it shows up in even the worst weather; a neon light has five times greater visibility but requires less wattage than an incandescent lamp. Many factors lead to the decline of the neon sign, including attempts at highway beautification, and sign control ordinances passed by most cities in the 1960s.⁴⁸

At the stop sign, look to your right where a gas station and the Mesa Cafe used to sit. Notice the recently restored neon sign informing travelers of their location (see Appendix B). As you turn left onto Main Street, notice the small park, plaque, and information kiosk erected by Lexington High School students. The Lexington Motel sat on your right and was the site of Gleeson's Mobil gas station; the motel is currently rented as apartments (see Appendix B). A Standard

station (The Filling Station Restaurant) sat on your left. Stop in here for genuine road food and a chance to sample Lola's excellent homemade pies.

Turn left on Grove at Anderson Automotive which began life as a gas station and car wash. Follow the curve around. This is part of the first alignment which has been resurfaced. You quickly get a sense of how curvy and narrow the road was; this also contributed to dangerous driving conditions. Scroggin Cemetery, established in 1850, is on your left. Directly ahead is the end of "Memory Lane." Pull over and walk for a distance on the first alignment.

Continuing your automobile journey, turn right on N. West Street, stop at stop sign. Turn left on W. North, past the elevators, and cross the tracks. You can get a close-up look at the elaborate drying system of the elevators. Stay straight on W. North, stop at stop sign. Turn left on Pine to Cherry St. Turn left on Cherry St. Stop at stop sign, go straight and enter the park. On your left is the Patton cabin which was moved from its original location to the park. Turn right just past the pavilion and make a complete loop via N. Oak Street and Bowery Streets. Turn left on N. Cherry. Stop at stop signs at intersections with Chatham St., Wall St., and East Main. Turn right on E. Main and drive right around the square.

Town squares

People who traveled prior to bypasses and interstates had to maneuver through downtowns which may have contained one of several types of town squares. In McLean County, Route 66 drivers

encountered everything from Philadelphia, Block, and Slashed Squares, to no square at all.

The square in Lexington is a Philadelphia Square. Here, Main and Center Streets come together and a rectangular square is created from corners cut out of the four adjoining blocks. Chenoa and Bloomington are good examples of the Block Square in which four streets pass along each of the sides of the square and all of the surrounding blocks retain their rectangular shape. Towanda and McLean are Slashed Squares, split diagonally by a main street paralleling the railroad and leaving triangular open spaces on either side. Normal, Shirley and Funk's Grove were designed without a square.⁴⁹

Stop half-way around the square to look at the Civil War Monument erected by the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) Post 240. Most central Illinois towns have erected a monument to honor the dead and veterans of the Civil War. If you wish to view the water tower, continue around the square, turn right on Center St., left on Chestnut, left on Cherry, and left on Main St, following the square back to East Main. Turn right on West Main St. As you drive through downtown, you will pass "The Fort," home to the Lexington Historical Society. You might wish to stop and get some background information on the area. Notice the old depot on your left (Koch's Depot Antiques and Oak Furniture) which now serves as an antique store. On your right is a restored blacksmith's

shop (Renovation Contractors, Ltd.) and the Lexington Garage Company (Bumper to Bumper), an old automobile garage.

Cross the tracks and turn left on Grove St. at Anderson Automotive; you are now back on the first alignment of Route 66. John Farr's Texaco station occupied the ground on your right (Lexington Speed-Wash). Follow this road to the Oasis Drive-In on your right (see Appendix B). Elmo and Arline Winterland (1998 Route 66 Association Hall of Fame Members), along with her brother, Allen Gleeson, were in partnership when they opened the restaurant in 1960. The plan was to sell only ice cream and beverages; the trio soon decided that they needed to offer a limited number of sandwiches. Mrs. Winterland recalled the menu:

When we ended up, I think we had maybe 12 different kind of sandwiches. And we became famous for what was called a "Luigi Burger" and this fella came through the country and it was a little packet of spices and you had to sign a contract and no one could serve these within a 25-mile radius. It cost us to do that and it really became popular. I had different guys come in and they'd taste it and they'd say, "Oh, we can figure out what's in here," but they couldn't. There was some secret thing in it. There was anise in it, I know that. But, it was a powder and you had to mix it up and you put tomato juice with it and then you put chopped onion on your hamburger and then the Luigi [sauce] and then a slice of cheese. It was really a good sandwich. People haven't forgotten that yet to this day.⁵⁰

In addition, the Oasis sold french fries, sodas, milkshakes, vanilla and chocolate soft serve ice cream cones, and Arline's homemade lemonade. Prices were reasonable: "When we started out, our hamburgers were 29 cents and then the penny [tax] made it 30 cents. And, then we had 10 cent ice cream cones and I think the big, humongous one was 50 cents, but it had a pint of ice cream on it, I suppose. We also had little bitty ones for the babies, but we gave those away."⁵¹

The original building featured six outdoor, umbrella tables that sat on cement patios; there was no indoor seating. The carport was added in 1963 or so,

although the restaurant never had car hops and customers ordered at walk up windows: "We just had the carport because it was so hot out there in the sun. And then we put a roof over it and built one big cement slab and had long tables rather than the round ones.....It was just window service. At that time period that's about all you saw. You had carhops maybe in town or close to town but it was strictly window service [at the Oasis]."⁵²

The Oasis was a family-operated business with Mr. and Mrs. Winterland's son and daughter-in-law, grandsons, and even Mrs. Winterland's mother, helping out. When they decided to sell the drive-in in 1971, it was primarily because of the arthritis in Elmo's hands. Another reason for selling was that, although sales were still good, I-55 was beginning to be built around Lexington. Three different, subsequent owners kept the restaurant open for a short time, but it eventually closed and is now used for storage.

Go to the stop sign. As you pause here, look across the road, to your right, at the site of an old race track (Anvil Brand Shoe Company). Although nothing remains of the race track, it was an important part of the social life of early Lexington.

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

Turn left on Route 66. On your right, just before the Mackinaw River bridge you will see a two-story white house on the hill, known locally as "Mosquito Ridge." This was Toby Davidson's restaurant where people stopped for a good steak dinner in the 1950s. He would later relocate to Bloomington's Beltline.

Notice the small grain bin on your left (0.8) for farm use. Note that it has its own dryer and a portable elevator which can be moved from bin to bin. You have no doubt noticed the large, open fields through which you have passed. Farming has changed greatly from the early days in McLean County. Most of the fields you will see are planted with corn or soybeans. There are very few farms which have livestock as their primary focus, although some farmers keep livestock for their own needs.

A Stuckey's gift shop and gas station sat on your left (3.2) until I-55 was built. The Stuckey's chain featured pecan log candy and guaranteed a sticky back seat for those people who gave in to their children's pleas for the treat. A one-of-a-kind gift shop called Asian Arts was located along the road on your left (4.2). Trooper Henry recalls that the shop

...had a bunch of things, products that they brought...overseas from Asia to sell, like bamboo chairs....A truck driver robbed the place one night....The guy was in earlier in the day and kind of cased the joint and then he came back and parked his semi over on the shoulder [of the] northbound lane and walked across there and broke in...and the owner, he lived in the back, he just opened up the door and seen a guy out there and he just put a rifle on him and shot and killed him.⁵³

Note the hedge-row on your left (2.2). Osage orange, which produces spiny hedge apples, was an early fencing and windbreak. Jonathan Baldwin Turner brought this plant to Illinois from its native Arkansas and Kansas in 1847. Advertised as "horse high, hog tight, and bull strong," it predated barbed wire and was the best available fencing to early settlers. Most of these hedge rows have been torn out in recent years.

Illinois State Police

As you drive, you will note the posted speed limit signs. When the "hard" roads began, there was no official maximum speed limit. Drivers were expected to drive at a "reasonable and proper" speed, to be determined by road and weather conditions.

Len Small, a Kankakee banker and farmer, ran for Governor in 1920, and was successfully elected on his promise to take Illinois out of the mud. During the first year of his administration, nearly 1,100 miles of road were paved. Soon, however, heavy trucks, loaded beyond their capacity, began to break up the road. In 1921, the 52nd General Assembly authorized the Department of Public Works and Buildings to hire a sufficient number of State Highway Patrol officers to enforce the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Law. Thus, the Illinois State Police were formed in 1922 to serve the people of Illinois on the new "hard roads." Eight officers covered the entire state and were paid \$150 a month. Their primary importance was the enforcement of weight limitations to protect the pavement. Other violations such as not obeying the speed law were of secondary importance. The officers were to be firm but courteous with traffic violators and to be ready to aid law-abiding travelers with directions, conditions of the roads, and locations of garages.⁵⁴

This small subdivision on your left (5.3), known as Walnut Grove, or "the frog pond" to old timers, opened in 1958. Originally, there was going to be a six-unit motel with kitchenettes on this site but Barton Construction finished off the units as houses because it was realized that the road would be relocated at some point in the future.

As you approach Towanda, notice the bridge on your right (6.3). This bridge was scheduled to be removed but was saved by Normal Community High School students under the direction of Fred Walk, geography teacher. They are completing a walking trail which runs to the small park on the other side of Towanda.

Towanda

(population 860)

Towanda was settled in 1854 by James Fell of Pontiac when the Chicago and Alton Railroad came through. Its name may be from the Indian for "where we bury our dead." It once claimed to be the highest point between Chicago and St. Louis.

Start your tour at the north edge of Towanda by turning left at Club 66 (6.7). An early Standard station stood here until it was torn down and this one was built in the early 1960s. You are once again on the first alignment of Route 66. Notice the collection of junked cars on your right. The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 regulated such places which were visible from the road, requiring that they be screened from view by tall fences; this Act applied to major highways. Follow the curve around (Jackson St.) and notice the small

block building with a canopy which was an early gas station on your left at the corner of Jackson and Madison. Stop at the stop sign. Turn left on Jefferson St., past the city park on your left. Turn left at Weakley's FS gas station onto Main St. You may want to park downtown and walk back to look at this early station. Note that there are no service bays; the lift was located outdoors, on the left side of the building. Mechanics endured the cold of winter and the heat of summer to repair cars and get stranded motorists back on the road. The lift has been removed and this station has succumbed to the fate of many old gas stations; it is just too expensive to remove or replace the underground tanks and it is not possible to compete with the larger mega-stations. Note that much of the downtown area is built of brick made in the local tile and brick factory.

Turn right onto Madison Street at the stop sign and cross the tracks. You will pass between the water tower and the grain elevators on Monroe Street. This is the second oldest water tower on the tour. Note the small park on your left, a remnant of the other half of the Slashed Square. Turn right onto Adams and cross the tracks, turning right onto Jefferson.

Stop at the stop sign, and proceed across the road, past the site of the Pure Oil Truck Stop (Fast Stop) which opened in 1952 as the Delco Trucker's Lodge and was operated until 1976. Marjorie and Eddie Baize (1996 Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Members) first came to Towanda in 1952 when Route 66 was two lanes; it didn't become a four lane highway until 1954. Eddie was transferred from a truck stop in Gibson City to be shift manager at the Delco Trucker's Lodge, which sold Marathon gasoline. The station became Pure Oil in the Spring of 1955. Pure Oil merged with Union Oil Company of California in late 1964 or 1965, then the facility became Eddie's Union 76 Truck Stop,

sometimes just called "Eddie's Truck Stop." When Eddie first took over the truck stop, gas was 19.9 cents per gallon and diesel fuel was 16.9; when he closed, gas was 30 cents per gallon, of which 11 cents was tax (4 cents going to the federal government and 7 cents going to the state of Illinois). The company set the prices on the gas and it was up to the individual lessee to decide how much discount to give a driver who fueled his semi truck; Mr. Baize usually gave a discount of 3 cents per gallon. The truck stop was open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; they did not close for holidays. Mrs. Baize worked as a bookkeeper, cook, waitress, hostess, and any other jobs that were necessary to keep the place running. She says that in order to keep up this busy work routine "[Eddie]... worked daytime and I worked nights and he took care of the kids and then we switched off. A couple of times I met him out here in the drive; he was coming in as I was going out."⁵⁵

Any mechanical work that had to be performed was done outside since there was no garage at the station. Mr. Baize also made road calls to get trucks back on the road. "Trucks would run out of fuel or freeze up, gel up, at Braidwood [or] Gardner and I drove fuel in my truck, filters, fuses, and go get them on the road."⁵⁶ Closer to home, when bad weather closed Route 66 and trucks were parked all along the road, Eddie would take his jeep to the station, use a generator to operate his pumps, and deliver five gallon cans of diesel fuel to the idling trucks, keeping their motors running for another three to five hours.

Eddie's Truck Stop closed on May 31, 1976, when the interstate opened. The truck stop couldn't remain open, even with an I-55 off ramp.

With an interstate location, you had to have a minimum of 14 acres, and they liked [for you to have] 18 acres, and we were sitting there with 3-1/2 acres without any sewer system. All we had was septic tanks. That was not capable of handling interstate traffic....They looked at

more ground to build on and they would have had to put in a sewer processing plant and that was \$500,000 plus...⁵⁷

Another problem was that the truck stop wasn't modern or up-to-date. It had a dormitory, or a bunkhouse with 24 bunks when Eddie first took it over. He afterwards converted the bunkhouse area into two apartments, living in one from 1954-58 until he moved his wife and three children into a trailer at Walnut Grove subdivision prior to building the house in which he and Marjorie continue to live.

Turn left on Jackson Street. Pause to look behind you at an early alignment of the road. Follow Jackson back to Route 66. You will cross the walking path being completed by the Normal Community High School students. **Turn right** at the stop sign. On your right was a Mobil Station and directly across the street is a small, glass-fronted 1960s building that was Fern's Texaco, located on the site of an earlier gas station and Fern's Cafe.

SET YOUR ODOMETER TO "0"

Note the park on your right (0.4). The pond you see is probably a borrow pit, which is associated with highway overpasses. When the interstates were constructed, the overpass approaches were built using dirt excavated (borrowed) from property close by. These shallow ponds have become a permanent part of the landscape and many now serve a recreational use; some are stocked with fish, allowing fish stories to be told even in the middle of the prairie.

The grand house on your left is **Duncan Manor** (0.8). William Duncan traveled from Kentucky to McLean County in 1863. He farmed over 300 acres of land along the railroad and had this three-story, twenty-room Italianate-style house built, featuring a great curving staircase with a walnut banister. There has

been a great deal of rumor and speculation about Duncan and his manor since the unfinished basement rooms have barred windows and there is a small room, which can only be entered through a trap door from the room above, beneath one of the second-floor bedrooms. Shortly after Duncan arrived, his wife died. A few years later his son was drowned in a slough on the property, and Duncan himself died in 1876.

Normal

(population 41,000)

In 1833, Jesse Fell located his home in this area, originally called North Bloomington, and laid out a town in 1854. Through the efforts of Fell and other influential citizens, Illinois State Normal University was officially founded in 1857 as Illinois' first state university. In February of 1865, the state government of Illinois approved a special charter which incorporated the fledgling community surrounding the school, changing its name to Normal, which was the name given to institutions that trained teachers.

Although early citizens and observers predicted that Normal and Bloomington would become one town, the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington remain separate entities. You will cross Division street on the in-town portion of the tour; the boundaries are not so clearly defined on the Belt Line; you will travel alternately through both communities.

Note: You have been traveling on a fairly straight stretch of Route 66; there has been a curve put into the road which skirts a new subdivision. Follow the curve around, which becomes Shelbourne Drive. Turn left at the stop sign on Henry St. which will curve around to Pine St., the first alignment of the road.

On your right, you will see one of several of Normal's water towers; the Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Children's School also has its own water tower which you can see off to your right.

Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Children's School

While the Civil War was still raging, a group of local citizens met and prepared a proposal requesting that the Illinois State legislature create an institution to care for the dependent children of the state's Civil War soldiers. On February 18, 1865, the Twenty-fourth Illinois General Assembly passed "An Act to establish a home for the children of deceased soldiers." A temporary home opened in August of 1867; "Old Main," was the first permanent building and housed the orphans and administration under one roof. As you can see, various other buildings were constructed over the years. In 1899, following the Spanish-American War, its charter was amended to admit the children of soldiers and sailors from any war. In 1920 the home was opened to all destitute children who had become wards of the state. The name of the home was changed to The Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Children's Home in 1931. The "Old Main" building was razed in 1961 and the home was closed by the state in 1979. Some of the land is currently owned by private parties, some by the State of Illinois.⁵⁸

William H. Sanders, a resident of ISSCS from 1939 until 1951 recalls a childhood prank associated with Route 66:

...when I was in grade school...for kicks we used to pile up branches and stuff across the highway down on where Route 66 and Pine St. sort of came together. This was after dark, and we would hide in the bushes and watch these poor guys come screeching up there, and say, "hey, what's this stuff up here?", and they'd have to get out and move the branches so they could proceed on their way. I think we probably got that from the old Westerns and stuff where these guys would pile stuff up in front of the stage coach....It was an evening's entertainment....I thought our little group was the one that originated that little activity but I was at a reunion a year or so ago and [found out that] another group of guys used to do that for the fun of it, before I did...⁵⁹

Continue your tour on Pine St. (4.8). In the early 1920s Manning's filling station and Tourist Camp stood along this road, near the corner of Beech and Pine, catering not only to Route 66 business but also to those people who came to visit their relatives living at ISSCS (Royal Acres, 605 Pine). The business remained, changing its name to Manning's Motel in later years and closing in the early 1960s. Mr. Sanders spent time in the tourist cabins:

...I got into high school and I used to run around with a fella whose dad used to come and visit him on Sundays and he had an old car he used to come down in from Braidwood, that area, and he would rent one of the little cabins for the weekend, maybe stay overnight Saturday and go back Sunday. And we used to go down there and we would get quarts of beer and sit down there and consume those in that cabin without any threat of being harassed. You know, kids growing up, experimenting with things....The cabins were eventually torn down. They expanded their trailer court facilities into the areas where they had the cabins.⁶⁰

On your left at 507 Pine, Ann's Cafe (AFC Checks, Inc.) was a place where Mr. Sanders and his friends "...used to hang out. It was a hamburger joint, [serving] sandwiches and pie and ice cream and stuff."⁶¹ At 310 Pine on your right, John I. Bolt operated a filling station (A-1 Security) in the early 1940s (see Appendix B), and William L. Snedaker operated a tourist camp at 306 Pine (Ultra Gold Auto Detailing), which was known locally as Bill's Cabins. In the 1940s,

Mr. Sanders' friend used to cut grass at the site: "...they were little bungalow things, probably just a bed and a wash basin and a writing table, perhaps."⁶²

Across the road at 305 Pine, on your left, local residents watched the gas station and restaurant change owners and names many times as it pumped Cities Service, Gulf, and Shell gasoline for its Route 66 clientele. The building at 208 Pine (Unique Design) began life as a garage and gas station in 1926 and became the Royal Crown Bottling Company by the early 1940s. It has since been home to a boat works, a farm equipment company, a tile company, a janitorial supply company, and currently houses a cabinet maker. Turn left on Linden. Go to the first stop light, turn left on Willow. You will cross tracks and the street will become Ft. Jesse Road, supposedly named because Fell had a small cabin constructed for himself two miles from his home; locals lovingly referred to it as his "fort." When you reach Veteran's Parkway, turn right.

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

You are now on the Belt Line. In the 1930s, people began to complain about traffic congestion, the noise and the inordinate amount of time it took to travel through town. The Belt Line was built in stages beginning in 1935 and finished in 1941, shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In 1979, the road was renamed Veterans Parkway, to honor veterans of all wars.

Notice the General Electric plant on your left (1.0) at Vernon Avenue/GE Road (behind Walgreen's). This is one of the many businesses that flocked to the area in the mid-1950s, replacing the railroad as the main employer and giving Bloomington-Normal a diverse and stable economic base. At one time, railroad

tracks ran across the road here, making it another dangerous crossing. On your right at this corner is the site of Toby Davidson's restaurant, relocated from Lexington. Also on your right, just barely visible behind other businesses, including the Lone Star restaurant, is the old Prairie Travler Motel which opened shortly after the Belt Line was completed (see Appendix B). The remaining original structure is privately owned and has been converted to an apartment building.

In the mid-1960s K-Mart (1.8), on your right at the intersection of Route 9, was one of the first stores to open up along the Belt Line. A Purple Martin gas station also occupied this corner. Eastland Mall was built here (2.0) in the late 1960s, beginning a growth spurt on the east side of town, which continues to-day.

The State Farm Corporate building on your right (2.6) is one of their several buildings in the area. (At one time, a farmer maintained a small air strip along this side of the road between Route 9 and Oakland Avenue.) The well-known insurance company was started in 1922 by G.J. Mecherle, a local farmer. (In downtown Bloomington, you will see a building which served as State Farm's home office for many years.) There was a traffic light and at least two gas stations at the corner of Oakland Avenue and Route 66 (Hardee's),

As hard as it might be to imagine today, the sweeping curve you are on (3.1) was reportedly designed to handle 100-mile per hour traffic, similar to Germany's Autobahn. Trooper Henry remembers that he clocked a group of people here "...at 80 miles an hour, all dressed up in tails, greatcoats, and striped pants, all going to a wedding. One followed the other one right through this 45

[mph] zone. We delayed them a little bit.⁶³ Many of the present-day traffic lights and the intersecting roads were added long after the Belt Line was built.

The buildings on your left (3.6) are two of the latest in the series of Bloomington State Farm buildings. The Five Star Truck Stop was located on your left (near Stahly's Truck City).

You are approaching an important corner in Route 66 history (4.4). In the early 1950s, at the corner of Routes 66 and 150, Bob Johnson opened up a restaurant; travelers and locals alike enjoyed the featured entree--broasted chicken (see Appendix B). Later, a huge chicken was added to the roof line, providing an easily-recognized landmark. Robert D. Johnson, a native Bloomingtonian, (1999 Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Member) leased a restaurant at the corner of Routes 150 and 66 in 1957. He named it Bob Johnson's Brandtville Restaurant and from the first day he opened his doors, he was busy. Part of the reason may have been that it was the only place in town open 24 hours a day, and part of the reason may have been his motto, "Take care of 'em, 'cause they'll be back." But, perhaps, the main reason people frequented Brandtville was the good food, including the broasted chicken for which his restaurant became famous. The chicken specialty came about because

I was sitting there with blue plate specials...and I said, "I gotta get a gimmick." And there was man come by one day selling chicken fryers and I said, "Well, I can't afford one of those," "Yes, you can," [he said]. And, so you know he brought one in and we cooked it up, fired it up, and it was great. We exhausted the smell outside so when you drove up, you could smell the fried chicken. It was just one of those things and I was at the right time at the right place. It just took off.⁶⁴

The present building (Ned Kelly's, Sonoma Cucina) was constructed to accommodate the increasing numbers of customers, and the smaller restaurant was razed. In 1984, Mr. Johnson decided to retire and sold his restaurant to Bob

Knapp. A gas station was also on the property. Chuck Benedict (1995 Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Member), who had operated a very successful gas station north of McLean, managed Brandville Gas Station for three years. When he went to work for them in 1977, there were 12 men working to keep it open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When Benedict left in March of 1980, six men were left doing the same thing; by this time self-serve pumps had been installed.⁶⁵ The area became known as Brandville after Arthur Brandt opened a truck line on the property. Immanuel (Manny) Streid, from Chenoa, moved to the area just across the road and opened a gas station, motel, and the renowned Streid's Restaurant (Schlotzsky's Deli) in the late 1940s. It burned in the 1970s and was never rebuilt (see Appendix B). To your right, on Morrissey St., the L & L motel catered to the needs of travelers at this busy intersection, beginning in the early 1950s. The motel is still open and operating (see Appendix B). Continue to Bloomington's Main St. exit (5.3). On your right is the site of the old Phil-Kron Drive-In Theatre, which was also the site of a smorgasbord restaurant called the Sinorak, the backward spelling of the name of the owner, Mr. Karonis (see Appendix B). Turn right onto Main St. (Business 51). Note: In the early days of the road, Main St. was a two-way street but traffic demands were such that it has been changed to one-way south. So, in order to travel the early road, it is necessary to jog around a bit through the downtown area.

Bloomington (population 57,000)

The area, originally known as Blooming Grove, was settled by John Hendrix of Virginia and John Dawson of Kentucky in 1822. Their families joined

them shortly thereafter and the area became the largest settlement between Chicago and Vandalia. McLean County was originally part of Fayette and then Tazewell Counties. In 1830, however, it became the present-day McLean County and was named for John McLean, an Illinois legislator who had died earlier in the year. The legal incorporation of the town of Bloomington took place in 1843, when a majority of its citizens voted for incorporation.

Drive-In Movies

Drive-in movies began in the 1930s but didn't really catch on in the Midwest until after World War II; for obvious reasons, most theaters were located in milder climates to take advantage of a longer operating season. The drive-in patron paid at a drive-up box office, and drove around to the fan-shaped viewing area where he/she checked the speaker which hung from a post, to make sure that the sound worked. In later years, the patron might have to try two or more before finding a speaker that worked. Once a working speaker was found, the car was parked on the slight incline provided and the speaker was attached to the inside of the car's window, providing sufficient, if somewhat tinny, sound.

The Phil-Kron Drive-In Theatre opened at the intersection of Route 51 and the Route 66 Belt Line in the late 1940s. Its ads appealed to families who packed the car with children, including some neighbor-

hood kids, and headed to the drive-in on "Family Nite Carload" when the entire vehicle and passengers were admitted for \$1. Patrons were invited to relax and enjoy the "movies under the stars" in the open-air theater while their children enjoyed the free playground. Later, pony rides and a carousel attracted families to the place "where the family goes for fun, a snack, and a show." Then, as now, concessions provided a profit for the theater owner. The "doors" opened at 7:30 p.m. and the first movie began at dusk. In addition to two feature movies, a cartoon and a newsreel, early 1950s customers were treated to vaudeville acts such as "Miss Maybelle" who performed her high-wire act at the "dizzy height of 102 feet."

The Phil-Kron often featured comedy and/or family fare, including such movies as "Hound Dog Man," starring Fabian, and "Apache Rose," with Roy Rogers. It occasionally showed scary monster pictures, such as "The Creature from the Black Lagoon," sending the children home to nightmares and monsters under the bed. By the 1970s, the Phil-Kron had been sold to a corporation and began to feature "R" rated movies such as this triple billing: "Hell's Angels 69," "Wild in the Streets," and "Cycle Savages." There was a public outcry as unsuspecting people who drove by on the Belt Line were subjected to a few seconds of "skin" in the "R" movies. As drive-ins in general got the reputation of "passion pits," the renamed Bloomington Drive-In proudly declared in its ad, "There's Nothing But Action at the Drive-In, and Some Good Stuff on the Screen Too!" giving further proof to parents, if they

needed it, that the drive-in was no place for them or their children. By the mid-1980s, the Bloomington Drive-In closed its doors.

On your left is Highland Park, which was the site of an early German brewery. It is now a golf course from which land was carved in order to complete the Belt Line. Continuing up the hill, on your left at 1415 S. Main was Ventura's Grill (South Hill Neighborhood Cafe), a popular eating place with locals and travelers alike. The viaduct at Oakland Ave. was constructed in order to safely ease traffic over the complex web of railroad tracks through this area. Get into the left lane and prepare to turn left on Front St. At this corner is a plaque commemorating Major's Hall (parking deck) which was the site of Abraham Lincoln's famous "Lost Speech" and the claimed founding of the Republican Party. In addition, Illinois State Normal University classes met in this Hall prior to the erection of "Old Main," their first permanent building. Turn right onto Main St. On the right-hand corner is the Miller-Davis Law Building (law offices) where Lincoln practiced law. At the corner of Main and Washington, look to your right. You will see the State Farm building that dominates the downtown skyline.

You will want to park your car at the McLean County Museum of History and go inside to look at the permanent and changing exhibits which will give you a good sense of McLean County and the people who settled it. Notice the newly-installed World War II monument stretching along the east side of the building. The Museum houses the McLean County Historical Society and is open from Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:00 p.m., and offers extended hours on Tuesdays until 9:00 p.m. While you are out of your car, you may wish

to walk to the State Farm Downtown Building, original headquarters to the insurance giant. View the newly renovated exterior, including the restored neon accents on the sides of the building. In addition, the large State Farm neon signs on the sides of the building have recently been re-lit after being turned off for more than 30 years (see Appendix B). Walk to the corner of Washington and Center Streets. Imagine a time when this was a dirt street. When it rained, the street became a nightmarish bog. In the 1850s, the following items were pulled from the mud of just a few blocks of downtown streets:

small boxes, a broken lamppost, large and small barrels, a baby's shoe, granite blocks, pieces of wood, two stakes, a stone jug, a large window frame, a lady's hatbox, a large box with a shovel standing straight up in it, pieces of pig iron, piles of ashes, burnt coal, waste paper, and a broken sawhorse.⁶⁶

Is it any wonder that citizens were ecstatic when the city began to experiment with various forms of paving, including gravel and wooden planks? It is claimed by local folks that the first brick pavement in the United States originated at this corner in 1877. Actually, other cities preceded this experiment in getting their citizens up and out of the mud, but because Bloomington drew a large number of visitors who left with a favorable impression of this innovative approach to paving the street, it soon claimed this marvel as its own.

Continue your car tour on Main St. To your right, at the northeast corner of Monroe and Main was the site of Cotton's Village Inn, owned by Cotton McNabney (1991 Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Member, now deceased). The restaurant was located in the basement of the building, its nooks and crannies a favorite with discriminating diners. Stop at the stop sign on Mulberry; continue through the parking lot, stop at the stop sign and turn left onto Route 51 North.

On your left, at Main and Empire, an early gas station (Preferred Motors/Ryder Truck Rental) served customers at this busy intersection. Illinois Wesleyan University, organized in 1850 by the Methodist Church, is on your right.

At the corner of Virginia and Main, on your right, is another early gas station (Norma's Beauty Corner) which took advantage of a busy intersection to bring in business. On your left, at 1219 S. Main St., is the site of the very first Steak 'n Shake restaurant, founded by Gus Belt in 1934.

Drive-In Restaurants

Drive-in restaurants evolved in the early 1930s as a quick and easy way for motorists to eat and drink without leaving their cars. Today, however, we substitute a drive-up speaker and take-out window for the friendly curb attendants who took our orders at the car door. The Steak 'n Shake in Normal is an early example of a drive-in restaurant which fulfilled motorists' needs. It began in 1934 as a small gas station, which also served hamburgers. When Gus Belt finally opened the Steak 'n Shake, he realized that motorists were concerned about the cleanliness and quality of the food they were being served. By preparing food in full view of the customer, Belt alleviated these concerns. A motto quickly emerged: since it was prepared "in sight, it must be right." Curb service was soon introduced and quick, wiry curb attendants literally ran from car door to order window and back to serve sandwiches, chili, and milkshakes on a metal tray which hooked over the car window. This chain of restaurants

has proven very successful, primarily in Florida and the Midwest, and is now owned by Consolidated Products, Inc., still preparing favorites "in sight" of customers. This Steak 'n Shake was built on a flood plain and is now closed. The building will soon be razed to be replaced by a pizza restaurant chain, which will build to meet the requirements of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, including locating a small detention basin on the property.

Mr. Sanders worked as a "curbie" at the Steak 'n Shake the summer of 1949, when he was 15 years old. "It was low wages, because they expected you to get most of your money from tips. I didn't get rich. I enjoyed the work. They gave you a meal for each shift that you worked...back in the days of the 29 cent hamburger and milk shake....chili mac was 35 cents a bowl, and I couldn't get enough of that. It gave you a little bit of spending money."⁶⁷ His uniform was white:

You had white pants, white shirt, little white hat (they still have those white paper hats), and a black bow tie, and oxfords. The girls wore black slacks with a white shirt and a little bow tie....they had those little carpenter [aprons], a place to put your money and your order book. And if you went through a book of orders, which I think was 25 or 50, you got a dollar. And, some of the older waitresses would do that easy.⁶⁸

Riding the bus back and forth from ISSCS to Steak 'n Shake, Mr. Sanders' on-the-job training consisted of working with one of the more experienced curbies.

It didn't take a rocket scientist to be a curbie, [customers would] tell you what they wanted, and then you told the people inside, and they'd fix it and call your number over the P.A. system and you'd go get your order.

Your biggest problem was making sure [customers] didn't short change you when they paid for the stuff, 'cause every evening you had to account for all your receipts.⁶⁹

To place an order, the curbie came inside and went up to the counter:

There was sort of a slope to the second set of doors and you went inside and hollered in your order. You waited until they called your order, and you went in and picked it up. And then when [the customers] were done, you took the tray, and went back in the building, there was a little place on the right where you pushed the tray through this little opening and somebody would take care of it, wash the dishes and stuff.⁷⁰

In addition to parking lot dining, customers could take advantage of a small seating area inside. "They had booths all down the west side of the building and on the east side you had a counter with these little stools that you could spin yourself on and they sort of wrapped around and you would see the people cooking the stuff. It wasn't very big inside."⁷¹ The basement was used for storage and "...every time they got a big rain, the basement would flood. It was just something that they lived with, maybe once or twice a year, they'd have to haul everything out of there and get the pumps going and let things dry out."⁷²

Mr. Sanders' shift started at 4:00 p.m. and he would generally have his dinner break around 6:00 before the 9:00 rush began after the theaters let out. He worked until 11:00 p.m. when he went inside the restaurant to figure out how much he owed Steak 'n Shake, how much money he had in his pouch, and how much he got to keep. The busiest time on this shift happened at 9:00 p.m. when the movies let out and Steak 'n Shake experienced a rush.

...that's when everything got jumping, people driving through and seeing who was there....We had a town policeman [who] used to come down there after the movies were out and he would direct traffic, it got that busy. His wife worked inside, she was a waitress. And, then at closing time he would come down there to pick his wife up, he'd always come early, and if anybody had any ideas of coming in there robbing the place, they'd have to get past him so it worked out pretty good for Steak 'n Shake....⁷³

McDonald's, at the corner of Main and Beaufort, is on the site of an early 1950s McDonald's restaurant. It was remodeled more than once before being razed and rebuilt in its present incarnation. Illinois State University (8.7) is on your right. The Campus Court Motel (Young America Realty) at 309 S. Main catered to Route 66 travelers and University visitors from the 1960s through the 1970s.

Illinois State University, founded in 1857, is on both sides of Main St./Route 51. You may wish to stop at the InfoCentre in Bone Student Center (located at College and University Sts.) for a tour of campus. (The InfoCentre is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m.-6:00 p.m., and on Saturday from 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tours are given from Monday through Friday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., and on Saturday at 10:30 a.m.) The quadrangle is a beautiful centerpiece to the University, and has recently become part of a major arboretum, named for Jesse Fell.

Turn right at Willow St. Notice another Normal water tower. The Phillips 66 station on your left was the site of a number of stations, including Lusher's Gas from the 1920s until the 1960s. Cross Linden St., go two blocks, and **turn left at Walnut**. **Turn left at Cypress** and stop at the Fell Park water tower. This is the oldest water tower on the tour, built in 1898 and restored in 1989.

Drive straight ahead to Linden, **turn left**, then **turn right onto Willow**, **turn left onto Main/Route 51 South**. This route through town was created to handle a heavy flow of southbound traffic. You will travel on Main St., Kingsley St., Madison St., and Center St. while following Route 51 south through town.

Cruisin'

As soon as they got the keys to the family car or their own "set of wheels," teenagers began to cruise up and down city streets, looking for something to do. Cruisin', as it was called, became the event, not a means of transportation. Done primarily in the summer months, and ideally in a convertible, kids drove from one end of town to another, in search of friends, concentrating on "looking cool." Their identity was tied up with the car they drove, although it was okay to drive the family car if you were still in high school. The motives of older people (anyone 21 or older!), however, who drove the designated "route" were suspect. In the late 1950s and 1960s, Bloomington-Normal teens drove endlessly from the Steak 'n Shake in Normal to the Hannah Street Steak 'n Shake in Bloomington and back again, unwittingly contributing to the coming oil crisis of the 1970s.

You will go past Bloomington's downtown area again. After crossing the viaduct, turn right immediately onto Oakland Ave. Turn left on Morris Ave. At this corner on your left, a gas station was opened in 1929 (Scoop Dreams). Since WWII, it has been a lunch counter, a cafe, and a carry-out grocery store. On your left, past Wood St., is Miller Park, purchased by the City of Bloomington in 1887 from W.T. Miller for \$17,000. It was originally only 39 acres but later additions and the creation of an 18-acre lake in 1903 have enlarged it to its current size. In

the late 1920s, a sign was hung over the Morris Avenue entrance, reading, "Welcome Tourists." Today, the park provides fishing, swimming, miniature golf, a zoo, and free outdoor concerts and plays. The park also contains a memorial for soldiers of the Civil War and World War I as well as a more recent memorial for the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Just ahead and also on the left is Forest Park, where tourists camped in the 1920s. Turn right on Springfield Road.

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

The Six Points Oil Station and Tourist Camp occupied the land to your right (see Appendix B). Turn right onto Beich Road (0.6), follow the curve around. A road called "Cabintown" is on your left (0.9), so named because it was the site of early cabins in which tourists and truckers stayed. Cross over I-74 (1.1), turn left, staying on Beich Road. Pass Nestle-Beich's Candy on right (1.5). Beich's started in Bloomington in the 1800s and is a name recognized around the world.

On your right, you will notice a small clump of trees and shrubbery (2.1) Many of these line the route, marking the site of abandoned farmsteads. As machinery became more sophisticated and one farmer could handle more acreage, many of the smaller farms were sold and the abandoned houses and outbuildings fell into disrepair and were either burned or bulldozed to the ground. You may also notice some abandoned farmsteads which are in the process of reverting back to prairie.

Note the sign on your left (2.6) which points out a Prairie Grass area on I-55. The State of Illinois has made a commitment to restore this area native along

the roadways; travelers may now appreciate the way the landscape appeared to early settlers.

Prairie grass

Early white settlers marveled at the prairies they encountered in central Illinois. The prairie was covered by a coarse blue-stem prairie grass which grew to reported heights of eight to twelve feet, sometimes obscuring the approach of a mounted horseman. The prairie grass prevented the settlers from moving out onto the prairies to farm until the technological advances of John Deere's steel-bottomed plow in 1837, followed soon thereafter by McCormick's reaper. Only then could farmers break the ground to plant crops which would grow in some of the most fertile soil which would ever be farmed.

Stringtown Road (2.7) on your right, may be named for one of three reasons: the road was as straight as a string, there used to be a town on this road named Stringtown, or there was a series of towns along this road stretched out in straight-as-a-string fashion. The origin is lost in history; you may choose whichever version you find most appealing.

Shirley

(population figures unavailable; township population 1,192)

There was a small settlement in the area around Shirley prior to the arrival of the Chicago and Alton Railroad in 1853 but the town was not platted until 1866 by John Foster. The name, Shirley, allegedly came from one suggested by Mrs. Corydon Weed, taken from a Bronte novel that she was reading. The Weed farm straddled the village of Shirley and was razed in 1944 to make way for Route 66.

The steep grade of Shirley Hill presented a problem to train service; two engines were required to pull heavy trains up these grades. In 1909, a cut was made to decrease the incline, the depot was moved from the east to the west side of the tracks, a large bridge was installed over the tracks, and a long flight of wooden steps was built leading to the lowered level of the tracks. Passenger service ceased in about 1970 and the depot was moved to Funk's Grove in 1975 (see Appendix B). Turn right at Shirley. Cross the bridge. The second building on your left was Deaver's Store, "...a general store, with a pickle barrel and flour barrel and all those goodies.....It was a regular country store," according to Ruth Carpenter, who moved to Shirley in 1933 with her husband, Joe M. Carpenter.⁷⁴

Turn right

into the downtown area on 1070E. In the middle of the block on your right stands a building which housed Hutchison's General Store (Culligan Water Conditioning), serving as the vital center of the community for many years. Here you could pick up your mail and purchase nearly everything you might need, including groceries, meats, drug store items, hardware, shoes, paint, etc. Mrs.

Carpenter describes the store, run by Mr. C.W. Hutchison, as a dry goods store with the entire north side of the store devoted to everything you might need to make a dress. The back of the store was a storage space for grocery store items, and one gasoline pump sat outside, uncovered. When the new post office was built across the street in 1963, the store "sort of died," according to Mrs. Carpenter. "Because if you went in the post office that used to be in the store, you were going to buy something. It might not be very much but you were going to buy something, and

when the [new post office opened, the store] just died the death of a rag doll because nobody went in the store."⁷⁵ The store closed in 1964.

Mr. Henry used the Shirley mailbox to mail tickets as part of his official duties: "When we were out there working, you had to go to a mailbox with a violator, they had to put the money in the envelope, seal it and put it in the mailbox. Whenever you arrested somebody under the bond system, both of you had to mail it if they were posting cash."⁷⁶

Dixie Truckers Home origins

J.P. Walters, co-founder of the Dixie Trucker's Home at McLean, also operated a general store on this street in the early 1900s. When this burned, he turned to his other interest, an independent oil jobbership, the Shirley Oil Company. John Geske, who married Viola, J.P.'s daughter, became a partner in these operations. The Shirley Oil Company was incorporated in 1923 and in 1928, the name was changed to Shirley Oil and Supply Company, and a service station was operated on Route 66; this building burned in 1937.

J.P. had an idea of operating a 24-hour service station for truckers where they could rest, sleep, eat, gas up their trucks, and have access to mechanical service. J.P. and John Geske opened up the Dixie Truckers Home in McLean in the Spring of 1928. (Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Members) At the end of your tour, you will see the large, modern truck stop which still serves the needs of truckers and the traveling public.

Joe Carpenter's job was to deliver gasoline for the Shirley Oil Company. He would take five-gallon cans out to the fields to fill farmers' tractors as well as fill larger tanks in their farm yards.

Leaving Hutchison's General Store, turn right at the corner. At the stop sign, turn right. Stop at the stop sign and turn left onto 850E, crossing the bridge to the stop sign on Route 66. You can cross over the four-lane and drive a short distance, left or right, on the first alignment of the road. Then, return to Route 66 and turn left. As you pass the Shirley elevators across the tracks and on your right, notice the Shirley Cemetery on your right. A young man from Normal, Alex Holsinger, earned his Eagle Scout badge by documenting and cleaning up this cemetery, and also earned the distinction of being the one millionth Eagle Scout.

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

Notice the raised road on your right that provides farmers access to their fields. Trooper Henry identifies this as a good radar location since motorists "...used to really let her out right down through here. We'd set up radar right down here at this little hump [and] come down both sides. If we didn't have radar, we'd just pull in there and sit on the other side and they wouldn't see you. We'd see the fast ones and we'd take off and chase them down to McLean."⁷⁷

Funk's Grove

(population figures unavailable; township population 302)

This grove was named for Isaac Funk who came from Ohio in 1824 with a team of oxen and built an agricultural and livestock empire. He drove his cattle and hogs overland to Chicago in roughly the same route that the railroad would later take and then that Route 66 would follow.

Begin your tour as you turn left from Route 66 at the Funks Grove sign. Cross the new bridge over Timber Creek. At the stop sign, you are facing the site of the old Edgewood gas station, restaurant and tavern. People would sometimes use this as a meeting point or to get in out of the weather as they waited for the bus to town (see Appendix B). Mrs. Carpenter recalls being in the Edgewood, "...that was quite a place...it could get a little rough once in a while."⁷⁸ This is also where a dance pavilion, and later a skating rink, were located.

Turn right at 850E. You are now on the tree-shaded first alignment of Route 66. Notice how narrow and curvy the road is; there are no shoulders, nowhere to go if one experienced car trouble. Is it any wonder that the road was sometimes called "bloody 66"? The road is now primarily traveled by local resi-

dents but this section will give you a good idea of what the road looked like in the late 1920s to mid-1930s. Trooper Henry laughs as he describes the road as a "...a lover's lane, boy, on a Friday night, Saturday night...There was plenty of company, they parked in there thick on Friday night, Saturday night...I'd like to have had the concession stand there...."⁷⁹ Turn around in the road where the road curves at the creek and retrace your path to Route 66.

Cross the road into Funk's Grove on County Road 36.

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

Prior to crossing the railroad tracks, you will notice a grain elevator on your right. Cross the tracks and stop at the depot on your right. This is the second Shirley depot and was moved to this spot by Bob Rehtmeyer in 1975. An earlier depot which stood at this spot from ca. 1900-1953 was the first Shirley depot which was moved to the timber just to the southeast, where it sits at the Funk's Grove Maple Sirup Camp. Also to your right are grain storage bins. The Walker Grocery Store (Funk's Grove Country Store) occupied the site to your left for more than 50 years, being open from 1921 to 1973. The store was truly a general store, selling everything from underwear to antifreeze to sodas and custom-made sandwiches. The store also featured two Mobil gas pumps; only one remains (see Appendix B). It was a looked-forward-to stop along Route 66. Mrs. Carpenter describes the store as having "...anything that you would have in a general store, even had a pickle barrel....And, bananas hanging from a stalk down

from the ceiling, [you could] walk in and grab you a handful of bananas if you wanted it."⁸⁰

Continue your trip back through the grove by turning left at County road 800E, and follow the signs to the Funk's Grove Church. As you drive back through the grove, notice the reforestation project on your right (0.7) which is an ongoing one. Note the Paintball Games area on the right (0.8); a very successful business that allows people to run around the woods and play "war" games, "shooting" each other with paint pellets. Turn right at the Funk's Grove Church sign on 525N (1.1). Enter the picnic area. On your right is the church which was built in 1865 and restored in 1952. The Funk's Grove Cemetery has some very old burials and many interesting stones. Just across the road, 300 feet into the woods and opposite the church, is the "Chapel of the Templed Trees," an open air church dedicated in 1956.

Turn left out of the picnic area onto 525N. Turn right at stop sign onto 725E. Follow this road, marked "dead end" a short distance past the Sugar Grove Nature Center to a parking area, marked "Funk's Grove Nature Preserve," where you may view the combined efforts of many groups and individuals as they work to reforest and restore some of Funk's Grove to pre-settlement conditions, including prairie, savanna, and the forested grove. Funk's Grove once covered over 3,000 acres and is one of the largest remnants of old growth forest in Illinois. About 1,000 acres of the original timber grove remain, held by family trusts, state agencies, universities and environmental groups.

Retrace your route on 725E and follow it to 550N. Turn right. Cross the tracks and turn right on 825E (Route 66).

SET ODOMETER TO "0"

On your left (0.5) is the Funk's Grove Pure Maple Sirup Camp. (Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Members) Turn left into the lane and stop at the sap house/shop. Here in the early spring, maple sirup is made. Pure maple sirup is produced commercially at only a handful of places in the midwest. Arthur Funk, grandson of Isaac, opened the first commercial sirup camp at Funk's Grove in 1891; his brother Lawrence took over the operation in 1896. Hazel Funk Holmes, cousin to Arthur and Lawrence, eventually took over the operation and from 1948, Lawrence's son, Stephen, and his wife, Glaida, (1992 Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame Members) operated the camp until recently when their son, Michael, and his wife, Debby, took over the sirup-making tradition. Visitors frequently ask about the use of an "i" rather than a "y" in the word "sirup." Hazel Funk Holmes insisted that it was Webster's preferred spelling and by tradition, it will always be spelled with an "i" at Funk's Grove. The sirup and related products are sold in the shop connected to the sap house. Also available are books by Susan Funk Kirby, the Funk's daughter, who has written a series of children's books about the road.

During World War II, Stephen Funk had been drafted and was in Cadet Training in Oklahoma when he met his future wife, Glaida, at a bowling alley. They were married in 1945 and returned to McLean County to set up their home. Mr. Funk started college at ISU on the GI Bill, attending as a special student by taking all of the agriculture courses that he could, with no intention of teaching. At the request of his cousin, Hazel Funk Holmes, Steve started making the sirup in

1948, and has worked with various partners over the years. The Funks moved to their current house in the maple trees in 1952, selling sirup off the front porch before building a new sap house. "It was kind of convenient ...you could just step out and then you'd come back and finish up your housework and stuff but...I don't think we've ever had a meal that wasn't interrupted by customers."⁸¹ The four-lane was constructed at the end of their lane in 1953. The Funks "...let a couple stay here on the farm in a trailer while they worked on the road. And I think they paid us a little bit of money to stay here, I let them have a little bit of garden out there..."⁸²

Mr. and Mrs. Funk saw their share of needy people along the road. "...we had people here wanting gas, they'd run out of gas, or they had truck trouble, or they...you know, it was something, it seemed like, all the time."⁸³ One Illinois State University student in particular sticks in the minds of the Funks:

This lady was actually getting her master's degree at ISU and she lived at Springfield and so she stopped in kind of desperate because her car had broken down and she was having exams that night...we happened to have a new car that year....I was going to take her up and Steve says to me, 'No, just let her have the car.' And, I thought, "Well, she seems like a nice lady." And we called [a garage] in McLean and he came and got her car and she never forgot that. For years she would stop in and remind me.⁸⁴

Exit the Maple Sirup Camp lane and turn left onto Route 66.

McLean

(population 800)

McLean was founded in 1855 along the railroad tracks which passed through the area. It was named for John McLean, for whom the county is also

named. McLean, was an Illinois legislator from Shawneetown, who died the year that McLean County was formed.

This curve (3.3) was the site of the Benedict family gas station (McLean County Auto Center) Benedict's Gas Station was on Route 4 in 1925 at the northeast edge of McLean, then moved to the junction of Illinois 119 and Route 136, one mile north. Benedict's started pumping gas in 1947. In 1961, the partnership was dissolved and Chuck Benedict kept the business, changing the name to Chuck's Midway Station. When U.S. 66 bypassed Bloomington on the north and west side, it was the first service station and rest room for 30 miles. This station led the company in gas sales from 1965 to 1972 but when the energy crisis came along, Sunday closures adversely affected business. Construction of I-55 left Chuck's without an entrance to the major highway, and it was closed in 1977.

The first gas station operated by the Benedict family in the McLean area was located at the corner of Fisher Street and Route 4 in 1925. Mr. Benedict's father, Charles Alfred Benedict, came to McLean County from Kentucky to put in crops and then returned to help with the harvest. In approximately 1903, he moved his family here, including Mr. Benedict's grandfather, George Starr Benedict. Charles Alfred and his brother, George, were partners in the first gas station. Sometime prior to 1932, they built on a small cafe with a counter and six stools and a table with four chairs. Mr. Benedict's mother was the cook and a fantastic baker, especially when it came to cream pies: "Those always was gone and all we seem to have got was three-day old raisin pie. That's what was left. And they would have fried chicken certain days of the week. I can remember having hamburgers a nickel or six for a quarter....probably in 1932."⁸⁵ In addi-

tion, they sold candy, cigars and cigarettes. Mr. Benedict is convinced that the hoboes had their cafe "marked" as a place to get free food. The B&O Railroads were just across the road and "...they ended up during the Depression just closing it down because Dad and Mom could not see anybody being hungry if they asked for it and they would give them food. In fact, we even had repeat hoboes that come back again."⁸⁶ The station sold Fisk Tires and Standard Oil and never had a pit or hoist; a person just slid under the car to work on it. At 11:00 o'clock one morning in November of 1946, the Route 66 bypass was opened. "...Our business...[had grown] to 38,000 gallons per month. And we had five cars on the drive at 11:00 when they opened that up and it was five o'clock that evening when we got our next customer."⁸⁷ In response, Mr. Benedict's father purchased the ground a mile north. "...on July 3, 1947 we sold our first gas out of there. We didn't even have the windows in, the driveway wasn't finished but people was pulling off...and in fact we didn't even have the restrooms done so we had an outhouse."⁸⁸ Mrs. Funk recalls that they did business at Chuck's Midway Standard: "...we had our oil changed there and bought tires there and I don't know so much if we bought gas but...you could charge it....Chuck's father [helped] in the station and when you paid your bill he always gave the kids some candy or something."⁸⁹

It took several years before the Benedicts reached their previous volume of 38,000 gallons of gasoline per month, but when they put the bypass around the west side of Bloomington on August of 1965, they were the first gas station for many miles. They remodeled, adding on a new sales room and enlarging the restrooms. "[Standard] said we'd be selling 100,000 the first month and we missed it by 8,000 gallons and that went up every month. But, our business would fluc-

tuate due to the fact that it was on 66...182,000 gallons was the most I ever sold. That was when I became "Mr. Benedict" to Standard Oil.⁹⁰

Although many famous people stopped at Chuck's Midway Standard, so named because it was the mid-point between Chicago and St. Louis, their biggest claim to fame was a mid-1950s visit from Elvis Presley: "This was about three weeks after he was on the Ed Sullivan Show for the first time. He'd been to Chicago and on his yellow Cadillac, in the dust on it, they had written "Come back, Elvis, come back to Chicago, we love you....And I had his credit card slip signed by him...I framed it, it disappeared. I wish I had it."⁹¹

Unfortunately, business fell off during the oil crisis in the 1970s. Closing the station on Sunday adversely affected business, and the high cost of gasoline affected the amount of traveling people were doing; gas was all of 39.9 cents a gallon. Another reason for a drop in business was that people were trading in their gas guzzlers and buying compact cars. Mr. Benedict closed the station on February 11, 1977.

Notice the large complex of elevators to your right (3.9). Follow the road (4.4) around to the right. N. Stewart Rd. becomes E. Carlisle. Yield at E. Carlisle and South Main. Cross the street. Stop at the stop sign, turn right on Center St. into the downtown. You can get a close up look at McLean's water tower on your right. Notice the old iron-clad elevator to your left, as you cautiously cross the tracks. There are also "ghost signs," fading to near nothingness, on the brick building to your left. Proceed around the square and retrace your route. Turn right at Center St. Stop at the stop sign on E. Carlisle and cross the street. You are headed towards the Dixie Trucker's Home, straight ahead. The McLean Railroad Depot which has been moved from the downtown area is on your right.

The depot was the former home of Puffabelly Station Antique Shop and Book store which is now located across the street on your left. You might want to stop in to talk with the owner who is knowledgeable about the area and eager to talk about Route 66.

Stop at the stop sign and look to your right; in the distance is the second passive restraint system just before the railroad tracks. Cross over U.S. Route 136 into the parking lot of the Dixie Trucker's Home. This is the site of the 1928 station built by J.P. Walters and John Geske. The current building was erected after a fire destroyed an earlier building in 1965 (see Appendix B). Be sure to visit the Route 66 Association Hall of Fame Museum, which provides a good introduction to the Hall of Fame members, visit the gift shop which carries Route 66 souvenirs, and have an authentic trucker's meal in the restaurant. Straight ahead of you, where the "Road Ends" sign is, was a frontage road which once lead directly back to Route 66.

This is the end of your tour along Route 66 in McLean County.

NOTES

¹Susan Croce Kelly and Quinta Scott, Route 66: The Highway and Its People (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 24.

²Michael Wallis, Route 66: The Mother Road (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 25.

³Ibid, 26.

⁴A complete list of these associations and their addresses appears in Appendix C.

⁵This event occurs on the second weekend in June each year and travels between Chicago and St. Louis, alternating directions each year.

⁶Terri Ryburn-LaMonte, "Route 66: Still Kickin' for Students and International Visitors," in Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go, ed. Carol Traynor Williams (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998).

⁷Nominations are accepted by the Route 66 Association of Illinois in January of each year for induction during the June Motor Tour. A complete list of the current Hall of Fame members appears in Appendix C.

⁸Robert P. Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 7.

⁹William D. Walters, Jr., The Heart of the Cornbelt: An Illustrated History of Corn Farming in McLean County (Bloomington, Illinois: McLean County Historical Society), 1997, 16.

¹⁰Ray A. Billington, "The Frontier in Illinois History," in An Illinois Reader, ed. Clyde C. Walton (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1973), 99.

¹¹Howard, 249.

¹²Norman T. Moline, Mobility and the Small Town, 1900-1930: Transportation Change in Oregon, Illinois (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 24.

¹³Pantagraph, (Bloomington, Illinois), 13 March 1889.

¹⁴Jon Anderson, "Concrete's Road to Success," Chicago Tribune, 16 October 1991, Section 2, 3.

¹⁵Don Munson, More of Don Munson's Sesquicentennial Stories (Bloomington, Illinois: McLean County Historical Society, 1981), 67-68.

¹⁶Stephen B. Goddard, Getting There: The Epic Struggle between Road and Rail in the American Century (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 49.

¹⁷Frank Ernest Hill, "Ford," (New York: Collier's Encyclopedia, Crowell-Collier Educational Corporation, 1969), 172.

¹⁸"Progress in Road Building," Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1921-22, ed. Louis L. Emerson (Springfield: State of Illinois, 1921), 325.

¹⁹S. E. Bradt, "Building the Hard Roads," Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1917-18, ed. Louis L. Emmerson (Springfield: State of Illinois), 1917, 67.

²⁰David R. Wrone, "Illinois Pulls Out of the Mud," An Illinois Reader, ed. Clyde C. Walton (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1973), 380.

²¹A. D. Gash, "Roads and Trails," Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1915-16, ed. Lewis G. Stevenson (Springfield: State of Illinois, 1915), 361.

²²Ibid.

²³Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois), July 14, 1914.

²⁴Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., in association with Archaeological Research, Inc., Historic Route 66 in Illinois, prepared for the Illinois Department of Transportation, 1995, 4-3.

²⁵Gash, Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1915-16, 362.

²⁶Ibid., 363.

²⁷Susan Croce Kelly and Quinta Scott, Route 66: The Highway and Its People (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), 1990, 12.

²⁸David J. Kammer, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 through New Mexico," multiple property documentation form, National Register of Historic Places, 1993, E-36.

²⁹Kelly and Scott, 19.

³⁰Ibid., 57.

³¹Ibid., 75.

³²Jack D. Rittenhouse, A Guide Book to Highway 66. (Los Angeles: Jack D. Rittenhouse, 1946); reprint (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 6.

³³Michael Wallis, Route 66: The Mother Road (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 9-15 *passim*.

³⁴Paul Taylor, "U.S. Route 66 Associations, Museums, and Information Centers and International Organizations," Route 66 Magazine, 6 (Spring 1999): 40.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Chester Henry, interview by author, 6 November 1999, McLean County, Illinois, tape recording.

³⁷Merle Parry, interview by author, 8 November 1999, Chenoa, Illinois, tape recording.

³⁸Carolyn Parry, interview by author, 8 November 1999, Chenoa, Illinois, tape recording.

³⁹Merle Parry, *ibid.*

⁴⁰Chester Henry, *ibid.*

⁴¹Florence A. Rice, "Service Station Design in Texas, 1910 to the Present," Preserving the Recent Past, (Washington, DC: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1995), II-25-II-29.

⁴²Carolyn Parry, *ibid.*

⁴³Merle Parry, *ibid.*

⁴⁴Carolyn Parry, *ibid.*

⁴⁵Merle Parry, *ibid.*

⁴⁶George O. Carney, "Grain Elevators in the United States and Canada: Functional or Symbolic?" Material Culture. Pioneer America Society, Vol. 27 (Normal, Illinois: Illinois State University, Spring 1995), 1-24 *passim*.

⁴⁷Frank Rowsome, Jr., The Verse by the Side of the Road: The Story of the Burma Shave Signs and Jingles (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), 18-27, *passim*.

⁴⁸Michael F. Crowe, "Neon Signs: Their Origin, Use, and Maintenance," APT Bulletin, The Journal of Preservation Technology (Fredericksburg, Va., 1991), 30-37 *passim*.

⁴⁹Michael D. Sublett, William D. Walters, Jr., and Southard M. Modry, Commentary on a Corn Belt Countryside: A Self-Guided Rural Experience (Normal: Illinois State University, 1973), 106.

⁵⁰Arline Winterland, interview by author, 8 November 1999, Lexington, Illinois. tape recording.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³Chester Henry, *ibid.*

⁵⁴LaWanda Henry, "Hard Road Cops," Route 66 Magazine 2 (Spring 1995): 14-16.

⁵⁵Marjorie Baize, interview by author, 8 November 1999, Towanda, Illinois, tape recording.

⁵⁶Edward (Eddie) Baize, interview by author, 8 November 1999, Towanda, Illinois, tape recording.

⁵⁷Edward (Eddie) Baize, *ibid.*

⁵⁸Carl Ekberg, Ann Malone, and William D. Walters, Jr., The Legacy: A Survey of the Historical Architecture of the Town of Normal (Normal, Illinois: Town of Normal, 1990), 91-104 *passim*.

⁵⁹William H. Sanders, interview by author, November 10, 1999, Normal, Illinois, tape recording.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³Chester Henry, *ibid.*

⁶⁴Robert (Bob) Johnson, interview by author, 5 February 1997, Bloomington, Illinois, tape recording.

⁶⁵Charles (Chuck) Benedict, oral interview with author, November 9, 1999, Bloomington, Illinois, tape recording.

66William D. Walters, Jr.

67Sanders, *ibid.*

68*Ibid.*

69*Ibid.*

70*Ibid.*

71*Ibid.*

72*Ibid.*

73*Ibid.*

74Ruth M. Carpenter, interview by author, 10 November 1999, Shirley, Illinois, tape recording.

75*Ibid.*

76Chester Henry, *ibid.*

77*Ibid.*

78Carpenter, *ibid.*

79Chester Henry, *ibid.*

80 Carpenter, *ibid.*

81 Glaida Funk, interview by author, 9 November 1999, Shirley, Illinois, tape recording.

82 *Ibid.*

83 Stephen Funk, interview by author, 9 November 1999, Shirley, Illinois, tape recording.

84 Glaida Funk, *ibid.*

85 Benedict, *ibid.*

86 *Ibid.*

87 *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid.*

89 Glaida Funk, *ibid.*

90 Benedict, *ibid.*

91 *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: ROUTE 66, 1926 TO THE PRESENT: THE ROAD AS LOCAL HISTORY

The difficulty of identifying and communicating historical events which high school and college students find relevant to their own lives is made easier when history teachers use the very popular culture with which students are constantly bombarded. The familiarity and comfort level students have with popular culture readily enables one to teach the relevance and applicability of the past to the present. And, one method of transporting students back in time is through the use of an American popular culture icon: Route 66. Since many of the resources still exist (documents, photographs, pavement, structures, people), students can make immediate and practical application of their new-found knowledge through the use of local history.

Teachers can easily develop an appropriate curriculum for teaching American history via the popular culture icon of Route 66.² This is necessary not just because understanding Route 66 is important to understanding the evolution of American road building and transportation, but because of the interconnectedness of the road with the American consciousness. Route 66 has become more than mere pavement and can tell us something about who we are as a society. It is also necessary because of the scarcity of national academic resources for studying Route 66. Teachers who wish to incorporate popular

culture into their lesson plans on American history have little direction except for their own creativity and initiative. Scheduling and/or publication demands in most high schools and colleges leave little time for integration of new or innovative lessons, much less entire courses. This dissertation will help teachers adapt and implement Route 66 as a topic into their teaching schedules.

For the teacher who is interested in incorporating local history into traditional American history courses, using oral history and images, Route 66 can give meaning to a series of seemingly disconnected places and events. The use of local history helps to personalize the road which is then studied within the larger context of American history. Application of traditional teaching methods allows students to learn research skills as they gather primary sources, and to hone these skills as they weigh the historical evidence associated with road culture. Students then make practical application of what they have learned to their immediate surroundings and to their everyday lives, as they add to their knowledge of American history.

This dissertation will enable history teachers to accomplish the above goals. Chapters II and III were the history of road building and transportation in the United States and Illinois as well as the history of Route 66. In addition, information was provided regarding climate, geography, and economic conditions that affected location and types of roads. The examples given focused primarily on Illinois. Chapter IV defined and discussed the interaction between material culture and popular culture. Examples of the art, music, literature and film associated with Route 66 were presented.

Chapter V defined and discussed local history, including the idea that all history is local and history as a series of concentric circles, moving from the in-

nermost circle of family outward to the community, state, nation, and world. Oral history was defined and the importance of including interviews with local people was stressed. This chapter also focused on the reliability of images such as post-cards and photographs as well as how they might be used in a study of Route 66.

Chapter VI presented a road guide to Route 66 in McLean County, Illinois, which incorporated all of the elements discussed in Chapters II through V. The guide was organized in a geographical manner, following the road from north to south. The objective was for students to effect cognitive gain (for instance, learning facts and concepts about American history) by studying a familiar and specific locality. The structure of the road guide allowed the classroom teacher to select discreet sections or to adapt various components for classroom use without substantial modification.

The appendix consists of maps, images, a series of classroom activities, a selected Route 66 bibliography, forms, and a list of questions necessary to organize an oral history project, and other support materials.

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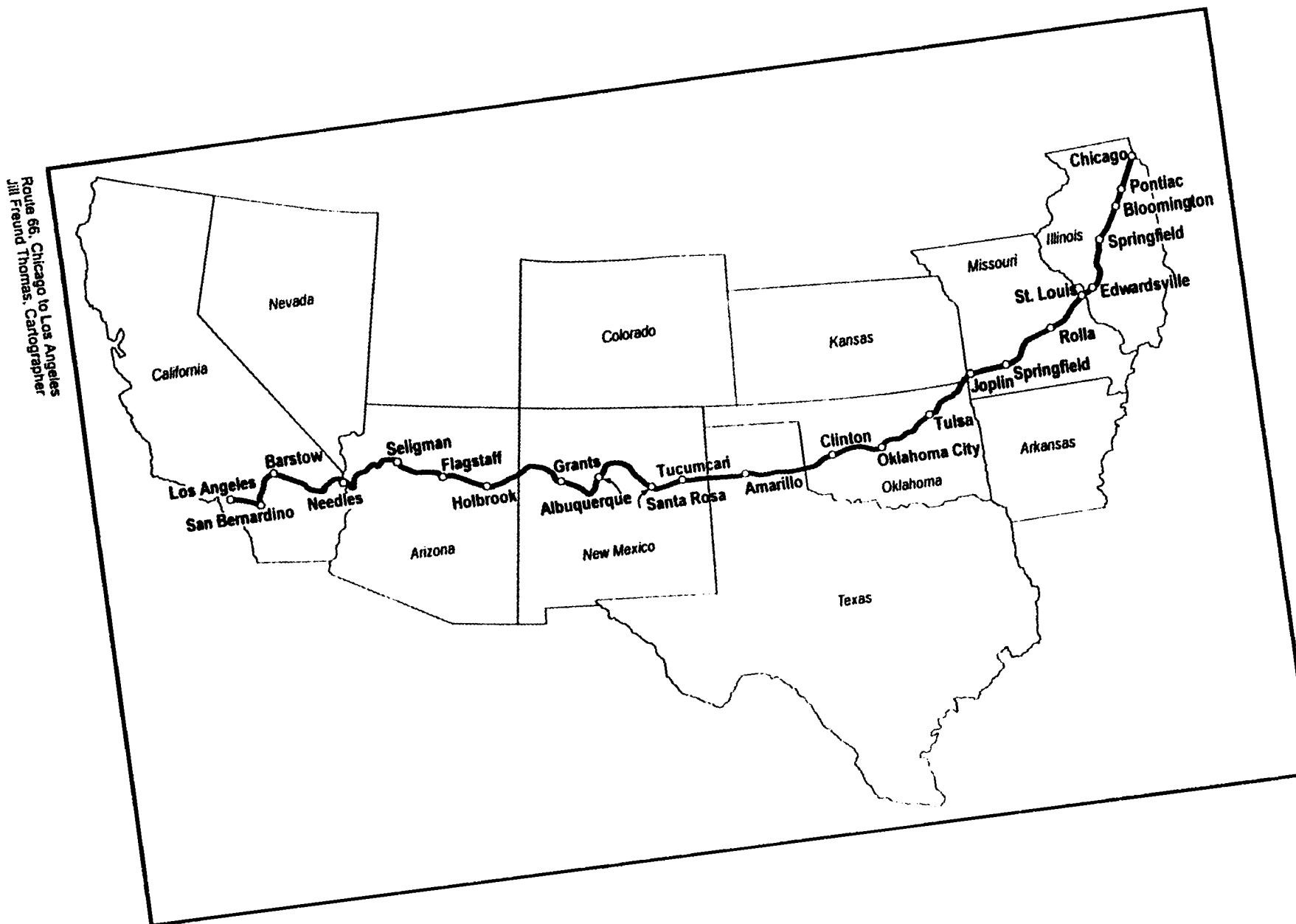
_____. Britannica Book of the Year. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1951. S.v. "Roads and Highways," by Thomas H. MacDonald.

_____. Britannica Book of the Year. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1956. S.v. "Roads and Highways."

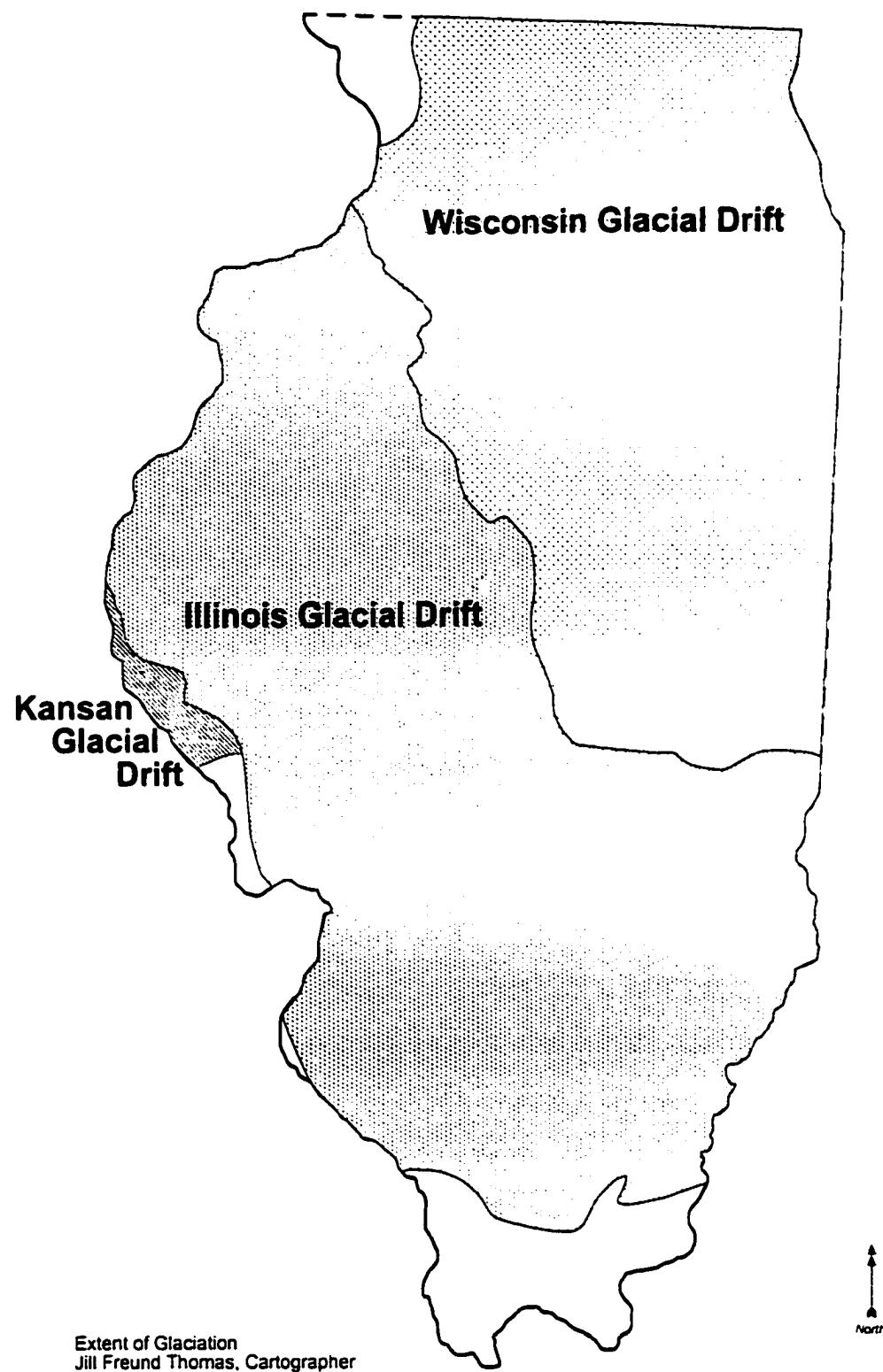
_____. Britannica Book of the Year. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1951. S.v. "Tourist Travel," by Russell E. Singer.

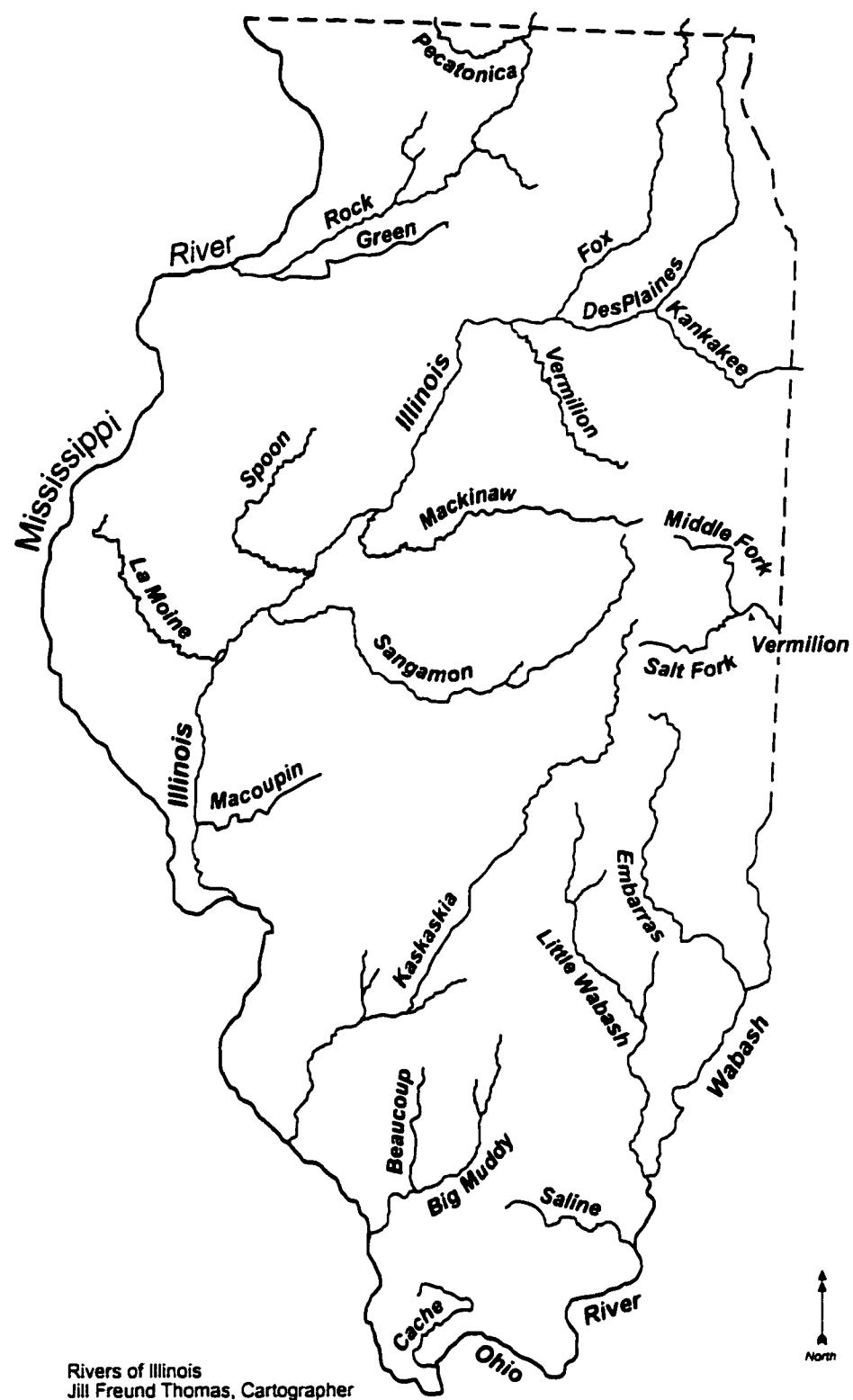
_____. Britannica Book of the Year Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1951. S.v. "Illinois," by Adlai E. Stevenson.

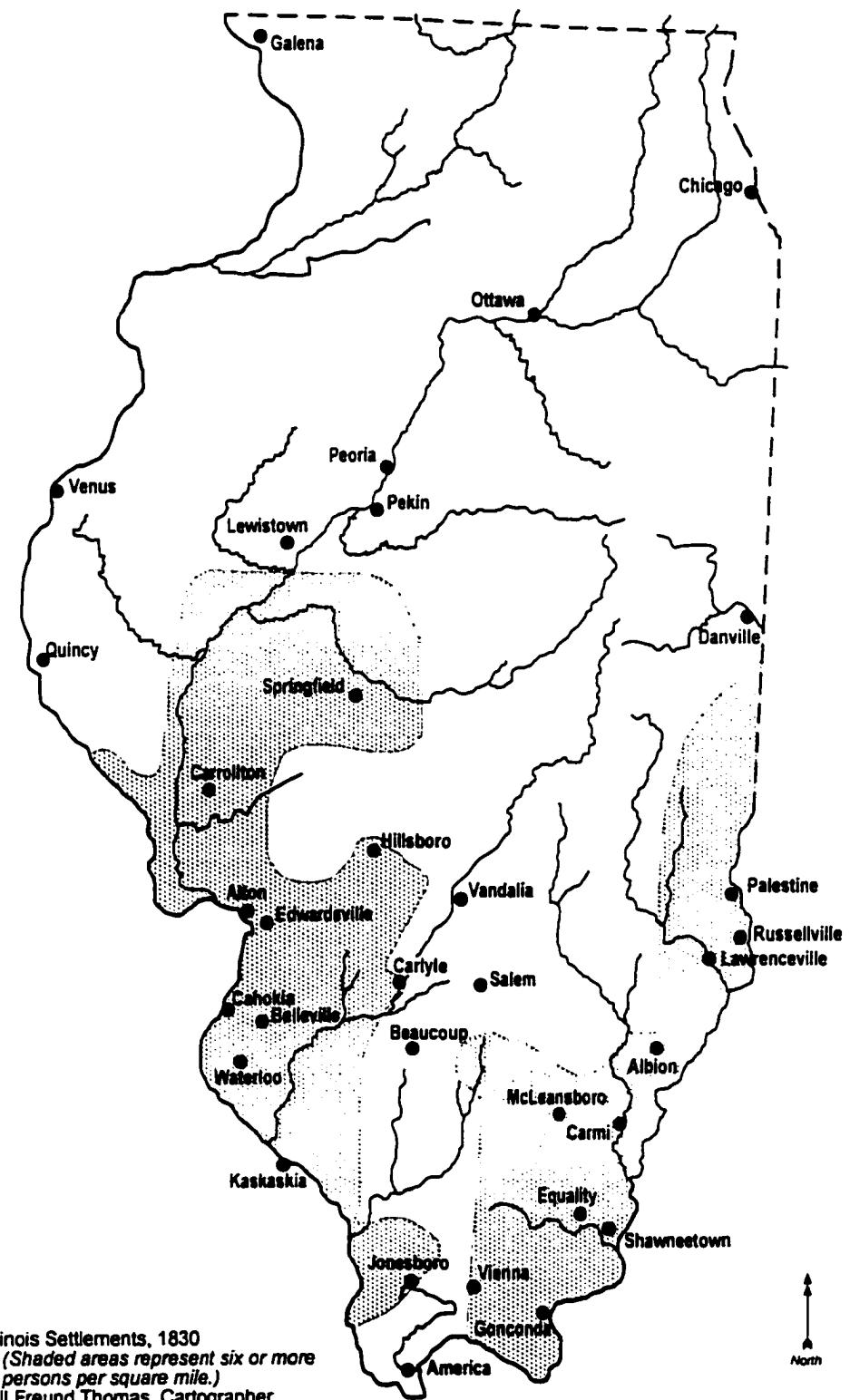
APPENDIX A
MAPS

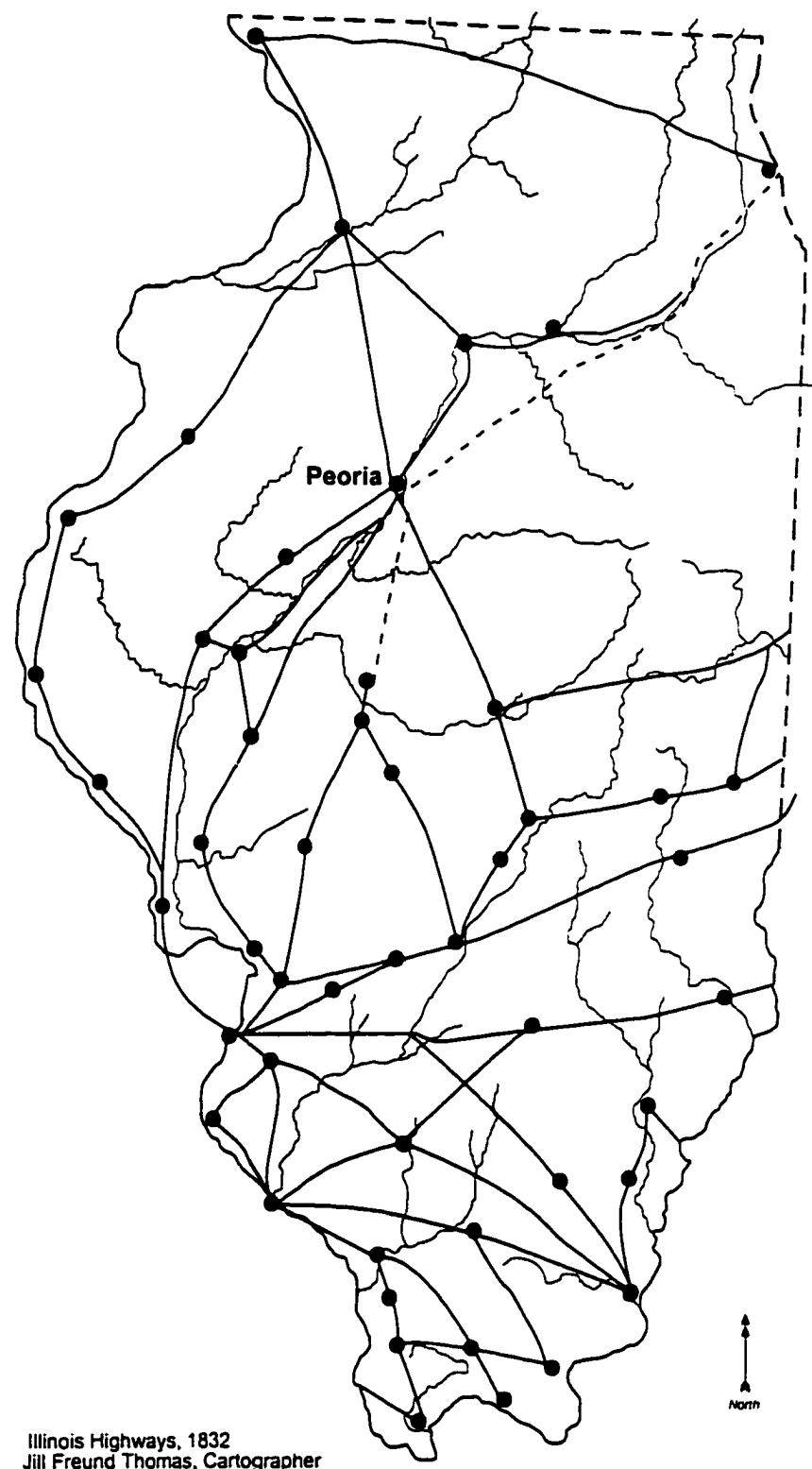


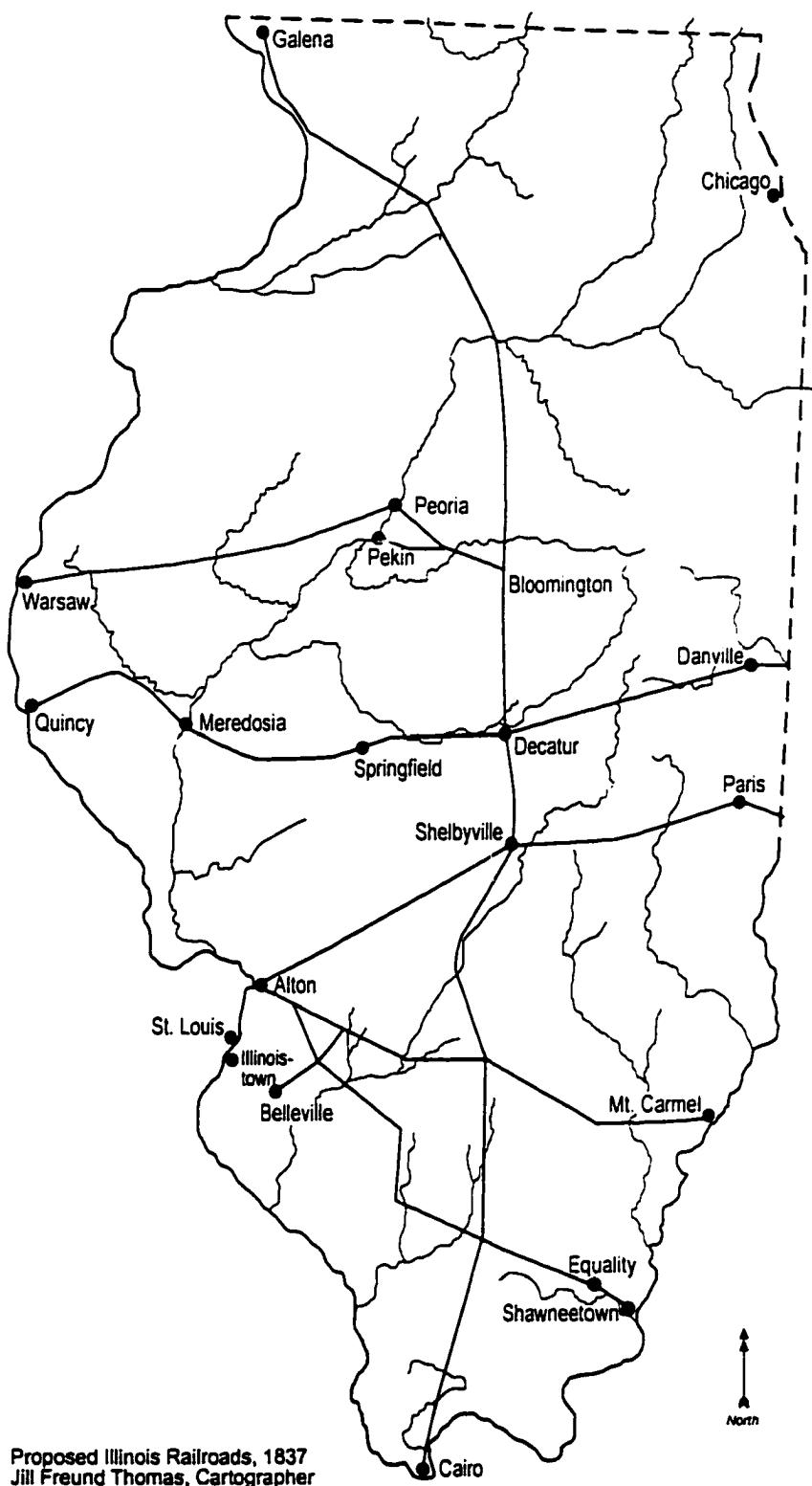
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.



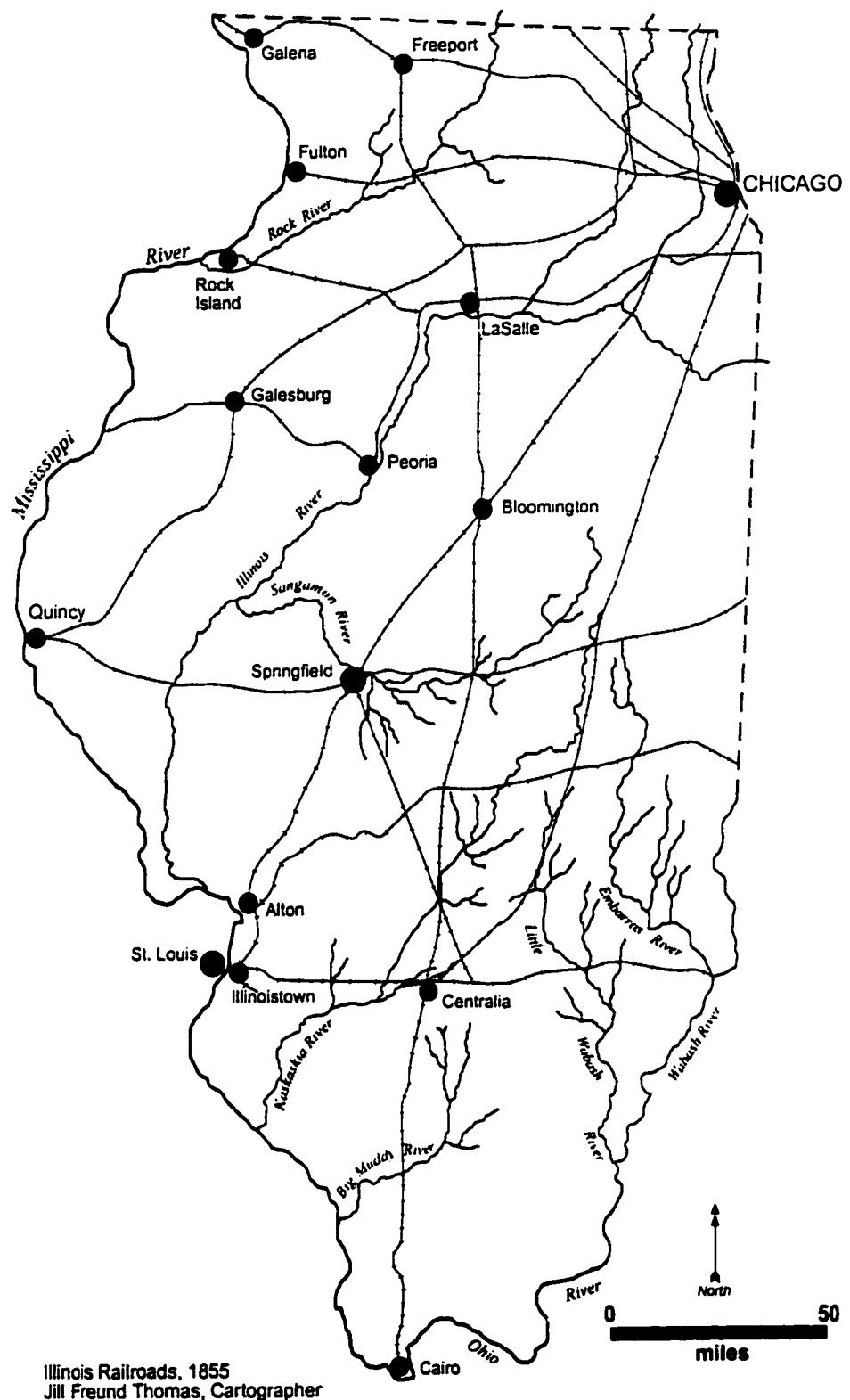


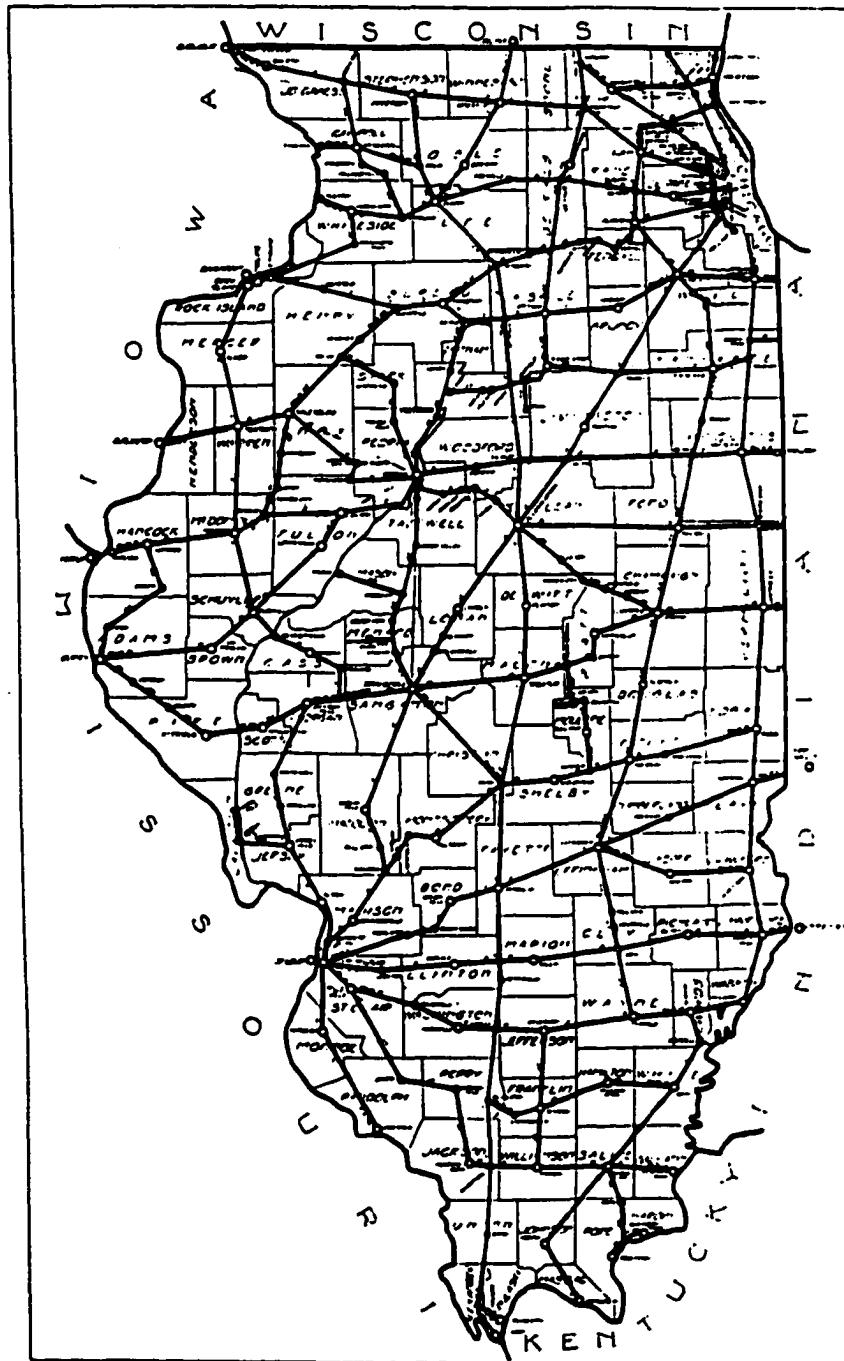






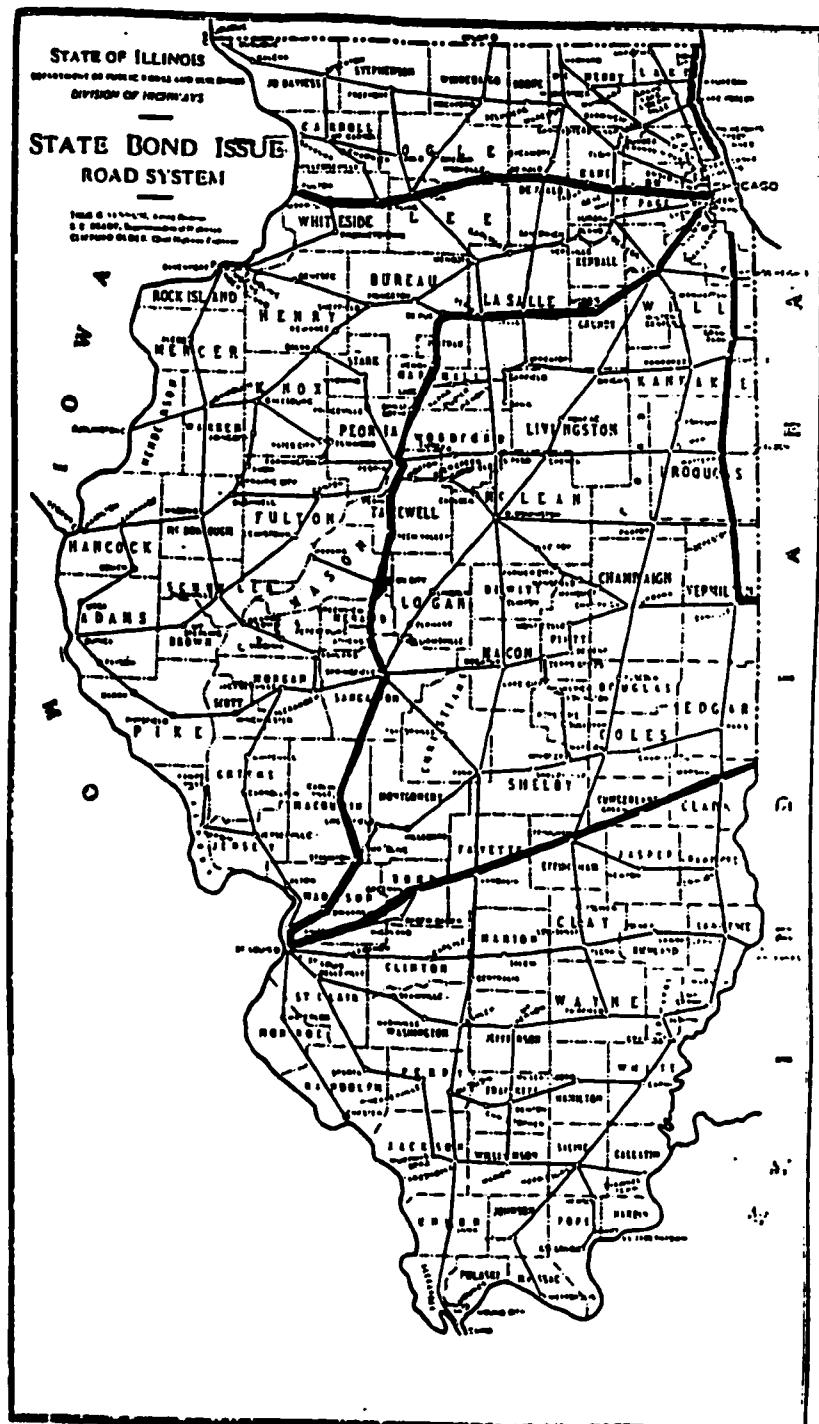
Proposed Illinois Railroads, 1837
Jill Freund Thomas, Cartographer





MAP SHOWING THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

Illinois Blue Book, 1917-18
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



The black lines designate the Federal-aid roads; the lighter lines all other roads
the State system.

Illinois Blue Book, 1919-20
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois

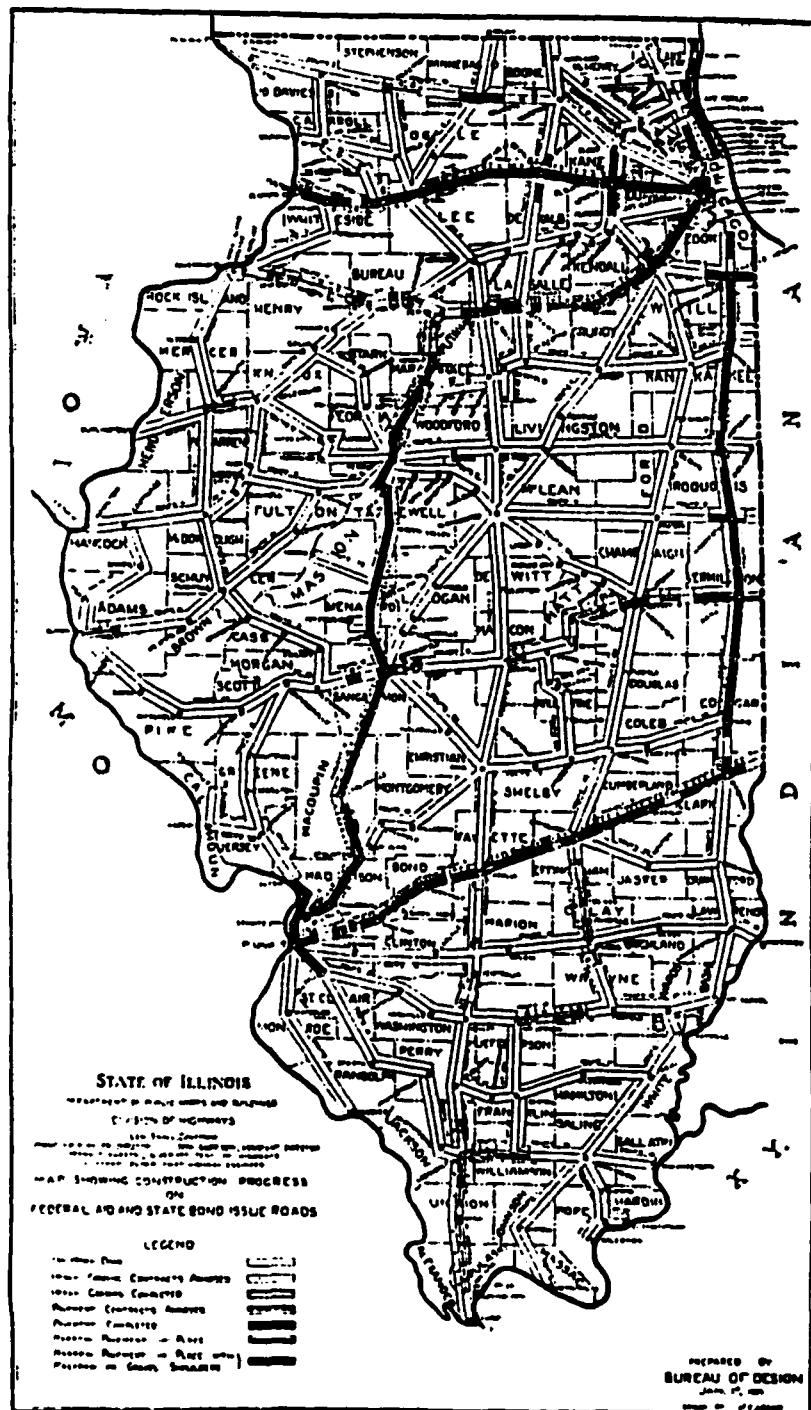
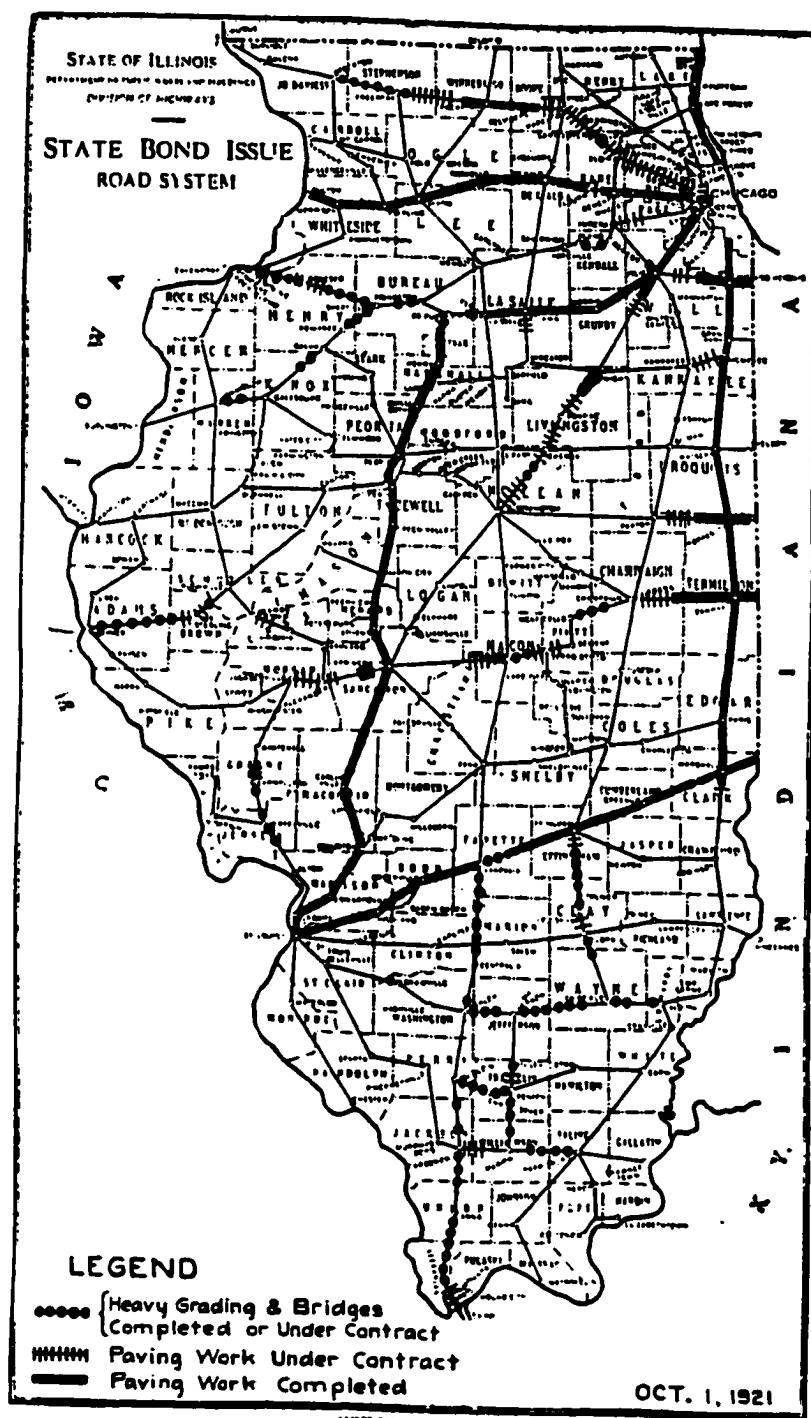


Figure B.—Progress of construction, January 1, 1921.

Illinois Blue Book
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



Progress in Road Building to October 1, 1921.

Illinois Blue Book
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois

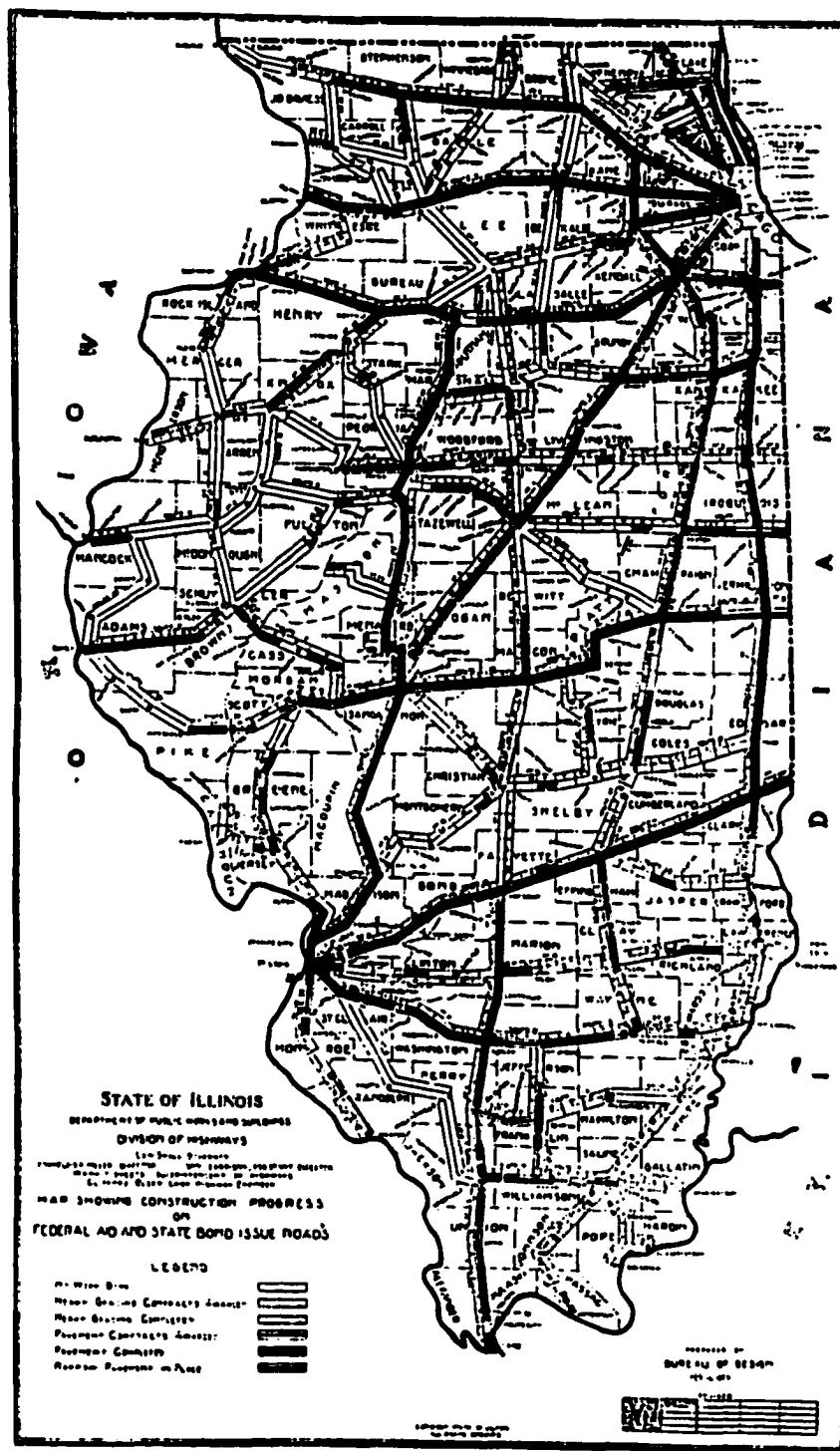
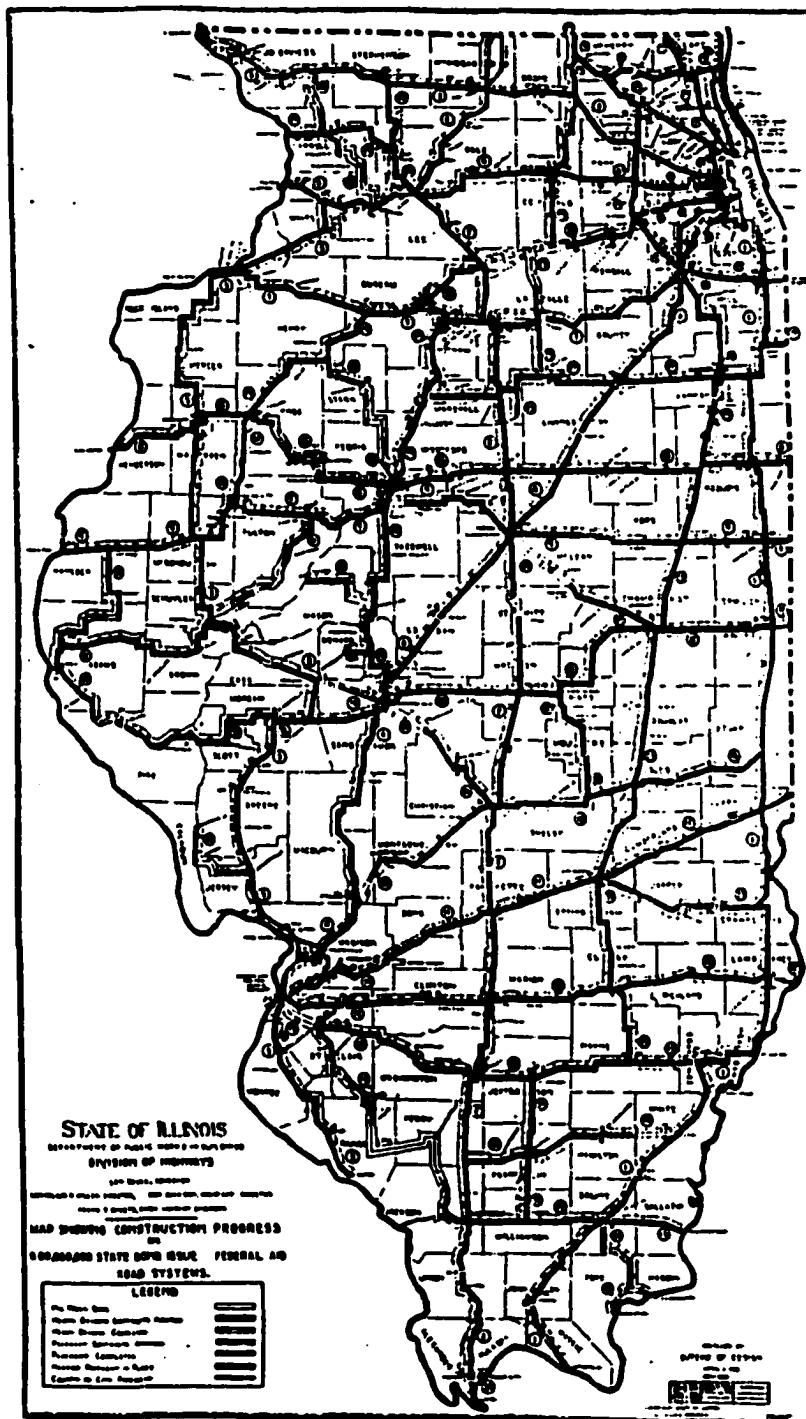


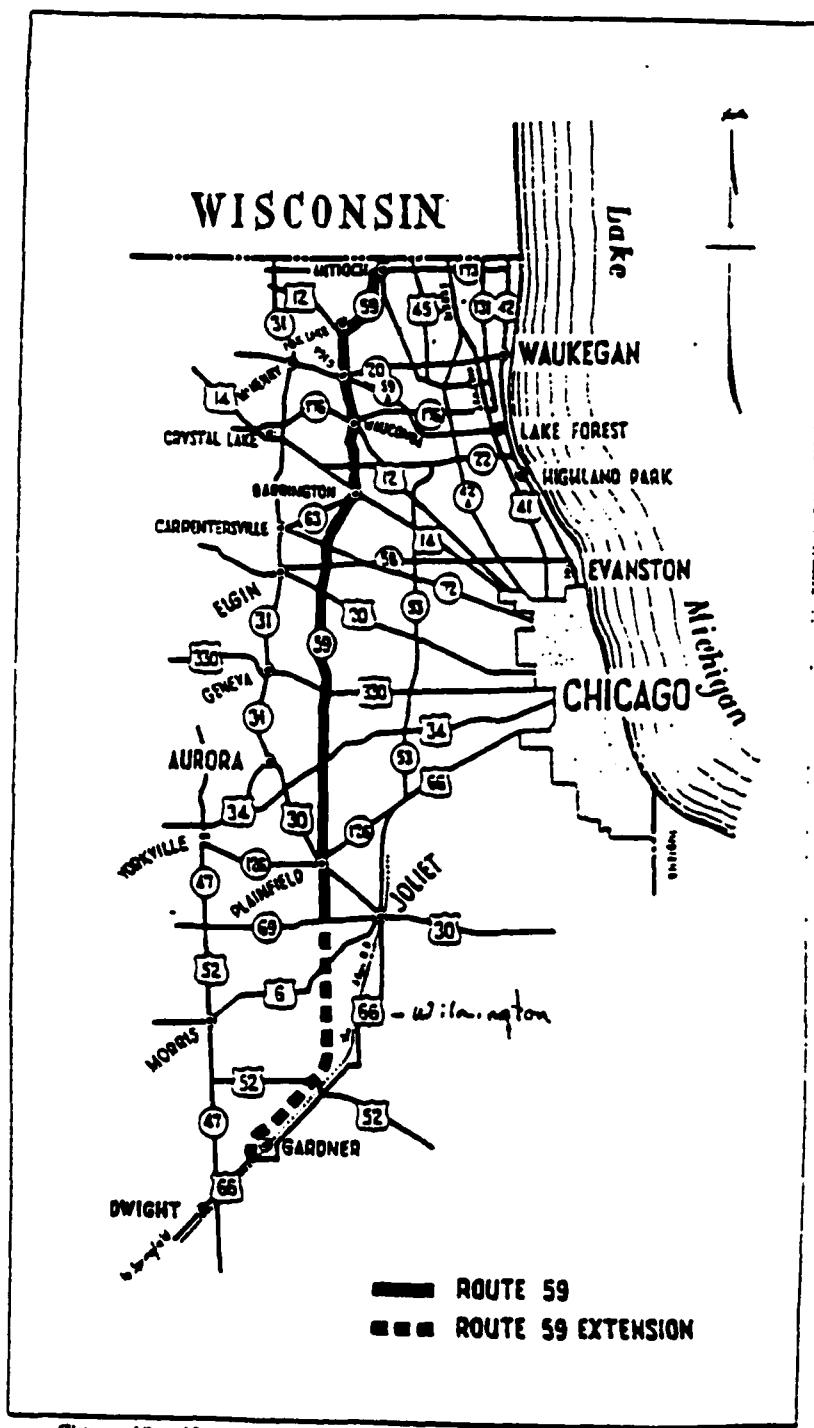
Figure A—Progress of construction August 1, 1923.

Illinois Blue Book, 1923-24
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



Progress of Road Construction to September 1, 1925.

Illinois Blue Book, 1925-26
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



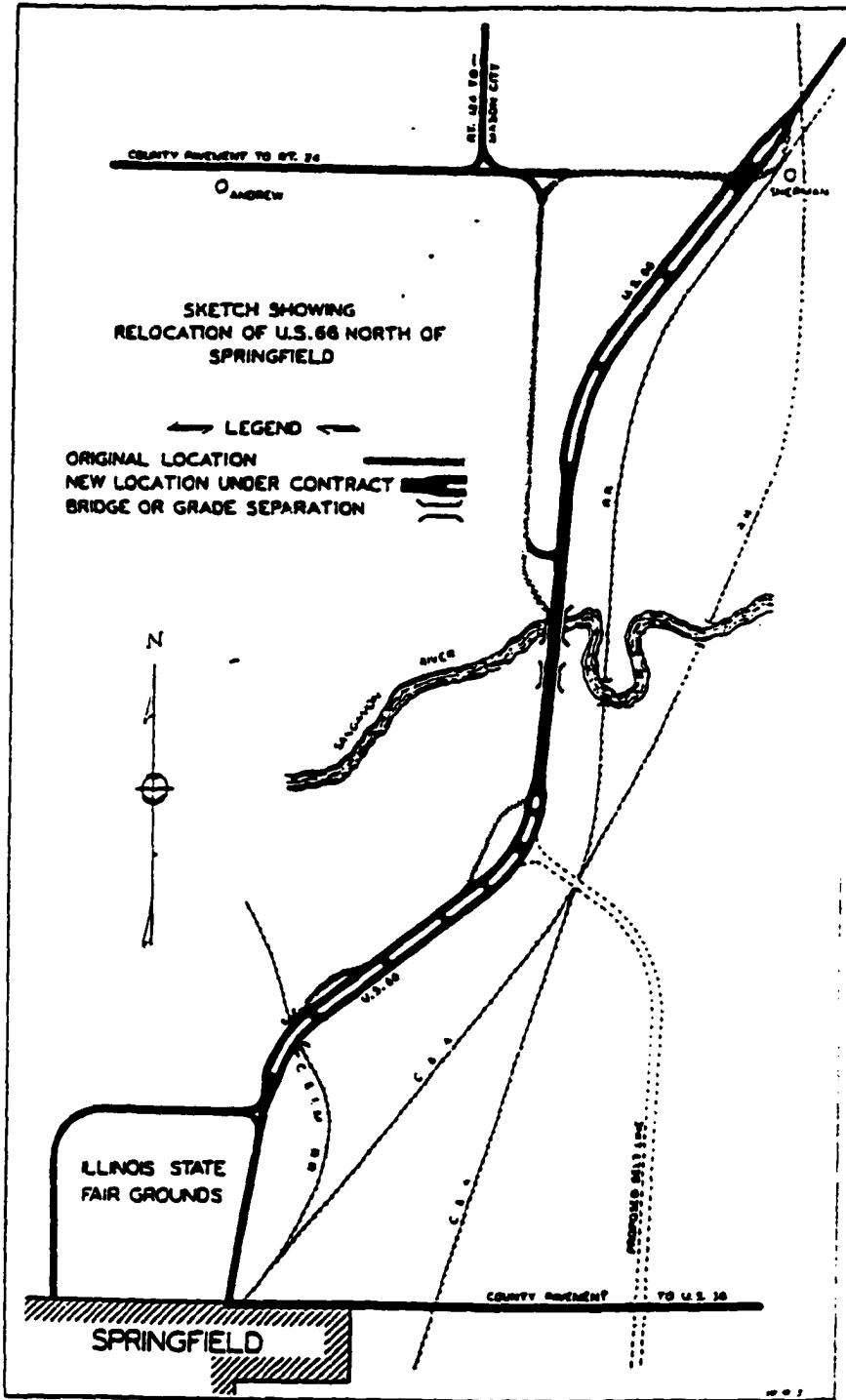
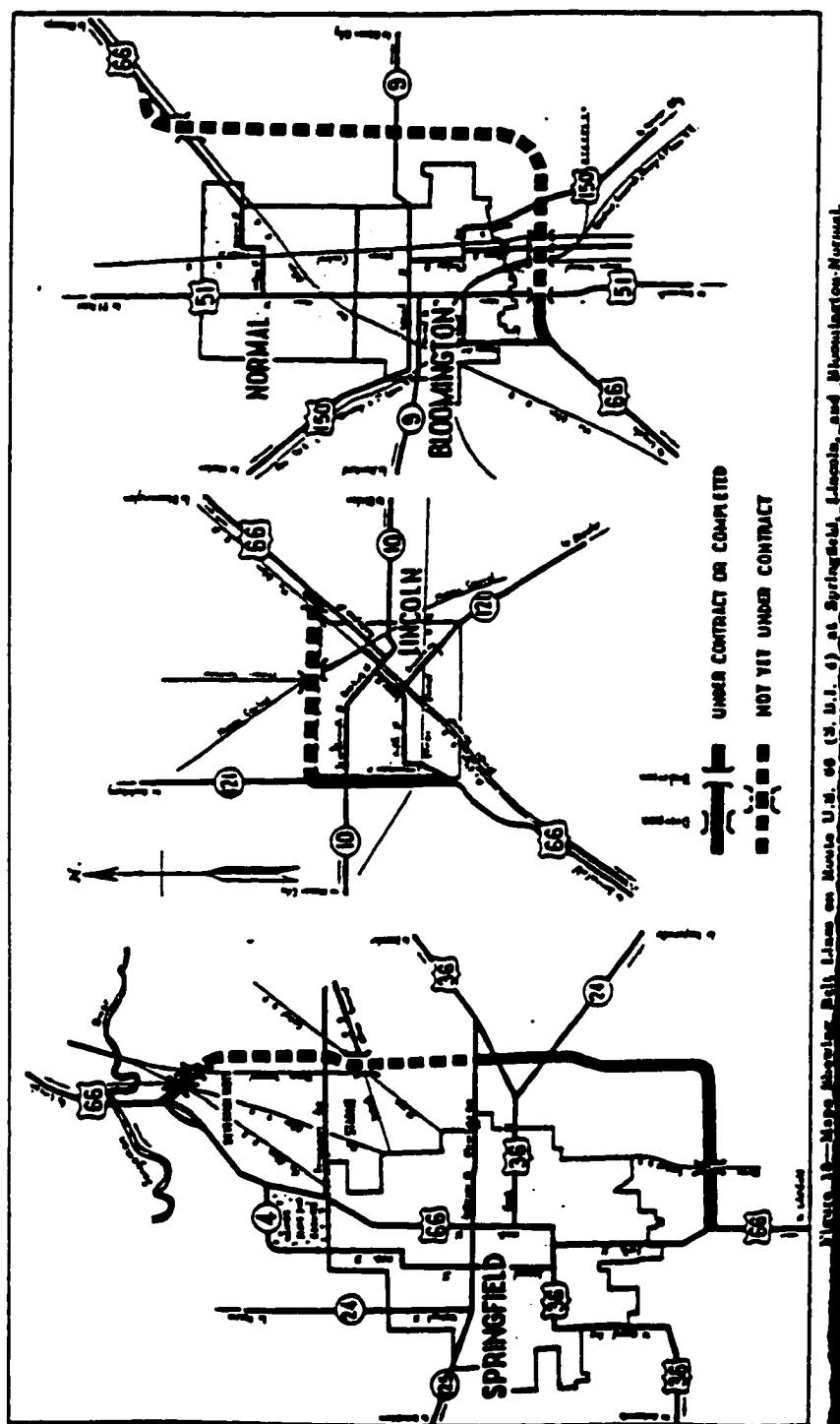


Figure 11.

Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department
of Transportation, Springfield, Illinois



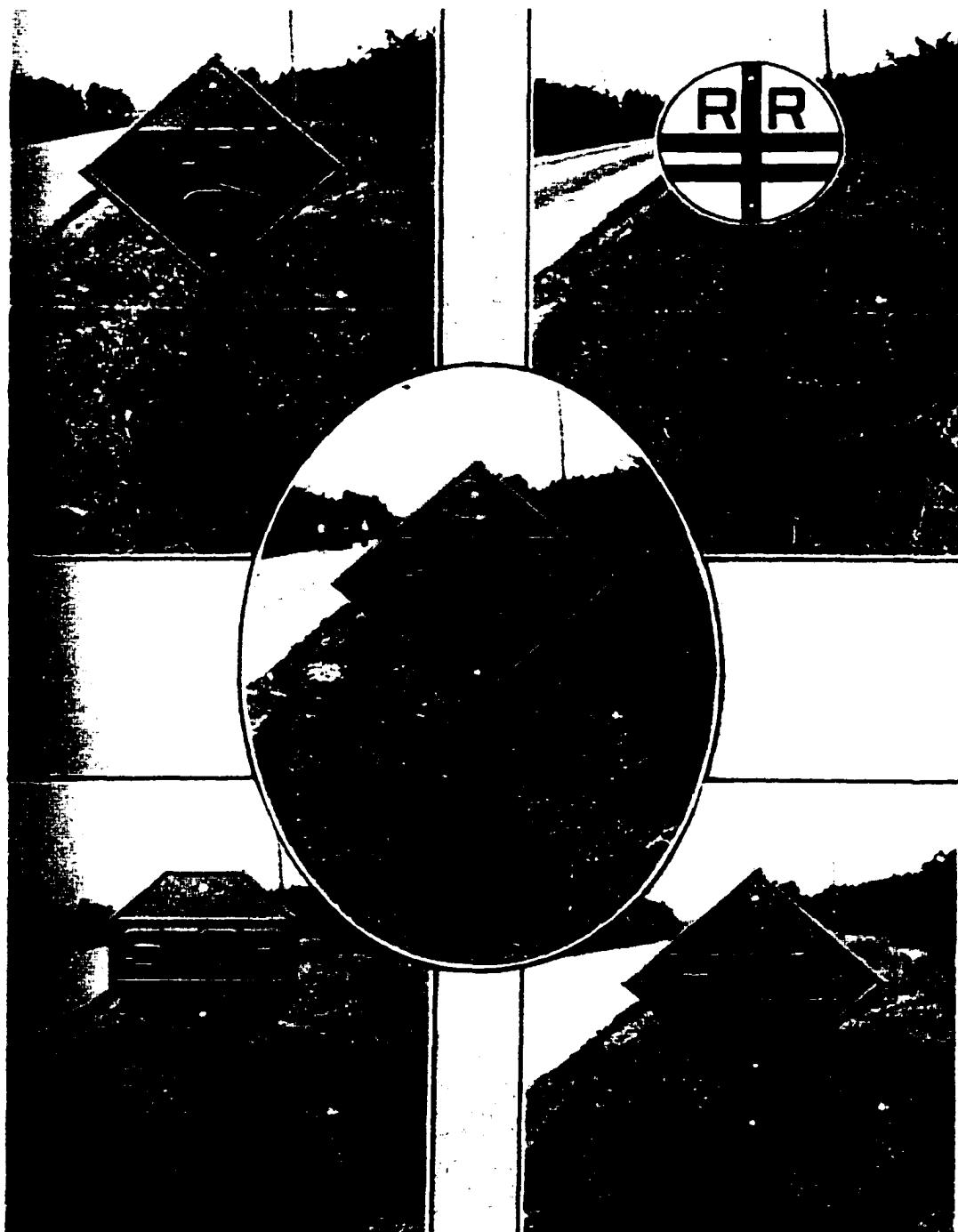
Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department
of Transportation, Springfield, Illinois

APPENDIX B

IMAGES



Standard Markings of Illinois Roads - 1927-28
Illinois Blue Book, 1927-28
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



Official Road Markers - 1929-30
Illinois Blue Book, 1929-30
Used with permission of the Secretary of State,
Springfield, Illinois



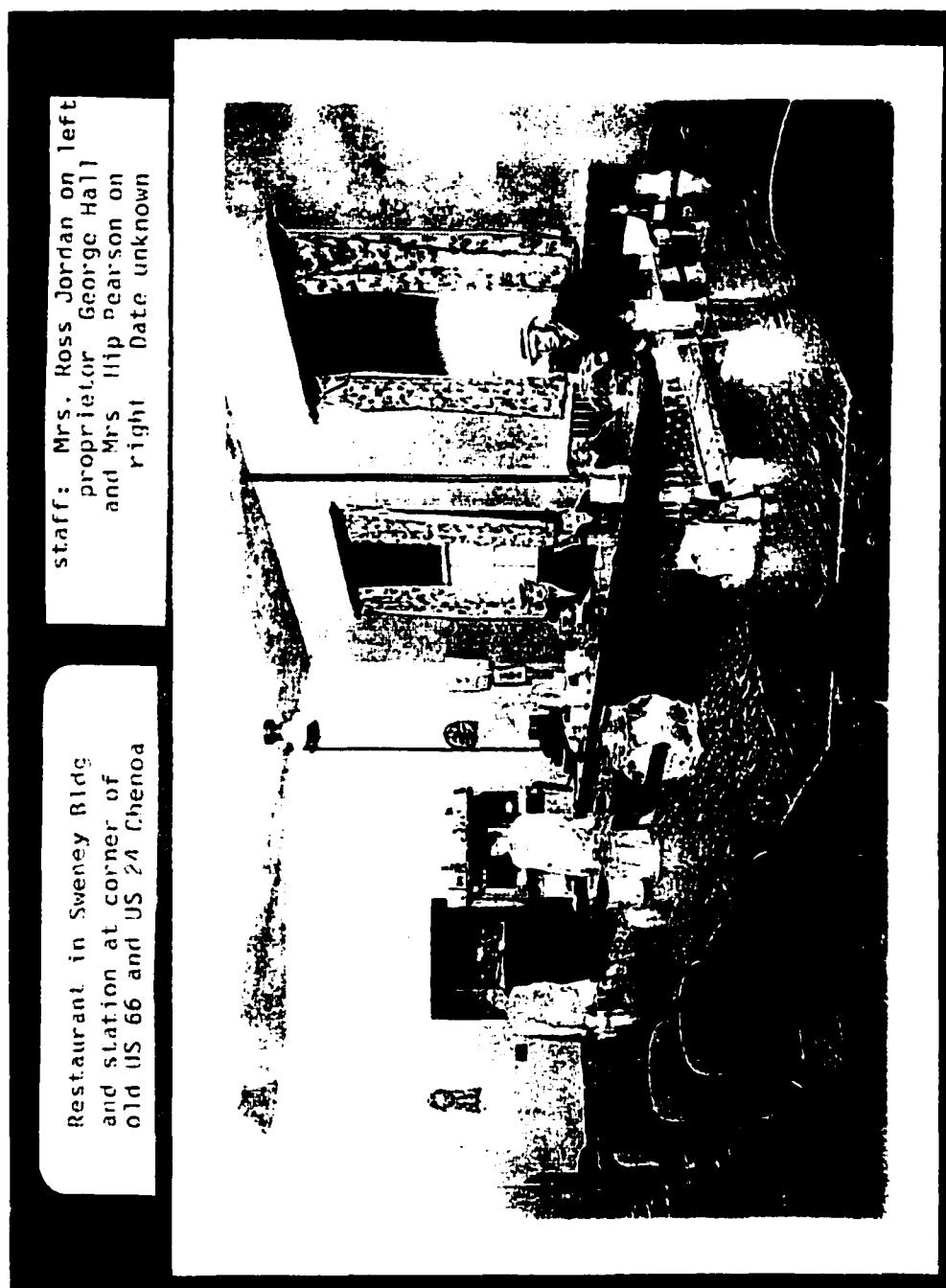
Work on Route 4 near Lawndale, Illinois - 1924
Used with permission of Betty McLellan



Accident on Route 66 near Brandtville, Bloomington
Used with permission of Chester Henry



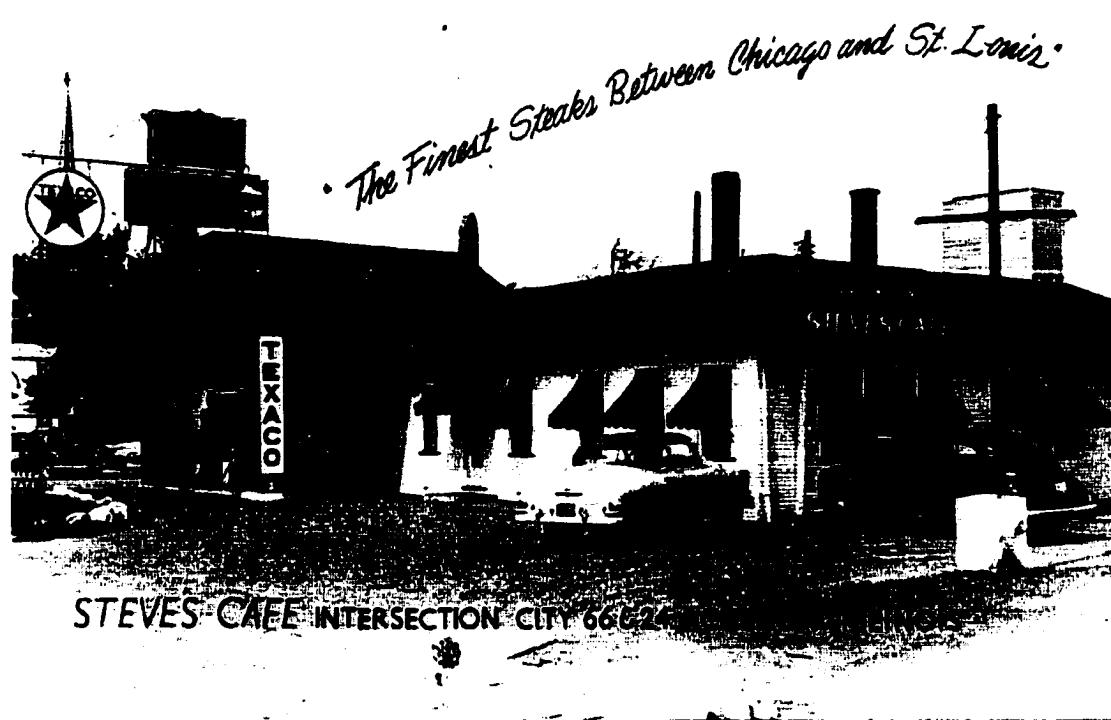
Standard Station at the corner of Route 66 and Route 24, Chenoa
Used with permission of Merle and Carolyn Parry



Interior view of Sweeney's Restaurant, Chenoa
Used with permission of Merle and Carolyn Parry



Gasoline Alley, ca. 1920s, Chenoa
Sweney's Restaurant on left, Standard Station on right, Steve's
Cafe in center on curve
Used with permission of Merle and Carolyn Parry



Steve's Cafe, ca. 1940s, Chenoa
From a private collection



Bird's eye view of Gasoline Alley showing the back of Steve's Cafe
in center, Streid's on the left, and Lanterman's on the right,
ca. 1940s, Chenoa
Used with permission of Merle and Carolyn Parry



Free Tourist Park, ca. 1920s, Chenoa
Used with permission of Merle and Carolyn Parry



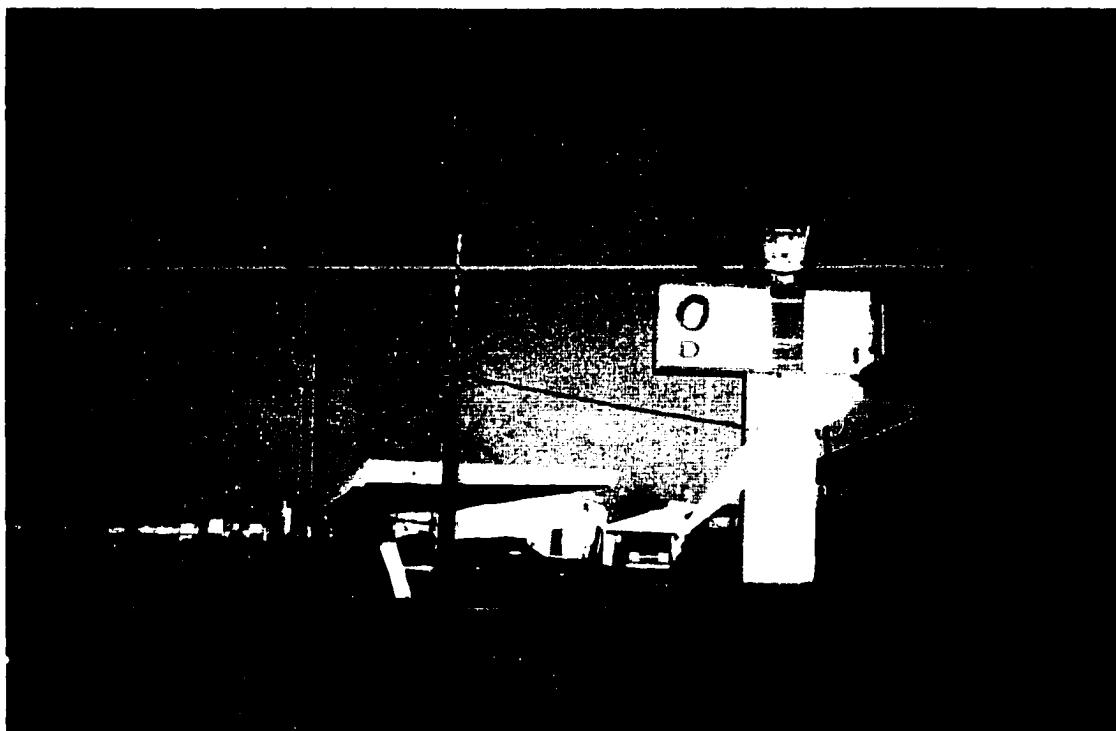
Ballard Elevator, near Lexington
Remains of scale house to right of elevator
Photo by author



Neon sign at edge of Lexington
Road closed sign marks the southbound lane
Photo by author



Lexington Motel
From a private collection



Oasis Drive-In, Lexington
Northbound lane of Route 66 visible on left
Photo by author



Bolt's Filling Station, Pine Street, Normal
Photo by author



Prairie Travler Motel, Bloomington Beltline, ca. 1950s
From a private collection



Holiday Inn, Bloomington Beltline, ca. 1960s
From a private collection



L & L MOTEL - BLOOMINGTON - PH. 96947 - ROUTE 150 AT 66 - AAA

L & L Motel, Bloomington Beltline
From a private collection

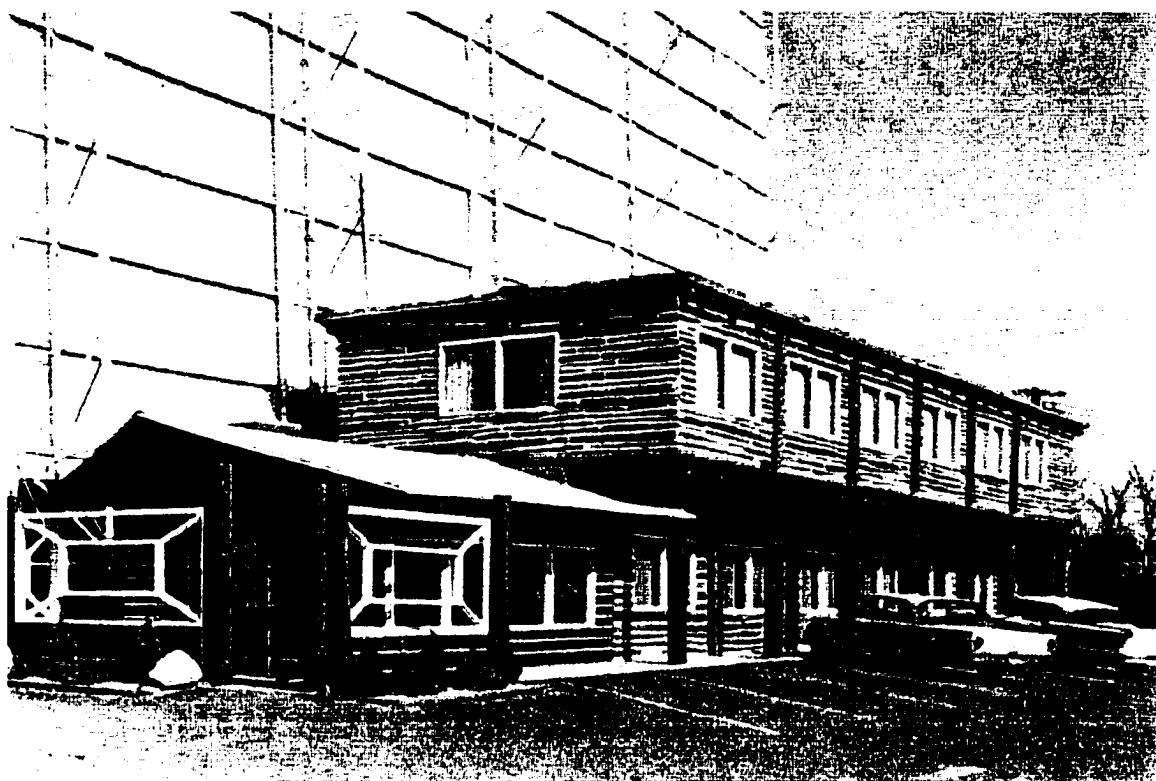


STREID'S MOTEL & RESTAURANT
Junction of U. S. Hwys. 66 & 150
Bloomington, Ill.

Streid's Motel and Restaurant, Bloomington Beltline
From a private collection



Bob Johnson's Brandtville Restaurant, ca. 1960s
Used with permission of Ken-Way Photography Studios



Sinorak Smorgasbord Restaurant, ca. 1960s
Scaffolding for Phil-Kron Drive In screen is immediately behind the
restaurant
From a private collection



State Farm Insurance building in downtown Bloomington
Postcard in author's collection



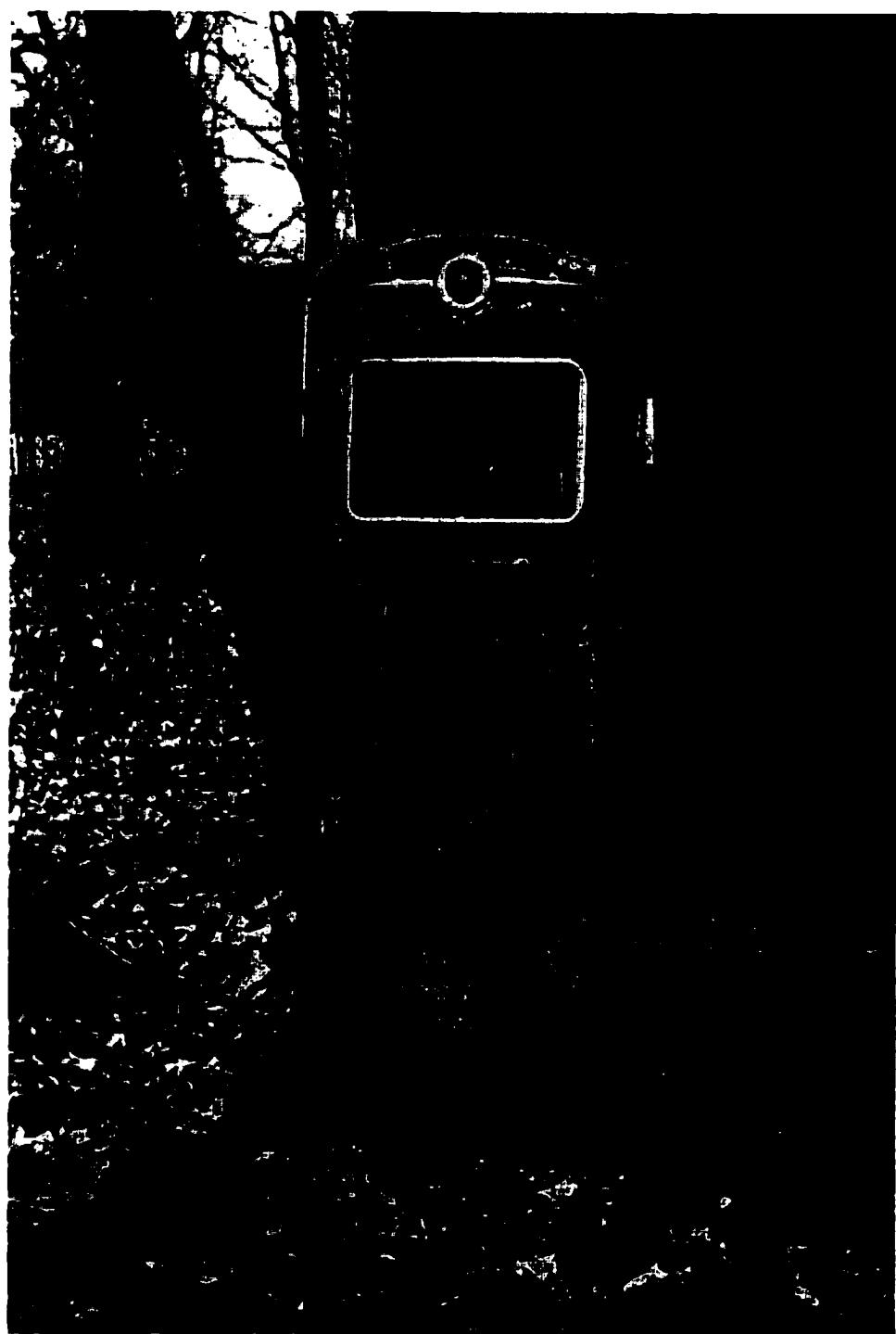
Detail of neon accents on East Street facade of State Farm
building, Bloomington
Photo by author



Six Points Oil Station and Tourist Camp, ca. 1930s, Bloomington
From a private collection



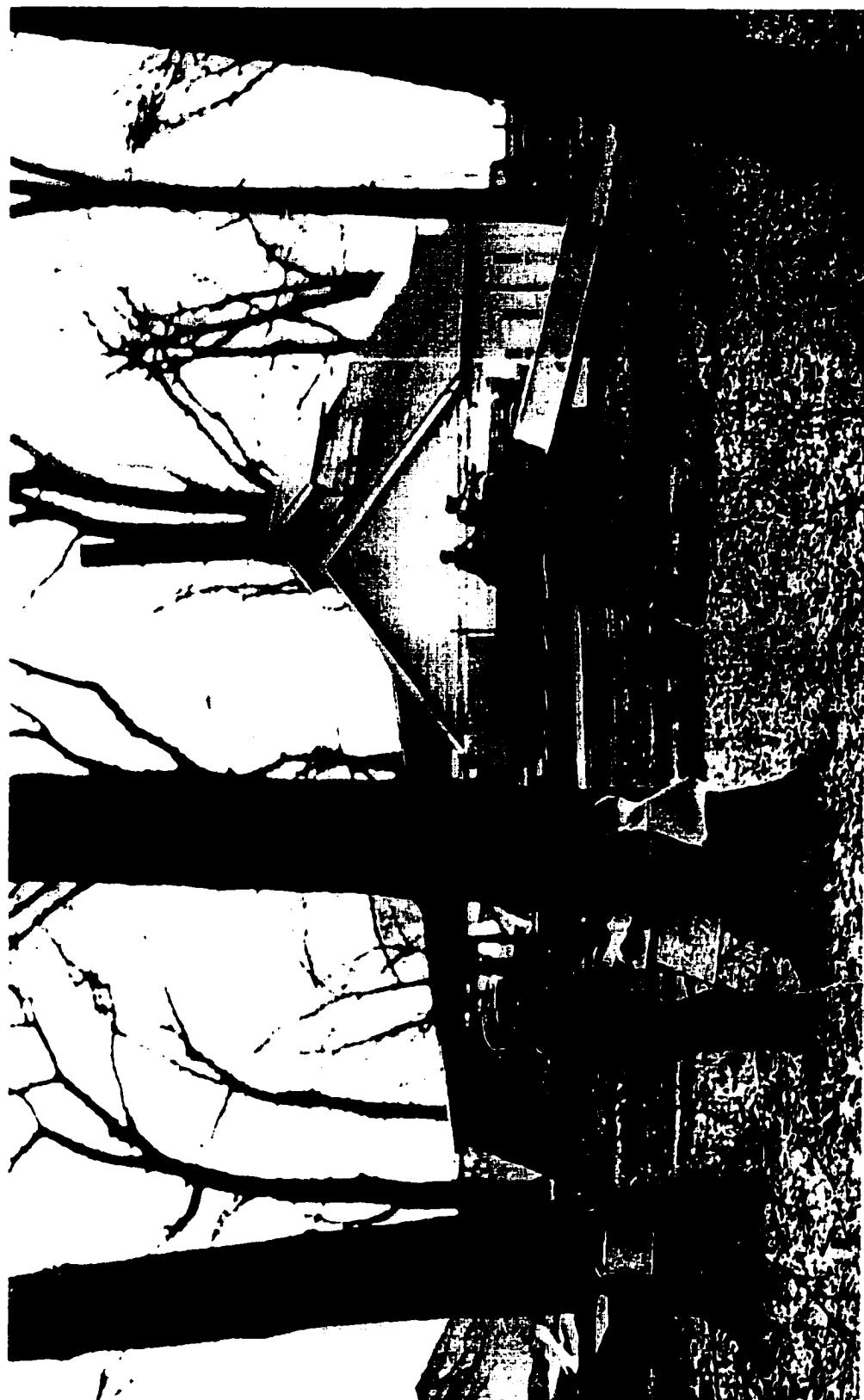
**Second Shirley depot, moved to this location in the 1970s, Funk's
Grove**
Photo by author



Gas pump in front of old country store, Funk's Grove
Photo by author



Edgewood Tavern and gas station, Funk's Grove
Used with permission of Steve and Glaida Funk



Steve Funk gathers sap, ca. 1950s, Funk's Grove
Used with permission of Steve and Glaida Funk



Dixie Truckers Home, McLean, pre-1965
From a private collection

APPENDIX C
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

U.S. Route 66 Associations, Museums, and Information Centers

**Ash Fork Tourist Center
Old Route 66
Ash Fork, AZ 86320**

**Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona
P.O. Box 66
Kingman, AZ 86402**

**California Historic Route 66 Association
2117 Foothill Blvd., #66
LaVerne, CA 91750**

**National Historic Route 66 Federation
P.O. Box 423
Tujunga, CA 91043-0423**

**California Route 66 Museum
16849 D Street/Route 66
Victorville, CA 92392**

**Route 66 Hall of Fame
Dixie Trucker's Home
I-55 and U.S. 136
McLean, IL 61754**

**Route 66 Association of Illinois
2743 Veterans Parkway, Suite 166
Springfield, IL 62704**

**Old Route 55 Information Center
Old Route 66 and Madison Avenue
Box 66
Staunton, IL 62088**

**U.S. Route 66 Association
Central Region
P.O. Box 150
West Point, IN 47992-0150**

**Kansas Historic Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 169
Riverton, KS 66770**

**Missouri Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 8117
St. Louis, MO 63156**

**New Mexico Route 66 Association
1415 East Central
Albuquerque, NM 87106**

**Route 66 Museum
2229 Gary Blvd.
Clinton, OK 73601**

**National Route 66 Museum
Pioneer and Third
Elk City, OK 73644**

**Oklahoma Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 21382
Oklahoma City, OK 74834**

**Old Route 66 Association of Texas
P. O. Box 66
McLean, TX 79057**

International Organizations

**Route 66 Association of Belgium
40 General de Gaulle Avenue
1050 Brussels, Belgium**

**Canadian Route 66 Association
P.O. Box 31061
#8 - 2929 St. Johns Street
Port Moody, BC Canada
V3H 4T4**

**Friends of Route 66 (UK)
The Drum Inn
Cockington Village
Torquay, Devon TQ2 6XA
England**

**Route 66
88 rue du Chateau
F. 92600 Asnieres
France**

**Route 66 Association of Illinois
Hall of Fame Members**

Inducted June 9, 1990

Ernie Edwards, Pig Hip Restaurant, Broadwell
John Geske, Dixie Truckers Home, McLean
Francis Marten, Our Lady of the Highway Shrine, Raymond
Francis Mowery, Illinois State Police, Pontiac
Russell Soulsby, Shell Service Station, Mt. Olive
J. P. Walters, Dixie Truckers Home, McLean

Inducted June 8, 1991

Metha Paulsen Jensen, Paulsen (Carefree) Motel, Dwight
M. F. "Cotton" McNabney, Cotton's Village In, Bloomington
Ed Waldmire Family, The Cozy Dog Drive-In, Springfield

Inducted June 13, 1992

Ariston Cafe and the Adam Family, Litchfield
Steve and Glaida Funk, Funk's Grove
Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket, Willowbrook
John Stonecipher, Stoney's Service, Odell

Inducted June 12, 1993

Chester D. Henry, Illinois State Police, Pontiac
Ervin Kolarik, Chicken Basket Restaurant, Willowbrook
Effie Marx, Dwight
Bill Shea, Shea's Finest Truck Covers, Springfield

Inducted June 11, 1994

Hubert Henry, St. Louis
Rodino Square and the Carmen Rodino Family, Pontiac
The Riviera, roadhouse and restaurant, near Gardner

Inducted June 10, 1995

Grace Brown, Larry and Debbie Lucas , and Howard E. and MariAna
McAnarney, Art's Restaurant, Farmersville
The Benedict Family, Chuck and Delmar Benedict, and Eleanor
Benedict Roberts, McLean
H. Burt Parkinson, Gardner
G. J. Mecherle, State Farm Insurance, Bloomington

Inducted June 8, 1996

Log Cabin Lunch & Mobil Service Station, Pontiac
Marjorie O'Brien; Brad and Debbie Trainer
Eddie's Pure Truck Stop/Eddie's Union 76 Truck Stop, Towanda
Edward and Marjorie Baize
Wilton C. Rinkel, Edwardsville
Irvin Brothers, Inc., Bloomington, Maurice Irvin

Inducted June 7, 1997

Rev. Dean "Shug" Benton, truck driver, Bloomington
Albert Cassens and the Cassens Transport Company, Edwardsville
Ralph M. Hay and Frank, Hay Brothers Garage, Davenport
J. Richard Jones, Dick Jones Garage, Odell

Inducted June 13, 1998

The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, Mitchell
Arlene and Elmo Winterland and the Oasis Drive-In, Lexington
Sky View Drive In, Litchfield
White Fence Farm and the Hastert Family, Romeoville

Inducted June 12, 1999

Casey's Garden Shop, Bloomington
FitzHenry Oil Company, Joliet
Robert D. (Bob) Johnson and Brandtville Restaurant, Bloomington
Rialto Square Theater, Joliet

**Artists who have recorded
Bobby Troup's
"Get Your Kicks on Route 66"***

Bobby Troup
Paul Anka
Keith L. Anderson
Asleep at the Wheel
George Auld and His Orchestra
Eddie Baxter
Chuck Berry
Big Four Blues Band
Charles Brown
Anita Bryant
Buckwheat Zydeco
Johnny Caldwell
Canadian Knights
Joe Carol
Chicago Brothers
Chicago Brothers and Sister Blues
Chuck Wagon and the Wheels
Rosemary Clooney
Nat King Cole & King Cole Trio
Natalie Cole
Cal Collins
The Cramps
Bing Crosby and The Andrews Sister
Perry Como
Lamont Cranston Band
Steve Dahl and the dahlfins
Charles "Bud" Dant
Sammy Davis, Jr.
Spencer Davis and Band
Martin Denny
Depeche Mode
Floyd Dixon
Lou Donato
Do Ray Mi
Ronnie Eden and Route 66 Band
Dr. Feelgood
Ducks Deluxe
Frank D'Rone
Bob Dylan
Earthquake
Eskimo Joe's Rhythm and Blues

The Four Freshmen
Charlie Francis
Gold Company
Buddy Greco
Greg the Black
Roy Hamilton
Tina Harper
Ted Heath
The Hi-Liters
Hollywood Jones
Eddie Howard
Humble Pie
Igor's Jazz Cowboys
Harry James
Louis Jordan
Jump'n The Saddle Band
Harumi Kaneko
Larry "88" Keys
King/Bluiett Trio
La Velle
The Lazy Cowgirls
The League of Decency
Little Willie Littlefield
Manhattan Transfer
Johnny Mathis
George Maharis
Greg Mahogany
Manfredo Fest
The Monkeymen
John Moriarty Trio
The Most Happy Fellows
Michael Martin Murphey
Marty O'Connor
The Original Sins
Lisa Otey
The Outcasts
Patti Page
The Penny Loafers
Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers
Bucky and John Pizzarelli
John Pizzarelli, Jr.
Louis Prima
Pump Boy's Dinettes
The Quest

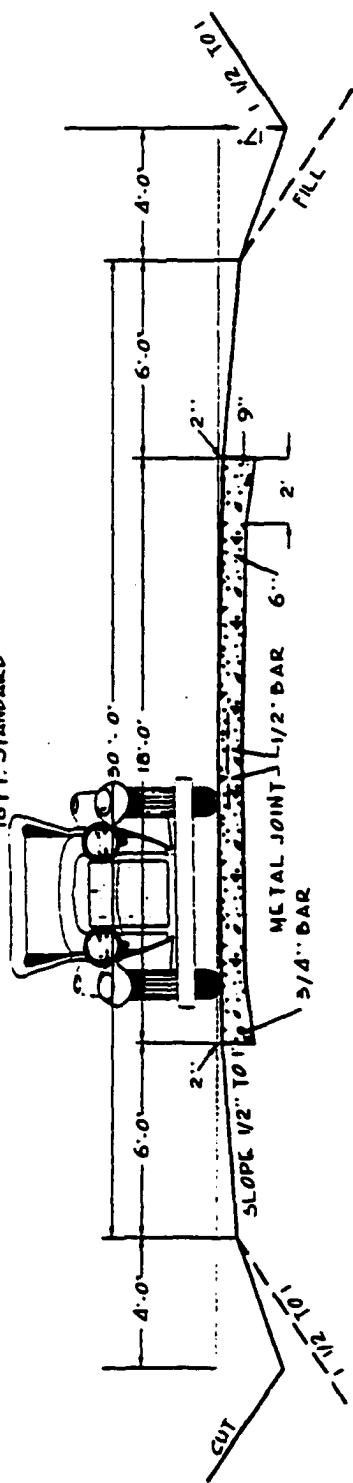
Leon Rausch
The Replacements
Buddy Rich
Judy Roberts
Betty Roche
The Rolling Stones
Rose T. C.
Rue de Blues
Runaway Express
Brian Setzer Orchestra
The Sharks
Cozy Sheridan
Starz/B-Troup
Lou Stein and Elise
The Surfaris
Grady Tate
Them/Van Morrison
Mel Torme
The Trenchcoats
The Underbeats
Bob Wills
JoJo Zep and the Falcons

*Source: Route 66 Magazine, Spring 1999.

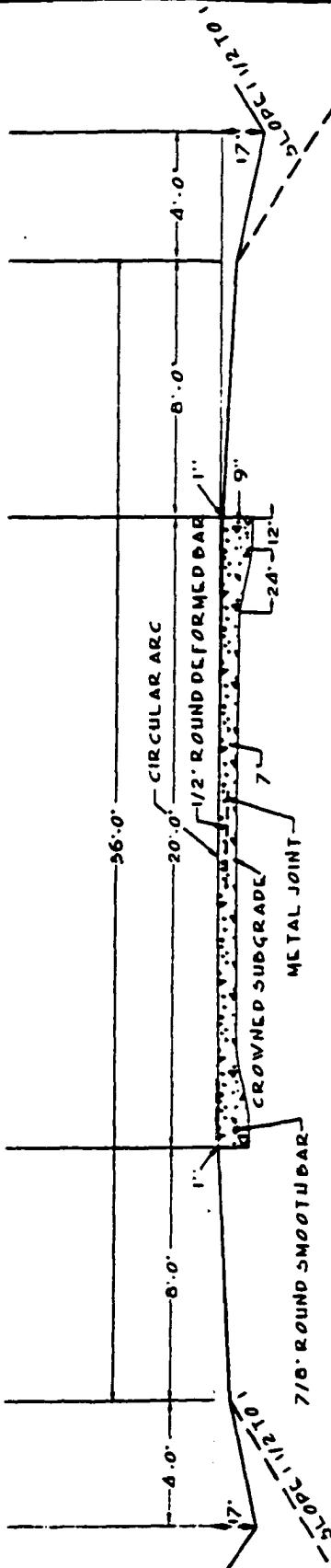
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE

DURING 1926

PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT 16 FT. STANDARD



PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT 20 FT. HEAVY TRAFFIC SECTION



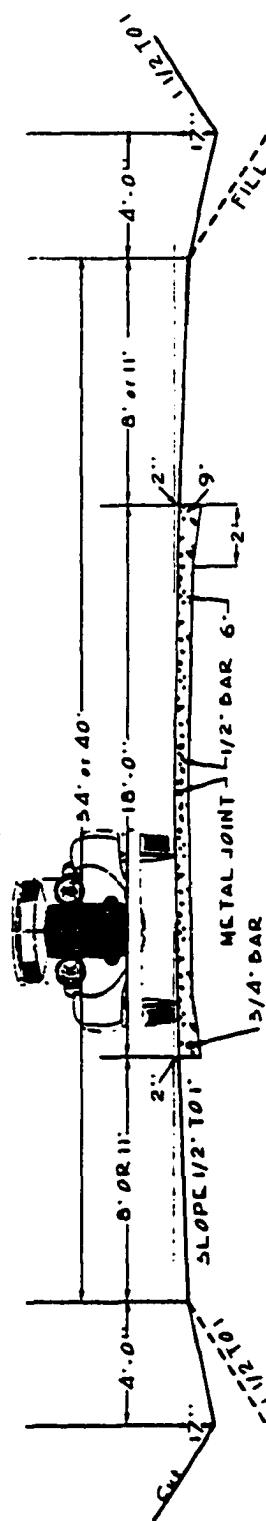
1926 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
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TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE

DURING 1930

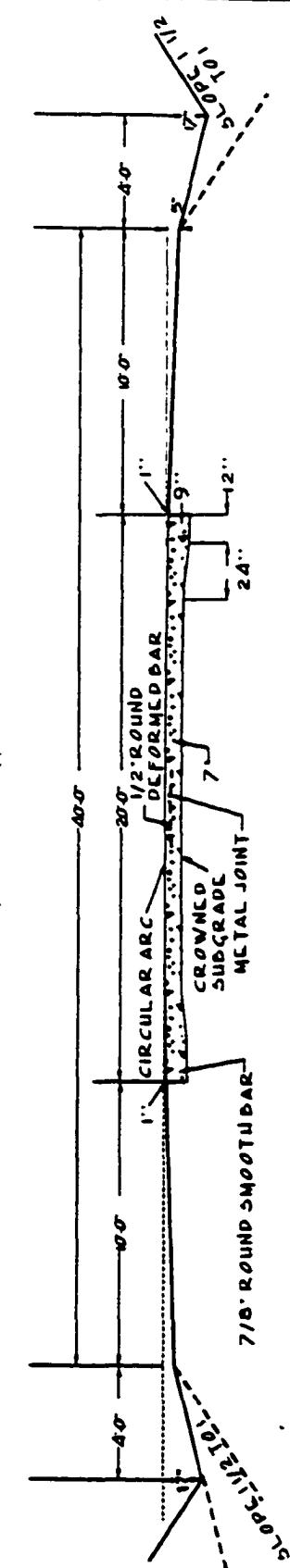
PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT

16 FT. STANDARD



PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT

20 FT. HEAVY TRAFFIC SECTION

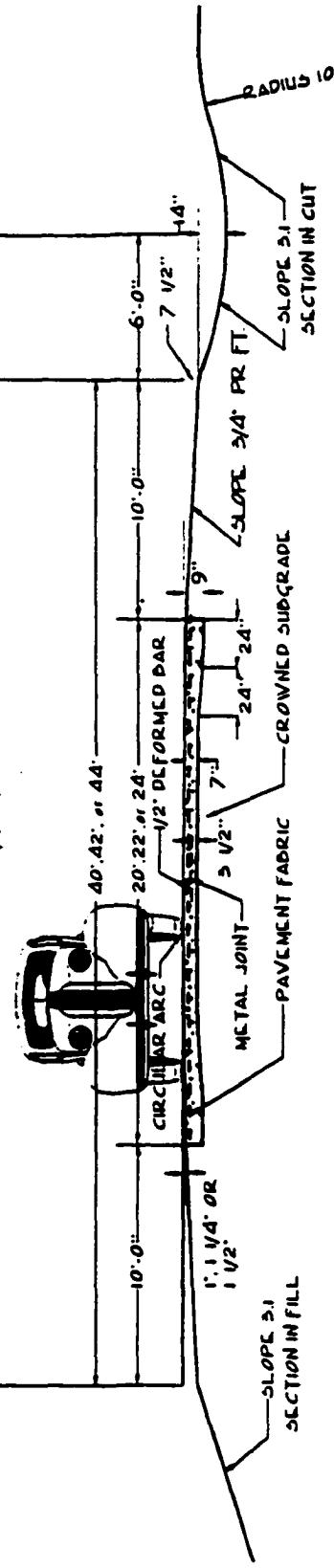


1930 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
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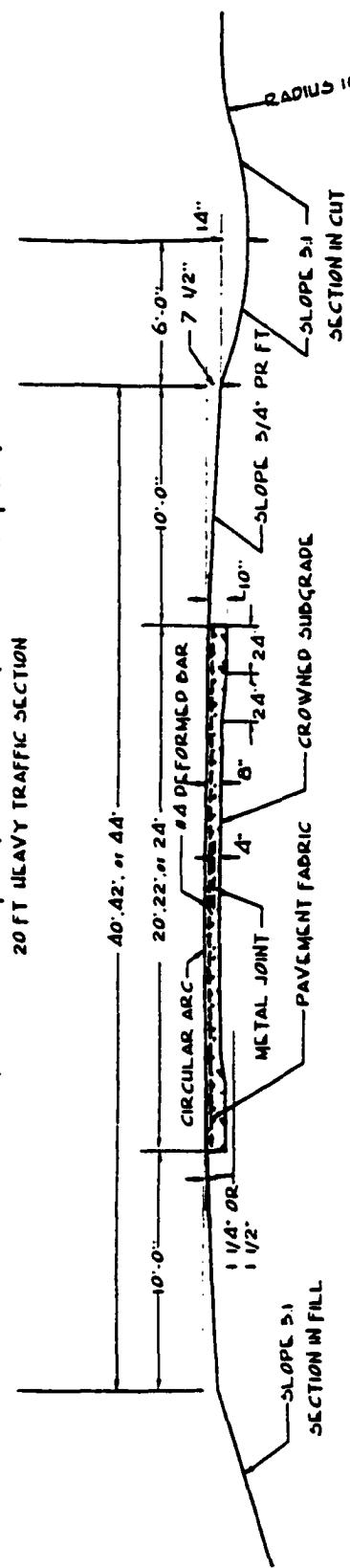
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE
DURING 1941

PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT

16 FT. STANDARD



PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT
20 FT HEAVY TRAFFIC SECTION

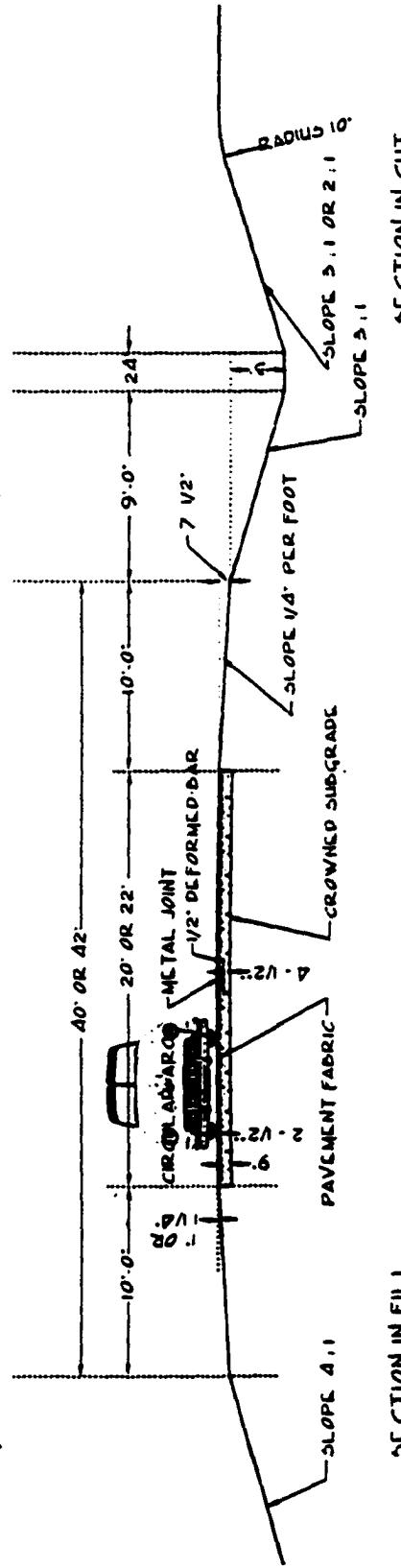


20 FOOT WIDTH USED WHEN TRAFFIC IS LESS THAN 1500 VEHICLES PER DAY.
22 FOOT WIDTH USED WHEN TRAFFIC IS MORE THAN 1900 VEHICLES PER DAY.
24 FOOT WIDTH USED WHEN LARGE AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC CONSISTS OF HEAVY TRUCKS OR BUSES.

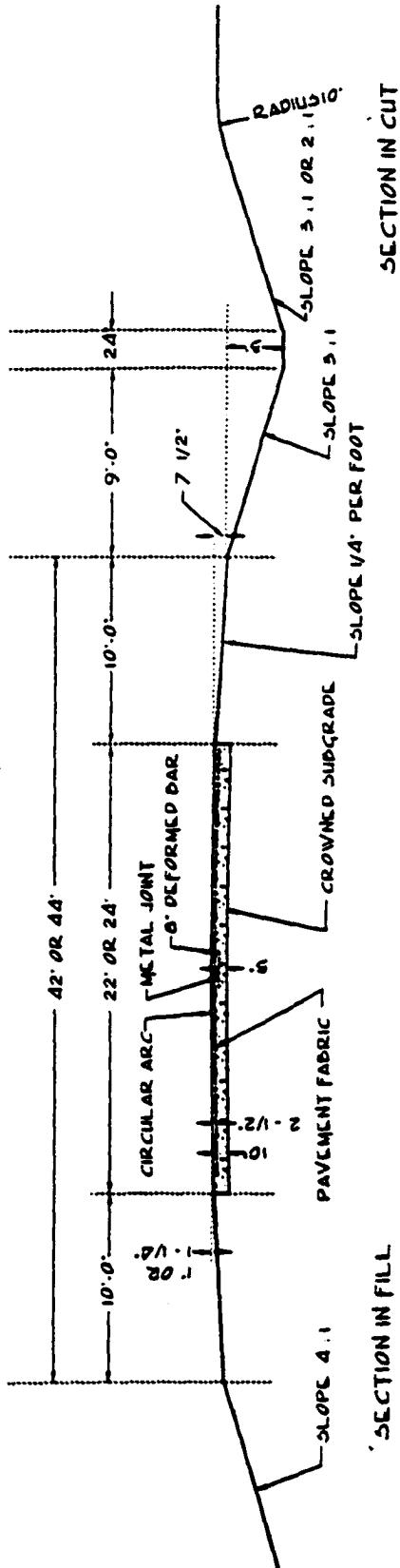
1941 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department of Transportation

TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE

DURING 1946 PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT NORMAL TRAFFIC SECTION



PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT HEAVY TRAFFIC SECTION

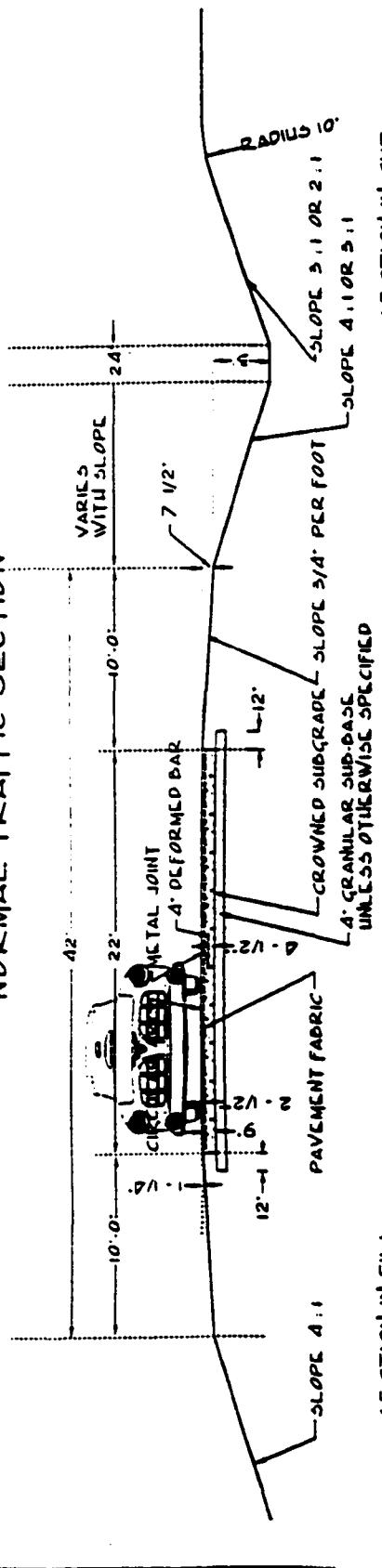


1946 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department of Transportation

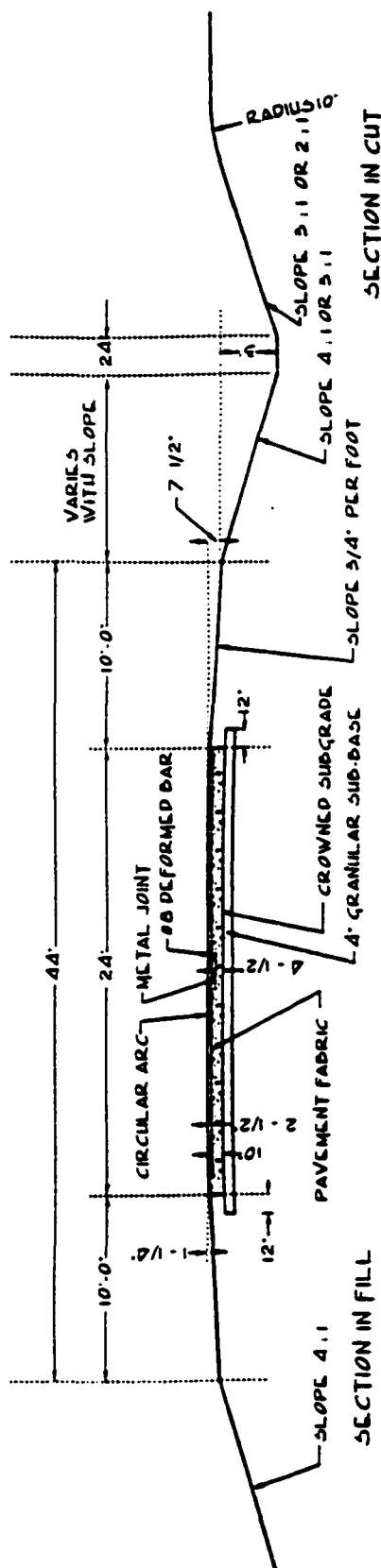
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE

DURING 1953

**PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT
NORMAL TRAFFIC SECTION**



PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT THICK TRAFFIC SECTION

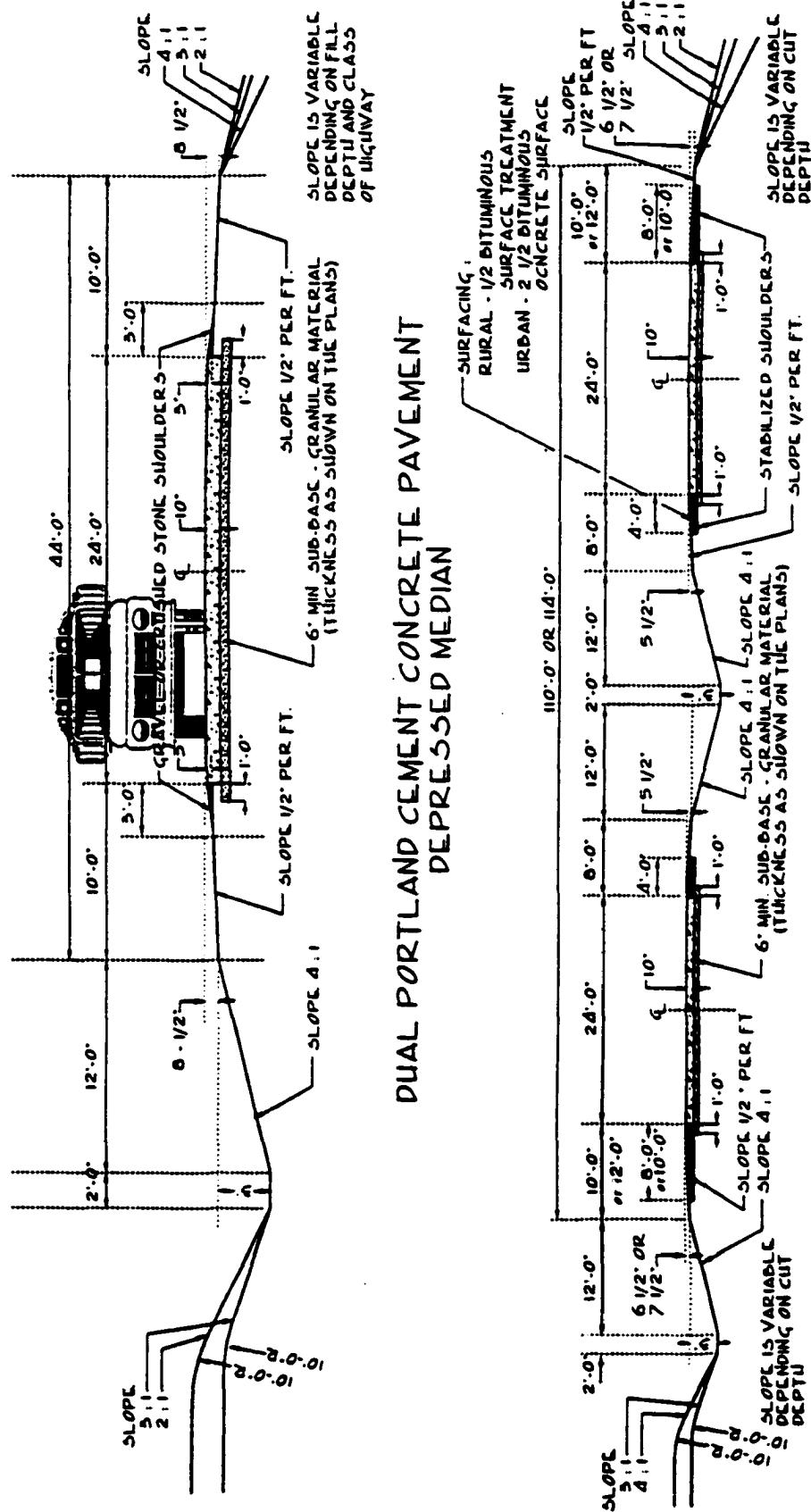


1953 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department of Transportation

TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS IN USE

DURING 1962

DUAL PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE PAVEMENT



1962 Annual Report, Illinois Division of Highways
Used with permission of the Illinois Department of Transportation

APPENDIX D
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

IDS 202.32 - Route 66: 1926 to the Present	Fall 1991
Instructor: Terri Ryburn-LaMonte	TR 8-9:15 a.m.
Phone: 438-2559	SH 302
Hours: By appointment	
Texts: <u>Route 66: The Highway and its People</u> , Susan Croce Kelly, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.	
<u>Searching for 66</u> , Tom Teague, Springfield, Illinois: Samizdat House, 1991.	
<u>Oral History Guide</u> , Elizabeth Bryant Merrill, Salem, Wisconsin: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1985.	

Course objective: Students will learn the history and popular culture of Route 66. They will be expected to conduct research using primary sources, including conducting their own oral history interview with people who lived and worked along Route 66 in Illinois. The end result will be a book, focusing primarily on the history of the Illinois route. Students will take part in class exercises and activities, including writing essays, creating their own Burma Shave signs, designing a class t-shirt, and taking part in small group projects. A field trip will trace the route from Chicago to St. Louis.

Due to the collaborative nature of this course, class attendance, attitude, and participation are crucial and will be a factor in grading.

Schedule:

Tuesday, August 20

Introduction, students' backgrounds and interests, overview of Route 66, course expectations

Thursday, August 22

Lecture: early roads (to Civil War), buffalo and Native American trails, National road, etc.

Essay: "My First Car Ride"

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 1, pp. 1-17, "Birth"

Tuesday, August 27

Lecture: Early roads (post Civil War to pre-World War II)

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 2, pp. 18-31, "Paving"

Thursday, August 29

Lecture: Roads (post-World War II to the present), Eisenhower, interstates, federal legislation

Reading: Teague, pp. 1-30, Introduction, Illinois

Tuesday, September 3

Lecture: 1920s era, popular culture, Cyrus Avery ("Father of Route 66")

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 3, pp. 32-56, "Business and Ballyhoo"
Teague, pp. 31-64, Missouri

Thursday, September 5

Lecture: 1920s era, promotions of the road, history of billboards, tourism

Reading: Teague, pp. 65-74, Kansas

Tuesday, September 10

Lecture: 1930s era, popular culture, Depression, Dust Bowl

Reading: Teague, pp. 75-113, Oklahoma

Thursday, September 12

Lecture: 1930s era, Burma Shave

Assignment: Create Burma Shave signs (due 9-17)

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 4, pp. 57-74, "Dust Bowl"
Teague, pp. 114-129, Texas

Tuesday, September 17

Film: "The Grapes of Wrath"

Assignment: Design t-shirt (due 9-24)

Thursday, September 19

Discussion: "The Grapes of Wrath"

Reading: Teague, pp. 130-164, New Mexico

Tuesday, September 24

Lecture: Oral History

Reading: Teague, pp. 165-192, Arizona

Thursday, September 26

Training: Oral Interviewing Techniques

Assignment: Write six questions for interviewees (due 10-8)

Reading: Teague, pp. 193-241, California

Tuesday, October 1

Guest speaker: Tom Teague, author of Searching for 66

Thursday, October 3

Midterm exam

Tuesday, October 8

Lecture: 1940s era, popular culture, effect of war on road, massive artery of military commerce

Assignment of interviewees, discussion

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 5, pp. 75-82, "Wartime"

Thursday, October 10

Lecture: 1940s era, music of the road, including "Get Your Kicks on Route 66"

Saturday, October 12

Road trip, round trip from Normal to Chicago and Normal to St. Louis

Tuesday, October 15

Lecture: 1950s era, popular culture, consumerism

Discussion: trip

Essay: "The Mystique of Route 66" (for those who did not go on the trip)
or "The Road Trip"

Thursday, October 17

Lecture: 1950s era, Eisenhower, Federal Highway Act

Essay: "My Driver's License Photo Looks Like..."

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 6, pp. 148-161, "Boomtime"

Tuesday, October 22

Lecture: 1960s era, popular culture, highway beautification

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 7, pp. 162-177, "Highway Hype"

Thursday, October 24

Lecture: 1960s era, deterioration of the road

Tuesday, October 29

Lecture: 1970s era, popular culture, replacement by interstates

Reading: Kelly, Chapter 8, pp. 178-189, "Interstates"

Thursday, October 31

Essay: "The Day I Got My Driver's License"

Discussion of interview progress

Tuesday, November 5

Lecture: 1970s era, the end of the road

Thursday, November 7

Lecture: 1990s era, resurgence of interest in the road

Tuesday, November 12

Lecture: 1990s era, grassroots effort to preserve the road

Thursday, November 14

Exercise: Revival of small town

Tuesday, November 19

Lecture: Transcribing oral histories

Thursday, November 21

Lecture: editing oral histories

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Tuesday, November 26

Lecture: Wrap up

Thursday, November 28

Thanksgiving vacation

Tuesday, December 3

Evaluations, turn in interviews

Thursday, December 5

Review

FINAL: Monday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.

Possible Questions for Route 66 Interviews*

1. In what ways has Route 66 changed or influenced your life?
2. What memories do you have of your first trip on Route 66?
3. Why do you think Route 66 is so important to many people?
4. Many Native Americans sold their crafts and art along Rout 66. Do you think they were degraded by this or did it help promote interest in Native Americans and their lives?
5. What was the strangest roadside attraction that you have ever seen along Route 66?
6. Can you remember any specific tourist that struck you in some way? What was it about him/her that made them memorable?
7. What would have happened if the road hadn't gone through this town?
8. Did the people in the East realize the importance of this highway?
9. What did you like/dislike about Route 66?
10. What were some unusual places along the road?
11. What are your funniest memories?
12. Do you still use the Route?
13. Is there any one restaurant or motel that you remember in particular along old 66?
14. What was your first destination on Route 66?
15. How did Route 66 touch your life or affect you?
16. Do you remember traveling it as a child?
17. Were you fortunate enough to have seen the making and paving of Route 66? How did you feel?
18. Were you ever stranded on Route 66? What was it like?
19. Why did you travel on Route 66 and how did the new interstate affect this?
20. Do you have a favorite story about Route 66? If so, what is it?
21. Souvenirs were popular on Route 66. Do you have on that is a favorite?
22. Why, in your opinion, were the merchants along the road prosperous, even during the Depression?
23. Was there any one experience that happened on 66 that stands out in your mind?
24. When was the last time you were on 66/ For what reason?
25. What were the attitudes of travelers towards workers?
26. Did the people who didn't live on the route take it for granted?
27. When I-55 was built, what changes did it bring to your life?
28. What was the best restaurant for good times and fun?
29. What was the best food along the route? What was the worst food?
30. What type of car did you own during the Route 66 period?
31. Did you ever meet anyone famous on Route 66?
32. Did you make a trip along the route to a certain place more than once?
33. What were your favorite Burma Shave signs? Are there any that you have memorized?
34. What were the rest stops like?

35. What is the longest trip you've taken along Route 66?
36. How did your town or area change when the interstate system replaced 66?
37. Do you notice any differences between "Route 66 people" and people of today's generation in terms of kindness or honesty?
38. Did you see many accidents?
39. Would you have liked to live along Route 66? Why or why not?
40. What was the attitude of travelers toward merchants?
41. Did you travel 66 for work or pleasure?
42. What is the first thing that comes to mind when the topic of Route 66 comes into the conversation?
43. How did you utilize 66?
44. What do you remember most about the traffic on 66 before the interstate? After the interstate?
45. Do you remember the "Snortin' Norton" trucks?
46. Re: the worst accident you saw on Route 66. Were there any fatalities?
47. How extensive were automobile accidents for parts of the road to be labeled "Bloody 66"?
48. Re: mechanical breakdown on Route 66. Did you feel you'd been charged fairly for towing and repairs?
49. What was the worst section of Route 66 you ever drove on? What made it so bad? (i.e. roadway breakdown, railroad tracks, traffic jams, etc.)
50. Was the loss of Route 66 the main factor for East St. Louis' problems or are there other independent factors?
51. Were the Phillips 66 gas station signs designed and named for Route 66?
52. Did people really fall for the bizarre tourist attractions like alligator farms and snake pits?
53. Hospitality seemed to be a key characteristic of those who lived on the highway or worked in the tourist spots, but what bout the travelers? What kinds of attitudes did they have towards these small-town people and did it vary at all depending on why these people were traveling?
54. Were towns "ruined" by the closing of Route 66, or did certain establishments simply die off? (Excluding East St. Louis).
55. How long did you live along Route 66?
56. Did you or your family own a business along Route 66?

*List compiled by IDS 202.32 class, Fall 1991.

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Revival of Small Town

You are a business owner in a small town of 750 people along Route 66. The interstate has long since passed you by and your business is supported primarily by a shrinking group of loyal, local customers. Younger people prefer to shop at malls, eat at fast food places and pump their own gas at mini marts.

You're too young to retire, you have financial obligations, and you want to stay in business. You'd like to cash in on the nostalgia boom re: Route 66 but you don't want to "sell out." You've called this meeting of your business colleagues to discuss what, if anything, can be done to revitalize your town and, thus, your businesses.

You must come up with a plan to attract business and revitalize your town. With whom must you work? Where will your money come from? How will you advertise? Discuss other related issues. Assign one of your group to take notes.

(Circle one for each student)

You own a: **gas station** **motel** **restaurant**

Burma Shave Signs

In the late 1920s, Burma Shave, a brushless shaving cream, was advertised by the unique marketing technique of placing a set of six rhyming 1' x 3' signs at 100-foot intervals along Route 66 and other highways. They were designed to be read for 18 seconds each while traveling 35 miles per hour. Before they were discontinued in 1963, 7,000 sets of the signs were posted. The literary quality of the signs varied, but they were generally light-hearted and corny, utilizing folk humor and wit. Contests were held beginning in the early 1930s, with a prize of \$100 for a rhyme selected for use by Burma Shave. You have learned the history of Burma Shave and have been given some examples of the signs. Try your own rhyme:

BURMA SHAVE

Route 66 T-Shirt Ideas

Design a t-shirt, including logo and wording, based on what you have learned about Route 66. Put your name on the back of this sheet. The class will select one design to be made into the class shirt.