

# A Journey Down



*Los Angeles to Amarillo*

*Molly & Bob Hillery*

*April 2002*

*If you ever plan to motor west,  
Travel my way, that's the highway that's the best,  
Get your kicks on Route 66.*

*It winds from Chicago to L.A.,  
More than 2000 miles all the way  
Get your kicks on Route 66.*

*Now you go through St. Looey, Joplin, Missouri  
And Oklahoma City is mighty pretty.  
You'll see Amarillo, Gallup, New Mexico,  
Flagstaff, Arizona, don't forget Winona,  
Kingman, Barstow, San Bernadino.*

*Won't you get hip to this timely tip:  
When you make that California trip,  
Get your kicks on Route 66.  
Get your kicks on Route 66.*

*--- Bobby Troup*

## ***Preamble***

***This first part of our Route 66 journey was to cover the western half from Los Angeles to Amarillo. However, we chose to start our trip in San Diego and visit with friends who would be attending the International Conference on Metallurgical Coatings - a conference with which I had been associated for many years while at GEAE. So, two days of renewing acquaintances before we start the journey proper.***

Saturday April 20

Left home about 6:30pm and drove to Airport Marriott.  
Checked in, had dinner and turned in.

Sunday April 21

Left hotel on Marriott shuttle about 7:30 in torrential downpour. We were checked in and in Crown Room within 20 minutes of leaving hotel - in time for coffee and relax before our 9:10 flight to San Diego.

Had good breakfast on plane and arrived about ten minutes late. Ram Darolia on same flight on his way to the ICMCTF conference.

Arrived to clear blue skies and temperature in mid-sixties. Got car and drove to Mission Valley Marriott, where we had lunch and sat by the pool for an hour.

I met Dave Wortman for a beer at the Town & Country and then I returned to the hotel until dinner. We met Dave at 7pm and the three of us went to Old Town. Had a pleasant meal and a good chat; home by nine.

Monday April 22

Up about eight and drove to Fashion Valley shopping center for a light Starbucks breakfast.....sitting outside under a clear blue sky. We then returned to the Marriott and read the paper by the pool. A little before noon we drove to the Town & Country to meet Bob and Mary Ann Tucker for lunch. We spent a very pleasant two hours with them, catching up on the events of the last three years. We also chatted briefly with a few other ICMCTF colleagues .

We then spent a very relaxing afternoon by (and in) the pool at our hotel (clear blue skies, low seventies, light breeze) before leaving for dinner at the Fish Market restaurant on the waterfront in San Diego. Had a very nice meal with a table overlooking the harbor on a perfectly clear night. At 9:30 we returned to the Town & Country hoping to get together with Dave and Tuck. However, by a little after ten they had not returned from their Program dinner, so we called it a night and returned to our hotel.

Tuesday April 23

Had breakfast outside again at the Starbucks in Fashion Valley and then returned to Marriott to pack and check out. On the road soon after ten and drove non-stop to Los Angeles. We arrived at the La Brea Tar Pits at 12:45 and spent about 2 1/2 hours in the grounds and the museum. In the grounds are several tar pits in which have been



*The view from our hotel room in San Diego*

discovered millions of bones from creatures that roamed the area ten to forty thousand years ago. Being covered by tar, the bones have been remarkably well preserved and literally hundreds of full skeletons have been cleaned and re-assembled.

The museum is still a working area and, in addition to the many exhibits, you can watch the laboratory staff sorting and cataloguing pieces that are still being excavated. The grounds surround the LA County Museum of Arts, which we didn't visit but which provided a snack bar where we had a late light lunch. Again we ate outside under clear blue skies; temperature near seventy, with a pleasant cooling breeze.

We then drove the remaining ten miles to the Courtyard at Marina Del Rey, where we checked in soon after four. Sat by the pool for an hour before getting ready for dinner. We went to the Warehouse about five minutes from the hotel. We sat outside (under heaters) overlooking the marina. It was a beautiful clear night, although just a tad chilly with the breeze coming off the water. The meal was good, although the service was a little inattentive.



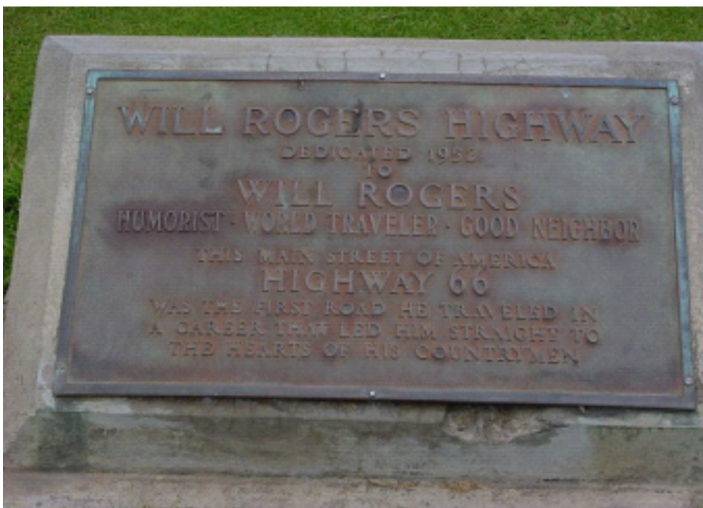
Wednesday April 24

Up about eight and had breakfast at Marie Callender's right next to the hotel. Then we checked out and drove the few miles to Santa Monica. Not knowing exactly where Santa Monica Blvd met Ocean Ave (the end of Route 66), we parked at the pier. We then walked about 3/4 mile north on the beach walk before crossing the Pacific Highway (at sea level) and climbing the path up to Ocean Ave. We then walked back towards the pier through the several palm tree lined parks that overlook the ocean. These parks are also lined with hobos and bums who sleep here and appear to spend most of the day here also. I remember the sight was the same when I first visited Santa Monica in the late sixties, so it is either condoned by the authorities or is impossible to police. There was no soliciting, however.

We found the plaque commemorating Route 66, although it was not identified as such. Rather, it was the National Trails Highway re-named the Will Rogers Highway and commemorating his life. I did check at the Visitor Center booth in the park and was told rather apologetically that this was the only marker at this end of The Route. We then walked back to the car (weather overcast but mild) and started our journey.



*The starting point at Santa Monica*



. It was just about noon as we turned away from the Pacific Ocean onto Santa Monica Boulevard and I re-set the trip odometer to zero. Our route followed Santa Monica Boulevard for several miles, passing Beverly Hills and West Hollywood and joining Sunset Boulevard. There were a few markers on the route designating this as Historic Route 66 and defining the period (Circa 1935-1952 or, in some cases 1934-1961). We also quickly learned that, in addition to some obvious date question, there is debate, or confusion, on the exact route that Old 66 followed. There were several possibilities covered in our various books and maps on the subject and the street markers sometimes weighed in with a further alternative. We learned later in our journey that these alternatives were not so much the result of confusion but rather that the road itself was re-routed over time. I suppose that makes sense; we see many examples of roads re-routed and re-named today.





The route paralleled various freeways and, in fact, several guides suggested taking these faster roads. However, we chose to be purist at this stage of our journey and stuck to the city streets. We also kept a lookout for landmarks along the way (Dodger Stadium, The Rose Bowl, etc) but we obviously weren't close enough or were too much concentrated on not getting too lost because we didn't see any of them. Not even one of the original McDonald's (pre Ray Kroc) with its red-tiled arches!

It was very slow going through the city and we had covered only 15 miles in the first hour. However, we felt that travelling Sunset Blvd and Foothill Blvd was far superior to simply seeing their names at expressway exits. We went through a short rain shower in this first hour or so but then it returned to simply overcast with occasional glimpses of blue sky. As we approached Monrovia (38 miles and two hours plus elapsed) we lost the route for the first time. As we were doubling back to correct this (it turned out to be only a few blocks) we decided to stop for lunch in this rather nice Monrovia downtown area. There were several nice looking restaurants and coffee shops - all virtually empty - and we chose a sandwich shop where they made the sandwich to order and where relaxing with the newspaper or connecting to the internet seemed to be as important as eating. Still, a very nice sandwich and drink in rather pleasant surroundings. Molly checked on our directions in the cafe and we were soon back on our route. We headed east along Foothill Blvd through Upland, near Ontario and into San Bernadino. On this stretch, which is today California State Route 66 we noticed two different road markings; one a slightly different CA/US Historic Route 66 and one simply US Route 66. This last one was especially interesting since we had thought that US66 no longer existed. We also passed on this stretch the Wigwam Motel ("Do it in a teepee"), a series of concrete teepees around an office.

The route through greater Los Angeles was, as one might expect, predominantly on city streets and totally built up. From time to time, however, we travelled through rather nice tree-lined avenues and you could believe (for a time) that you were in a rural area.

At San Bernadino, we were obliged to get on I 215 and then I 15 to climb over Cajon Pass (elevation 4200 feet) to get to Victorville, where, at 5:30, we decided to call it a day.

We checked in at the Best Western Green Tree Inn and relaxed until dinner. We ate in the hotel restaurant and had a surprisingly good meal with excellent service. All in all, an interesting start to our journey despite the only 115 miles under our belts.



*One of the few stretches still designated simply as US Route 66*



*The wigwam motel*



Thursday April 25

Had breakfast at Ritchie's American Diner just across the street from the hotel. We checked out a little before ten and drove a few blocks to the Roy Rogers Museum. We didn't go in but took a photo of "Trigger" outside. We noticed that the building and adjoining land were for sale so it would appear that another Route 66 fixture won't be around too much longer.



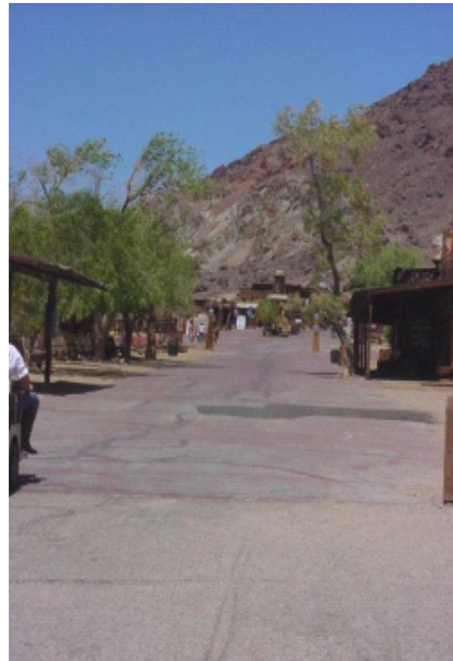
We then went to the California Route 66 Museum, which we did visit. It's only a single room (perhaps 25 ft square) but it is packed with photos and memorabilia of the old road. There are road signs, traffic lights, motel and cafe ads and many short descriptions of various aspects of the road and its travellers. We spent about 45 minutes in there before heading north on the loop that parallels I 15 to Barstow.



Nothing particularly of interest on this 20 mile stretch but it was more pleasant than travelling the Interstate. We stopped in Barstow to get food and drink for a car lunch and then headed east towards Needles.

A few miles east of Barstow, we took a few mile detour to visit the Calico Ghost Town. This had been a silver and borax mine between 1881 and 1896 and had been reconstructed by Knott (of the Berry Farm) in the 1950's. There are a few dozen buildings and mine sites and even a short train ride around the area. Apparently there were 3000 people

in the town at its peak. An interesting place to spend an hour, and the weather was great - clear skies and a temperature around 70.



*Calico Ghost Town*

We then continued on Route 66, stopping from time to time to take photos of points of interest. The Route 66 markers were painted every few miles on the roadway rather than on poles at the side of the road. We saw many groups of bikers and, at a stop in Amboy (population 20) there were dozens of Harleys parked. It appeared that they and their support vans were travelling the Route and stopping at various spots for rest and socializing.



### ***Our Route 66 Companions in Eastern California***

When we got to Needles, we found out that this is the weekend of the "Harley River Run" so obviously these guys were headed to that.

Route 66 paralleled I 40 on the north or south side, often in sight of the Interstate but in some areas perhaps as much as 15 miles away. We were usually in sight of the railroad, however, and we saw many long freight trains headed both east and west.

We left Route 66 about ten miles from Needles and travelled the Interstate into town, but it was encouraging to find that much of the old road exists and we were on it for virtually all of our 236 miles today.



We arrived in Needles about 5:30 and checked in at the Colorado River Best Western in late afternoon temperatures in the eighties. Coincidentally we had stayed here four years ago when we were returning the Suburban to Albuquerque after our west coast trip with Geoffrey and Jenefer and Dorothy and David. We ate at what appears to be the only restaurant in town, right next to the hotel. We ate there four years ago also and tonight's meal was similarly uninspiring.

Altogether a very interesting day and we got a real sense of the old road. Virtually all of it is now two lane (maybe always was in these parts) but very straight and quiet so it was easy to do 50-60 mph most of the way. Basically it was us and the Harleys!

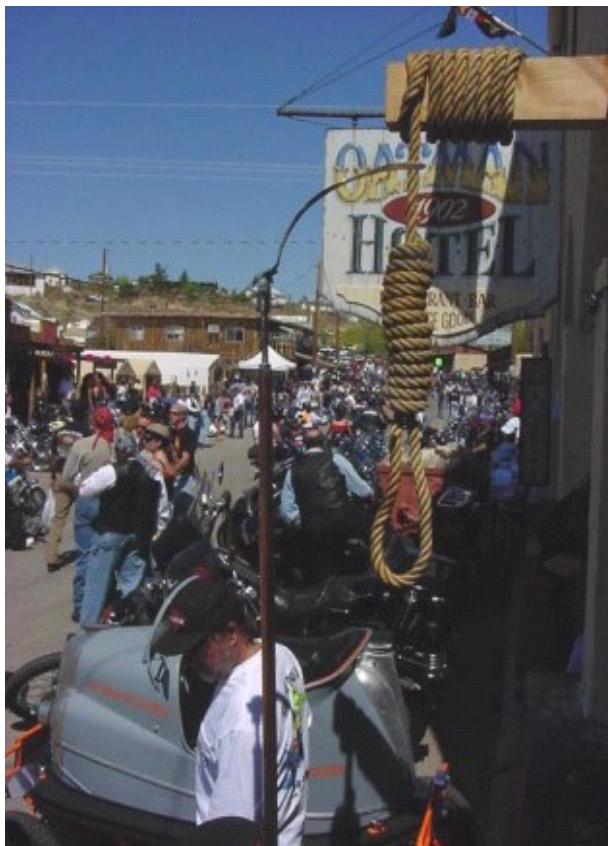


Friday April 26

Up early today; had breakfast at the Country Pantry again, read the paper, checked out and on the road before nine. Another gorgeous day with just a few white clouds and temperature near seventy. We headed on I40 after leaving Needles for a few miles to the Arizona border at the Colorado River. Then it was northwards on Route 66 running parallel to the river.



For the first 15 miles or so it was relatively flat but then we started to climb. We were soon at the old mining town of Oatman which, in its prime, had a population of 10,000 but is now just a sleepy hillside, one street hamlet containing gift shops and eateries. A pleasant place to stop for a quiet stroll. But not today.



Oatman is on one end of the Laughlin (NV) to Oatman Harley River Run and was filled with literally hundreds of bikes and their riders. Parking for (the very few) cars and some bikes was on gravel pits off the street but parking for the majority of the bikes was on both sides of the narrow street. Since the street was also used primarily as a pedestrian walkway for the dismounted riders, driving through town was a real test of skill and patience.

We spent about 90 minutes strolling the perhaps 1/4 mile street; visiting the gift shops and souvenir stands, having a coffee and muffin at a roadside tent stand, but mostly just soaking up the atmosphere of the event. Bikes and riders of all shapes and sizes, including several bikes that were fashioned from bumper cars, complete with the electrical connector rod. All the bikes were in immaculate condition and painted in every color scheme imaginable. And what a noise when a pack of them decided to leave town!

Oatman is also known for the burros which roam the streets but clearly on days like this they find quieter and safer places to walk as we saw only two during our visit.



*Which one shall I choose?*



Everyone was very polite and helpful; when we left the village and had to negotiate the traffic and pedestrians, a couple of bikers guided us through the crowds and helped with backing up and passing requirements. It came as quite a shock, therefore when we heard a couple of days later that a few of these same bikers had got into a fight in Laughlin and three had been killed.

From Oatman the road climbs steeply via a series of hairpin curves and through spectacular rugged mountains to Sitgreaves Pass (3500 feet).



Then an equally impressive run down to end up in Kingman. Here we stopped for lunch at Mr Dz Route 66 diner - a true 50's eatery. I had the Harley Hot Dog with "our special Route 66 sauce" .....very good.



Near the diner was a huge old ATSF steam locomotive parked on the grass; very impressive.



*Also outside the diner we saw this unlucky guy who had almost lost his rear axle*



From Kingman, Route 66 follows a 90 mile loop north of I40 through the high desert. This is a two lane road but with the many long straight stretches it is easy to maintain speeds of 60+ mph. It is barren land for the most part with many unusual rock formations. Today it was quite windy at these higher elevations (to 5000 feet in places) and we saw many dust "tomadoes".





The road passes through a handful of very small hamlets, each with its remnants of the Old Road amenities, but the most unusual was Sligeman where each gift shop or cafe tries to outdo its neighbor with 50's memorabilia. At Delgadillo's, the back yard was filled with "stuff" and a 'converible stood outside containing flowers and a Christmas tree!



*Route 66 memorabilia in Sligeman*

Another brief stop was at Ash Fork, originally a train depot on the Santa Fe line but now claims to be the flagstone capital of the world. Interestingly, this town did not have its own water supply until 1976 and until then relied on a daily train run bringing it.

After Sligeman we were soon forced back onto the Interstate for the short run to Williams, where we decided to stop for the night at the Best Western Inn. By now storm clouds were gathering to the south and as we checked in there was a very strong wind and a few snow flakes were falling - quite a change from this morning. 210 miles covered today.

We had a very nice steak meal at Rod's steak house (same location since 1946, cow-shaped menu) right on Route 66 in Williams. It was much more cosmopolitan than it appeared in that in our little group of six tables there was a couple from German, a foursome from Australia and a couple with a sleeping child from some Eastern European country. Not to mention this English-speaking couple. When we drove home there was a light dusting of snow along the roadsides!

Saturday April 27

Woke up to drizzle and a temperature near freezing, together with a strong wind. Had continental breakfast in hotel and checked out about 9:30. Went first into Williams where we saw the Grand Canyon train before its daily departure. We also visited one Route 66 shop before driving by way of Route 66 and I40 to Flagstaff. We walked around here awhile in a bitterly cold wind (no more rain, however) but the Route 66 area didn't seem as extensive or interesting as when we were here four years ago. We had a very nice coffee and blueberry turnover in a downtown espresso bar before getting in the car again.



*The Grand Canyon Express in Williams*



Route 66 in this part of the country criss-crosses the Interstate and for several sections is impassable. As a result, we were on and off I40 many times doing as much of the old road as we could.

There were also a few sections that were unpaved and a little rough but were driveable. On one of these we passed the highest point on Route 66 and also came across a whole family of white tailed deer who seemed more at home on the track than the car. The weather now was beautiful again - blue skies with a few puffy white clouds - although with the wind and the over 6000 feet elevation, it was cool.



***An Unpaved Section at the Highest Point of Route 66***



***A Family of White-Tailed Deer***

In Holbrook we saw the second of the wigwam motels, this one complete with a 1950's car parked next to every (concrete) tent. We also stopped at the McDonald's in Holbrook for a coffee.



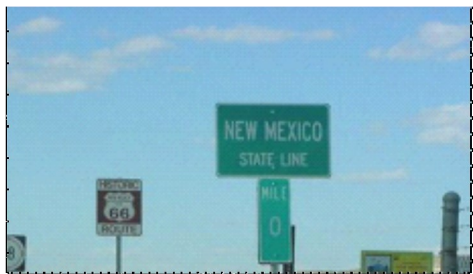
This part of Eastern Arizona has some spectacular mesas and rock formations in fantastic colors. Notably, the painted cliffs presented a spectacular wall near the road.



There are also many Native American craft stores on this stretch and we were able to patronize one. We also saw several hogans in this area. These are traditional Indian homes that are circular (or, more precisely six or eight sided) and are built this way because their occupants believe that evil spirits lurk in corners. Apparently the Bureau of Indian Affairs insisted on giving the Natives a pre-fabricated home, which they neither wanted nor used. Your Government at its best!



We crossed into New Mexico on Route 66 and stayed on the same road for the 20 miles to Gallup, where we stopped for the night at 6pm (now Mountain time). The 230 miles we did today seemed a very easy drive and, again, even though we kept having to use the Interstate, we were pleasantly surprised at how much of the old road we could use.



We stayed in Gallup at the El Rancho hotel which was built in the thirties. Although brick built, the interior is filled with heavy wood fittings and furniture reminiscent of the grand lodges in National Parks. It has also been visited by almost every Hollywood star and its rooms are named after some of its more famous guests..... WC Fields, Rita Hayworth, John Wayne, etc. Ours was the Carl Kempton Room - I guess he was before my time!

We had a very nice meal (I had Mexican) at the hotel restaurant and turned in about ten.



***The El Rancho Hotel and Downtown Gallup, NM***

Sunday April 28

Up early today and had breakfast in hotel. We stepped outside after breakfast to a sunny but cool (30F) morning. We checked out and were on the road before 9am.

We took a detour to start the day by driving south and then east to re-join Route 66. The route was described in our guide book as a beautiful part of New Mexico and also included the El Morro National Monument. El Morro is a 200 foot high mesa which was on the routes followed by the conquering Spanish from the south and the westbound emigrants and pioneers. The area around it was also surveyed for a possible route by the Union Pacific Railroad (which eventually was routed further north).



The unique aspect of the mesa sandstone rock face is that each of these travellers was inspired (it's called Inscription Rock) to carve his name and maybe some details of his purpose in being there. Consequently there are hundreds of names inscribed dating from 1605 to the late 1800's. Presumably someone at that point said no more, carving or maybe it fell out of favor as a route. Now the rock face is protected by the National Parks Service.

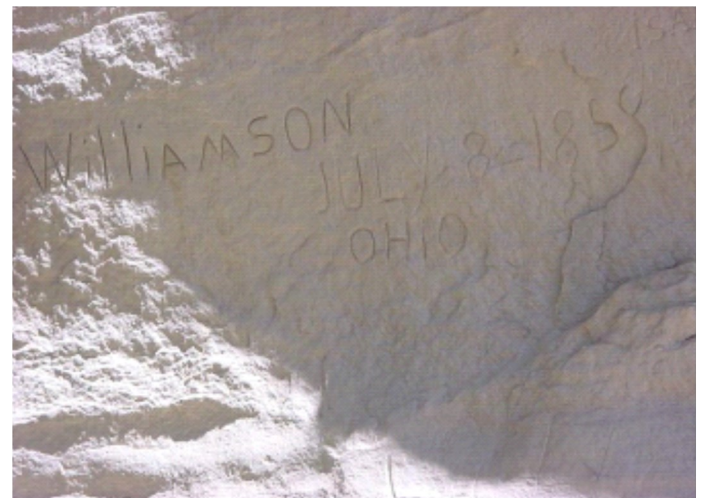
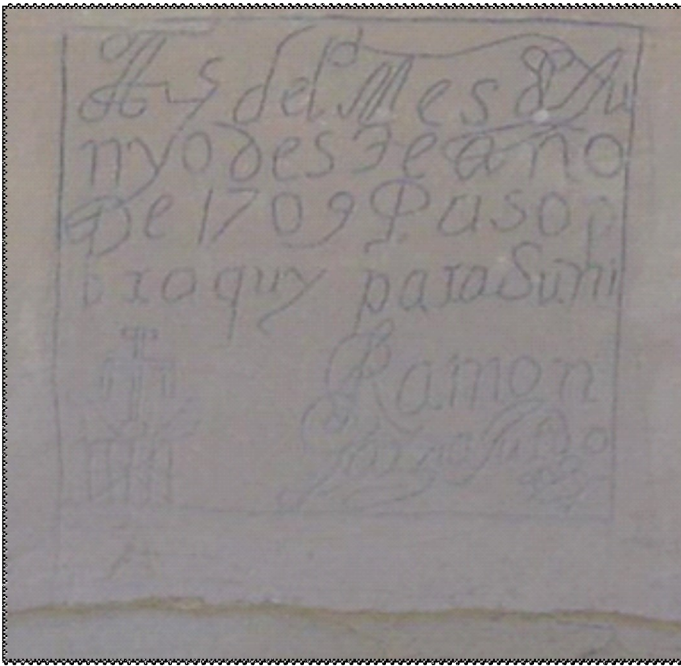
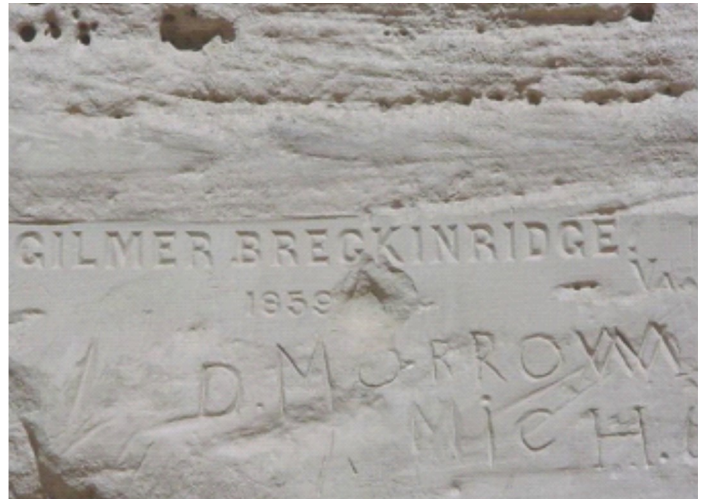
Many of the inscriptions are very ornate and most are easily legible. A fascinating historical diary. Clearly the Spanish were not the first to use the rock as a writing tablet as there are also several ancient Indian petroglyphs carved.

The water run-off on the south side of the mesa filled a large pool which provided a source of drinking water for the travellers.

In addition, Indians lived at the top of the mesa between 1245 and 1350 and several ruined buildings have been excavated on this site, which once was home to 1100 people.

The Parks Service has provided two trails around this site to view the carvings, the ruins and the box canyon on mesa itself. We took the longer, two mile trail which was advertised as a two hour "walk". The walk starts innocuously with a stroll along the south side to get a close look at the carvings and the pool.





***El Morro National Monument; the petroglyphs and the travellers' inscriptions at Inspiration Rock; the 13th century Indian Ruins; and, the walk across the top***



Rounding the narrow east end to the north face, the inscriptions soon end and the trail begins to climb. It was quite cool on this shaded side, which was fortuitous since the path soon climbed very steeply and zig-zagged to the extreme west end of the north side of the canyon. At over 7000 feet this has a pretty hard climb so we took full advantage of every bench provided and every rest point suggested by the guide brochure. Once on top, however, the climb was worth it, not only for the fantastic views over the valley but also for the rock formations on top of the mesa and the sheer faces of the canyon walls. The trail on top of the mesa was little more than a pair of parallel lines etched in the rock which went right along the north jaw, across the eastern end of the "box" and along the south jaw to the ruins. The route was a little precarious at times but generally not too tough a walk and the whole experience was great. The trail ended with a steep walk down to the visitor center. Our two hour walk took almost three and we were ready for it to end but it was a great experience. We then drove the remaining 20 miles to Grants crossing the Continental Divide (7882 feet) and part of the El Malpais black volcanic lava fields. At Grants we had a very light lunch and then re-joined Route 66. The road criss-crossed I 40 until we were about 40 miles from Albuquerque at which point one route (the pre-1937 road) took off south east.



We took this alternative which, for the first seven miles was very worn and rutted but which then became a well paved road all the way to Los Lunas. Here we crossed Interstate 25 and the Rio Grande before turning north for the remaining 20 miles or so to Albuquerque. We checked in at the Sheraton in Old Town at 6pm after a long but interesting day (210 miles) with absolutely gorgeous weather again. We had a very nice dinner at Maria Teresa's (right next to the hotel) where we have eaten several times in the past.



*Two more signs for the collection*



Monday April 29

We walked into Old Town. There was nothing open on the square but we found a cafe open on Church St and had a very nice meal on their back patio. We then shopped a little before returning to the hotel to pack and check out. We drove about a mile on the east-west Route 66 to downtown where the north-south (pre-1937) alternative intersects at fourth street. Somewhat surprisingly, Fourth Street at that point is a pedestrianized street. We parked for a little while and checked out the Route 66 markers and the Los Angeles-Chicago mileage indicators. We also saw the beautifully decorated Kimo Theatre built in 1927.



We then set off on the pre-1937 Route towards Santa Fe. The road parallels I 25, switching sides from time to time, and there are several short stretches where the Interstate is the only road.

One very interesting short detour was to a 1926-32 section of the old road where it crossed a significant ridge (the Bajada) just south of Santa Fe. After travelling west from the expressway for about 5 miles we followed a very rutted road for about another mile to the bottom of the ridge. From there we could just make out the switchbacks of the old road as it climbed very steeply over the hill. You could imagine the hair-raising experience of that part of the drive in under-powered motor cars with perhaps less than perfect braking systems.



***The 1926-1932 version of Route 66 went over this ridge south of Santa Fe. It is just possible to make out the hairpin turns of this roadbed.***

We completed the drive into Santa Fe (only 84 miles today) and checked in at the Santa Fe Inn about a quarter mile from Old Town. We had a very good Salade Nicoise at a patisserie attached to the La Fonda Hotel - the "Inn at the End of the Trail". We then relaxed by the pool until dinner at the Coyote Cafe. This was an excellent meal - by far the best so far - with great fish, super presentation and excellent service. With hotel shuttle there and back, it was an excellent way to end the day. We also chatted with a woman at the next table from Lexington; she was a lawyer out here for a two day conference. Small world.

As we drove to and from the restaurant, the strong winds of earlier had subsided and there was a clear sky; hopefully the high clouds of the late afternoon are over.



Tuesday April 30

We had decided to stay two nights in Santa Fe so this intermediate day was a non-travel day. At least we were not going to travel Route 66 but we did decide to take a little side trip to Taos. First, we had breakfast in a little cafe near the Plaza where we had a very interesting chat with a retired USC professor (aged 68) who was planning an extended trip to Europe with his pre-teen daughter.

It was a beautiful day as we drove north from Santa Fe and took the mountain roads towards Taos. The road took us through desert area first but as we climbed there was an increasing amount of vegetation and quite a lot of farming. At the highest elevations we were in dense pine forest and we almost reached the snow line. There were several 13,000 foot peaks in the area that were still snow-capped and I suspect the road approached 10,000 feet before descending steeply into Taos.

Taos seemed like a smaller version of Santa Fe with a central plaza old town. The Indian jewelry was missing but it was replaced with dozens of art galleries. We strolled around a little (still warm and sunny with a stiff wind) and had a very nice lunch at Doc Martin's.

We returned to Santa Fe via the more direct route which provided some very good views of the Rio Grande, which had a decent flow at this time of year. Much of the drive was reminiscent of Derbyshire, rocky, flowing river and quite green.



We arrived back at the hotel about five (after a 165 mile round trip) and sat by the pool until we got ready for dinner. Had a very nice meal at Cafe San Estevan, about a 15 minute walk from the hotel. Not quite up to last night's but still very good food, well presented with attentive service.

Wednesday May 1

We had breakfast in a mall cafe about ten minutes walk from the hotel, after which we packed and checked out. We left Santa Fe on the Santa Fe Trail south towards Las Vegas, NM. The route went through predominantly wooded terrain with some significant cuts through rocky areas at passes through the hills. There were several historic markers denoting the Santa Fe and Pecos Trails as well as commemorating Civil War battles. Apparently the

Confederates were trying to take the West for the important mines in California but this was as far as they got. It was on this stretch also that we saw a Route 66 iron bridge over a river, it's no longer used and is at the end of a short unpaved stretch off the current road.



We stopped for an hour or more in Las Vegas, which is about eight miles off Route 66. We had a very nice light lunch and strolled the town. It is a mixture of Indian (a Plaza just like Santa Fe), fine Victorian buildings and Wild West cowboy town. Apparently the early Tom Mix movies were made here and it was also home to Doc Holliday and Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. It was occupied by the Spanish but there is a copy of the "take it or leave it" Proclamation declaring it to be governed by the US. All in all, a town with a lot of history and well worth a visit.



*Main Street, Las Vegas, NM*





FRANCISCO VASQUEZ  
CORONADO  
Spanish Explorer  
Crossed  
The Gallinas River  
A. D. 1541

  
The Santa Fe Trail  
A. D. 1821-1879

*Las Vegas*

**PROCLAMATION OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN W. KEARNY,  
TO THE  
PEOPLE OF LAS VEGAS, AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup> 1846**

Mr. Alcalde, and people of New Mexico: I have come amongst you by the orders of my government, to take possession of your country, and extend over it the law of the United States, we consider it, and have done so for some time, a part of the territory of the United States. We come amongst you as friends—not as enemies; as protectors not as conquerors. We come among you for your benefit—not for your injury. Henceforth I absolve you from all allegiance to the Mexican government, and from all obedience to General Armijo. He is no longer your governor [great sensation] I am your governor. I shall not expect you to take up arms and follow me to fight your own people, who may oppose me; but I now tell you, that those who remain peaceably at home, attending to their crops and their herds, shall be protected by me, in their property, their persons, and their religion; not a pepper nor an onion, shall be disturbed or taken by my troops without pay, or by the consent of the owner. But listen! he who promises to be quiet, and is found in arms against me, I will hang. From the Mexican government you have never received protection. The Apaches and Navajoes come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep, and even your women, whenever they please. My government will correct all this. It will keep off the Indians, protect you and your persons and property; and, I repeat again, will protect you in your religion. I know you are all great Catholics; that some of your priests have told you all sorts of stories—that we should ill-treat your women, and brand them on the cheek as you do your mules on the hip. It is all false. My government respects your religion as much as the Protestant religion, and allows each man to worship his Creator as his heart tells him best. The laws protect the Catholic as well as the Protestant the weak as well as the strong; the poor as well as the rich. I am not a Catholic myself—I was not brought up in that faith; but at least one-third of my army are Catholics and I respect a good Catholic as much as a good Protestant. There goes my army—you see but a small portion of it, there are many more behind—resistance is useless. Mr. Alcalde, and you two captains of militia, the laws of my country require that all men who hold office under me shall take the oath of allegiance. I do not wish, for the present, until affairs become more settled, to disturb your form of government. If you are prepared to take oaths of allegiance, I shall continue you in office, and support your authority.

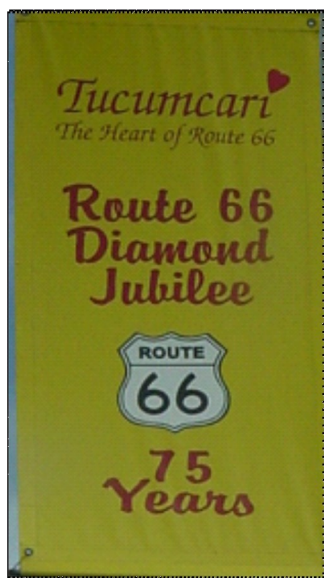
*New Mexico*



The remainder of the pre-1937 Route 66 back to I 40 was a fast, straight road south and was predominantly farm land. At I 40, we re-joined the more modern routing of Route 66 which criss-crossed the Interstate through the remainder of New Mexico. The road was generally straight and we were able to travel essentially as quickly as the Interstate traffic nearby. For the most part we were off the expressway and there were some brief stretches that we took that were unpaved.



We arrived in Amarillo (330 miles today) after 7pm (now Central Time) so we checked in the Radisson and immediately went for dinner at the Big Texan Steak House, home of the free 72 oz steak (if you can eat it in an hour). We both enjoyed our eight ounce versions!



### ***Tucumcari, NM; a sleepy town proud of its Route 66 Heritage***

The land here and in Texas when we crossed the state line was made up off huge cattle ranches. The terrain was dead flat in all directions and the wind was very strong across these high plains. Although we had descended considerably from the 7000 feet of Santa Fe, we were still over 4000 feet right into Amarillo.

Just west of Amarillo, we stopped to view "Cadillac Ranch", a series of ten Cadillacs of 1949 to 1964 vintage buried nose down in a field!

So, that's the end of this stretch of our Route 66 journey. We are 1140 direct miles east of Los Angeles (although we have covered 1415 not including the Santa Fe - Taos side trip). Again, I was impressed as to how much we were able to travel on the old road and, although I didn't check specifically, I don't think more than 15% would have been on interstate highways. A great trip.







