

Alicia Barber, Ph.D.

University of Nevada, Reno

NCPH 2012 working group case statement: “How Much is a Piece of the ‘True Road’ Worth?”

Historic Roads: Of the People, By the People, For the People

My interest in this working group stems from two experiences—one past and one ongoing—researching historic roads in America. Both experiences have demonstrated to me the critical factor of engaging the public in historic road and roadside preservation efforts by researching and emphasizing historical and contemporary narratives about the people and communities living along and around these historic roadways. Determining the value of “authentic remnant roadway structures” is as much a question for these communities—perhaps even more so—as it is for the historians and preservationists to whom they hold objective historical and cultural value. Involving “the people” in the preservation process is not only a democratic gesture, but can infinitely improve the case for preservation by revealing previously undocumented significance, and gaining critical community buy-in for future preservation and commemorative efforts.

The first experience dates back to 2000, when I spent a summer conducting historical research for the National Park Service’s Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) at Scotts Bluff National Monument in western Nebraska. The task at hand was to research and compile a complete history of the construction of the Summit Road, a New Deal project completed under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) from 1933-1937. Endorsed by NPS Director Horace Albright in 1932, the construction of the 1.7-mile roadway was a feat of contemporary engineering, requiring the excavation of three tunnels and the camouflaging of the road through a combination of discreet site selection, large manmade berms, and tinted gunite.¹

While living in the town of Scottsbluff to conduct this research, I became intrigued by the disparate meanings the road appeared to hold for local and national audiences over time. My efforts to document the road’s history in detail proved very personal to many residents of the nearby farming and ranching communities of Scottsbluff and Gering, whose forefathers (literally) had constructed the road.

¹ “Scotts Bluff National Monument Summit Road, Gering, Nebraska.” *Historic American Engineering Record Report No. NE-11* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, 2001).

Consisting mostly of beet farmers and other agricultural workers, these workers had been hard hit by the Great Depression, finding both meaning and much-needed financial compensation in their employment by the federal government. The collective memory of the road's construction remained strong in the local community, and photos of the work-in-progress prompted intense interest and recognition (Fig. 1). However, to most outsiders without that local connection, the road remained a convenient but nondescript means to ascending an Oregon Trail landmark to access the impressive view from the observation decks on its summit. Incorporating the human story into interpretation of the Summit Road offers a means not only to strengthen local connections to a site operated by the National Park Service, but also to provide contemporary tourists with a unique narrative of triumph over hardship with which to engage at the site, to more deeply understand the history literally underneath their feet (and tires).²



Fig. 1: Workers excavate one of the Summit Road tunnels during New Deal-era construction. Courtesy Scotts Bluff National Monument Archives.

² Barber, Alicia, "Local Places, National Spaces: Public Memory, Community Identity, and Landscape at Scotts Bluff National Monument," *American Studies* 45, No. 2 (Summer 2005): 35-64.

My second historic roadway experience involves a project currently underway in Reno, Nevada, where I am conducting oral histories centered on East 4th Street, the route of the former U.S. 40 and, before that, the Lincoln and Victory Highways, which briefly intersected in northern Nevada before crossing the Sierra range immediately to the west. After being bypassed by Interstate 80 in the mid-1970s, the street went into decline, like so many others across America, but is now garnering increased interest for its historical (albeit somewhat shady) character as Reno's redevelopment efforts move eastward. Formerly vibrant family-friendly motels that have deteriorated into shabby weekly rentals prompt some to suggest demolition, while others see opportunities for nostalgia and neon-themed adaptive reuse. Other historic structures from industrial sites to commercial buildings intrigue developers and preservationists alike (Fig. 2). As an oral historian, historical researcher, preservationist, and frequent collaborator with urban planners, I'm immersed in conversations from all sides, including the passionate voices of current business owners in the corridor.



Fig. 2: Reno's East Fourth Street.

This project is financially sponsored by the county's transportation agency, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). As such, it represents a fairly unique partnership and is exciting for injecting substantial conversations about history into an ongoing urban planning process, far beyond the capacity of traditional public workshops and "stakeholder meetings" to do so. Under the banner, "History is a Stakeholder," the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP), which I direct, is speaking with a broad cross-section of interested individuals, from the owners of longstanding businesses to new arrivals, auto shop operators to city council members, fabricators of custom steel installations for upscale homes to the director of the city's homeless shelter. Our goal is not only to document the history and contemporary status of the corridor, but to solicit chronicler feedback into ideas for how to balance preservation, development, and safety needs along the thoroughfare.

As a longstanding urban corridor, the physical surface of the roadway itself has long lost its historical integrity, and yet the roadway retains its historical significance via its association with historic travel and transportation patterns, its alignment, and its ability to convey the historical feeling of the U.S. 40 area through the impressive array of hotels, motels, auto shops, and brick commercial and industrial buildings punctuating its length. Revitalizing this neighborhood while preserving its remaining historical integrity will require the support of much larger constituencies than local members of the Lincoln Highway Association and preservation advocates. Documenting and incorporating the diverse voices of local residents can provide entry points for a broader cross-section of the community. The possibilities for incorporating these voices into interpretation at bus shelters, inside and outside buses, inside Reno's main bus station, located on E. Fourth Street, and elsewhere throughout the city and online, hold great potential for engaging residents and tourists alike, as Reno's leaders search for ways to diversify its struggling casino-based economy.

As with the Summit Road at Scotts Bluff National Monument, the significance of the roadway is coming into focus as not just the story of a road, but of a longstanding, ever-changing community centered along a corridor whose meaning can be elevated today through collecting and conveying the narratives that make this street as vivid and alive as the populations who have traveled it for more than a century.

What is a Piece of the 'True Road' Worth: A Case Statement

Robert W. Craig

New Jersey is a transportation-intense state. With a population density rivaling that of Japan, its history has been driven (pardon the expression) by its location along the mid-Atlantic coast in close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia. In the heyday of rail it became the most intensively tracked state in the Union, as one transcontinental road after another aimed its eastern terminus at the Hudson River shore opposite Manhattan. Commenting on this and other pertinent facts, New Jersey's best known popular historian of the past fifty years characterized the state as "America's Main Road." Today, some still ask of a New Jerseyan, "What exit are you from?"

But there were three eras of road making in New Jersey before rail's iron interlude, and there have been three since (so far). The early colonial period of the late 17th century witnessed the phenomenon I've described as "path adoption," as well as road making in the early towns. It was followed by the gradual creation of an integrated road network across the colony during most of the 18th century. For a time, most people seem to have deemed it sufficiently satisfactory to reach their destinations via roads of any kind or condition, but in the second half of that century a movement began to replace early, indirect roads with new roads on straight or straightened alignments. Historians of transportation call this the "turnpike era," but for New Jersey, at least, a better name would be the "era of straight roads," because the improvements, not limited to company-built toll roads, extended to all types of roads.

The straight roads era in New Jersey so changed the roadscape that in many places the former locations of the colonial-era roads are no longer known. At the site of the battle of Monmouth (28 June 1778), for example, **none** of the roads that exist there today occupy places where roads existed during the battle. Fortunately, extensive research has re-determined their former alignments and rediscovered much more about the 1778 landscape. The historian Garry Wheeler Stone has spent years to make possible a virtual restoration of the Monmouth battlefield. In 2003 the battle was re-enacted on the same ground by twenty-five hundred participants in front of fifteen thousand spectators. Double those numbers and they would approximate the combined British and Continental armies at Monmouth, when for a few days they more than tripled the population of Monmouth County.

A grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program has paid for historians to undertake a major new study of the battle of Princeton (3 January 1777) that has re-examined the battle through a comprehensive review of the first-hand eyewitness accounts--hundreds of them survive--and through sophisticated terrain analysis and metal detector surveys. Yet the study did not do what was done at Monmouth: the research to produce a reconstruction of the landscape at the time of the battle. The location of crucial landmarks mentioned in the eyewitness accounts have not been found. Chief among these is the so-called "sawmill road," a road that crossed the battlefield and near which Washington's forces were located when the important

counterattack that routed the British forces began. Opinions differ whether this was the road that is shown on the famous “spy map” of the battlefield owned by the Library of Congress.

The historians have evidently found one point along the line of the sawmill road, but they failed to identify the course of the road, did not locate the site of the sawmill, and did not attempt to explain how the memory of where the fighting took place came to be so subtly shifted away from the ground where a portion of the battle in fact occurred. That loss of memory took place during the century that elapsed between the battle and the appearance of Princeton’s first well-written local histories. During the same century, the battlefield was bisected by a new turnpike road during the straight roads era, and the sawmill road, itself, disappeared.

To complete the trifecta, the battle of Trenton (26 December 1776) also faces a current ‘true-roads’ controversy. Amazingly, considering the above, nearly the entire route of the Continental Army’s march from ‘Washington’s Crossing’ to Trenton remains as public roads today. Even where the army split its force to create a pincer movement, the division led by General John Sullivan followed a road that is still called “Sullivan’s Way.” The route is a scenic one for motorists and a popular one for re-enactors, who march the route on Christmas weekend during Trenton’s popular “Ten Crucial Days” commemorations each December. About two miles into their march, Washington’s army descended through a ravine and crossed Jacobs Creek, a small tributary of the Delaware River. In 1776 this crossing had not yet been bridged, so the army slogged through the freezing water and up the hill on the south side. The first bridge at this location came twenty years later, in 1796, and a surviving record describes it, but to build this bridge the course of the road was deflected to permit a crossing at a right angle to the flowing water. The bypassed segment, several hundred feet long and about two hundred feet away, was abandoned, “vacated” in legal parlance, but the alignment of it is still known because the army’s surveyors mapped it in 1779.

Fast forward to 2011. A picturesque wrought iron through truss bridge from the 1880s, a successor to the 1796 bridge and at the same location, had become worn out and needs to be replaced. (Already closed to vehicular traffic for safety reasons, it was fatally damaged by floodwaters from Hurricane Irene and the remains were dismantled in late 2011 and have been removed.) A cultural resources review caused the preparation of a lengthy report that combined historical research with an engineering study of the existing bridge and an explanation of alternatives. It is the most intense examination of the location ever undertaken. The report confirmed that the crossing was indeed the route of the Continental Army’s march to the battle of Trenton, turned up the record of the 1796 bridge, and documented the construction of the 1880s wrought iron bridge.

Yet as this is written, no one has yet “found” the physical remains of the actual segment of road that the Continental Army trod at Jacobs Creek. The local residents nonetheless collaborated on the preparation of a National Register nomination for a historic district that includes the crossing site. What remains of that site continues to be

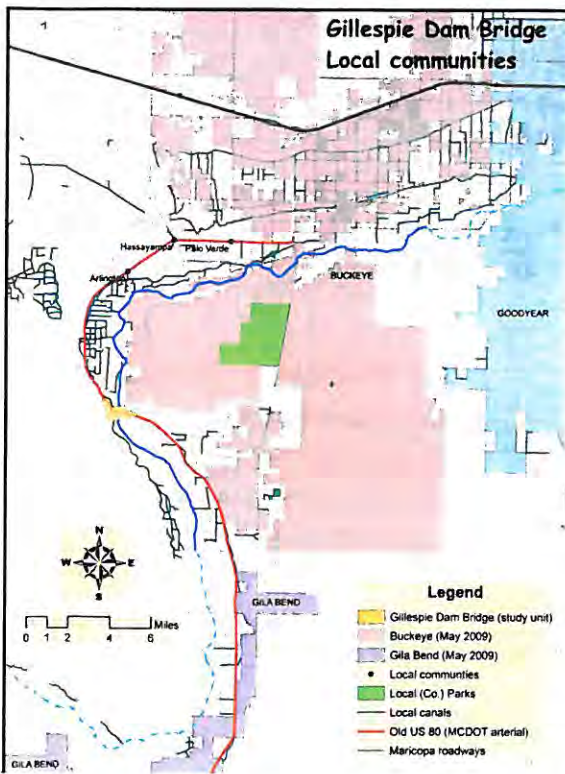
a mystery. Even though Erskine's 1779 map precisely shows the route of the road, its alignment has not been effectively evaluated. Sub-surface archaeological testing has been limited to the "A.P.E." (area of potential effect) of the proposed new bridge. Archaeologists that this author has questioned have agreed that a road of this type would leave a signature in the ground, but the depression through which Jacobs Creek flows has flooded many times, and it is subject to scour as well as deposition, so who knows whether any, or how much, of the 18th-century road segment on either side of the stream is even still there? It may even be such that this true-roads controversy is about a piece of road that no longer physically exists.

Such issues are not exclusive to early roads. Roads of all types and periods deserve a respect that they are not getting. Railroads, too. For example, the original main line of the Camden & Amboy Railroad, put into service in 1833 as the first rail line to link major cities in the nation, and which formed a remarkable, practical laboratory of railroad building while under construction, has been trivialized with a monicker, "the Robbinsville Industrial Track," that masks its historic importance and fosters its piecemeal abandonment by Conrail and subsequent dismemberment, despite the fact that it is not hard to foresee a future need for the line. Nineteenth-century plank roads, the macadamized roads of New Jersey's pioneering state-aid highway program of the 1890s, and 20th-century state highways: all have their true-road stories. Whatever cultural value these roads may possess--whatever they're "worth"--will require looking at them as we look at other historic properties, not by contemplating them as if they were displaced religious relics.

“Been down so g__d__ long its beginning to look like up to me...”

The Doors (popularizers...likely from a Blues master)

‘True Road’ considerations—identifying preservation worthy historic roadway segments—under local agency jurisdiction faces major challenges. Direct association with mainstream automobility, highway service and transcontinental travel has not pertained on these roads for considerable time, often a half-century or more. Maricopa County’s jurisdiction includes a 40-mile stretch of Old US 80—centered on the Gillespie Dam Bridge (GDB; 1927, at right). This and other historic US 80 features have indeed been down a long time, and any preservation evaluation and recommended treatment will start from the ground up.



When moribund roads again command our attention the impetus is often new episodes in metropolitan urban (or exurban) expansion. Historical roads can take center stage in transportation agency planning and design in these circumstances. Certainly in metropolitan Phoenix (“The Valley” in local parlance) we lay at ground zero in the great American boomburb phenomenon.¹ The west Valley city of Buckeye exemplifies the sprawling annexation that characterizes symbolic growth of urban landscape (at right; Old US 80 in red).

Early-mid twentieth century transportation infrastructure built to order for the west Valley had clearly bounded townsites, rural districts and desert open space. This aging network seldom serves leapfrog exurban development very well. On the Valley fringes older highways provided west Valley town dwellers and far-flung rural inhabitants the means to market goods and services, drive to

experience big city life and to engage in interstate travel. Today these same roads are subject to unprecedented traffic volumes from planned community, commuter and commercial traffic generated by widely dispersed residential and commercial centers amid shrinking irrigation farm, ranch and open space acreage. County planners and engineers knew where inadequate older roadway needed quick refurbishing, and tried to remedy Maricopa County system deficiencies in annual design and construction schedules.



Figure 15. Photograph of paved portion of Road Segment 2, AZ FF:9:17(ASM), facing west.
As shown, the road segment terminates at guardrail Road Feature 2 of Road Segment 3.

Nowadays the Valley's aged transportation corridors pose a challenge to public works agencies, most of who would rather not consider aged roadbed in any way 'historic.' Historical Archaeologist Tom Jones' picture (at left) and his report on Maricopa County's Old US 80 features near Gillespie Dam Bridge underscore the dilemma.

Older roads and their ancillary elements, historical culverts and drainage structures, aged steel and concrete bridges and engineered right-of-way features now comprise the source of innumerable problems to transportation project managers. What we recommend as 'historic' any civil engineer sees as inadequate drainage and runoff pollution control, a guaranteed congestion bottleneck, poorly signed or signaled intersections and corridor alignments that sustain poor road geometry and exhibit structural deficiencies that endanger today's motorists. Surviving sub-standard road remnants among county systems include orphans from decommissioned or abandoned federal and state routes. Professional civil engineers, and not a few transportation planners, simply want to obliterate these historical segments from the local scene and start anew.



Still, the attentive and somewhat informed motorist can have quite a bit of fun tearing off the principal freeways and highways to take in small town and rural byway survivors—a primary appeal of historic Route 66 segments for the public (at left, Flagstaff-Walnut Canyon). In a state where the federal presence looms so large (70% of Arizona land) most agencies are actively engaged in their own travel management plans that include cultural resource management considerations and interpreting 'off-

road' historical features. The Old US 80 corridor intersects with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) history-rich Agua Caliente Road alignment, which is now designated as a principal off-road excursion route. Even the most hard-bitten professional engineer concedes at least some value lies in selecting a representative sample of road and bridge engineering art as it was once practiced. It is even

easier to convince the local resident public the character of their immediate surroundings resides in large part in the older roadways they use each day. As public historians, historic preservation specialists and cultural resource managers how do we deal with this still ill defined historical property type?

Do historic preservation professionals perceive local roads as little more than a conglomeration of modern roadway juxtaposed with dated and insignificant remnants? Should survey historians address this annoying detritus by filling out an inventory record, and then relegate the segment to the figurative dustbin of history? Yes, in many cases such due diligence is part and parcel of historian's work. A major failure of Arizona's first stab at devising a comprehensive roadway historic context and evaluation process—*Good Roads Everywhere*--reiterated that historical state and federal highway system elements *alone* are worthy of evaluation.² The *Good Roads* evaluation procedures severely constrain historians' ability to construct National Register eligibility arguments based on historic associations and events. 'Significance' in this purportedly objective guidance all but eliminates arguments that local history specific to a specific road localities can be advanced by historians as a credible tack. The otherwise well-crafted and informative narrative in *Good Roads Everywhere* predictably failed to generate any evaluation consensus among transportation cultural resource managers. Local roads never figured into the equation.

Old US 80 case study: Mapping compliance to push the outside of the envelope

Perhaps it is my historic trails background, or appreciation of vernacular road systems, that makes me uncomfortable with our disposition of local road history into inventory file oblivion. 'Survivor remnants,' as found on Old US 80, seldom place sufficient time or resources at our disposal to give them due consideration. Old US 80, like many of its kind, are cast adrift in the historic preservation process by skeptical bureaucratic fiat—in reviews administered by devotees of premier historic designated roadways. Local roads will likely remain untested candidates for preservation of legitimate historical associations and significant local history.



Historic context statements and surveys generated for premier historic roads accomplish little more than accentuate the premier status of acknowledged historical roads—we are now filling in the historic gaps on US 66 studies (at left). We have become so enamored with a tripartite scheme of Landmark Roads (e.g. Good Roads Movement), Freeways-Highways (Federal or state jurisdiction) and Designed Boulevards, Parkways and Scenic Byways that the more prosaic, but truly representative, historic roadway segments fail to receive consideration .

To accomplish my goal of gaining historical local roads greater consideration in the preservation process I devised a plan. I believed a credible argument for finding local roadway segments as National Register eligible—the uniform yardstick applied in historical survey—could be tested on half-century old Maricopa County roads. Using Old US 80 as a test field obviously suggested itself when Maricopa County began a planning and design project for the rehabilitation of the Old US 80 Gillespie Dam Bridge (1927) on the Gila River.

The landmark Gillespie Dam Bridge was the subject of an exhaustive series of structural evaluations, rehabilitation design proposals, roadway refurbishing plans, and protracted environmental and cultural resources analyses and recommendations (below).



Six years in the making the historic bridge rehabilitation project is just now (2012) coming to fruition as a designated Arizona Centennial Project. The historic preservation credentials of the bridge rehabilitation were deployed during the last stages of the planning and design phase—first with the bridge’s National Register listing (1981), project proponents advanced Historic American Engineering Record documentation, detailed

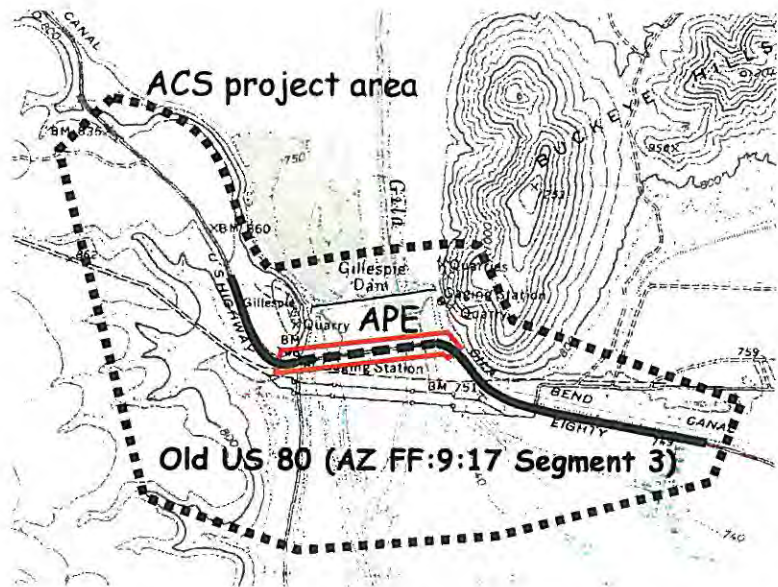
survey and assessment of effect reports (2006; 2010) and final rehabilitation design plans (2011) that fulfill the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for historic rehabilitation projects.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 (NHPA) are relevant to this bridge rehabilitation project. Since the Gillespie Dam Bridge Rehabilitation Project is being conducted under federal permits, licensing and funding both environmental and cultural resources regulatory compliance is mandatory. The regulatory process that unfolds under environmental and historic preservation law is often cast as a major obstacle to advancing the project to construction. For a variety of reasons the review process can impede your agency’s smooth progression to construction. More often, I would suggest, strategic use of the project review can advance not only the project at hand, but legitimately establish a bit of historic preservation precedence for future use.

Unfolding regulatory compliance can act as a springboard toward simultaneous bridge and Old US 80 roadway evaluation. As with any public works project under federal auspices I act as MCDOT’s cultural resource manager. I translate all engineering plans, visual media, and project descriptions into an area of potential effect(s), or APE. Project impacts—or effects—to the existing bridge fabric itself and within a

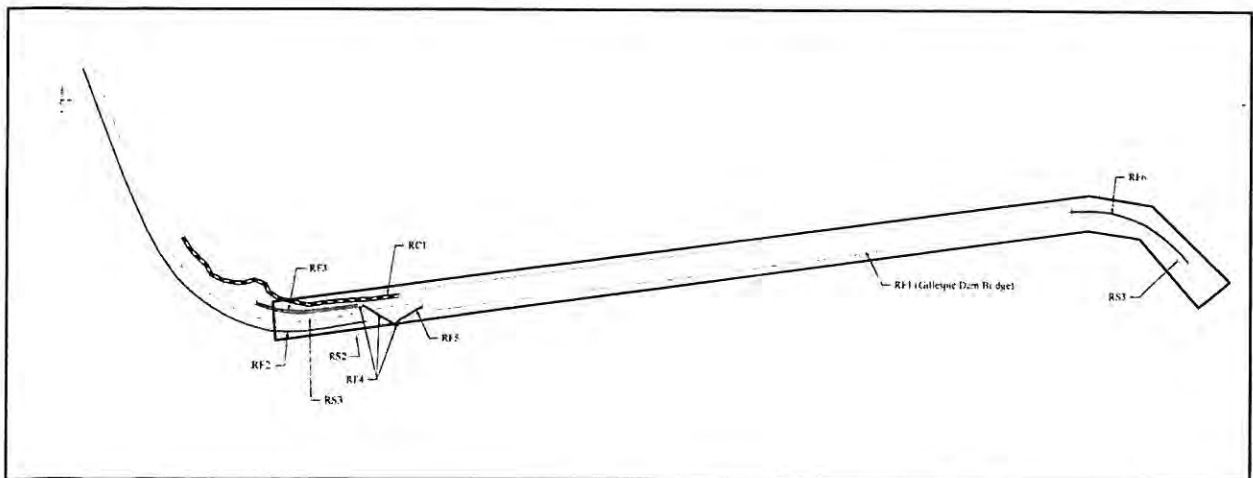
reasonably bounded project construction area is the basis for an APE. All project documentation advanced to historic preservation reviewers makes reference to the APE parameters.

Consider the fact that the Gillespie Dam Bridge documentation had to fulfill regulatory compliance to the satisfaction of a host of preservation-savvy reviewers. State transportation authorities, federal highway administrators, state historic preservation office staff, Tribal governments and other concerned parties all have the right to review and comment on your agency's project. You seek their

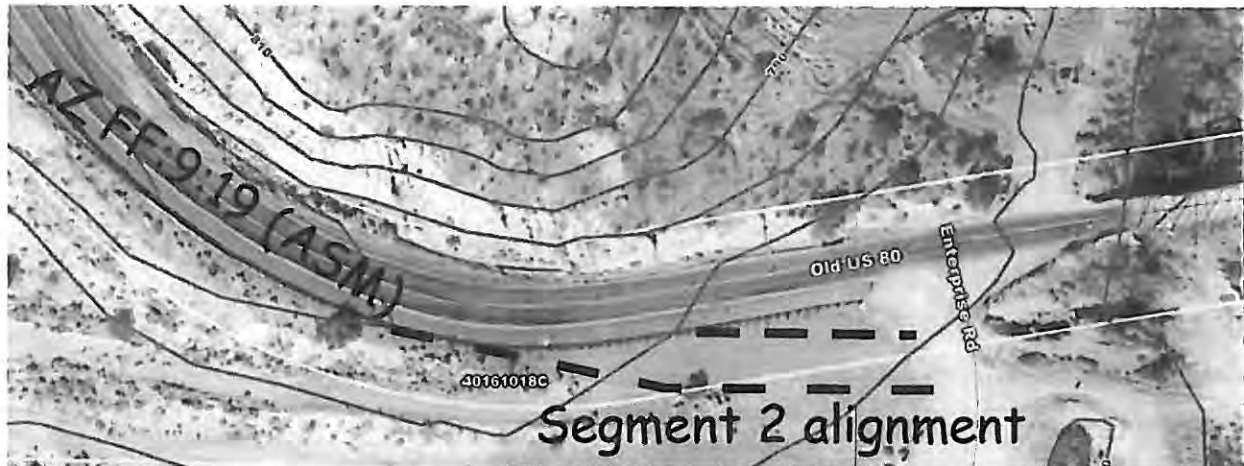


agreement (or concurrence) that you have made adequate provision for historic preservation standards and practices, and advanced protection of non-project cultural resources that might be threatened by construction.

Pivotal to our approach was to define the APE to have both the historic bridge and its Old US 80 historical approach lanes considered as possible National Register eligible structures to be placed under evaluation by preservation review authorities. The Old US 80 roadbed within the APE (in red above) comprised bridge approach lane features (as depicted below) that became the object of a project impact mitigation requirement we recommended to the review authorities.



In project review documentation we specified that we would exactly record, evaluate and propose preservation treatment strategies for the historic roadbed approach lanes.



This expanded roadway preservation treatment strategy was approved, and subsequent to securing reviewer's agreement we fulfilled all of the historic preservation compliance requirements we were set to act. Our consultant at ACS, Historic Archaeologist Tom Jones, completed another survey and recording project specific to the roadway segments features that articulated with the bridge itself. The documentary record of these historical structural elements essentially became an Old US 80 roadway evaluation model we could apply across the spectrum of Maricopa County administered roadways wherever historic road remnants were identified.

Old US 80 roadway segments as a property type

Having secured confirmation that the Old US 80 roadway articulating with Gillespie Dame Bridge can be judged an authentic historic structure we have advanced our study, analysis and contemplation of Old US 80 roadway as a potential linear historic district. On one recent Maricopa County project we proposed pre-construction mitigation of WPA era roadbed and culverts near the town of Buckeye (at right).



Figure 3. Photograph of RF 1, a cobbles-lined concrete culvert, facing south. This feature was initially documented in the previous Class III survey (Jones 2009).

As the inset above illustrates, the culvert was marked with the WPA headstamp.



In east Buckeye we evaluated and recorded several 1920s and 1930s Old US 80 remnants exhibiting early concrete roadway construction (at left). In the same project area we were able to further refine the developed historic context statement devised for Old US 80 inter-war transportation improvements spawned by Great Depression public works projects.

In another recent investigation we recommended abandoned US 80 realignment segments north of the Gillespie Dam Bridge (at right) as comprising National Register eligible roadway components. As we move into the future we envision a wide-ranging interpretive project centered on this historic Gila River crossing to accenting the history of the Old US 80 corridor and Gillespie Dam Bridge, in tandem with a significant natural



resources interpretive element advanced by Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Bureau of Land Management.

¹ Robert E. Lang and Jennifer B. LeFurgy, *Boomburbs: The Rise of America's Accidental Cities*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2007.

² *Good Roads Everywhere, A History of Road Building in Arizona*, Arizona Department of Transportation, Environmental Planning Group, Phoenix, AZ, 2003.

Preserving the True Road

I believe that comparing the significance of historic roads and roadside buildings to the significance of relic pieces of the True Cross (whether as actual remnants or as highly suspect material culture perceived only by True believers to have highly symbolic functions) is both unfair and disingenuous at worst, and at best it amounts to misspent time. It reminds me of the doubts that Dr. Thomas F. King, a former Advisory Council on Historic Preservation staff member and Director of Project Review, has raised about the value of the National Register of Historic Places as a historic preservation tool. In the early 1980s he argued that the Register should be closed because the identification and evaluation of historic properties through the federal historic preservation law Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) would be sufficient to recognize the importance of these properties in the planning of projects undertaken or assisted by the federal government.¹ Fortunately, the National Register is still very much with us and has been influenced by (just as it has influenced) the Section 106 review process.

So here goes nothing. I believe that the “True Road” exists, but also that there are many true roads, and that they are scattered everywhere. Not just modern Interstate highways covering the former alignment of routes established long ago by bison, Indian, or Conquistador, but intact remnants of historic roads may be found all over America. Their survival has always depended upon efforts to modernize and increase the efficiency of our transportation networks. I would also guess that stretches of abandoned or under-utilized routes survive in every state. Similarly, virtually every community in America has buildings and structures all owing their origins to these networks. I do believe that conscientious application of the National Register evaluation criteria is necessary to identify those roads that meet the Register’s high standard of significance and integrity. Moreover, I will readily agree that some (or even many) roads will not make the cut.

Yes, nostalgia does play a role in efforts to recognize and then preserve historic roads and relict buildings lining them, but when has nostalgia not been a factor in motivating the preservation of that which is familiar? No, emotion is not the only driving force. During the past 35 years, an impressive body of scholarship on the subject has accumulated and continues to be developed.² Once every two years, the National Park Service holds the very popular “Preserving Historic Road” conference. Moreover, an ever growing number of roads and roadside historic properties are being listed in the

¹ See Thomas F. King, “Is there a Future for the National Register?” in *The Historic Preservation Yearbook: A Documentary Record of Significant Policy Developments and Issues, First Edition, 1984/85*. Russell V. Keune, ed. Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler Publishers, 1984.

² An exhaustive bibliography will not be possible here, but several of the more notable titles include: Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999; Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010; Eric Jaffe, *The King’s Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route that Made America*. New York: Scribner, 2010; John Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008; Andrew H. Malcom, *U.S. 1: America’s Original Main Street*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991; Karl B. Raitz, ed., *The National Road*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; Raitz, ed. *A Guide to the National Road*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; Michael Wallis, *Route 66: The Mother Road*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990.

National Register of Historic Places. That each of these developments is occurring suggests to me that nostalgia plays only a very minor role in attempts to preserve roads and associated properties. Finally, given that other disciplines including literature, art, photography, stage, and screen, have long recognized the cultural significance of movement, transportation, the automobile, and roadside commerce, it is quite inconceivable to me that we as public historians would countenance the notion that roads and roadsides are largely not worthy of preservation, or deserve less attention.

In 1998, the planning and execution of Society for Commercial Archeology's "Drivin' the Dixie" conference centered on the theme of the Dixie Highway, and featured paper sessions on the subject and two bus tours of the highway's routes in Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia. Aside from being a successful event that made money for the organization, the conference had two other benefits. First, it led to the establishment of local and regional heritage tourism efforts in both states recognizing the historic importance of the Dixie Highway that continue to this day. Second, the meeting resulted in the University of Tennessee Press publishing the book, *Looking Beyond the Highway: Dixie Roads and Culture*, which contained a series of essays with the Dixie Highway serving as its central focus.³ I should point out that even before the conference organizers staged the meeting, the UT Press had contacted them to invite the planners to write a book using papers from the conference paper sessions and material from the bus tour guidebook. So a university press sought us out, encouraging me and my conference organizing committee to think about doing a book on something the press clearly thought was a worthwhile subject.

I will add that my experience was not an isolated example. Other efforts to elevate awareness of historic roads have similarly resulted in book-length publications, many of them scholarly, and even now several organizations (some with international memberships) are actively working to promote the preservation of the roads and buildings lining the corridors. Whether these attempts ultimately succeed or not depends greatly upon the continued willingness of transportation agencies to address the question of how to preserve historic roads and associated resources, but also upon the historic preservation community and allied fields of study to research these topics for historic context purposes. Perhaps the solutions that have been found in evaluating historic districts containing multiple buildings (e.g., that the district represents a significant whole whose individual elements lack significance; and the variety of architectural styles and building types signify the historic development of a particular community) still have wide utility to assisting others how to understand the impact of highway development. Granted, how to best interpret roads and associated roadside development will be challenging. Perhaps the proposition of incorporating both into an outdoor museum as advanced by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle in *Remembering Roadside America: Preserving the Recent Past as Landscape and Place*, will be useful:

Americans need reminding of how automobility first arrived. . . . We need to be reminded of how it all began, what was lost along the way, and what might have been—"the roads not taken," so to speak. Automobility came with options—various avenues that might have been

³ Claudette Stager and Martha Carver, eds. *Looking Beyond the Highway: Dixie Roads and Culture*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006.

followed but were not. Why were only some options pursued and pursued, many critics claim, so blindly? American-style automobility was not a natural outcome. One has only to look to landscapes and places affected by automobile use in other parts of the world. Many similarities are to be found, perhaps more similarities than differences. But there are important differences. . . . Exploring such issues as museum program—the effects of modernism, the privileging of the visual, America’s quest for speed and convenience, changing social values, the enhancement of the private over the public, and lingering petroleum dependence, for example—should be made fundamental to understanding who we are as a nation today. All are themes that can be brought together in our collective remembering of roads and roadsides in America life. Fostered on the roadside, a new sense of space arose. A more abstracted world of sight in which exaggerated size, color, and, at night especially, the intense use of light entered forcefully. It was a world of technological progress that most Americans could readily “buy into” (quite literally), and thus participate. A world of accelerated ephemerality rooted in rapid technological change evolved. Roads no longer merely led to places, but fostered an important new kind of place; Roadside America. Indeed, the roadside became, we would argue, the most important kind of place yet devised in the American experience. . . . Landscapes observed for interest and edification can be of several kinds. Regarding Roadside America, they can be the currently evolving roadsides of our own locales, or of distant locales we have visited. For historical understanding, however, we can turn only to relics, to built environments surviving from the past or to buildings and spaces in museums that one way or another stand as replications or simulations of the past. . . . A museum of Roadside America would necessarily rely on scholarly insight for interpreting the material culture. But curatorship would also seek to plumb the personal in its visitors by portraying historically significant things not only accurately, but in ways that facilitate visitor comprehension.⁴

I look forward to serving on the working group panel. It should be an interesting as well as lively discussion!

Jeffrey L. Durbin
Section 106 Compliance Officer
National Park Service
1200 “Eye” Street NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202-354-1816

⁴⁴ Jakle and Sculle, *Remembering Roadside America: Preserving the Recent Past as Landscape and Place* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), pp. 226-27, 230.

The Land of Sunshine
by Liz Murphy Thomas

Before the interstates laced across the state, US-1 was the main access to east coast Florida, and even now many of these older attractions still lie along this highway. As a Florida native, I grew up with tourist attractions such as Marineland, Coral Castle, Weeki Wachee, and roadside motels with promising names like *Sans Souci* (“carefree”), the *Sand Man* and the *Cadillac*. These artifacts of an older, more “mom-and-pop” Florida are fast disappearing from the landscape, replaced by more commercial and generic theme parks and big-box, chain hotels.

So much of living in a place designed for the purpose of selling itself to visitors is the sacrifice of nostalgia. The cute mom-and-pops motels and the attractions, which hold fond memories for many in the region, just look run down and “old” to the tourists. For this reason, little stays the way it is; there is constant remodeling, a never-ending expansion, and a steady development. This happens to the point that much of Florida's history is lost, forgotten, and covered up by the sky-rise, beach-view condos that seem to multiply daily.

The Land of Sunshine images examine the impact of tourist economies as transit routes change. Starting at the Florida-Georgia border, I have traveled along US1 documenting the remnants of attractions, motels, roadside stands, “tourist traps” and whatever else I found along the highway.

Although most tourists now move through Florida via the interstates, the attractions, restaurants and hotels built along the highway are still there. Some thrive, while some are abandoned and repurposed. Focusing on sites along US1, my images document the region from Boulogne, FL down through Key West and show what has become of this once important route.

Would my mom remember going down this road when she went to the beach in the 1950s?:
Issues Related to Integrity and Conveyance of Significance of Tourism-Related Roads and
Railways in Florida

By
Edward Salo, PhD

In the state of Florida, one of the important historic themes is the development of transportation infrastructure and its support of the tourist industry. Be it the railroads that first brought tourists to the state in the nineteenth century, or the road systems that continued the growth of the state in the early twentieth century and after World War II, CRM professionals working in Florida frequently encounter roads and railways (classified as linear resources by the Florida State Historic Preservation Office) that have some degree of association with tourism. As a CRM professional in Florida, one the questions I face when evaluating and assessing these linear resources is whether the road or railway retains enough integrity to convey its significance as a tourism-related road. Many times it is not the engineering aspect of the road that is significant, it is the cultural aspects of what developed there.

My mother grew up in the 1950s, and like so many other Southerners, she vacationed in Florida. She told me stories of the drives down the old US highways to Florida, and the motels they stayed at right on the beach. Now, when my parents come to visit me, I often wonder if the US highways they travel (they don't always like the interstate), bring back any memories. Does my mom recognize anything, or is it too different?

Informally, I think to myself, would traveling this road today remind my mother of her vacations to Florida in the 1950s? However, that nostalgic view is not always appropriate. In

this working group, I would like to discuss **how to assess a road related to the development of a tourist area and determine if the road can convey that significance**. It is important that public historians and other CRM professionals go beyond the engineering history of a road and explore how roads and railways can present other aspects of economic, cultural, and social history related to the tourist industry. I would like to discuss what are some of the sources we can use to examine the tourist related setting of an area; what are the important elements to a tourist related road; and finally; how does the natural evolution of a tourist related area effect the integrity of a historic roadway.

So What Sources Should I Look At?

When examining a historic tourist related road in Florida, there are many excellent sources and secondary works to examine the tourist. In many recent projects I have used:

- Postcards
- Aerials
- Maps
- Tourist books
- Advertisements in magazine and newspapers

What are some of the other sources people have been using or consulting? Because in Florida we look at resources that are 45-years old, to provide a buffer, I was thinking of the use of television or movies from the period. The clips might be at a digital archive, DVDs, or on YouTube.

What Are The Important Elements To A Tourist Related Road

In addition to the road having to maintain its integrity, the main problem I have in assessing a tourist-related road is assessing what elements of the setting are important. Since most of the tourism in Florida that is associated with the roads also correlates to the rise of automobile culture, I have been relying on the number of gas stations, motor courts, and tourist shops as the main elements of the setting. However, since most tourist-related businesses have a short-shelf live, they are consentingly changing.

I have looked at the Route 66 Multiple Property nominations for guidance, but what are the elements people see in other less-developed tourist areas?

How Does The Natural Evolution Of A Tourist Related Area Effect The Integrity Of A Historic Roadway

An example of this dilemma is the Buccaneer Trail in Northeast Florida. The “Buccaneer Trail” was a toll road project completed in 1950 to allow easier tourist access to the “seldom visited section of quiet, unspoiled beauty and immense historic interests along the northeast Florida coast” (*Daily Boston Globe* 1951). Completed in 1951, the construction of the road cost approximately \$4.6 million and resulted in the addition of 17.5 miles of highway and five bridges across the estuaries and inlets between Fernandina and Mayport (*Daily Boston Globe* 1951). In 1953, the toll road was described as a “financial flop of first magnitude,” and by 1958,

the toll authority had failed to produce the revenue to cover its operation and maintenance (*St. Petersburg Times* 1953, 1958).

As parts of the Buccaneer Trail now go through Amelia Island, which is a tourist area, but the development is modern, and not from the 1950s. In your opinion, does the natural evolution of a tourist related area effect the integrity of the roadway?

References:

Daily Boston Globe

1951 Fernandina Beach: A Section of Quiet Unspoiled Beauty. 23 December. Boston.

St. Petersburg Times

1953 Buccaneer Trail Recalled. 29 March.

1958 Scenic Toll Road Called White Elephant. 13 February.

NCPH-OAH 2012 Conference - Working Group Forum

“How much is a piece of the ‘True Road’ worth?” Evaluating the historic roadway and its preservation value

Position Paper – Christina Slattery, Mead & Hunt, Inc.

The charge given this working group is to discuss the value of the road as a representation of our heritage, addressing the question “just how much is the true road worth in terms of promoting preservation value and public interpretation?” As an architectural historian who specializes in assisting clients with compliance with Section 106 (Section 106) of the National Historic Preservation Act, my comments are focused on the evaluation of historic roads within the context of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Understanding if a road and its components are eligible for the National Register is a common challenge state and federal agencies face as they identify whether or not their project activities will impact historic properties under Section 106.

Although roads in various forms, including highways, trails, parkways and even the interstate, have been recognized as historic properties, the identification, evaluation and management of roads continues to be a challenge. There is no doubt that road networks from the earliest time to the present have played an important role in providing transportation, shaping our communities, and often demonstrating feats of engineering. An intertwined network of roads cross our nation leaving a legacy that speaks to our transportation history and America’s distinct automobile culture.

Roads, as a unique property type, intrinsically test us as we contemplate how to recognize their history and contributions. Roads are linear resources that go on for miles and miles. As a result, preservation cannot be neatly tied to one distinct location, such as it is with a historic school and its adjacent playground or park whose boundaries are clearly marked. Practitioners need to decide how much of a road network is needed to convey its role – is it the entire corridor or can a smaller segment suffice? In addition, the road itself is only one component of what may be special and its setting and viewshed may need to be considered in identifying if a road conveys significance. This position paper looks at the topic of setting as it relates to integrity and provides examples of approaches to roadway evaluation being applied throughout the country.

Can the Road Stand Alone?

Can the road alone be the historic resource? Is it just the alignment, road surface, vertical and horizontal alignment, and bridges and culverts that make up a roadway? Or do you need to evaluate the

roadway by going beyond its physical boundary to include the setting and overall experience? Within the overall “experience” of the road, there are often adjacent landscapes, buildings, and other structures that influence the context, setting, and feeling for the transportation corridor. Additionally, the vistas from a road or how a road is viewed within its distinctive landscape, conveyed strongly in the example of Glacier National Park’s Going to the Sun Road, lend to the experience. So the question becomes if and how these “experience” features should be considered when determining significance and eligibility of a potential historic corridor.

Roads are part of a larger cultural landscape that can encompass the adjacent landscape and buildings. A bridge is defined by the structure alone, a house by its footprint, but when it comes to the road, the entity seems to expand to the larger corridor including its setting and adjacent landscape. It may be the linear nature of the resource that changes the experience, but it may also be the way one travels down the road passing by different places, buildings and landscapes that contributes to the sense that the resource is not a static object to observe from a single vantage point. As a result, the overall road corridor within its specific landscape with all its component features and views is the larger experience and essence of a road.

Typically the setting of the road comes into the equation in our evaluation of eligibility for listing in the National Register, as setting along with the related aspect of feeling are two of the seven aspects of integrity considered when evaluating a property. However, the reason that the road is being considered significant can play into the importance of these two particular aspects of integrity. Under Criterion A – History, a road, such as the north-south Meridian Highway, may be important for its association with transportation and travel patterns. Under Criterion C, that same highway may serve as an example of a distinctive type of road construction or engineering. In both cases, what role does the setting and adjacent landscape play in evaluating the significance of the road? Setting is typically viewed as more important under Criterion A because it contributes to the context of the road. However, the setting is also significant when a road is eligible under Criterion C because its linear nature automatically draws your eyes to what is seen at the edges and beyond. As a result, the setting does have an impact on eligibility regardless of which National Register criteria is applied. Unlike a house, where you may be able to focus on it and ignore its neighbors it is harder to divorce the road from the adjacent setting and landscape. Therefore, modern intrusions along a roadway (even one that retains alignment, profile, etc.) can detract from the significance of a road. For example, modern gas stations and fast food restaurants lining a

1920s alignment of the Lincoln Highway would significantly alter the setting and ability of the highway to convey its feeling and association as an early-twentieth century highway.

A 4.5 mile section of the Meridian Highway in Nebraska, listed in the National Register for both history (Criterion A) and engineering (Criterion C), demonstrates the importance of the setting. The road segment was an intact section of the original 1911 alignment of this early significant north-south transcontinental highway and had some improvements prior to 1939. Not only did this corridor retain early-twentieth century road design and resources (alignment, roadbed, bridges and culverts) from the road's period of significance, it also retained the rural landscape adjacent to the highway allowing for the road to demonstrate its history and significance within the context of its cultural landscape. The retention of the rural setting with distinctive vegetation along the roadway, ranging from stands of mature cottonwood trees demarcating farmstead boundaries to shelterbelts of trees from the 1930s, allows for the continued feel of a pre-1940s road and landscape. Even though the setting contributes to the road's historic integrity, the boundary of the nominated section is limited to features directly associated with the transportation corridor and was delineated to be the 66-foot legal right-of-way. The 4.5 mile section of the Meridian Highway displays excellent historic integrity and is long enough to convey its historic significance through the feeling and association of travel on an early twentieth-century highway.

Many National Register Multiple Property Documents (MPDs), in their discussion of registration requirements, address the importance of a setting to the road corridor. For example, the Colorado State Roads and Highways MPD states: "the principal consideration of integrity of setting is the extent that the general environment and any particular elements of the environment that affected location, design, construction, and use of the highway remain intact from the highway's period of significance." And the MPD continues to state that the "extent of the view shed/setting, the key integrity consideration is the retention of salient features from the period of significance of the highway."¹

Other MPDs, such as Oklahoma's MPD for Route 66, focus some of the discussion of setting on the length of the segment being nominated and that "it should be sufficiently long to preserve the feeling and setting of a continuous road." The MPD also discusses that sections of the road are eligible if "the majority of associated property types are present."² In this case, the MPD supports that idea that

¹ Robert Autobee and Deborah Dobson-Brown, *Colorado State Roads and Highways National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, January 10, 2003, F-3.

² Maryjo Meacham, Brenda Peck, Lisa Bradley and Susan Roth, *Route 66 and Associated Resources in Oklahoma National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, February 1995, F-3 and F-4

adjacent landscape and properties contribute to the overall integrity of Route 66; in addition to addressing that the length of the segment allowing for the overall experience of the highway is important to its setting. Other state MPDs, prepared for Route 66, reiterate the importance of the setting to this historic highway. Arizona's MPD states that the "setting should reflect the same general character of the historic period, with minimal intrusive elements."³ While both Illinois and New Mexico's Route 66 MPDs note that the setting needs to provide the driving experience and properties historically associated need to be present.⁴

In other cases, the setting beyond the road is not clearly addressed. The guidance prepared by the Georgia Department of Transportation for linear resources does not emphasize the setting or viewshed and focuses integrity on the roadbed and associated right-of-way, calling for the retention of the "general characteristics of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the corridor and design."⁵ These are important and integral aspects of integrity when nominating a road; however, one could argue that in addition to this integrity of setting is also necessary.

With the inclusion of the setting as integral to a roadway's integrity and ability to reflect a particular time and place, one additional challenge is where should the boundaries be drawn? Do you create a cultural landscape district with the road at the center and encompass adjacent features or do you define the property boundary as the road and associated right-of-way. The later appears to be the approach that is being taken for most road segment nominations, including the Meridian Highway segment discussed above, and is the practical way to address this question. However, one could consider a broader cultural landscape for nomination.

In conclusion, the relationship and importance of setting is just one challenge faced when identifying, nominating and managing historic roads. Among other major issues are the organic nature of the roads and their settings. Unless abandoned, roads are part of an active transportation network, and how much "authenticity" and original fabric are needed for a road to demonstrate its significance are other important questions faced in determining integrity for National Register listing. Regardless of the challenges and questions with which we grapple, roadways clearly demonstrate significance in our transportation and cultural heritage and need recognition.

³ *Historic Route 66 in Arizona National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, 1989 and revised 1996, F-4.

⁴ *Historic Route 66 in Illinois National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, F-7 and *Historic and Architectural Resources of Route 66 Through New Mexico National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, F-83.

⁵ *Georgia Linear Resource Guidance Paper*, prepared by Georgia Department of Transportation.

How Much Is a Piece of the “True Road” Worth? Evaluating Historic Roadway and Preservation Values

Facilitators:

Hugh Davidson, Maricopa Co. (AZ) Department of Transportation; samhughroe@mac.com

Christina Slattery, Historic Preservation Lead, Mead & Hunt, christina.slattery@meadhunt.com

In his classic exposition on material culture history Brooke Hindle deployed the storied ‘True Cross’ as an antiquary relic to considerable advantage. Time revealed that such medieval relics lacked authenticity, but purported crucifixion fragments captured people’s imagination as embodying cultural significance for considerable time. In this working group forum we ponder whether cultural resource specialist’s and preservationist’s attempts to grapple with remnant modern roadway—running the gamut from old postal roads up to Interstate highways—doesn’t invest inordinate meaning to older transportation facilities. Recent analysis of highway history in the West and Midwest will inform our discussion, but we seek out other participants from across the country. From macadamized roads, to two-lane blacktop, and up to expansive parkways and divided freeways, we assign significance to roadway sites arguing they embody once notable achievement and cultural attributes worthy of preservation. Across the nation public historians, cultural resource managers and preservationist’s repeatedly attach significance to these structures; however, how often are we yielding to a nostalgic impulse toward automobile culture, which undoubtedly merits consideration as popular culture, but rarely translates into well interpreted appreciation of American automobility? Should our desire to recognize twentieth century automobility receive its own catalog of worthy historical artifacts? Undoubtedly. The focus of this working group is to discuss boundaries; namely, just how far should we cast our net to include authentic remnant roadway structures. Just how much is the true road worth in terms of promoting preservation values and public interpretation?

What began as a buffalo trace and Indian trail in due course became a pathway for explorers and land speculators, then a major route for settlers, travelers and drovers. As more usage occurred demands for improvements resulted in efforts to identify, build and maintain a road over the historic Wilderness Road. A remarkable flow of humans has continued now for centuries across Cumberland Mountain and through Cumberland Gap. “Location of the Wilderness Road,” Jere Krakow, p. 51.

Although this session addresses 20th century road traces in particular, I would like to include a case study of the preservation and restoration of an 18th century roadway. Here at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the goal of the park when authorized in 1940 was to commemorate the old Wilderness Road used by hundreds of thousands of westward settlers between the years 1780-1810. This road was also integral to untold others who needed to get through the formidable Appalachian Mountain chain, including of course Daniel Boone, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and both Union and Confederate troops in the American Civil War. With the opening of the state-of-the-art Cumberland Gap Tunnel in 1996, it was possible to fully realize that mandate, and in 2002 the restored road was completed. Today visitors can walk through the storied Cumberland Gap much as their forefathers did 250 years ago. Years of research was conducted so as to be able – to the best of the National Park Service’s ability – preserve the historic trail. So the question, “Just how much is the true road worth in terms of promoting preservation values and public interpretation?” is one we have studied for decades.

I often receive information requests as to the precise location of the route Boone (or Lewis and Clark, or Thomas Walker, or Civil War troops) traveled when traversing the Cumberland Gap centuries ago. To me, a trail is like a river in that you don’t travel the same one twice. Trails change, adapting to climatic events such as downed trees and floods, or to new dangers, such as native hostilities or wild animals.

As early as the 1920s, ideas on how to best commemorate the tremendous historical value of the Cumberland Gap have been floated, including carving an immense head of Abraham Lincoln on the face of the Pinnacle, or the erection of statues of Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant meeting in the saddle of the pass. The national park was authorized in 1940 and dedicated in 1959, but it wasn’t until 1973 that Public Law 93-87 was passed, which authorized the relocation of US Highway 25 through the drilling of twin-bore tunnels. This highway had earned the pass the nickname, “Massacre Mountain,” because its steep and winding route had been the cause of many fatal accidents over the years.

The extensive work involved in restoring the “true road” was described by Cumberland Gap National Historical Park superintendent Mark Woods, in a paper published in *CRM: The Journal for Heritage Stewardship*, in 2002:

Historical documentation regarding the significance and location of the Gap and the Wilderness Road was available from a study prepared by National Park Service historian Jere L. Krakow in 1987. In addition, Michael F. Hart, a visual information specialist (now retired) with the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, was challenged with rediscovering the alignment of the Wilderness Road and other significant early trails as well as the approximate "historic" contours of the topography of the "saddle of the Gap."

Hart's methodology combined with Krakow's work were used to prepare construction documents advertised to potential contractors in the winter of 2001. A rare combination of artistic skills, historical research, and knowledge of photography, surveying, and cartography created documents that guided contractors to successfully rehabilitating the historic landscape at the Gap and the adjacent corridor that had been the highway.

The methodology involved a combination of fieldwork and research using, among other elements, an 1833 survey, an 1862 map, re-creation of historic photographs by locating original camera positions, surveying from reference points, aerial photographs, and extensive field study along the mountainside.

The entire project, from rerouting two highways through creating the state-of-the-art tunnels, to re-contouring and resurfacing the old road, cost more than \$260 million. Great pains were taken to mitigate the tremendous upheaval to the natural environment, including using fill dirt taken from the tunnel excavation back on the road to raise sections as much as 32 feet in places, and harvesting native seeds and seedlings from elsewhere in the park to ensure consistency of plant life and adaptation.

The tunnel opened to traffic in 1996, and I moved to the area in late 1998, after the highway through the Gap was closed, but before the asphalt surface was removed. Today, when I walk the trail, I am hard pressed in some areas to be able to identify where the old highway lay, and in another 15 years as the trees reach maturity, traces of the highway will be completely obliterated.

Our studies have been used to help other groups trying to find "true roads" – the Boone Society is searching for remnants of the old Boone Trace, and the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation has established that both explorers traveled through the Gap on their way back to Washington in 1806.

Just how much is the true road worth in terms of promoting preservation values and public interpretation?

So, to address the question of the worth of all this painstaking research, construction and money, I can truthfully say that visitors to the park are very appreciative of the results. I do hear from people the thrill inherent in feeling they are walking along the same ground that Boone, Clark, Grant – trod. (Not all of the trail is restored to the Wilderness Road period – a segment interprets the 1908 Object Lesson Road, one of a handful constructed to showcase the benefits of automobile travel.)

The story of the Wilderness Road is a real story of American perseverance, and it is that symbolism that visitors find compelling. Hiking the road is also a very personal way to connect with one's past, since statistics say that as many as 60 million Americans can trace their ancestors through that chance opening in the vast Appalachian chain known as the Cumberland Gap.

Interpretive rangers who speak with visitors on a daily basis feel strongly that the tangible aspect of the road is what draws people to the park. Often the pioneers who traveled the rough road brought just the clothes on their backs with them from their earlier lives, and in this way the road serves as a memento left to a descendant by their ancestors. Many are on a sort of pilgrimage, the same as visiting a relic – after all, the trail also served as a burial ground for many, young and old, who could not survive the journey. One unexpected use of the Gap restoration was its destination as a place of comfort after the attacks of September 11th – visitors still come on the anniversary to find peace and solitude, and sometimes even leave offerings.

In 2008, the park hosted a Descendants' Walk, in which people who have traced their family through the Gap carried lanterns and hiked to the saddle of the Gap at dusk, where there was a screen set up with voiceovers reading diary entries of long-gone travelers.

The emotional impact of this event was surprising even to us. One family's especially moving saga had begun with the patriarch hearing of our initiative and beginning a lengthy correspondence, relating his family's story, enclosing copies of deeds and census records to bolster his claim. Unable to attend the Descendants' Walk event at the last minute, he convinced his son to attend in his stead. His son, who was not as interested in the family saga as his father was, came and was given a lantern to carry. He wrote to us later, relating the emotional impact the experience had on him, "As I hiked through the Gap last week I was in awe knowing that my ancestors came through there almost 200 years ago."

Not long after, his father died and his son buried the lantern in the casket with him.

What is a Piece of the 'True Road' Worth: A Case Statement

Robert W. Craig

New Jersey is a transportation-intense state. With a population density rivaling that of Japan, its history has been driven (pardon the expression) by its location along the mid-Atlantic coast in close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia. In the heyday of rail it became the most intensively tracked state in the Union, as one transcontinental road after another aimed its eastern terminus at the Hudson River shore opposite Manhattan. Commenting on this and other pertinent facts, New Jersey's best known popular historian of the past fifty years characterized the state as "America's Main Road." Today, some still ask of a New Jerseyan, "What exit are you from?"

But there were three eras of road making in New Jersey before rail's iron interlude, and there have been three since (so far). The early colonial period of the late 17th century witnessed the phenomenon I've described as "path adoption," as well as road making in the early towns. It was followed by the gradual creation of an integrated road network across the colony during most of the 18th century. For a time, most people seem to have deemed it sufficiently satisfactory to reach their destinations via roads of any kind or condition, but in the second half of that century a movement began to replace early, indirect roads with new roads on straight or straightened alignments. Historians of transportation call this the "turnpike era," but for New Jersey, at least, a better name would be the "era of straight roads," because the improvements, not limited to company-built toll roads, extended to all types of roads.

The straight roads era in New Jersey so changed the roadscape that in many places the former locations of the colonial-era roads are no longer known. At the site of the battle of Monmouth (28 June 1778), for example, **none** of the roads that exist there today occupy places where roads existed during the battle. Fortunately, extensive research has re-determined their former alignments and rediscovered much more about the 1778 landscape. The historian Garry Wheeler Stone has spent years to make possible a virtual restoration of the Monmouth battlefield. In 2003 the battle was re-enacted on the same ground by twenty-five hundred participants in front of fifteen thousand spectators. Double those numbers and they would approximate the combined British and Continental armies at Monmouth, when for a few days they more than tripled the population of Monmouth County.

A grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program has paid for historians to undertake a major new study of the battle of Princeton (3 January 1777) that has re-examined the battle through a comprehensive review of the first-hand eyewitness accounts--hundreds of them survive--and through sophisticated terrain analysis and metal detector surveys. Yet the study did not do what was done at Monmouth: the research to produce a reconstruction of the landscape at the time of the battle. The location of crucial landmarks mentioned in the eyewitness accounts have not been found. Chief among these is the so-called "sawmill road," a road that crossed the battlefield and near which Washington's forces were located when the important

counterattack that routed the British forces began. Opinions differ whether this was the road that is shown on the famous “spy map” of the battlefield owned by the Library of Congress.

The historians have evidently found one point along the line of the sawmill road, but they failed to identify the course of the road, did not locate the site of the sawmill, and did not attempt to explain how the memory of where the fighting took place came to be so subtly shifted away from the ground where a portion of the battle in fact occurred. That loss of memory took place during the century that elapsed between the battle and the appearance of Princeton’s first well-written local histories. During the same century, the battlefield was bisected by a new turnpike road during the straight roads era, and the sawmill road, itself, disappeared.

To complete the trifecta, the battle of Trenton (26 December 1776) also faces a current ‘true-roads’ controversy. Amazingly, considering the above, nearly the entire route of the Continental Army’s march from ‘Washington’s Crossing’ to Trenton remains as public roads today. Even where the army split its force to create a pincer movement, the division led by General John Sullivan followed a road that is still called “Sullivan’s Way.” The route is a scenic one for motorists and a popular one for re-enactors, who march the route on Christmas weekend during Trenton’s popular “Ten Crucial Days” commemorations each December. About two miles into their march, Washington’s army descended through a ravine and crossed Jacobs Creek, a small tributary of the Delaware River. In 1776 this crossing had not yet been bridged, so the army slogged through the freezing water and up the hill on the south side. The first bridge at this location came twenty years later, in 1796, and a surviving record describes it, but to build this bridge the course of the road was deflected to permit a crossing at a right angle to the flowing water. The bypassed segment, several hundred feet long and about two hundred feet away, was abandoned, “vacated” in legal parlance, but the alignment of it is still known because the army’s surveyors mapped it in 1779.

Fast forward to 2011. A picturesque wrought iron through truss bridge from the 1880s, a successor to the 1796 bridge and at the same location, had become worn out and needs to be replaced. (Already closed to vehicular traffic for safety reasons, it was fatally damaged by floodwaters from Hurricane Irene and the remains were dismantled in late 2011 and have been removed.) A cultural resources review caused the preparation of a lengthy report that combined historical research with an engineering study of the existing bridge and an explanation of alternatives. It is the most intense examination of the location ever undertaken. The report confirmed that the crossing was indeed the route of the Continental Army’s march to the battle of Trenton, turned up the record of the 1796 bridge, and documented the construction of the 1880s wrought iron bridge.

Yet as this is written, no one has yet “found” the physical remains of the actual segment of road that the Continental Army trod at Jacobs Creek. The local residents nonetheless collaborated on the preparation of a National Register nomination for a historic district that includes the crossing site. What remains of that site continues to be

a mystery. Even though Erskine's 1779 map precisely shows the route of the road, its alignment has not been effectively evaluated. Sub-surface archaeological testing has been limited to the "A.P.E." (area of potential effect) of the proposed new bridge. Archaeologists that this author has questioned have agreed that a road of this type would leave a signature in the ground, but the depression through which Jacobs Creek flows has flooded many times, and it is subject to scour as well as deposition, so who knows whether any, or how much, of the 18th-century road segment on either side of the stream is even still there? It may even be such that this true-roads controversy is about a piece of road that no longer physically exists.

Such issues are not exclusive to early roads. Roads of all types and periods deserve a respect that they are not getting. Railroads, too. For example, the original main line of the Camden & Amboy Railroad, put into service in 1833 as the first rail line to link major cities in the nation, and which formed a remarkable, practical laboratory of railroad building while under construction, has been trivialized with a monicker, "the Robbinsville Industrial Track," that masks its historic importance and fosters its piecemeal abandonment by Conrail and subsequent dismemberment, despite the fact that it is not hard to foresee a future need for the line. Nineteenth-century plank roads, the macadamized roads of New Jersey's pioneering state-aid highway program of the 1890s, and 20th-century state highways: all have their true-road stories. Whatever cultural value these roads may possess--whatever they're "worth"--will require looking at them as we look at other historic properties, not by contemplating them as if they were displaced religious relics.