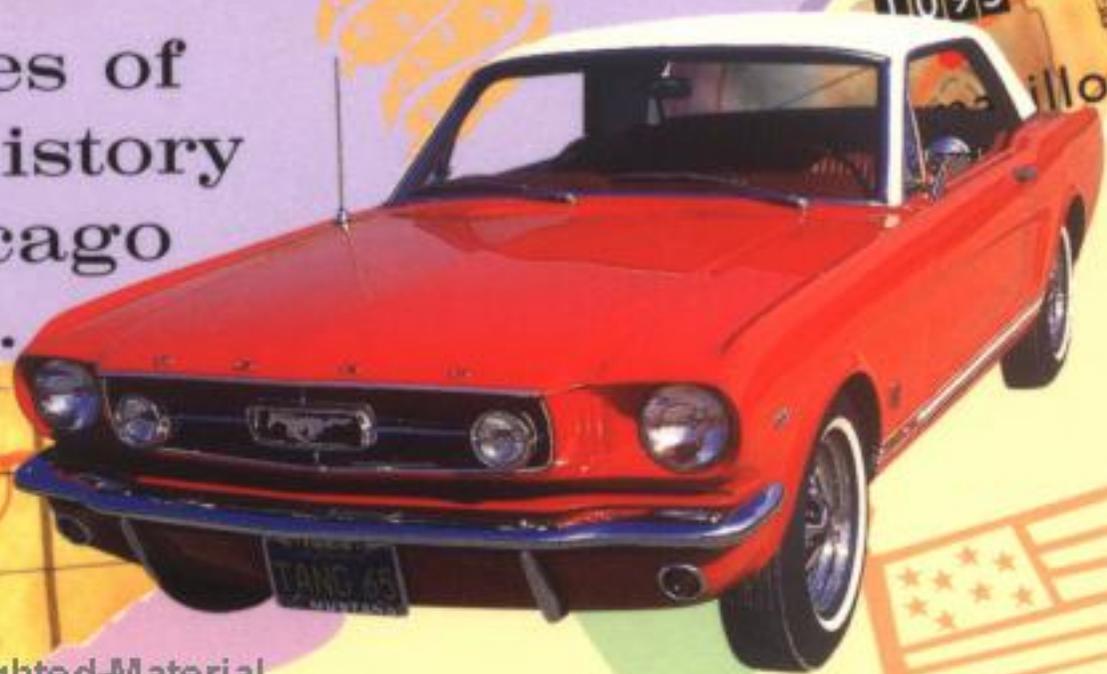


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Traveling Route 66

2,250 miles of
motoring history
from Chicago
to L.A.

ROUTE
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Consulting Editor: Paul Taylor,
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University of Oklahoma Press

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4 CREDITS

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Consulting editor:

Paul Taylor, *Route 66 Magazine*

Editor: Philip de Ste. Croix

Design and page make-up:

Philip Clucas MSIAD

Photography:

Dan Harlow, Neil Sutherland

Editorial Director: Will Steeds

Production: Neil Randles

Color reproduction: Pica Colour

Separations (Pte) Ltd, Singapore

Printed and bound: Star Standard

Industries (Pte) Ltd, Singapore

Oklahoma Paperbacks edition published 2001 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Publishing Division of the University, by special arrangement with Salamander Books Ltd., 8 Blenheim Court, Brewery Road, London N7 9NT, United Kingdom.

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The majority of the photographs of locations along Route 66 published in this book were supplied by the photographer Dan Harlow to whom the publishers extend warm thanks for his help and encouragement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Freeth, Nick, 1956—

Traveling Route 66/Nick Freeth; consulting editor, Paul Taylor.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8061-3326-0 (pbk.: alk. paper)

I. United States Highway 66—History. 2. West (U. S.)—Description and travel. I. Taylor, Paul, 1931— II. Title.

HE356.W37F73 2001

917.304'929—dc21

00-048005

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Nick Freeth was born in London in 1956. After graduating from St. Catharine's College, Cambridge with a degree in English Literature, he joined the BBC in 1978, and later became a senior producer in the World Service, where he specialized in making radio programs covering folk, jazz, and blues. Nick left the BBC in 1990 to work as Senior Producer for the London radio station Jazz FM, producing the 26-part series "100 Years of Jazz" and a wide range of other shows. In 1992, he was appointed Head of Music Production at Rewind Productions, an independent company making radio programs for the BBC. In 1994, Nick and his colleague Charles Alexander formed their own production company, Gleneagle Productions, whose recent radio commissions have included a 12-part survey of "The Guitar in Jazz," and a series examining the history of jazz in Nazi Germany. He is the author, with Charles Alexander, of *The Acoustic Guitar* and *The Electric Guitar*.

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Introduction by Paul Taylor

Just when you think that you have seen every book that chronicles the spirit of Route 66, along comes another celebration of the historic highway. You are holding in your hands the newest offering to the Mother Road—a state-by-state Route 66 odyssey authored by English journalist Nick Freeth. And it is obvious that Nick knows the mystique and excitement of Route 66, as he so aptly captures the mood and magic that has made the old cross-country route the world's most nostalgic highway. Don't be fooled by this small package—within its pages is a colorful, illustrated history of the fabled road and its landmarks.

Traveling Route 66 is packed with memories of my teen years in the late 1940s, when the family got together at the table and plotted a course that would take us on vacation across U.S. Highway 66.



Gasoline was 17¢ a gallon. Haircuts were 25¢. A set of Allstate clincher tires was \$43.80 — installed. We paid 35¢ toll to cross the Chain of Rocks Bridge over the Mississippi River. We filled our water bag in Tulsa, and wondered who was crazy enough to bury those Cadillacs nose first in the ground outside of Amarillo, Texas.

The fabled ribbon of asphalt and concrete still winds her way across the country, and this handy book is your passport to the sights and sounds of America's Main Street.



Prologue

Route 66 is the USA's most famous highway. Opened in 1926, it connected Chicago with Los Angeles, over 2,000 miles (3,200km) to the southwest, and made long-distance road transportation a reality for millions of Americans. It played a key role in the development of industry and commerce, offered the prospect of a new, better life in the West for families trapped in rural poverty along its path, and gave vital support to the US war effort in the 1940s. And it quickly became part of the American Dream, generating its own myths and romance, and inspiring scores of novelists, poets, artists, moviemakers, and songwriters to weave its images into their work. This book follows the path of the Mother Road, assesses its importance, and attempts, in the process, to capture something of its special magic.

*Right: Winslow, Arizona – one of hundreds of
small towns that benefited from Route 66.*

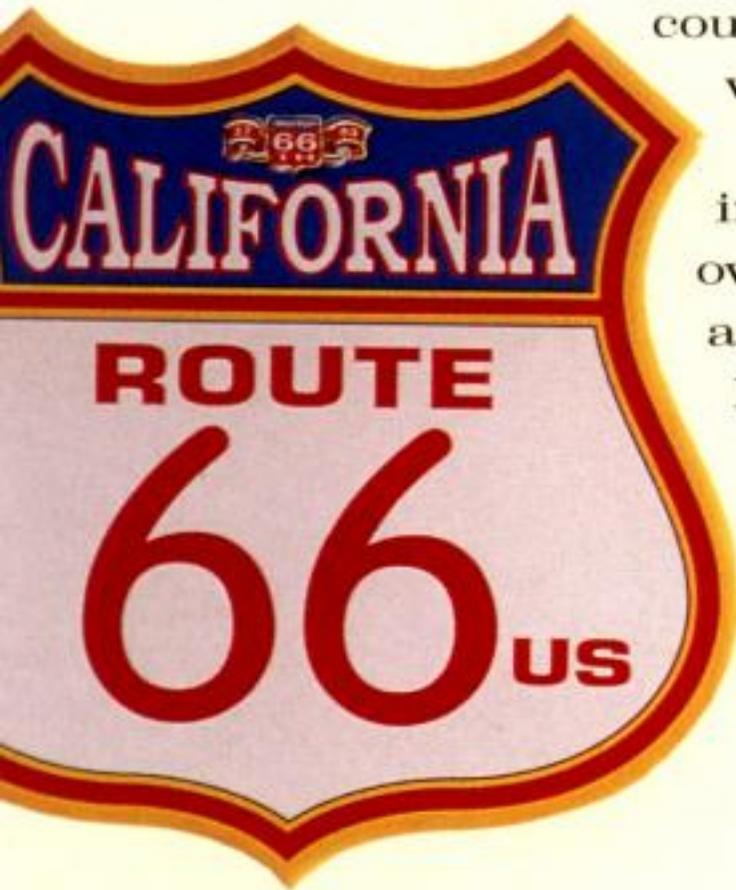
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By the 1920s, America's railroads boasted over 200,000 miles (320,000km) of operational track. The country's road system was far less advanced; but an increase in car ownership, as well

as dissatisfaction from state and business leaders, and growing Federal investment, was precipitating a long-overdue improvement in it. One of the prime movers in this process was Cyrus Avery, an Oklahoma-based businessman with a passion for roads. As a member of the American Association of State





STREET USA

Highway Officials, he wished to see the existing, haphazardly organized system of “named” roads (like the Lincoln Highway and National Old Trails Highway) replaced by an integrated network of interstate routes. One of his ideas was for an east-west thoroughfare from Chicago to California, taking in his own home state; this road was formally proposed in October 1925, and approved, allocated a “route” number — 66 — and opened by the following year.

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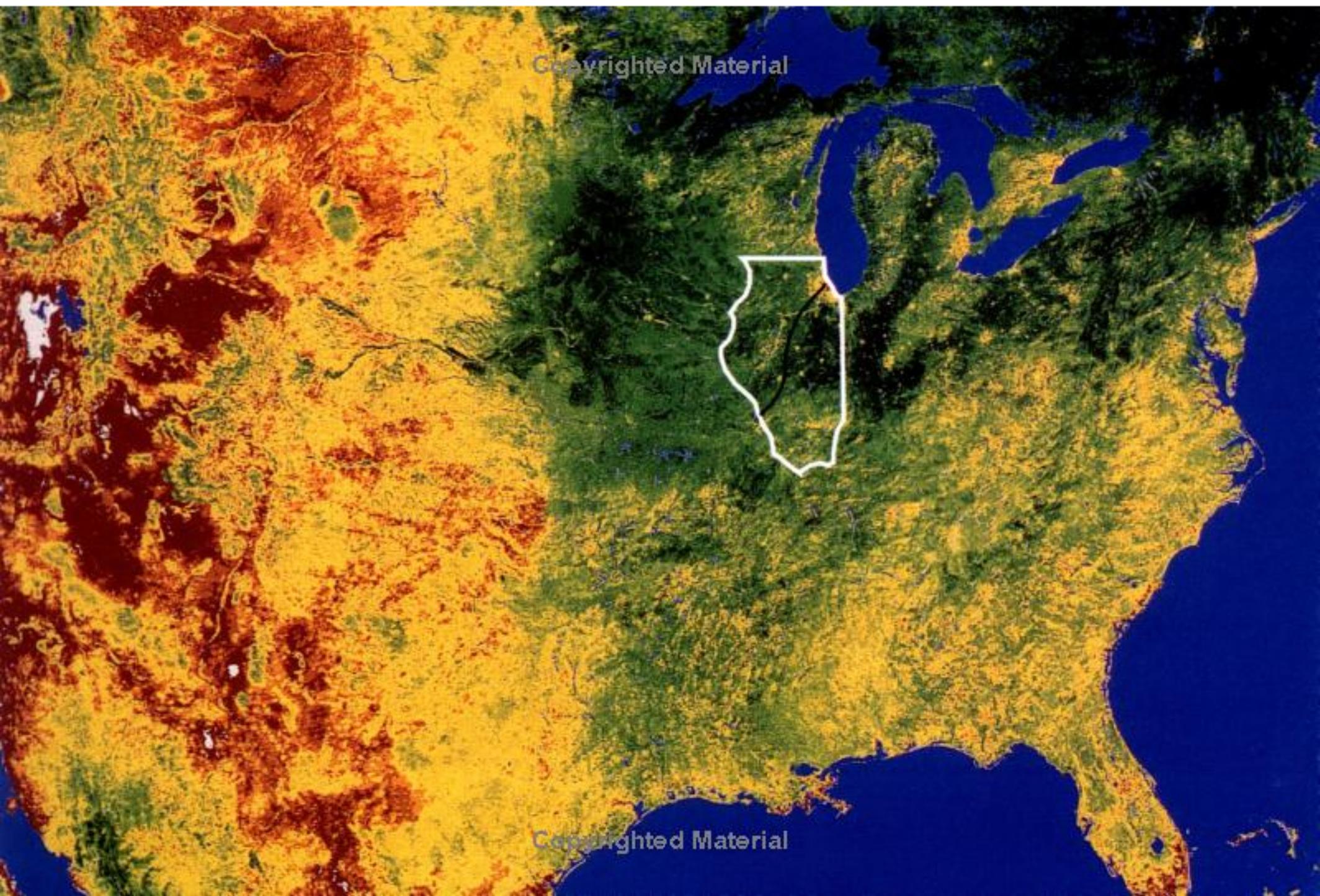
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Illinois

In the early 1830s, much of Illinois was prairie, and Chicago was just a marshy, sparsely inhabited settlement on the edge of Lake Michigan. By the following decade, however, Chicago had become an important hub for the transportation of crops and livestock by ship; and the coming of the railroads established it, in the words of Alistair Cooke, as “the ideal junction between the harvests of the encircling prairie and the people who would eat and use them.” Route 66 opened up the prospect of reliable long-distance road freight to and from Chicago, and its 290-mile (467km) long Illinois section, leading southwest towards the Mississippi, was already fully paved before the highway’s inauguration in 1926.





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Landscape & Climate



Chicago got its nickname, the “windy city,” from the bitter Arctic air that blows in across Lake Michigan. At its coldest, in January, average temperatures in the area can fall to 18°F (-8°C); the summer maximum is around 86°F (30°C). The fertile prairie land covering much of the state of Illinois is now mostly under cultivation: the region’s main crops are corn, soyabeans, and oats; and — appropriately — its major industries include the manufacture of farm machinery. Route 66 heads southwest from Chicago via the state capital, Springfield, to the plains surrounding the Mississippi River — the lowest-lying part of Illinois, standing less than 300 feet (91m) above sea-level.

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**If you ever plan to motor west;
Travel my way, take the highway that's the best.
Get your kicks on Route Sixty-Six!**

**It winds from Chicago to L.A.,
More than two thousand miles all the way.
Get your kicks on Route Sixty-Six!**

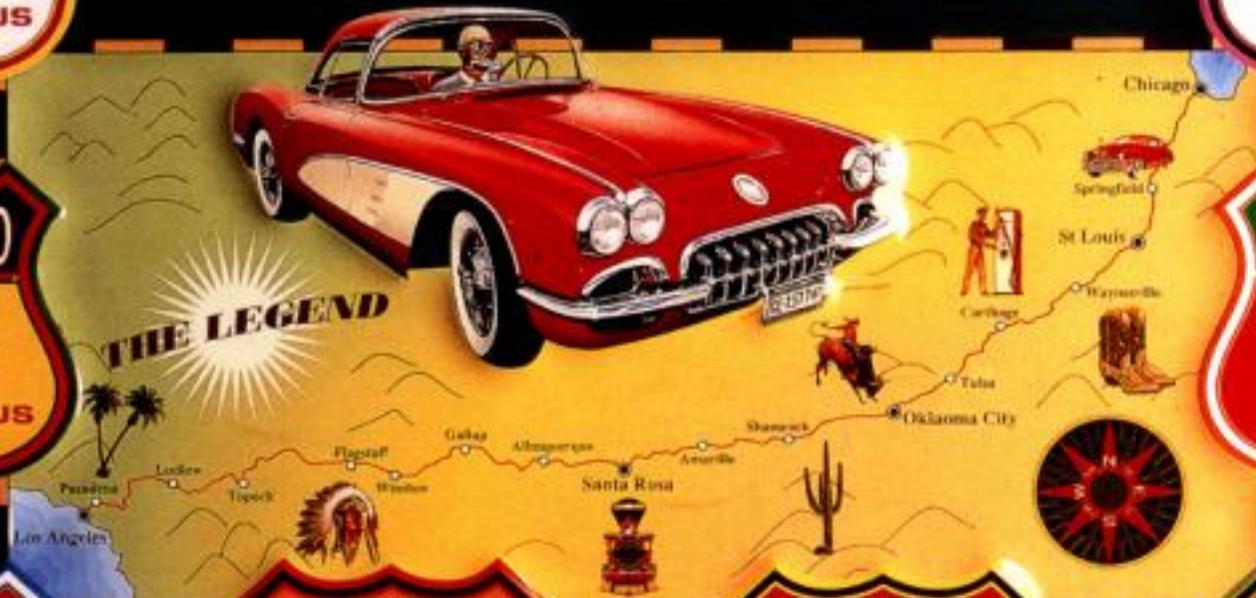
(from Route 66 by Bobby Troup, 1946)

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27th ANNIVERSARY 66th 93



Easily the most famous in the world,
this highway opened in 1927 and ran nearly 2,600 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles



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