

Route 66 Across New Mexico A Wanderer's Guide

By Jill Schneider, Photographs by D. Nakii
University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1991
Paperback, 212 pages: includes B & W Photos, Maps, & Index

Thirty years ago (1991), the author, Jill Schneider published a series of stories centered around the "old highway 66" that she learned from an older "story teller" she met at the La Fonda Hotel in Albuquerque, NM. The "story teller" had been a traveling salesman identified by the author as a "Peddler" in New Mexico. He began his salesman work in the 1940's and was familiar with the places along Route 66 in New Mexico. Is he a fictional character? She doesn't say. Some of the stories are the author's and she says some of the memories might be "faulty."

Although there is no biography of the author available, she is someone who lived in Albuquerque and had absorbed New Mexico culture.

The book is divided into three parts. The First part covers Fourth Street and Central in Albuquerque west to the Arizona border. The Second part covers Fourth Street and Central east to the Texas border. The Third part is only a few pages and points out that the original Highway 66 came through Santa Fe but before the time of the "peddler" so he had no stories except how Governor Hannett changed the route of 66 to run directly from Santa Rosa west to Albuquerque.

The vignettes are well written and give the reader a clear sense of place and includes information about history along the route across New Mexico. For instance, she writes about restaurant owner Harry Garrison who escorted pop singer Dorothy Shay from the train station to his restaurant in Tatum. Shay later wrote a hit song about the cowboy, "Two Gun Harry From Tatum" (1948) released as a single on 78 rpm that is still playing on various streaming services and video channels:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeETE8Ue4c>. There are still motels from the 1940's in Tatum. On a Tin Lizzies Model T tour to Tatum (2014) participants

by Paul Duncan

Book Review

stayed at the Blue Swallow Motel that has served travelers along Route 66 since the 1940's. The large iconic neon sign with a blue swallow welcomes travelers. More information about the motel is available at this link: <https://www.nps.gov/places/blue-swallow-motel.htm>.

The motel has convenient narrow garages with wood overhead doors located between the rooms. Our Model T's fit perfectly.

The Peddler commented: "It used to be that if you were traveling east, you couldn't see any part of Albuquerque

until you topped out on Nine Mile Hill... that was the place to go if you were in love and had a car... I imagine that a great many citizens in Albuquerque got their start in life there."

This is a book that is best put in the glove compartment of your vehicle. When out in New Mexico along Route 66, it can be quickly referenced for stories. I think we all yearn for those stories of the past when our parents or grandparents were on the road. I recommend this book for those interested in the history of US Highway 66. The paperback book is out of print but used copies are available on the internet at a reasonable price.

