

Interview with Anne Walker  
by David Dunaway  
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Route 66 and East St. Louis studies have never benefited the city. People apprehensive about sharing information: want projects that empower the community. 66 in trouble here: MacArthur Bridge, first carrier of African-Americans for Route 66, now has a section taken out. Tenth Street is part of Route 66 but East St. Louis acquired 66's roadway. Plans for a new Mississippi River Bridge bypass East St. Louis. In the '30s East St. Louis had three highways, was very progressive.

1917 race riots, about 10-20,000 blacks living in East St. Louis. "Blacks Never in East St. Louis" motto. Exodus of blacks during the riots. Started gathering again in the '30s. She remembers packing their bags in the summer and taking Route 66 to Chicago. Did not personally experience racism on that road. Need to let people know there is economic significance in history. People want to put money somewhere else. Thinks that people are afraid to visit East St. Louis. Says the city is the hole in the donut; everything has been done around them. 'They' doesn't mean only white people, there have been black people in power too.

People still leaving East St. Louis. Area increasingly African-American since the first black mayor in the '70s. Probably 99% African-American. European-Americans live in the bedroom communities, some work in the city, still claim that they are from East St. Louis. New Library was built. Many books left behind. Walker begins Freedom Trails Legacies, an African-American heritage group.

For 66, check St. Clair Historical Society. Collections in Edwardsville. People have cut pages out of the books she needs. There have been oral history projects, Jacqui Dace. Are there resources in Granite City and Madison. Theorizes that a lot of the information is still in homes. East St. Louis historical society. Ruby Ivory-Williamson. Doris Cason, artist, worked with the school system. St. Louis History museum. Katherine Harris-Hayes is another key person, anything about Illinois at Lincoln Library. Collinsville has a very active historical society. Granite City, Maryville, Hamel, doesn't know. Other ethnicities scattered. Edwardsville. Alton. Venice. Brooklyn. Brighton, Underground Railroad. Cahokia, Indian trail, Cahokia Mounds, still a Native American gathering spot. Edwardsville, SIU presence in East St. Louis. Alton Historical Museum. Wood River, Underground Railroad. Teachers had students do a project about the buildings in the city. No real collections per se, but people who collect: Willie Walker, her father, has a photograph collection. Men who call into the cable access station would have history. Carl Nune does books about local history.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Tell me about the community and then I'll want to ask you a little about your own past.

ANNE WALKER: Interestingly enough, we are honored that you are giving us some attention and that you are interested in this part of the world and what 66 history has meant to this area. So many people have come to East St. Louis to study us, to cull information. We have studies upon studies and the city has never benefited in any way from most of these studies. You can look around and see that we have not benefited. Usually those folks that come in end up with the PhD and the funding to do whatever it is that their goal was in the first place.

So, people in our community have become very apprehensive about getting information, sharing information for that very reason. It's like a sore that doesn't heal. We're looking for people and projects that will help empower this community and people in it. Or else we're not interested. That has become the mantra. The history that we have is not only ignored, but in large measure cut off.

We have the MacArthur Bridge for Route 66. That was the first carrier of traffic over to St. Louis, Missouri. That bridge has a large section taken out of it so that nobody is going to go across that bridge. Then on Tenth Street, where one of our illustrious mayors lived in the Joyce mansion, which is now Catherine Dunam's museum, was a carrier of Route 66.

There were two thoroughfares, Ninth and Tenth Street. They were one-ways. There used to be a Y in the middle off of St. Clare coming south that divided the area. You'd come into East St. Louis on old Collinsville road and then the Y would split the traffic up so that if you were going south you'd come up Ninth Street and if you were going north you'd come down Tenth Street. Then as you got to Broadway, the road would come back together and go across MacArthur Bridge.

Well, in recent years we've added metrolink which, in California, they'd call it a trolley, but it's a train, mass transit. In building that it was feared that no one would come to East St. Louis to catch the train, etc. We had all these negative vibes about what would and would not happen and what money would be wasted. As it turned out, the two stops in East St. Louis became the stops that were used most. We catch a lot of traffic because of the two stadiums in St. Louis, the football stadium and the baseball stadium. We actually have one brand new stadium for the Cardinals and we have one football stadium for the Rams.

So on days when there are games, this area is flooded. For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration—flooded. People don't have, or they put aside, perceived fears about East St. Louis, safety issues because there is something bigger that they want to do or get to. It's easier for them to do it coming through East St. Louis.

We have on the drawing board plans for a new Mississippi River Bridge. That's interesting in that I've always said that you can't really ignore East St. Louis because you have to go through it to get to downtown. As downtown St. Louis declines and as East St. Louis continues to decline, the new bridge bypasses us again. So eventually if this bridge gets built, you won't have to come through East St. Louis.

Historically, you know that towns that have been built are dying because of their transportation systems. Either the road didn't come, or the railroad didn't come, or the cattle found grazing ground better someplace else, and towns literally died. What I'm saying is, as things exist now, we're on suicide watch. We're really not doing it to ourselves. This is a double-dose, inside and outside.

I've already tried to give you a visualization of how that highway came through East St.

Louis and I've told you about the metro link. The reason for describing those is that Route 66 has been closed off again at the southern end of the city so that you have tracks on a mound on the northern part of Route 66; you have a bridge with a hole in it on the southern end. We are essentially cut off.

DAVID DUNAWAY In other words, you can take Route 66 into St. Louis, and then you stop. There's actually two alignments, the pre-1940 alignment which went up through Granite City and connected with the MacArthur Bridge, and then the 1940-1977 alignment which went down Collinsville Road. You're talking about the 1940 alignment that sort of dead ends here?

ANNE WALKER: Actually, the bridge was built in the twenties. It was built and decided upon as being the carrier for Route 66 during that time.

DAVID DUNAWAY: When you say the MacArthur Bridge you're talking about the one that's known as the Chain of Rocks?

ANNE WALKER: No. It's debatable. I've heard historians say that the first Route was McKinley Bridge.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I have a map.

ANNE WALKER: This map was issued when?

DAVID DUNAWAY: It's the Illinois 66 Association map of Route 66. I don't really know much more than what's there.

ANNE WALKER: I don't get into the debate, but I do know that building the bridge was a big issue between St. Louis and Illinois and that from what I have been able to ascertain, we were an earlier carrier than the Chain of Rocks Bridge. That bridge now has been designated as a walking bridge and has the Route 66 markings on it. They're getting ready to reopen the McKinley Bridge and it will have, probably, some nostalgia that lets people know it once was Route 66.

Maybe my own prejudice get involved in this, but I tend to think that the most popular route and an earlier route was through East St. Louis down Ninth and Tenth and that's not even shown here on this map. 64 did not exist so now it goes, if you were going to set a course to go across, you don't have a choice anymore. You can't go Chain of Rocks in a car, you can't go McKinley Route 66, you have to go 64, or 40, or 55/70. They all merge at this point. But, East St. Louis back in the '30s was one of the most progressive towns in the area. We had three convergences of highways. We had the national road, Route 66, and the old 40 or 50.

I have an article I was able to pull out of microfilm that talks about the excitement of the community because they have all this traffic and everybody's coming through East St. Louis. It was the motivation for a building that you can see through this window that used to be the Broadview Hotel which at its time was not a high-class hotel of the same caliber of the Chase Park Plaza in St. Louis.

There was at that same time the building of the hospital, the highway, the plans for the thoroughfares. We actually have a historic corridor. Right here is the old national road going up

to Ead's Bridge. In that area between Tenth Street and the river was the most popular area. The economy revolved around this area. We have remnants of the old first telephone company.

DAVID DUNAWAY: This is predominately an African-American community.

ANNE WALKER: Now, yes.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How has that changed since the days when Route 66 opened? Was it that in the '20s as well?

ANNE WALKER: Actually we have started doing commemorations of the 1917 race riots. In 1917 there were approximately ten to twenty thousand black people living in East St. Louis out of a population that is larger now than the city is. The labor unions, the war economic conditions, industrial leaders supposedly bringing in blacks from the south as scallywags or union breakers to do jobs that white folks weren't doing or couldn't do, or going to war.

There was another mantra: "Blacks never in East St. Louis." There was a massacre here, and after the riot of 1917, there was an exodus of black people from East St. Louis, of about 10,000. The complexion of the city has done a total flip-flop. Blacks have been in this area since 1720 if you count the Cahokia area, with the Indians, so we have always been around, but not in heavy concentration.

Around the '30s, families were gathering around again. My family came here before the race riots from Mississippi and Arkansas. By and large, you will find that most black people in East St. Louis have roots in Arkansas and Mississippi and Tennessee. The great migration, Route 66 carried us from here to Chicago more or less. I have this wonderful picture of my great uncle and aunt in their brand-new 1920-something car. You can see the pride in this picture.

My uncle stayed on the highway going from Arkansas, East St. Louis, to Chicago. One of the sisters of this family ended up in Chicago. And my mom, as my uncle got older, would do the driving. I can remember us packing our bags in the summer time getting in the car, getting on Route 66 and going to Chicago. I remember the time when we ended up in the ditch spun around. The old Stucky store, you had to stop there and get the jelly while you were on the road. It seems like the forever trip during that time.

We left here once, I tend to say August but maybe September, we were still wearing shorts here, by the time we got to Chicago, it was snowing and we were freezing. It was as if we had gone to Alaska in my mind, as a child. All of that is part of my Route 66 experience.

DAVID DUNAWAY: A lot of the area you were going through in that trip to Chicago would have been both rural and European-American farming country. Did you ever encounter prejudice along the road?

ANNE WALKER: Personally, no. Not along the road. I have in many other instances, I was never made aware of as a child any of those prejudices along the road.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Have you heard of any stories of others that encountered that?

ANNE WALKER: Interesting question because it has never been an issue that anyone has brought up. As you know I'm involved in trying to do a celebration for Miles Davis, for his 80<sup>th</sup>

birthday. If you read his autobiography you know that Miles spent some time going from East St. Louis to Chicago. He would play in Springfield, Illinois, he would do some gigs in Chicago. I'm sure he put some rubber on the road on Route 66. He talks about some of the things he encountered, but he never specifically said that it happened on Route 66.

That would be something that would be interesting to cull that information. We've not had that opportunity, or taken that opportunity to actually do a collection of memorabilia or history on the road. People sometimes think that because we are so consumed with potholes in the streets, keeping the streetlights on, just basic services, police, fire, etc., that we really don't have time and resources to get involved in frills such as historic road this or historic building that.

People tend to not take those kinds of issues seriously when they're in an area of decline and they feel abandoned. Let's put money where we need to put money, not knowing it can be a hand in glove situation. Not even band-aid, hand-in-glove situation. So we get information out to let people know that there's an economic significance in the history. To a large degree heritage tourism is the biggest growing aspect of tourism in this country. As you have people coming in and out of your community, there's spending dollars.

You tend to think—you remember the old pictures where they did counting with the machine? I'm reminded of this cell phone commercial where this woman is counting the people coming in the building, saying "Here's a call, there's a call." Well, nobody is standing and counting the people coming in and out. However, when you do your traffic flows, it becomes a marketable thing, people pay a lot of money for feasibility studies.

We put meat on the skeleton by making things happen in this community that will cause people to want to come visit us. They don't have to stay, just come. Even if you come to experience what you've heard is the rough side of the mountain, come. It's not. "The rumor of my demise is greatly exaggerated."—That's East St. Louis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's a great overview. I wonder if you have any thoughts about whether it's the largely African-American nature of the town today that has had some effect in tourism or the lack of it through the community.

ANNE WALKER: No doubt. You don't have to wonder about it. There's no doubt. I can't imagine a fairly integrated or white community that would have allowed some of the things that have happened to this community to be done. I told you I worked for the mass transit system. You know how they say don't bite the hand that feeds you. So I'm not trying to be critical, I'm not trying to slap anybody's hand. It's just the facts.

You have a stretch of about 15 miles of East St. Louis. In East St. Louis you, have when they built that system, maybe one or two off-grade carriers, bridges. As you come in to more integrated and white communities, there are no, or very few, on ground at-grade crossings. Why is that? It's a rhetorical question. You can hear the train as we sit here. That's the Metro Link train. Again, the train had to come to East St. Louis because we're here on the Mississippi, we're the most valuable property.

In a sense we're like the hole in the donut. They've done everything around us. When I say "they" it hasn't been all just white people, we've had black people in positions of power for some time. But, as a black community we have never embraced that power to that level or extent that has been forceful enough to say, "No, you won't do this to us." And, when one or two people stand up like that, they're usually isolated and somehow removed from the picture.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So if I understand you, what you're saying is that East St. Louis have been bypassed repeatedly.

ANNE WALKER: Yes, from the 1960s being voted the All-American City for the country to as the '60s Civil Rights Movement took its toll on the community. Then there was "white flight." If you recall I said that in 1917 there was a "black flight." In large measure, people are still leaving East St. Louis because they see no hope, nothing happening here. That's their perception. And then you have people who think, well, that perception is going to linger until everybody's gone, because that's the plan, to get everybody to leave so they'll come back. Do Christopher Columbus, plant the flag and grow again.

DAVID DUNAWAY: This is not an uncommon pattern.

ANNE WALKER: It's not an uncommon pattern. Regentrification, right?

DAVID DUNAWAY: It was 1917 here, but it was 1913 in St. Louis; in Springfield it was 1906, in Joplin; Missouri it was 1902: Ku Klux Klan riots which were followed by Negro chasers who came up from the south. Even up until this day the communities in southwest Missouri are largely white communities which were integrated communities.

Redevelopment plans that tore out the bottoms districts where African-Americans had settled all along there. It's quite a systematic process that happens to discourage African-Americans from certain parts of this area and, coincidentally perhaps, a lot of this takes place along Route 66. I guess this is maybe one more example of what's been going on for a long time. What point did the population, if the African-Americans were leaving in 1917 and European-Americans were coming in, did it begin to shift into a "Chocolate City"?

ANNE WALKER: It wasn't until after the '60s. The latter part of the '60s, early '70s. We had our first black mayor, and it has been increasingly African-American since.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What percentage, roughly, would you guess you are at now?

ANNE WALKER: 99.5%. [laughing] I still have some European-Americans in my neighborhood. We are not 100% African-American and in the daytime if you still go to some of our businesses and you did not see the community; which a lot of people never do, they only come and see what's in the stores, and the hospitals. You would not think that this was as heavily populated African-American community as it is. Because we have a work-force of European-Americans here on a daily basis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: But they're not living here.

ANNE WALKER: Not living here.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Where are they living?

ANNE WALKER: They're living in the bedroom communities around us. Fairview Heights,

Caseyville, O'Fallon, Belleville. Belleville has been increasingly getting a chocolate coating for a number of years now. I don't think they like it. Most of those folks who are from East St. Louis who have managed to have a financial stream that affords them an opportunity to move, move away. They never give up their claim to East St. Louis. They'll live in O'Fallon, but they'll say, "I'm an East St. Louisan." To the extent that you have folks who, unfortunately, have even run for office in East St. Louis because they are East St. Louisans but they don't actually live there. Once an East St. Louisan, always an East St. Louisan.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Some of these communities you're talking about like Caseyville are on Route 66, Collinsville, I'm not quite sure where O'Fallon is. Is that up Collinsville Road?

ANNE WALKER: O'Fallon would be due east. What's interesting is that the Granite City area had an early collection of African-Americans. You have Brooklyn/Lovejoy, which is said to be the first black-incorporated city. During the 1917, black flight the population in Brooklyn increased. A lot of the folks who left here went to Kinloch, Missouri. If you look at the demographics you can see where some of those people migrated to, but in the Granite City area, which was said to have been a very prejudiced area back in that time, had its own African-American community.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That is where Route 66 originally passed. I think maybe it's important to try and document some of these times of prejudice, and I'm just wondering how one might go about learning more about the history of Granite City, or East St. Louis. First of all, are there histories that have been written of these towns?

ANNE WALKER: Yes, but not usually from an African-American perspective. It's almost like any other history. Not until recently has there been an acknowledgment that there is another side of this coin. African-Americans say history is HIStory, not our story. Most of the histories, the real histories, that have been done on this community have not been from an African-American perspective, or even total inclusion.

DAVID DUNAWAY: If one were to try to start with whatever there was, including histories that weren't inclusive of places like Granite City and East St. Louis, where would you go to find them? Are they in the public library? Is there a used bookstore here that might have some of these histories?

ANNE WALKER: We have a tragic story about our library. I'm almost to ashamed to admit it. We were fortunate enough to get a new library built in the last 5 or 6 years, but in the transition from the old library to the new library, a lot of the old books of significance were left in the old library.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Abandoned? Where's the old library and can we get the key?

ANNE WALKER: Some community people decided that they should go in and rescue the books and some of the books were rescued, but I don't know where they are.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's something that we will probably want to ask you to help us check

on at a later time. It would be good to find those old books.

ANNE WALKER: Freedom Trails Legacies, which is African-American heritage tourism development, is a combination of art, humanities, and heritage tourism development. I have done numerous searches, even to write the proposal for the project. I would go to the library and have to order books through the inter-library loan system and I was looking for this one particular book that I had been introduced to in Springfield. I went to the reserve table and unloaded my stuff on a table, told the librarian what my mission was. She came and sort of dumped books on the table. It was almost as if she had been waiting for the day that someone was going to come in and ask for them. So, in her doing that, she actually introduced me to the book *They Knew Lincoln* which is about African-Americans who knew Lincoln, like the guy who used to cut his hair in Springfield.

It talks about Watch Night, which is important to me in terms of heritage: it's one of the emancipation celebration nights. I wanted to find this book. I didn't want to have to go to Springfield and copy pages out of it every time I wanted to refer back to some information in the book. I found it on the internet after tons of searching for thousands of dollars, I kept going and eventually found one on Ebay one day for the jacket price, it had two weeks, nobody bid on it. I bid, and the book went away from me because I didn't know the game. After I lost the book, I went back online found another, a thousand dollars or more. So that old books have great value is the moral of that story.

Those books in that library—someone told me as I was searching for this book that I should have that book. They say at the libraries that I should have a copy of this book in our library in East St. Louis. We don't.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Could you tell me the names of some of the basic books about East St. Louis or Madison or Granite City. Is there a local historical society here?

ANNE WALKER: There is a St. Clair County Historical Society. Most of Illinois in the early days was St. Clair County so that even when you go to history books and you read about something that's St. Clair County, it may not be St. Clair County now but it was then. The boundary of St. Clair County was immense when the states started. There is a St. Clair County Historical Society.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do they have a collection of books?

ANNE WALKER: They basically work in companion with the Belleville Library. Do they have a set-aside of information about Route 66? Couldn't tell you at this point in time. That's the homework I have to do, but I can tell you that there is a lot of information on the SIU campus and the library in Edwardsville.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Not on Route 66 unfortunately.

ANNE WALKER: Have you been to the St. Louis History Museum?

DAVID DUNAWAY: I haven't.

ANNE WALKER: They have a huge collection of history. It peeves me that we don't have our own history in this community. One of the things I would like to see is a museum of history, the heritage, African-American heritage. We have Catherine Dunham Museum which speaks to African-American history, but not local African-American history. Mrs. Dunham was born in Chicago and traveled the world performing, dancing, doing studies.

In this museum is a collection of her work and the places she visited. There are the African masks, there's a Japanese robe that was given to her by an emperor at one point. That kind of thing. You can go there and be enlightened, but you don't get East St. Louis history. I don't think that when you go in there that there is anything that says this house used to be owned by one of our former mayors. I don't think that that has been added to the museum, just as an aside.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So they don't have a library or collection of books about East St. Louis?

ANNE WALKER: In East St. Louis? No. The collection is in Edwardsville, in St. Louis. Even when there was talk about rescuing the books from that library, you had factions that said they could give these books to, or we could donate them to. I'm saying, "why would you consider taking them out of the community?" Then the people who live here would have to leave their community to learn about or to get books that were once in their community. That's not the way we want the traffic to flow. We want people to have to come here to get the information.

There was a significant church that ended up being a boys club that was bought out for the Metro Link route. The cornerstone, they had a time capsule. When that time capsule was unearthed, it wasn't given to anybody in this community, to any organization in this community. That kind of thing has happened time and time again.

Most people, African-Americans, who died in this community were buried at Booker T. Washington Cemetery, which is outside of the community. Recently, someone got the records of the burial sites at Booker T. Washington and they gifted these names to the St. Clair County Historical Society. The names are not in the African-American community, but it's an African-American cemetery. Go figure.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So it sounds like Belleville is the place to go as a possible repository for local history, not your East St. Louis library?

ANNE WALKER: You may find some recent publications at the East St. Louis library. Tragically I have found that, in trying to do some research on East St. Louis, I have gone to books that in the introduction, the table of contents, says there is information about East St. Louis. When you go to the page, you are anticipate finding that information, those pages are gone.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How do you understand that?

ANNE WALKER: It's like somebody took a razor-blade and cut the pages out.

DAVID DUNAWAY: There are possibly some resources on the other side of the river. I have spoken a number of times with an oral historian at the Missouri Historical Society, Jacqui Dace.

ANNE WALKER: She's from East. St. Louis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I have tried to contact her several times since our interviews and I have never heard back from her. I hope that you'll tell her that I would still like to be in touch. I invited her to some meetings. I spoke with her at some length about Joplin and about Langston Hughes and his family in the Joplin riots of 1902. I think she was very interested in that. What we need to find are the people who are still here who remember these transitions and you have been looking around. Has anybody done oral histories?

ANNE WALKER: There have been oral history projects. Jacqui did an exhibit a couple years ago that included some oral histories from the south end of East St. Louis and it was called "Through a Child's Eye."

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you think she has done interviews on East St. Louis's history?

ANNE WALKER: Yes, she even had an exhibit once on the 1917 riot. Nobody that I am aware of has done a linear history. They'll take a subject, pluck it out, and study it, research it, display it. Then it's put on a shelf and never combined with any other history that's been done.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Is this also the case for places like Madison and Granite City? Do you think there might be resources there?

ANNE WALKER: It would be interesting to find out. I have been wanting the opportunity to be able to do that. It's part of what I've been doing. It's been amazing, the information that I've been able to get. I haven't gotten to the migration yet. That's on my drawing board.

I have been going from slavery. People say, "Illinois, that was a free state." Yeah right. There's an interesting book called Sundown Towns. There's some information there that you may be able to pull out. I have the editor's edition. I don't have the final copy.

DAVID DUNAWAY: At this point what would be really helpful is to try to make a list of all the potential resources.

ANNE WALKER: I've also gone to the Underground Railroad which was supposed to be the cornerstone of Freedom Trail Legacy. You cannot tell the Underground Railroad story unless you tell about slavery. So, then we talk about Civil War, the migration, Civil Rights, and contemporary issues, that's how it's divided up.

I haven't gotten to migration yet. It would focus a lot on Route 66 because the migration was from here to Chicago. A lot of people who have really studied African-American history will say, "Which migration are you talking about?" There have been several waves.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's true. To write that history if the documents aren't in East St. Louis. You mentioned St. Louis's museum. Where else is the totality of resources to be able to reconstruct this history?

ANNE WALKER: I theorize that there is still a lot of this history in the homes. In the basements, in the attics, in the scrapbooks. It hasn't been culled. There has been no call for it.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Is there an East St. Louis historical society?

ANNE WALKER: There is. It's not named the East St. Louis historical society. Generally you have some of the same people who are civic and social-minded who have worked on the historical society. I don't think it's chartered. But there are groups of people who do that work under the umbrella of a historical society.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Maybe you could name some names, just so we get it on the record.

ANNE WALKER: A key name is Ruby Ivory-Williamson. She has been spearheading the current active historical society. One of their missions is to revitalize that Booker T. Washington cemetery.

Back in the '60s a key name was Doris Cason, who's still here. She is an artist, has worked for the school district as head of the art curriculum. Those are two of the key names of people who have been on the forefront.

DAVID DUNAWAY: If you were going to do an oral history, as you may well, of some of these figures, who besides these two people would you really think it critical to interview.

ANNE WALKER: I have a list. The thing about these lists, and time is that sometimes when you get the time, those people aren't here anymore.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's true everywhere and I know just what you mean. The anthropologists call it salvage anthropology. You've missed so much of it that all you can do is salvage. This list that you have: do you want to give me some more of those names so that I can kind of document it?

ANNE WALKER: Not at this time.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Has anyone done these sorts of interviews, from the community or outside? In other words, maybe they're sitting in a university or archives somewhere. There was a big one at Sangaman State in Springfield. They don't have much on East St. Louis. Collum Davis.

ANNE WALKER: I did some of my graduate work there and as a matter-of-fact it's part of the University of Illinois. I didn't study with Collum Davis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: He is the oral historian for Central Illinois.

ANNE WALKER: He's been working on the Freefrank project.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Many projects. He's taught there for 40 years. Are there any other researchers that have come into this community that have done this kind of research and then taken it somewhere else?

ANNE WALKER: You won't find any collection of Route 66 information that includes African-Americans and African-American perspective on the road. When you pick up a Route 66 book, and it's an older book, you may find mention of East St. Louis. I got a painting once on auction in Springfield that had East St. Louis and an old gas station there. There has not been an interest, I guess, in getting that information. This goes back to what were talking about at the beginning. Route 66 has been cut off. It's like it never came through East St. Louis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: One of the big issues is trying to understand the relationship between local history and Route 66 history. What I've just decided in my own research is that I'm not going to think of Route 66 history as the history of literally Collinsville road for example, but, as the history of a community that inevitably used Collinsville road to get back and forth to market. So, I'm interested in local history. That maybe is a more inclusive approach because it isn't just limited to this building or that building. If you were to start fresh and try and do the history of East St. Louis, where would you turn?

ANNE WALKER: To my list, to those people on the list, and to people's homes. It's no big secret that the institutions are just a few. The history museum in St. Louis, the Missouri History Museum, the library in Edwardsville, very few.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What about Springfield?

ANNE WALKER: Yes, and Katherine Harris-Hayes is another key person that any information you want about anything in Illinois she has a handle on.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Now where is she located?

ANNE WALKER: She's at the Lincoln library. The Lincoln Presidential Library.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Does she work with the state historical society?

ANNE WALKER: She works for the Preservation Department.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about the university, do you know if they have materials?

ANNE WALKER: Again, I have not put my foot on the road to do the actual research, so I cannot tell you exactly what is there at this point.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I'm just trying to find as much as possible for people to come after both of us so I can leave them some clues to the trail. We can talk later about where you might find resources to do the kinds of interviewing you're interested in doing. I want to make sure before we stop talking that we have really made a complete list of every institution where there might be material lurking that isn't assembled, even if it isn't identified specifically about Route 66.

ANNE WALKER: I don't think that anybody has actually taken the time to list. There is no magic list. This is day one.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What about further up the road, say into Collinsville?

ANNE WALKER: They have a very active historical society. I have their telephone numbers. I'm not sure if Collinsville calls themselves the Madison County or rather they call themselves the Collinsville Historical society but I do know they are very active.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Granite City, is there likely to be anything there?

ANNE WALKER: I would be surprised if there wasn't.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Will they have a public library there?

ANNE WALKER: (Doesn't say anything.)

DAVID DUNAWAY: What about Maryville?

ANNE WALKER: I don't know.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I've been to the university library in Edwardsville, and it now occurs to me that I never went to the city one. Do you think that's a possible?

ANNE WALKER: Yes.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Hamel, is that still a viable town?

ANNE WALKER: I'm trying to visualize as I drive, what do I see when I pass the road. You don't see much of the community from the highway. I have never ventured off into that community.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Staunton, have you been up that way?

ANNE WALKER: I've been up and down this road so many times that I could drive it blindfolded. I have gotten off at Mount Olive. I have gotten off at Litchfield.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Litchfield I've been to and they have a special file on Route 66. I guess these are smaller towns, Mount Clare, Sawyerville, smaller even than Mount Olive and Williams. Of these communities, there are two sides to Route 66. One is the older alignment that is Route 4 and the other parallels I-55. Of these, which do you think is the more likely path of immigration and where there might be more African-American presence. Would it be the I-55 side?

ANNE WALKER: Currently or historically?

DAVID DUNAWAY: Historically.

ANNE WALKER: Historically and currently, you wouldn't find any. You wouldn't find any

large populations of African-Americans in the middle of this.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Currently and historically it's really East St. Louis where the African-American community is concentrated?

ANNE WALKER: Correct. Historically, and that's why you don't even consider getting off the road, as an African-American traveler. You wouldn't have had the sense that you were welcomed. If you were talking about historically, back in the early '20s and '30s when there was still a sense of, "Well you go the other door. You don't know which one of these towns is going to be the sundown towns. You don't get caught there after the sun goes down: to do so would be to take your own life in your hands." You have population in Springfield. It has changed a lot. You will find more African-Americans in contemporary history, but if you're talking about the '20s, the '30s, you won't find many.

DAVID DUNAWAY: If one were heading north towards Chicago from East St. Louis following 66, where would the African-American community end, today, and become primarily European-American? Is that at Pontoon Beach or at the end of Collinsville Road?

ANNE WALKER: Historically there was an African-American community in Edwardsville, Alton, an early African-American community in Granite City, and of course you had Venice, Illinois, and Brooklyn. When you go up in here it gets very thin.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So it's really after Collinsville?

ANNE WALKER: In Brighton, Illinois, east of Edwardsville. Brighton was on the Underground Railroad. Black folks went through there but it wasn't where they stayed in large numbers, there were one or two families. That would be pretty much consistent all along the road. You wouldn't find a stronghold.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Even today, is Collinsville primarily white?

ANNE WALKER: It's predominately white but not primarily white.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Are there other communities, Hispanics, in this area?

ANNE WALKER: Right outside on Collinsville Road, right outside of East St. Louis is the predominately Hispanic community. Fairmont. They've been there for a while. Still maintain that presence.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Asian-Americans?

ANNE WALKER: Scattered, very scattered.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You have Cahokia, which is an amazing coincidence of Route 66 and ancient people.

ANNE WALKER: Right. Route 66 was an Indian trail that European-Americans paved. It was on the Underground Railroad. I can show you maps of that and it's the same lineage as Route 66. Collinsville Road goes right through the Cahokia Mounds. The park. You can't talk more ancient in this area than the Cahokia mounds. It's still a gathering spot for Native Americans. I'm not aware of there being a large population of Native-Americans living around there. So that's a scattering as well.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Well in a situation like this the historians really do tend to rely on oral information.

ANNE WALKER: You have to put your foot on the ground and do the work. It's not there already.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Are there educational institutions, a college or university in East St. Louis, or is the nearest one Edwardsville?

ANNE WALKER: Edwardsville. There is an extension here in East St. Louis. SIU has had a long-time presence here in East St. Louis. They took the old building that used to be the East St. Louis Senior high school that was off Tenth Street, Route 66. We used to call it Tenth Street Tech. They moved from that area to the old Broadview hotel and recently built a new facility to the south east of where we are now. They just built two new building there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Who are the historians at Edwardsville who have written about this?

ANNE WALKER: There are several archivists at the library, don't know them by name. I just got a package from one of them. I'm so bad at names, but they're there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Is there anyone teaching local history in Edwardsville that you've run into or heard about?

ANNE WALKER: Not that I've run into or heard about. The Alton Historical Museum is out there pounding the pavement all the time. They are engaged. Even in Wood River there are signs up directing you to their museum. There used to be a lot of the early church conventions in Wood River. The churches were heavily involved in Underground Railroad and civil rights issues.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Are there any high school teachers in this community who are teaching local history that might have had their students do interviews?

ANNE WALKER: We have a charter school within SIU that last year did a project where they went and took pictures of some of the historic buildings and tried to get the background information on those buildings. There was a class last year that did that. I sit on the advisory board of the high school. I was there when they gave a report.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you know the teacher?

ANNE WALKER: I have it on the report.

DAVID DUNAWAY: We will ask you for that teacher because they may have done some interviews as well. What we're trying to do here is to muster the resources so that people like yourself can write your own history. Our history is not in writing it from the outside, but training people and the technologies and techniques to set up their own oral history program. I suppose it's conceivable that we might have another workshop that might even emphasize African-American history. We had one in Springfield and it was not predominately African-American.

ANNE WALKER: Did you have any African-Americans there?

DAVID DUNAWAY: Well, it's been a number of years. I think we had one or two out of the eighteen or so there. Are there books about Illinois Black heritage?

ANNE WALKER: There are probably several.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you own copies of them?

ANNE WALKER: I have copies of segments of books.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about photos? Is there a collection of historical photos?

ANNE WALKER: No. Because when you say, "Is there a collection?" you're talking about a place or someone who has all of this together.

DAVID DUNAWAY: But there are individuals with collections?

ANNE WALKER: I'm sure there are.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Other than the people you've mentioned, are there any others that stand out as someone who collects old photos?

ANNE WALKER: My dad who is a photographer.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And his name is?

ANNE WALKER: Willie Walker.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What's his contact information?

ANNE WALKER: I'll give it to you later.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you know any Route 66 fanatics in this town?

ANNE WALKER: Let me tell you, I was thinking about you last night. We have cable access channels and on one of the channels, it's a call-in show. There are two or three gentlemen who

call several times religiously, whatever the program is. They are people I would like to get in a room, like you have me here, and just let them go. They need to be triggered, but they have the wealth of information that a lot of us are seeking.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Have they mentioned Route 66 in particular?

ANNE WALKER: I haven't heard them talk about Route 66 in particular on the air, but I know from the time frames that they talk about and some of the things they've done that they have a recollection of that. I would put money on it.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You talked about researchers coming into this community, are there any of them that are known for researching this history.

ANNE WALKER: There's a local historian, Carl Nune, who does a lot of paperback books about periods of times. He did a book on prominent East St. Louisians. He did a book on gangsters in this area. He has done timelines of history in this area, but again, his books have been a collection of information from people he knew or he associates with or who heard about what he was doing and sent him information.

There is not a lot of African-American history in it. I can recall maybe eight to ten years ago the senior member of my family, a cousin, who came here in 1917, as he was coming into the city on a train as a young lad of 4 or 5, saw smoke from the riots. He had this kind of burning desire to have some knowledge of this history. I found some of his scrapbooks. My kids keep telling me to take all of this stuff and dump it. That has happened to so many families.