

INTERVIEW WITH DAN HARLOW

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By David K. Dunaway

His interest in Route 66, beginning in the 1980s. His relationship during the transition period of Route 66. The books he consulted on Route 66, such as Jack Rittenhouse's A Guide Book to Highway 66. His first travels on the route, from California to Kansas. His work as a photographer and a graphic artist and the products on Route 66 he produced with Richard Huffnagle.

The first preservation efforts he was involved with. In the beginning, the importance of signage on Route 66 so people would be aware that it still existed. His efforts and relationship with the California Route 66 Association. Route 66 newsletter. 1992 being an important year in the preservation movement because it was the 66th anniversary of Route 66. Organized cross country caravan from Chicago to Los Angeles that year with the help of organizations and individuals. The first meeting with National Parks Service people, at Route 66 Diner in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Raising awareness of Route 66 and that it was still there. Media coverage, sponsorship from Ford Motor Company. The National Parks Service and the importance of a national entity for Route 66.

The different concerns, needs, and landscapes of the various Route 66 communities in California. Desert communities becoming extremely influential in the development of the Route 66 preservation movement. The history, development, and founding of the Route 66 Museum in Victorville, California. The Route 66 San Bernardino Rendezvous. The efforts of the Los Angeles Conservancy and Historic Route 66 Association. David Knudson's Federation, his intent to have a national forum and the skepticism from other Route 66 groups regarding the federation and its motives.

The development of Harlow's Route 66 West magazine in 1995-1996. His idea for a phone book, a place that would list all Route 66 resources in one place, including motels, eateries, galleries, and all other businesses on the route.

Transition period, important people that were part of the grassroots movement; the ebb and flow dynamic. Angel Delgadillo, Martin Zanzucci, Delbert Trew, Bob Odette, Bob Waldmire. Importance of Michael Wallis' book, Route 66: The Mother Road. The realization by many that Route 66 was an important part of American history. The revitalization of Route 66 and how it was a state by state movement, somewhat fractured, due to the different needs of the various communities on the road.

The California Association and its trouble in recapturing that sense of goal that it had at the beginning, a loss of mission. Proprietary issues and rivalry among state organizations.

Jim Conkle and the development of the Historic Route 66 Foundation. The commercialization of Route 66, including businesses and merchandise.

The history of Route 66. Its beginnings on pioneer trails, such as the Santa Fe Trail and the Mormon Trail. The founding of San Bernardino by Mormons in the late 1800s. How the interstates and freeways affected the communities on Route 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Maybe we can start by you telling me a little of your own background in relation to Route 66.

DAN HARLOW: Ok. My background in relationship to Route 66 is not as deep and far-reaching as others you may have spoken to. I didn't grow up on Route 66, I didn't take family vacations on Route 66 every year, and there weren't those kinds of early memories of Route 66 for me. I came to Route 66 later in life, following service in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam. I returned to California to live and then would travel Route 66 back and forth between my home in Kansas and my new home of California.

And that was in the late days of Route 66; the transition days actually, where Williams was the last hold out and Route 66 was no longer the highway of choice; the interstate had taken over. But I would travel. I remember one particular trip back where I decided to do it by hitchhiking in 1976, which was kind of an experiment on two levels: I wanted to see if, after a decade of change in America, you could in fact still hitchhike and get where you wanted to go and I wanted to see a little bit more of the American countryside and landscape close up. So I packed my camera and my backpack and hitchhiked.

DD: Where did you leave from?

DH: From here. I got a ride with a friend out to San Bernardino and then I picked up a ride from San Bernardino all the way to Kingman. I remember most standing in Kingman along Andy Devine Boulevard there, which is Route 66, and just waiting, and waiting, and waiting. And it was so hot: it must have been over 100, I'm sure; the long wait in Kingman, Arizona. Kingman since has always had a little special spot in my heart as a Route 66 town. In a funny way, a classic Route 66 town, Kingman, Arizona.

So I come to the history of Route 66 sort of late and second hand. I wouldn't return to it again for another decade when my wife and I were traveling and we happened upon a little stretch of it in Kansas. We were doing a cross-country trip and we came across a little stretch of it in Kansas and for some reason there was a juncture that was still marked. This is 1986 and it had somehow probably just got overlooked and someone decided that because it's a juncture we still need to have a marking. And that triggered

it all over again and we set out from that time each year to find a little bit more of Route 66.

My wife and I would do that each year. At first, we had only the Rittenhouse book; Michael Wallis' book did come out, and we discovered that, curiously enough, in a bookstore in Laguna Beach. It hadn't yet been that widespread, widely distributed. And Quinta Scott's great photo essay. My wife would make notes from the book and then we'd use Rittenhouse's guide, the 1947 guide, as if it were still valid. We simply drove around, following as closely as we could Rittenhouse's guide. And the road was either there or it wasn't and if it wasn't we'd try to figure out why it wasn't, beginning a decade later, in '87.

DH: '89 was really the big trip. I'm trying to remember how far east we had gone; but then I became involved as a photographer trying to document what I could of Route 66 because it was clearly going away. As a result of my business as a photographer and graphic artist I became involved with a fellow named Richard Huffnagle, who was a business entrepreneur and had started a business named Route 66 Clothing and Goods. He wanted graphics works and advertising for his company and it was just one of those deals.

I had merged myself into searching for Route 66, and then Route 66 comes to me in a different form. Richard and I became fast friends and business partners and we began publishing what I still think are significant items relating to Route 66. Among those is a map which commemorated the 66th anniversary of Route 66, which included Bon Waldmire's work and my graphics composition and a coloring book for children, called the Route 66 Fun Book.

DD: Ok. You were talking about how you and Mr.Huffnagle...?

DH: Huffnagle. Richard and I published a children's activity book, all related to Route 66, because we recognized at that time if Route 66 was to be put back on the map, and stay on the map, young people had to become involved. It had to be a continuing process and I came to the realization that it wasn't going to be as much fun, or as interesting or important if I tried to keep this Route 66 idea as my own little fishing hole.

I think a lot of people came to that same realization: that it was fun to go out and search for it and find it and photograph it and write about it, but it wasn't going to be there if there wasn't a larger movement to preserve and recognize it. That coincided with an idea of Richard's to promote our product line and the efforts of Route 66 Clothing and Goods. So I contacted the local California Route 66 association, whom I understood had a newsletter. I found a copy somewhere along the road and I said, "We want to place an ad in your newsletter." Vivian Davies at the time was the secretary and newsletter editor and she said, "Well, I'm not sure there'll be another newsletter."

No newsletter, no advertising. My task was to place advertising in Route 66 publications, but: no Route 66 newsletter, no ad, no association, no newsletter, no road, you know? So I became involved in the California Route 66 Association as a result of that. I helped them publish and finance some newsletters and became more involved and at one point became the President of the California Route 66 Association for the year 1992, that year being significant because it was the 66th anniversary of Route 66.

With the help of some other grassroots Route 66 people, like Jeff Meyer in Illinois and Delbert Trew in Texas, and others, we planned for and carried out a cross country caravan to honor the 66th anniversary of Route 66. And it was a completely open caravan, unlike some others since – the sort of sponsored, professional, official caravans and car rallies that are prominent today. We were going to start in Chicago and drive to Los Angeles along Route 66; all who wanted to could join us. We contacted all the associations and what was different about this also was that in each state the recognized Route 66 association for that state would be our leader, would lead the caravan, and guide the caravan, because most if not all of us had only been to certain sections of the road at this point as adults. So we had official guides from each association from each state. In some cases, more than one guide.

We carried a plexi shield of Route 66, sort of an Olympic torch, in the style of the Olympic torch. We carried a plexi Route 66 shield from state to state and they engraved names and so on. It was just symbolic of what we were doing. So you could join at any time, you could travel as far as you'd like, and we had P.R. people working on it from

California. We had the individual associations working on it locally, and the others who were just enthusiasts helping promote the idea of what we were doing, and letting people know we were there.

It was surprising, the response that we got. This was 1992. At that point, in my own experience of Route 66, when I would tell friends I was going to go travel Route 66. People would ask me "What are you going to do this weekend? Are you going to do anything fun?" "I'm going to go up on Route 66 and photograph it." They'd say, "Well, that's not there anymore, is it?" These were the responses in 1992 I'm getting from people.

So now, with this caravan, towns were beginning to celebrate the fact that they were on Route 66. When we would show up in these little towns in Oklahoma, the whole town would show up to greet the caravan. Of course, I'm exaggerating, not every single person in town, but it would seem as if the whole town were there to thank us for coming through their town.

The caravan would fluctuate between half a dozen cars and 100 cars or more, depending on how far car clubs could join us: entire car clubs, Model T clubs. We made it. It took a long time, but we traveled the entire route that way, staying on the old road as much as possible and meeting with people and having gatherings. Michael Wallis spoke to us in Oklahoma, and we ran into the National Park folks in Albuquerque and joined them for a luncheon at the 66 Diner at Michael Wallis' invitation. The Park's people were at first not sure who we were, or what we were doing (Laughs).

DD: Who did you meet with from the Park Service?

DH: I'm trying to remember the names. I believe there was a David at the beginning? The names and personalities have changed over time, and I apologize for not remembering the names.

DD: That's ok. Where were they from? Were they from Santa Fe?

DH: Yes. This was the first survey group. They were out traveling the road with Michael at the time themselves,

surveying. This was their first voyage on the road, that's what I recall for one thing. So, this 66th anniversary caravan is lost now in the lure, both the myths and facts of Route 66 over the years, but in 1992 it really did make a difference that grassroots people, just people who had no great investment in Route 66 except to see that it became recognized again, went out on the road and joined with others to make a lot of noise.

Local TV stations would interview, local newspapers would interview as we came through, and I got the Ford Motor Company to throw in a Mustang for me to drive so I wouldn't have to drive my own personal Japanese car, right? (Laughs) As the Ford Motor Company got behind us and helped, each time they would ask, what are you doing and why are you doing this? And I would say each time, "Well, they keep telling us Route 66 isn't there anymore. If we're standing in the middle of it and shouting, they can't tell us that anymore. What people don't understand is that eighty-percent-plus can still be driven: it's just a matter of finding it. And these local enthusiasts and association members are helping us find it."

For me that was a big kick off of the preservation movement: the new Route 66, the new old Route 66. We returned and had a celebration in Santa Monica. Some of what we expected from that came to fruit, other things did not. We were hoping it would, and it did, to some extent, help connect some associations, because at that time they were all just disparate little groups. So it helped make connections between associations of Route 66; slowly, but a recognized connection.

I learned a lot about Route 66, physically, philosophically, and politically in that process. One of the things that was impressed upon me by the Park Service was that there needed to be a national group or at least a national entity that the Park Service could work more directly, rather than trying to deal with eight different and disparate organizations. Within months, David Knudson contacted me and wanted to talk with me about Route 66 and his concept of the federation.

Because I'm talking on the phone with him, you know? That illustrated for me how varied the outfits and the resources were all across the United States. California had a

reasonably strong association but didn't have a lot of connections to others. And that was true it seems for every association at the time. At that point, there was no national entity for people to draw to, or draw from.

Our view in California was to get it strong, then work on a national agenda. Part of what we were discovering in California that was a handicap was that the big stretch of Route 66, all the way from Needles to Santa Monica, very different landscapes, and social constructs between Needles and Santa Monica. Very different needs in the communities between Needles and Santa Monica. I'm sure that every association experienced that to some degree in every state. Although it was easier, I think, and this may sound like an odd bias of mine, it was easier to get a little town in Oklahoma, like Elk City, excited about Route 66 than it was to get a city in Southern California excited about Route 66, in an area where there was something going on every day. Something's happening every day in Southern California.

So what came out of that was that the desert communities became more influential in what happened to Route 66 because for them it was more important, for them it rose to the level of need. For example, Victorville, where there is now a Route 66 museum, and Barstow, where they also have a Route 66 museum located in the train station, the Harvey House. And Maggie McShan and her efforts for Route 66 in the Needles area: all very strong components of Route 66.

Even though the association is still centered in the Inland Empire, the newsletter comes out of that and San Bernardino Route 66 Rendezvous each year which is really a gigantic car show, it wasn't until very recently that the Rendezvous began to present Route 66 at the core of what they do. But that's because those communities saw a need that fit their communities. Santa Monica doesn't need anybody else to boost them. They are Santa Monica. Hollywood is Hollywood. Los Angeles. Now, certain individuals would get involved. Members of the Los Angeles Conservancy. Certain members are still interested and concerned, and help whenever possible with Route 66 preservation, because they're concerned with preservation.

And members of the Los Angeles Conservancy, like John

English, who's big on neon signage, began preservation activities with the California Route 66 association, but thought he could do more with the Los Angeles Conservancy and do both. There are official and unofficial partnerships with associations and groups, and this has made a difference over the years. But Maggie McShan's desert group, and the California Historic Route 66 Association, the Los Angeles Conservancy, however tenuous, even if it's that their members cross, the same people are members of both, so I don't know if I've answered your question, but the associations are varied in how well structured they were and purposes which made it difficult to have a national entity until David came along.

DD: David's federation seems like it's more a federation of individuals than a federation of associations...

DH: It is.

DD: Was he thinking at one point of having it as a federation of associations?

DH: I don't think he was. I don't believe that was his goal necessarily. If it became a factor all the better, but I think... I don't want to put words in David's mouth. You would have to ask him. But I think he meant it to be a forum for national issues. Because in truth each state association was more concerned about their state than they were anything else and rightfully so, unfortunately. Because in some cases that became a problem for coordinating events and gathering sponsors; sometimes it would be a problem.

So David's intent was to have a national forum. Now, the associations were free to join the federation as an association but there was always a lot of caution: "What's in this for you? Why are you doing this?" So there was a lot of skepticism at first when David's organization first got started. Not the least of which was from the California association, which I was no longer an officer, because David was also located in California. A lot of questions, but all those got worked out simply by, if you will, again the market factor. He got support, he presented programs, had annual events that related to Route 66 that weren't just giant car shows. That's what made the difference.

What happened in the later years of the Route 66

preservation efforts in California is that many, many different groups and individuals and cities and organizations had come about. I don't think it was realistic at any point for the California association or any of the associations to believe that they were going to be the one organization to promote, preserve, and enjoy Route 66. In 1995, representatives from Victorville came to the association, called for a kind of summit meeting with the association because they were interested in beginning a Route 66 museum and the CA association was interested in cosponsoring or being involved in some way. Well, they called me to the meeting as an ex-president of the association as an active person on Route 66.

DD: Do you remember who these people were?

DH: Yes. Mark Ward from Victorville, he was the primary person from Victorville. He was a real estate investor principally, but also a Route 66 enthusiast. Vivian Davies was there, Jenny Avilla, Jeffrey and Joanne Willis were all attending. These were the officers of the California Route 66 Association. And coming out of that meeting two things became apparent: that the association was not interested in becoming involved in something else, particularly something so locally driven, or at least was reluctant to become involved; and exactly what they could do wasn't clear. Also, it pointed out to me that the desert cities were going to be the next center of Route 66 activities, Victorville being among those, and that they needed someone to help put it together.

The idea in their minds about what that meant – in practical matters, they didn't have a clue. So I presented myself to Mark Ward as a potential volunteer curator, and help put this together whether the association came in on it or not, to just do it. So Mark and others in Victorville decided they were going to do this. They got a building donated. The first building in Victorville, in the old part of town, was donated as a site for the first museum location. Had to be converted to be a museum of sorts. Mark and I spent two months getting it ready and collecting artifacts. As we were working on it, interesting things came about.

Miles Mahan, who was a folk artist, who lived along Route 66 outside Victorville, with his bottled trees and a mock miniature golf course and his little books of poetry had to

leave his land, had to go into a care facility. He was 100 years old. So we knew at that point his folk art was going to just disappear or literally degenerate into the desert so we got as much of his folk art as we could for the museum. And it's still there today. So these things were all happening at the same time.

DD: Who funded that museum?

DH: It was funded by volunteer donations, the city threw in some money, grant money, Mark Ward spent some of his own money and, like I said, the building was just donated, so it was rent-free until we got started. And then rent was paid out of the revenues from the museum. The museum has always been free with a small gift shop and donations. It struggles, but right away it began to pay rent money. The museum was able to get some grants from the city of Victorville. The city helped fund it. Again, the city recognizing that this is something positive for our community we can use.

It became successful. I stepped aside. One of the things is that, and I've used this phrase before, but I'm one of those fellas that recognizes when to stop pushing the car once the engine turns over. (Laughs) So I get out of the way. The California association, we got the interest, we got the signage and I stepped out. The Victorville museum, we got it started, they then acquired another building through a combination of grants and loans right on that same block, and the museum was moved to that location. Everything was going fine, and I stepped aside.

So, I'm no longer active in those ways these days. I remain active as a photographer and writer whenever possible. My photographs have been published in different venues as you may have seen, in Route 66 magazine, in books by various authors.

DD: Let me take you back to Route 66 West, and how that came about.

DH: Have you seen a copy?

DD: I've seen one copy. I don't know how many copies there are or how many issues.

DH: Route 66 West came about because there were magazines being published at the time, and each individual association had their newsletter. But, what didn't exist at the time, what I called it, was a sort of phone book of Route 66, that was not only informative as articles about locations and landmarks and routes and traveling and maps, but literally had a directory of resources. So, I decided to publish it and I knew I couldn't do the entire route because it was just my wife Sheila and I. Some friends, but primarily Sheila and myself. So I decided to call it Route 66 West and focus on Texas-West so I could cover it as well as possible. And then later, I could always add a second edition or whatever. I published it quarterly for a year and a half.

DD: Six issues, then?

DH: Yes, and it included stories written mostly by myself about landmarks: maps, reasonably detailed maps, on city locations and a directory state by state of resources, hotels, eateries, the associations, galleries, anything I could think of that was in those Route 66 communities that people could use.

DD: So this was 1995-1996?

DH: Yes. It was actually, on a very limited level, successful. People enjoyed it. I remember, having planned our trip, in the early years when my wife was writing things down on a notepad, we were using Rittenhouse's guide to find something. I remember how difficult that was. And how more and more people wanted to travel Route 66 and wanted to know where they could stay in Tucumcari. And it used to be Tucumcari, the City of 300 Motels. Well, it's no longer the city of 300 motels. And one motel is not another motel on Route 66 so it was important for people to get good information, or at least, know how to contact people and get that information.

And again, I quit publishing. I quit pushing the car when the engine rolled over, because more publications began to include directory pages and the associations began to list in their newsletters...

DD: Your personal interest in Route 66 starts out in the mid-80s it seems like. Your first trips. As you were making those trips, you ran into individuals who were enthusiastic about

their parts of Route 66, and occasionally people like yourself that were trying to get a grasp of the whole. This is the period that you call the transition period: Route 66 is shutting down, but there are a few people, Angel Delgadillo comes to mind, before it closed, were actually reviving it. Martin Zanzucci in Flagstaff was trying to get it renamed Route 66.

DH: I remember when Martin was actually walking Route 66 with hand done flyers that he had copied at the local Kinko's or something, which included a Route 66 shield, Route 66 business, and he was literally walking Route 66 handing these out, saying, "You are on Route 66." I don't know if you've talked to Martin yet, but he remembers doing that. I remember when he did that and I remember his hospitality when we went through in 1992 and how he embraced that. He said, "Thanks for coming," and hosted us and recognized that even a city like Flagstaff, which has a lot of things going on, not as dynamic, if you will, as some in Southern California, but has lots of dynamics – skiing, Grand Canyon – that Route 66 was still of value there.

DD: Who in New Mexico?

DH: At the time, it was Scott that was his first name...

DD: What city?

DH: Albuquerque. I'm having senior moments in combination with a bad cold. I can't think straight. Bob Audette. When we came through in 1992, on our relay, we stopped at Bob Audette's and he actually led us, he was our guide, into New Mexico. He did these little passports, which he signed for us to come into New Mexico (Laughs). As if we're traveling into a different country; he made a big deal of us coming into the state. Had troopers there, made a big deal of us coming. Bob's big push: always signage, getting the highway marked again. He led us into Albuquerque and I can't remember all the activities but that's when we met the Parks Service at the Route 66 dinner, Bob was there. And this happened along the route. Sure enough, Bob says, "Well, you know what? I'm going to go with you. I'll go the rest of the way to Santa Monica." And he joined the caravan.

As did Bob Waldmire when we got to Arizona. Bob Waldmire was one of those great angels of Route 66 from the very beginning. I've written of Bob about how we became kindred souls before we ever met. We were doing business together; he would send me his products re-packaged and recycled grocery bags, and I know who this guy is. I know this guy. Curiously enough, we had not met face to face until this 1992 relay from Chicago to Santa Monica, 66th anniversary. We got Bob Audette, now part of the picture, driving into Arizona and we stop at Hackberry, which was an abandoned general store at the time. And there's Bob Waldmire sitting there with his van, sketching Hackberry's General Store. He goes, "I was wondering if I would run into you guys." And Bob says, "Well, I'll go ahead and go with you too." (Laughs)

Obviously Michael Wallis. Not only his authorship of his book, but his willingness to come out to California and attend our annual meeting, and speak to the group. Well, practically, we paid for his flight and his room, you know. I was embarrassed that we couldn't do more, but Michael always mentions that to me, because he made good contacts at that point.

DD: I'm going to ask you to step away from the recollection and reflect a little on – because I think you are the right person to do this – how revivalists or preservationists or Route 66 were different by the time of that 66th anniversary to the folks that had been around before. What was happening? I'm trying to get a sense of the evolution of this from a few people who had different enthusiasms to state associations...

DH: ...to our present state.

DD: Yes.

DH: Well, I suppose, like so many other ideas, that different people bring different perspectives to it. For a long time, I think it was that little secret that some of us back road travelers knew about. And, it was kind of left at that except for certain people, like Angel Delgadillo, who saw a greater vision for it and a greater importance because it meant living or dying on Route 66. For his community, it was either life or death. If they couldn't hold on to Route 66, that community was not going to survive, at least not in any

recognizable fashion. So for different communities it was a matter of survival.

For others, it was a matter of passion. Either personal or aesthetic passion. For some people who had traveled the road as children, it was a personal passion. For others like myself who traveled later in life, it became a sort of aesthetic passion. Preserving that time in history was important as part of American history. Just as you would not do away with other historic buildings or landmarks, you wouldn't want to do away with a highway that was so significant.

Recognizing all the literary references that had been made by everyone. Steinbeck, Kerouac, all the references. But the personal stories that come out of it as well. That needed to be preserved as part of American history. I've always said, I've always equated to the last American trail west. After that, the interstates were different. So, Route 66 was the last American trail west and it ranks among the Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and so on.

DD: Yes. I want to talk with you about that in just a moment but how did we get from people with passion and obsession, or whatever the right word is, how did we get from there to associations beginning to form?

DH: Well, that's an excellent question. I don't know that I've thought it through completely even for myself, but beginning again with Angel, it meant the survival of that community. In some cases, I think it was just a group of enthusiasts: "What can we do in our state?" Because it was state by state. Once Arizona built their association as a state organization it grew by natural process that it would be a state-by-state organization. Each state would organize an action. There would not be a central, national action from it. Otherwise, everybody could have just joined Angel's association.

There's a certain proprietary sense to it that each state needed to form their own. And, although there are some common factors, the states are varied in what their needs are. For Arizona, for a long time, the Fun Run was all they needed, all they wanted. Then, as other communities became involved, like Flagstaff, more things came about. How it evolved from enthusiasts, hoping to preserve and

recognize a road, to organizations now in every of the eight states, and, in many states, multiple organizations, with different goals, I don't know that I can pinpoint one single event or action. I think, like Route 66 itself, it has always been dynamic. It's always had a dynamic to it where it ebbed and flowed, there was boom and bust, good and bad, and if you were setting in Amboy there was a time all you had to do was throw on a couple of gas pumps. Now, there are new owners in Amboy now, and you can still maybe make Amboy work, but it's different now.

There's a different dynamic. San Bernardino, their goal was to have a car show that would rival or approach the visibility of Reno's Hot August Nights. In some cases, they just wanted a hook, in other cases they wanted to preserve historic buildings: the Aztec hotel, the [Wigwam] Village in San Bernardino. There are people whose interest is as narrow as architecture, they're concerned about saving significant architectural structures and that fits into Route 66. I think from the beginning of associations, a lot of people have tried to say, "What's the key? What's the one little thing here?" And there wasn't one little thing, because it's Route 66, because it's dynamic, because it stretches 2,000 miles, because every community is a little different than the next community.

The landscape in California, the desert, is so very different than the Pacific coast that there is no one little secret. There's no one little answer. In a way it makes sense that, instead of some central organization, there is instead a dynamic hodge podge of organizations and groups and individuals working for preservation and promotion and enjoyment of Route 66.

DD:

I follow you. You're talking about differences in motivations between localities, between states, between regions, between individuals, some pecuniary, some aesthetic. I'm interested in this. Before we leave this topic in analytical context. For example, I've studied a bit of the folk music revival, or plural, folk music revivals. Here's folk music, it's always there, underground, in people's houses, et cetera; then there are these city billy enthusiasts who go and learn about it in Texas prisons and little remaining folk music festivals. Then they bring this back and start doing it themselves; there may be some parallels here to Route 66. Eventually, they start to sort of form

associations and it eventually becomes a commercial phenomenon.

There is, as you say, a transitioning period, between a group of people who love it and get together and find each other occasionally here and there, and the emergence of an institution, a church, as it were. That middle ground I find pretty interesting. How do you get from a few people to a set of institutions or associations?

DH: It's curious. How do you get to it now? Every other car has a Route 66 shield thrown in.

DD: And now, a situation where, for example in your state, the California Route 66 Association is almost non-existent. How do you explain that?

DH: True. Well, you know, I think you can say for the most part, I keep coming back to this, where the need is greatest, you will see the greatest activity. And, the association was never able to recapture that sense of goal – the California association – that we had at the beginning. I don't want to say it became passé, but it doesn't have that sense of mission that it did at the beginning. Not that it's totally mission accomplished, but to some great degree it is. We had the signage, we had the state recognition, and individual communities have taken it upon themselves to do their thing, the relationship to their needs.
(Unintelligible)

There's room of course for them to become more involved by getting involved with those individual communities in greater ways. It's a victim of its own success to some degree. But more true to the point is that by the California association not being more active at a certain point, lost its opportunity...for instance, when Victorville came to it and said, "We want to have a museum and we want you to be a part of it." Instead of jumping right in and saying, "Yeah, great idea," they were reluctant.

(END OF TAPE ONE)

(TAPE TWO)

DD: I guess what I'm trying to get at here is there seems to be a life cycle of Route 66 associations. You mentioned ebb and

flow, but it's quite hard for me to understand... is it that there isn't new blood? Is it what some call people call founders' disease where the people who start the organization don't consciously bring in younger people and push them to the fore and give them the training and leadership opportunities perhaps because they themselves feel proprietary?

DH:

Some of that exists. I think the proprietary problem is key. When you're proprietary, you have to remember, by nature you have limited yourself. If what you want to do is promote a popular movement, you can't be proprietary.

I don't need to pat myself on the back, but you're asking for my personal response to Route 66. But I remember when our association listed all the Route 66 associations on our newsletter, and we were the first to do it. There was this, "Why do you want to do that?" In 1991 or 1992, we're at a point where we want everyone to join this party. "But their state association is not ours." And the harm is? I think that that was always a problem, from the beginning. With the 1992 relay we wanted to leave that tension between the associations, you know. For some people like Delbert and Angel, and others, they learned, "Well, this California association isn't such a bad bunch of people. They didn't come through our state and try to take over. They did a lot to promote the road."

So some of the animosities were broken down. I keep thinking back and forth. If you're inclined to say, "We're the California association. You can't be the California association," you're going to handicap yourself because what is going to happen, if you don't step up to the plate, if you don't have a mission or a vision, someone else is going to do that. Victorville is a prime example of that. They said, "Look, we would like to have you involved." The association didn't fight them, but they didn't get involved in the way they could have been.

So Victorville was going to do it anyway, and did. And I'm proud of that, of helping them get started with the Route 66 museum because that had always been part of the mission in the beginning, to have a museum. It would be crazy to say to Victorville, Well, we're going to be *the* museum because you're not. Barstow is going to open up a museum. And did. The dynamics of it all preclude, really, any

proprietorship.

DD: Where does in the history of the California association revival do Jim Conkle and the Historic Route 66 Foundation fit in?

DH: That came later, after the museum was going strong. The California association was weak and there was a need now for an organization whose mission was preservation. The mission of the California association was only marginally preservation, although they were involved on the margins in preserving some locations of Route 66, but it wasn't their biggest focus nor did they have the manpower or volunteers to really focus on preservation.

My understanding is that what was needed was an organization whose focus was preservation so that the National Parks among other people would go to a California source for information and for that kind of support. It was presented to the members of the board of the California Route 66 museum that a foundation was going to be formed, needed to be formed. It was brought under the agenda in how can a museum be helpful in this, what can we do, how can we be involved, do we really want to be part of a foundation focused on preservation. It was left on the table and no decision was made at the board.

At this point I was no longer a member of the board; I was emeritus, as a founding curator and director, but that issue was left on the table. Jim Conkle was a board member at the time. He resigned and took on the California Foundation idea. I don't know much more detail beyond that, how that foundation works. What I have learned over time is how in order to start an organization all you have to do is say, "I've started an organization." (Laughs) There are legal parameters and there are proper channels to incorporate as a 501 for tax purposes and all those things which count when the association is done properly and there are many different ways to form an organization and be in the leadership. It's pretty interesting. You can see why some people become very shy and "Who are you? What are you trying to do? And who are you doing this for?" I would never sit here and try to be so altruist as to say that any of us had done this solely for the purity of preservation or the love of history. We've all had some

self-interest, every single one of us.

DD: Are you still working with Mr. Huffnagle?

DH: No. Richard and I dissolved the company right about 1995. We let it go. My wife Sheila and I joke about this because being the first horse out of the gate isn't always the best for the race (Laughs). We were selling clothes and pins shaped like the shield – we were among the first to do it – and we sold Jim Ross' first guidebook; we sold it at the Rendezvous. We were at the very first Route 66 Rendezvous at Glen Helen Park, 200 cars maybe. Two weeks before the event was starting they asked me if I could produce a t-shirt for the event and I said, "Yeah, I suppose I could."

So we did that, we produced the first Route 66 Rendezvous t-shirt. I don't have an example of it right here. But again, you tell people where the fish are and they're going to show up. So, it wasn't long before people who were financed well could produce t-shirts, cheap Sri Lanka white tees with automatic machines and just kicked us, you know? We just couldn't compete at that same kind of level any longer. When we were at one time the only Route 66 merchandise that could promote the swap meet and the Route 66 Rendezvous, it was no longer the case. And we recognized that and we just dissolved the company. But it was at that same time that I saw little niches that weren't being fit, and that's when I published Route 66 West, and I began to work with others in different ways, more in the margins.

DD: Let me close by asking you a little bit about the history of Route 66. You mentioned earlier the Mormon Trail, Oregon Trail: how is Route 66 related to these things and how would you trace the ancestry?

DH: Well, Route 66 through California does have a very interesting history. It goes back to pioneer trails, including the Mormon Trail south of Utah and Nevada, down to San Bernardino. It was, for all intents and purposes, the Mormons who founded and settled San Bernardino along the Mormon Trail. It was part of the Old Mojave Road, through Needles and through the desert. It later became, of course, the highway of the migrant worker.

DD: What about the Oregon Trail?

DH: The Oregon Trail is farther north of course: I just used that phrase. The Santa Fe Trail: it's part of the Santa Fe Trail, your territory in New Mexico. I just used it as an analogy, it's not part of....I was misquoted once: I wish I hadn't used it now. I should have stuck with the Santa Fe Trail and the Mormon Trail. But like all those trails, it was called the "last great trail west." It's changed in California a lot. Perhaps, if you think about it to some degree, California really encapsulates the changes of Route 66 over the years as well as any state. The interstates came in early, in the 60s, came through the desert. The freeways took over from Route 66 in the cities; in the desert, miles and miles cut off some communities. Amboy was cut off completely.

The interstates and freeways cut off communities. Not by such distance but just by the physical presence and speed of the interstate. They were right there on the other side of the rail, those communities like Monrovia, La Verne, and Fontana. They were always right there. Things change very quickly in Southern California anyway. So, that's what was real disturbing at first was how deteriorated in some places Route 66 was in Southern California.

When you would knock on a door of a motel or a business, a long-standing business. "You know this is Route 66 right out here?" And they would say, "No, what do you mean? So what?" So, you can make that important again and make more money! When you say you can make more money people start to listen. I'm probably wavering again from what you're trying to ask me, a history of Route 66...

DD: No, it's very useful.

DH: It was California, of course, which the Joads were traveling to, although they didn't go to Santa Monica (Laughs). They went to bigger cities, but it was Chicago to L.A., and then it was extended to Santa Monica. You know, "The route doesn't technically end there at Palisades Park, it ends at Ocean...."

All the different alignments, I'm sure you've heard. Every state has at least one area where the alignments... "How many alignments?" There were three alone in Pasadena.

DD: Well, I hope some day someone can untie all of that. But for the time being, I want to thank you for speaking with me and make sure it's ok if I use this in my writing.

DH: Please do, and in your broadcast. I feel like I just rambled. Maybe if I wasn't coming off such a bad cold, I could have thought clearer.

DD: No, I really enjoyed this.

(END OF INTERVIEW)