

## Interview with Paul Taylor

3/17/06

by David Dunaway

Names from Bob Moore interview: Clare Richardson (California); Two-Guns Miller's descendant (diner in Sanders, Oklahoma); Rod's Steakhouse family (can't remember the name); Joe Pill.

Life up to *Frontier Chronicles*: grew up in Rusville, Illinois; father was a grocer, traveled 66 often, first introduced when 8, would go to Chicago and Pontiac area, drove 66 in high school for sports; hitchhiked 66 when in the Navy, Sheriff picked him up when it was too cold one night; got into publishing for a computer firm; got divorced and started traveling the country; got remarried and started freelance writing and worked for NPS as ranger; decided to put together a history magazine.

Wife Sandy suggested they start another magazine, *Route 66 Magazine*—He has 10 complete copies of *Frontier Chronicles*, summer of '94 was not published—Published both magazines at the same time for a while—Libraries that have copies, Laughlin, branches of Las Vegas, Costa Mesa, Phoenix—*Route 66 Magazine* and *True West* are similar magazines.

People to interview: John Weiss (Illinois); Skip Curtis (Missouri, place names on 66 in MO expert); Skip Odell (WGN Chicago, radio show on 66) —Nick Adam (owns the Ariston in Southern Illinois) —Southern Illinois: the Chamber of Commerce—Bill Shea in Lincoln who had the service station—Sue at the Cozy Dog—Person who wrote the book on St. Louis, can't think of name—Jim Ross knows St. Louis, as does Jim Powell.

Kansas has Baxter Springs Museum—Michael Wallis (Tulsa)—In Sayre the couple that owns the motel —Linda Drake (Vega Chamber of Commerce)—Johnny Meyer (Santa Fe, NM)—Al Unser—Diane Patterson and sister at museum in Winslow—Richard and Shirley Mangum (Arizona)—Published *Route 66 Magazine* in Williams for six years—Bob Boze Bell (publisher of *True West Magazine* in Phoenix area)—Needles library—Burlesque museum in Helendale—Don Harlowe (Chapman Community College)—Meyers as a collector—Scholars on 66: Delbert Trew, Jim Ross, Johnny Meyer, Michael Wallis, Russ Olson (*Lost And Found* old photo and new photo of same place, based in Los Angeles area)

DAVID DUNAWAY: I'm sitting with Paul Taylor in the luxurious offices of *Route 66 Magazine*. Paul, to start the interview, I'd like to ask you about a few people: names and places that came out of the interview I just finished with Bob Moore. The first is a fellow named Clare from out in California.

PAUL TAYLOR: Richardson. Clare Richardson. I don't know how to find him, but I know he lives in California.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I know he's a collector. Then I wanted to ask about a collector down in Phoenix, could the name be Dave?

PAUL TAYLOR: Dave in Phoenix?

DAVID DUNAWAY: It could be another name. Is there a collector in Phoenix that you know?

PAUL TAYLOR: No, I don't know anyone in Phoenix.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then how about in Sanders, Oklahoma, at the diner?

PAUL TAYLOR: Yes, that's—I can't think of her name. She is a descendant of Two-Guns Miller, who founded Two-Guns, Arizona and eventually went on to Yellowhorse. She would be a good contact.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Good, I'll be asking you about contacts. And finally, the family that has Rod's Steakhouse. Do you know who that might be?

PAUL TAYLOR: Can't think of her name, that's terrible.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's fine. How about Joe Pill in Winona?

PAUL TAYLOR: I don't know Joe Pill—I know of him, I don't know him.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I know that before you started *Route 66 Magazine* you were the editor of a scholarly historical journal, a number of copies of which I've found.

PAUL TAYLOR: You're not thinking of *Frontier Chronicles* are you?

DAVID DUNAWAY: I am.

PAUL TAYLOR: Oh, good heavens.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I want you to tell me how you became involved with that. First of all, give me a very brief description of your youth leading up to the *Frontier Chronicles*.

PAUL TAYLOR: I grew up in Rusville, Illinois, which is about 30 miles from Springfield. Springfield was our contact point with Route 66. My father and mother traveled Route 66 quite

often. I was born in 1931, which gives you an idea of what it was like. It was the Depression Era and my father at that time was a grocer, Kroger Grocer and Bakery Company, and we were getting along just fair as far as the economy was concerned. But we did travel Route 66 during the '30s.

I was about 8 years old when I was first introduced to Route 66. I recall traveling to Springfield, Illinois. My father was a great baseball fan, he was a Cubs fan—as was I—and we would go to St. Louis to see the Cubs. Of course the Cubs always got beat. Then our other contact point on Route 66 was picking up the highway in McLean at the Dixie Trucker's home. We would go north into the Pontiac and the Chicago area.

My sister lived in Joliet so we would go up there often to see her. When I joined the Navy, Route 66 was another road for me. Actually, further back than that when I was in high school, I drove 66 a lot for competitive games in the towns along 66, like Pontiac, Bloomington. Then I joined the Navy in 1950, I was inducted in the Navy in Great Lakes, Illinois. I hitchhiked Route 66 many times, caught in many snow storms.

One night I was hitchhiking in the winter in Great Lakes. I was in Odell, Illinois, and the Sheriff came along and picked me up and took me to the jail and I slept in a cell that night to keep warm. The next morning I got back on the road again. I hitchhiked to my home near Springfield.

After the Navy, after I was married, we moved into the Denver, Colorado area, where I got into the publishing business. I was going to college in Denver, the University of Denver, studying electronics at the time, and graduated and was offered a job in the publishing business as the electronics editor with a large national publication. Then went I into the advertising and public relations business for a computer firm. Analog Computers, that's my first introduction to computers. That company was purchased by Astradata in California, which got me into California.

I got into the public relations business in California. I was in that business for about 12 years. I sort of burned out: too much drinking, too much smoking, too much partying. This led to a divorce, of course. So I left publishing, got in my MG and started traveling the country to find a job.

At that time I met my current wife, Sandy. We traveled the desert Southwest and we purchased a trailer. I decided maybe we better find some work since we were getting low on money, so I started freelance writing. I did pretty well in freelancing and then we came into the Bullhead City area and we both went to work as rangers for the National Park Service. During that time, we decided to put together a publication and it became a history magazine on the desert Southwest.

We started gathering stories in the area, interviewing people—this is when I really started getting in to history. History was a subject I had no interest in when I was in high school. We published the magazine, a monthly, for about 6 or 7 years.

This was *Frontier Chronicles*, a little 24-pager. I wrote all the stories in it. It kept us busy and brought some income in besides the ranger jobs. Then I finally left that. During the time we were publishing that, Sandy had suggested that we start another publication on Route 66 because we traveled Route 66 so much. We traveled the desert Southwest and the Midwestern area for about five years while I was freelance writing.

Started publishing *Route 66 Magazine*, with 200 subscribers. It is now 50,000 on the newsstand and 8,000 subscribers. It's an international publication and we're in our 15<sup>th</sup> year.

Actually, it was a retirement project that got out of hand. It's really been a very nice publication for us. It's been very good to us. That's about where I am right now.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Who has a complete set of the *Frontier Chronicles*?

PAUL TAYLOR: We have ten copies each of the complete set. There was one publication we did not publish. We did go through some financial problems, and we were going through some copyright problems at the time, and we did not publish one issue. I think it was summer of '94.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So for a while you were publishing both *Route 66 Magazine* and *Frontier Chronicles*?

PAUL TAYLOR: Both. That really kept us busy every month to put out this 24-pager and put out this 64-pager which is a slick publication. We just started giving it up and started moving subscribers of *Frontier Chronicles* to *Route 66 Magazine*. They were very delighted about it.

It's interesting you would bring it up because I just gave a talk about a month ago and a lady had attended my talk at the library and wanted to meet me because she had remembered *Frontier Chronicles* and it was like a ghost coming out of nowhere. I was proud of it at the time, but when I look back at it, it just was not the professional approach I would have liked to have made at the time.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I think that the articles stand very well for the purposes of history and I'm wondering if by any chance you remember any libraries that took *Frontier Chronicles* from the beginning?

PAUL TAYLOR: Yes, the library across the street, the Laughlin Library. All of the branches of the Las Vegas Library took it, and then Costa Mesa, California. Also Phoenix. Mostly in the Southern California, Arizona, and Nevada. A copy will turn up occasionally and I'll see it in maybe a doctor's office.

Occasionally it is mentioned by someone that does remember the magazine. And apparently it did have a lot of value as far as history was concerned.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I see a continuity between the two magazines in some sense, preparing history for public.

PAUL TAYLOR: There is. *True West* loves the magazine because it fits right in. *Route 66* and *True West* are almost sisters because they cover so much of the same area. People in the old West on the old trails traveled Route 66, before it was Route 66. It all fits together.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What I'm doing now is going around the country for the National Park Service to try and get a sense for the key collectors, collections, and people who should be interviewed. I just sat with Bob, and we went all the way from Chicago to California thinking about people who it's very important that we get in touch with.

As an expert on Route 66, I would like you to think about five or ten people in the whole length of the road who you think we should consider trying to arrange interviews for.

PAUL TAYLOR: Well, I probably will repeat some of the people that Bob has. John Weiss in Illinois. Skip Curtis in Missouri, especially, is the aficionado of Missouri from one end to the other. In fact, in my new book there is an alphabetical listing of all the places along all the alignments from Chicago and Los Angeles, three and four alignments, of all the towns and how they got their name. There are towns in here you are never going to hear of, that you never knew existed. It's been fun putting together. Well, let's go on down the line here.

DAVID DUNAWAY: We could do state by state.

PAUL TAYLOR: Ok, Illinois. One good contact is Skip with WGN. He has a radio show on Route 66, really enthused with Route 66 and has learned about Route 66 and has traveled 66. Skip Odell, WGN Chicago.

John Weiss. Nick Adam, who owns the Ariston. He's an immigrant, his family came over here from Greece and they have been on Route 66 ever since they have been over here. He knows a lot about Route 66 in the Illinois area. Originally they had a store in Carrollton, Illinois, which is old 66. He's a good person to talk to.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Reminds me of Pete Craigs in Demus. He ran a Greek café along the route in Illinois. You know the area that's hardest to find people is Central and Southern Illinois.

PAUL TAYLOR: Well, it would be Southern Illinois for the Ariston. Southern Illinois, the Chamber of Commerce in Collinsville, where the big ketchup bottle is, that was at one time on Route 66. I don't have a contact name there, but that would be a good place to stop in.

DAVID DUNAWAY: East St. Louis?

PAUL TAYLOR: Any part of Missouri would be Skip Curtis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Ok, so Lincoln and Mt. Olive and that whole area.

PAUL TAYLOR: Litchfield. Lincoln I know another one. Bill Shea that had the service station. Have you done anything with them? Have you done anything with the Waldmires? You could get some information from Sue there at the Cozy Dog because she knows quite a lot about the history of that area. The Cozy Dog is a great story, have you done that?

DAVID DUNAWAY: Yeah. Well, skip to Missouri. We've talked about Skip Curtis.

PAUL TAYLOR: He's the only person I can think of.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Anybody in South Missouri: the Carthage-Webb City-Joplin area.

PAUL TAYLOR: That contact has passed away.

DAVID DUNAWAY: St. Louis? Anybody other than Shelly Graham?

PAUL TAYLOR: Scott. Have you talked to him?

DAVID DUNAWAY: Yes, he's in L.A.

PAUL TAYLOR: Oh, he's in L.A. I'm sorry. Who was it that did St. Louis? He just did a book on St. Louis on Route 66. Let's check with Bob on who did the St. Louis book. Jim Ross knows the St. Louis area too. There was a man who did St. Louis, all the highways in St. Louis in the book. I can't think of his name.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You covered that a bit in *Frontier Chronicles* didn't you? No, that was...

PAUL TAYLOR: That was *Route 66 Magazine*. Jim Powell knows St. Louis too but I don't know where Jim Powell is now.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then in Kansas we have the Baxter Springs Museum of course and Scott Nelson. Anybody else come to mind?

PAUL TAYLOR: No, that's it.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Oklahoma, Northeast Oklahoma? Vinita, Miami, Quapaw?

PAUL TAYLOR: Jim Ross is the only one that comes to mind.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Down in Tulsa?

PAUL TAYLOR: Tulsa area would be Mike Wallis.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about that region between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, you know Davenport and Clinton in particular. Any figures there?

PAUL TAYLOR: No, I have no contacts there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Now, of course, as we go through this we're not just looking for people to be interviewed, though that's very important. We're also looking for collections of materials in an archive or a library that you might know about. We're trying to exhume all these collections and integrate them. I'll talk about that in a minute.

So, from Clinton south to Oklahoma City, do you know anyone there? I'm interested in the Route 66 fanatics who would both make collections and also people who could be interviewed.

PAUL TAYLOR: No, everyone I know has left that area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: From Oklahoma City to Yukon and Bethel and out to El Reno.

PAUL TAYLOR: Doesn't ring a bell, I'm sorry.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then moving further to the west we get out there to Weatherford, Sayre,

Erick.

PAUL TAYLOR: In the Sayre area, lost the name. There's a couple that owns an old motel there. They could give you a lot of history in that area. The reason I brought that up is because the old bridge that used to be on old Route 66 flooded out, and the owner of that motel knows all about that in Sayre.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about Erick?

PAUL TAYLOR: Nothing.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And Texhoma?

PAUL TAYLOR: I don't know anybody in that area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Moving into Texas, we of course know the Trews.

PAUL TAYLOR: That's the only ones I know of in Texas.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then out towards Amarillo, Wildorado, Vega, Adrian?

PAUL TAYLOR: In the Vega area, the girl at the Chamber, Linda Drake, could give you a lot of information. I'm sure she could give you contacts for the older people there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Moving out to Adrian, and Glenrio, San Jon. Then we hit Tucumcari. Anybody in there?

PAUL TAYLOR: The only ones that would know anything about that would be Johnny Meyer who's up in the Santa Fe area. He has information about that area. Tucumcari, Santa Rosa, the entire area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Skip up to Romeoville, Pecos, and Santa Fe. Do you think of anyone in that area?

PAUL TAYLOR: Johnny Meyer, that's where he lives. He'd be very valuable in that area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then from Santa Fe we go down to Albuquerque and Los Lunas.

PAUL TAYLOR: In Albuquerque you might get in touch with the ones that built the racing museum. Al Unser would be a good contact. They can give you a lot of history in the Albuquerque area. And what they're doing, if this is of interest to you.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Sure. From Albuquerque we start going west, we hit Cubero, Budville. There's probably not a lot there. Then out to Gallup.

PAUL TAYLOR: No one there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Ok, then we skip over to Lupton and Holbrook, Winslow.

PAUL TAYLOR: Winslow. Diane Patterson and her sister at the museum there could tell you a lot about that there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then moving over to Winona and up into Flag?

PAUL TAYLOR: Flagstaff, yeah. The Mangums, Richard and Shirley. They know all of Arizona. They really know Flagstaff.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Good. Then out west further to Parks, St. Belmont, Ashfork.

PAUL TAYLOR: There's hardly anyone in Ashfork now that would know anything about the history.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Seligman?

PAUL TAYLOR: Angel Delgadillo. If there was anybody else, he would have run them out.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then towards your old grounds in Williams. How many years were you publishing the magazine in Williams?

PAUL TAYLOR: About 6 years. I really can't think of anyone.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about Peach Springs?

PAUL TAYLOR: Nope.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Truxton or Hackberry?

PAUL TAYLOR: Johnny at the General Store.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then we get to Kingman.

PAUL TAYLOR: The best one to talk to is Bob Boze Bell, publisher of *True West* magazine. He's in the Phoenix area. He loves 66, one reason that the magazine is interested in 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then jumping across to your part of the world. Needles, that area. Maggie McShan is gone.

PAUL TAYLOR: She's gone. The only thing I can say is to stop in the museum there and talk to some people. Or go to the library because they are a good source of information at the library.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I know about Dennis Casebier in Goffs. I'm headed to interview him tomorrow. Anybody else in that Mojave area that I should talk to?



PAUL TAYLOR: I can't think of anybody. The museum in Victorville would probably be interesting.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Barstow, Helendale?

PAUL TAYLOR: No, maybe the guy at the Bottle Tree Ranch could help you.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I've spoken to Hilda Fish at the top of the summit. Anyone else in Victorville?

PAUL TAYLOR: No, but bouncing back to Helendale, you might want to stop by the burlesque museum and talk to that lady. We did a story on her some time ago. She's been in the area quite a while.

DAVID DUNAWAY: San Bernardino. Then that long Foothill Boulevard section.

PAUL TAYLOR: The only one I know is Don Harlowe. He is teaching at Chapman Community College in Orange and he's been interested in Route 66 for years and years. Teaching was one of his first loves. He would be worth talking to.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about getting Monrovia, Duarte, Glendora, Pasadena, L.A.?

PAUL TAYLOR: Scott's the only one I know in L.A.

DAVID DUNAWAY: We seem to have covered the major figures and areas. How about collectors? When you think about collectors on Route 66 who do you think has the most stuff? I'm interested in not just physical things, but someone who might collect old newspapers and maps, things like that.

PAUL TAYLOR: Meyers is the only one I can think of as a collector. In Illinois. He's got a great collection. That is one area that I have never really pursued—not that I haven't had an interest in it, I have just never needed to attach myself to it.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Then when you think of scholars of Route 66, people who are really doing a serious, in-depth understanding of Route 66, aside from the company in the Route 66 office, who do you think of?

PAUL TAYLOR: Well, I don't know that we're scholars, but Delbert, Jim Ross, Johnny Meyer, Michael Wallis, Russ Olsen is who I'd think of. He's [Russ] the one that does the book *Lost And Found*. It's a fantastic book. He collects the old photograph and puts it with the new photograph and gives you a photo essay. He's doing a second volume. He's really involved. I would call him a scholar. He really knows Route 66 and can really tell you where things are. He's based in the Los Angeles area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: At [route66lostandfound.com](http://route66lostandfound.com). Great. How about this Jim Robinson, do

you know him? He's the one that did the "Lives on the Road."

PAUL TAYLOR: I think it's easy to do books about people on the road because all you have to do is get a pencil and pad and a camera and travel Route 66, and I don't necessarily call these people scholars. You are a scholar; you may not call yourself a scholar. You sat here and named off every little town between Chicago and Los Angeles. How many people can do that? I can't even do that.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Michael Wallis.

PAUL TAYLOR: Well, Michael Wallis, but I can't. It's people like this. I think Johnny Meyer is, too. There's so many out there that should be mentioned.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I really appreciate you taking the time to go through and help me identify these resources. It's just fine that you have mentioned the same people that Michael Wallis has and that Bob Moore has because that indicates that they are important. You know, great minds think alike. I want to thank you again.

PAUL TAYLOR: I hope I've been some help.