

Sally Noe
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By David Dunaway

Gallup and Route 66 in the 1920s – railroad land claims and the highway right-of-way – Gallup Mayor (later New Mexico Governor) A.T. Hannett and the Route 66 selection committee – racing challenges: Gallup drivers are the best – only one alignment in Gallup: follow the railroad – the Rio Puerco of the West: the “Perky” and its flooding – the Winders family: Sally’s in-laws – “no hospital in that town” – First Ward and the grid system – never a company town – Route 66’s “double entry” into Gallup – downtown is walking distance of the trains and the roundhouse whistle – the largest jewelry trading business – Route 66 brought in the corporations – Gallup, a good-time town – courting tourists through the ages: camps, auto courts – immigrants and the stores they built – the highway arrives: through Sally’s kitchen – historical resources and sites in Gallup: the Red Rock Park, Rehobeth [Hospital], the “igloos” where live ammunition was stored, Gallup Public Library’s books and newspapers and Rex Library’s photographs, Ceremonial, Octavia Fellin (librarian), Bill Nechero (father owned the service station next to the El Rancho), Gallup Historical Society (Jack Starkovich – mines, Tommy Gaspridge – railroads), Armond Ortga (the El Rancho), Pauline Middleton (now in Las Cruces), Joe DiGregorio (father had stores on 66) – “genealogy, that’s the big thing right now”

DAVID DUNAWAY: Okay. I'm sitting with Sally Noe. I'm David Dunaway. We're here in Gallup on a little hill overlooking the Route 66 and the interstate, and I think the best way for us to begin would be to have you tell us a little bit about the history of Route 66 in Gallup. A kind of short overview of it. Which, since you've written two books on the subject, I don't think – three books on the subject – will be too much of a challenge.

SALLY NOE: Well, most people don't realize that the mayor of Gallup in the 1920s was interested in creating the new highway through Gallup, which was at that point on the Old Trails Highway. But it was going to be the largest and the longest project in the United States when it was decided where the new road would go.

The new road didn't have a name, but they wanted to take it from Chicago to Los Angeles. We competed with Albuquerque and other locations over a period of time because Santa Fe and Las Vegas and Albuquerque felt that the road should go there, and should really go down to probably to Socorro and cross into Arizona.

Now, you realize this highway – Route 66 – and all highways through New Mexico have their right of way because of the railroads. The railroad had first choice as to where the rails would be. It was significant that the highways, which came later, had the – what should I say – the right of way claim on land from the railroad.

The railroads had these huge land claims, and the largest land claim in the whole United States for a railroad came through what is now Gallup. It was the Atlantic and Pacific Land Claim that was designated after the Civil War in 1868, and the A&P Railroad, John C. Fremont, went after the land claim for the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad that would go from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River. It was a huge land grant. Over a million acres.

The highway ultimately was built on the railroad right of way and followed the railroad. Now, there's a lot of information about that, but the highway itself, even the Old Trails Highway, followed the railroad right adjacent to it. But our mayor was on the State Highway Commission after he quit running for mayor. And, incidentally, his name was A. T. Hannett.

And he became Governor of the State, but not right away. While he was the mayor of Gallup, he insisted that eight whole blocks in Gallup, New Mexico, should be paved for the traffic and the tourists. And he got it done, and he also got his appointment onto the national committee. When the highway was going to come through here, Gallup, it was already part of the Old Trails Highway. Now we would be designated by a different identification because roads all over the country now had numbers, not names.

Consequently, Hannett was on the committee to select where the road would go as well as the number. He was the one that determined that Highway 66 would come through here, because he campaigned for it. You know how he campaigned? We had challenges – racing driver challenges – with all the surrounding towns to show that Gallup was the best way to get across to the Colorado River.

We challenged towns in Arizona, and we challenged Albuquerque – they would race to Belen. They raced to Albuquerque. They raced to Santa Fe. And we had a whole group of people. My father-in-law was one of them, that did that to see

which was the quickest route. Was it the easiest route? No, it was not. But it was the quickest route because we had experienced car drivers.

We had a lot of people around here that had cars, and they loved them, and they raced them all over town, and still do. Anyway, when the selection committee chose where the road would go, it was the best day in Gallup's history, probably, because we had figured we weren't going to get the highway, because Albuquerque and Santa Fe were campaigning for the other road.

Well, A.T. was on that commission that identified the highway and identified where it would go, but we didn't get the information for almost a year.

DAVID DUNAWAY Tell me about the different alignments that existed. What's the oldest alignment of 66 through Gallup, and how has it changed?

SALLY NOE: It hasn't changed. It only has one way to go, and that's follow the railroad. Our community is different in that the hogback [rock formation] was narrow, but it did allow for two tracks, east and west, but there was no more room to add other tracks. So the track came through the hogback and through the downtown area. What stops it from being wider is the Perky. Do you know what the Perky is? That's our dry river – the Rio Puerco of the West – that only has water when it floods up on the mountain, up around Crownpoint.

That particular waterway is here because we get huge floods. The Corps of Engineers has check-dammed them, and the dams wash out.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So is the Rio Puerco then running east-west in this part of the world?

SALLY NOE: Yes. And it runs from the Continental Divide all the way to the Zuni River, which then runs into the Little Colorado.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So, you're talking west from here: from the Continental Divide to the Zuni River, and then further west.

SALLY NOE: The Rio Puerco of the West and the Zuni River junction at the Little Colorado.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Which is over in Arizona. Okay. And that's the same Rio Puerco that goes all the way to Albuquerque.

SALLY NOE No, it doesn't.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Remember that there's a bridge just south of Albuquerque on the Rio Puerco.

SALLY NOE: But that is not the Rio Puerco of the West. That's the Rio Puerco of the North. And it was a dry river bed, but we haven't had any huge floods lately, but we have in the past had floods that would inundate the downtown area. And

when you drive through Gallup and you look at the old stores that are just adjacent to the railroad, most of them have steps up to them, and that's because of the Perky flooding.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's great. Okay. I should get some background on you, and then we should move towards who has what – where collections are, where resources are. So let's start by my asking you some questions, very briefly, if you could talk about your growing up in Gallup, and how and when and where it intersected with Route 66.

SALLY NOE: Can I mention my husband's family? 'cause they had been here longer than my family was. My husband's family came in 1885, when they opened up the Gibson Mine, which is right over here. And the family has been in this community ever since. It's the oldest family in the community.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What's the name?

SALLY NOE: It's the Winders. Bob is named Noe because that was his dad's name, but the Winders family was the oldest family remaining in the community. Bobby's grandfather and the great-grandfather worked in the mines, but they had been transferred here from the Midwest, and they were not pick-and-shovel miners. They ran the slopes.

Then his father came here, like my father, because his father's dad was transferred to Gallup with the railroad. My father was transferred to Gallup because the J.C. Penney Company was building the very first JC Penney store in New Mexico. Gallup was such a good business town, and so he was transferred from Kansas City to this store.

Did I come then? Well, I was already born when he got here – well, I wasn't born yet. My mother said, "There is no hospital in that town, and I am not going until this baby is born." So she stayed with her aunt in Kansas City until I was born, and at two months old, I came to Gallup on the Pullman with my mother.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Okay. And what part of Gallup were you living in in that time?

SALLY NOE: We lived in – well, it's the – what would I say? We used to designate areas by schools, and First Ward was built up on the hill, south of the railroad tracks, between First Street – well, it was Puerco – Puerco and Strong, along in there. We lived up on the hill.

Now, Gallup is laid out just exactly like towns back east are, on a grid system. It was totally laid out that way when the local people bought the land to establish the town of Gallup. They laid it out on a grid system, and you've traveled the hills, and you know, they go up hill and down dale. They don't try to miss them, like farming communities do, because we weren't a farming community.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So this is the 1930s when you arrived?

SALLY NOE: No, I arrived in the '20s.

DAVID DUNAWAY: In the '20s. So had Route 66 been built, or can you remember the building of Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Well, no, 'cause I was only a baby. When we arrived – I arrived – here, a couple months before Route 66 was named to come through here. And it was named in 1926, and we had the Old Trails Highway. The numbering was what we waited for, and when we were on it, and I have a clipping. Gallup was on Route 66, it was Hallelujah time around here.

Most people don't know how many mines there were in the area. We were never a company town. We were totally different from any of the towns that had mines across the United States. We had 57 mines in this region over time. Not all of them were open at the same time; some of them were purchased by Gamarco [Gallup American Coal Company] and other mines closed down and so on.

But we still ship, on the railroad, the coal that runs the lights in Las Vegas, Nevada.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What are your first recollections of Route 66 and being on it?

SALLY NOE: If you went to town, you had to cross either the tracks or the street – you were along Route 66. But I do have to tell you something. Route 66 goes all the way through town, but the business district does not. You know that it is kind of compressed between Strong Street, where the railroad station is, and about Fourth Street. So you've got Strong, and Perco, and First, Second, Third, Fourth. Then, you have to go up on Coal Avenue.

But when Route 66 came here, initially, from the west it came on what is Coal Avenue, because what is Route 66 was blocked by the roundhouse for the railroad, which was built at Fifth Street, across that one street. So, you came in on Coal, and then you had to take the cross street off of Coal because Coal was blocked by the brickyard out on the east end.

That's the reason Gallup has the double entry. You could come that way, and that was blocked up until the 1940s, after World War II.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And then they straightened it out?

SALLY NOE: No, they didn't straighten it out. They left it. They just built the road so you have two Y's, and you can take either one of them. You are on old Route 66 if you take the north Y, but if you take the south Y, you're on part of old Route 66 as you drive through the business district also.

And why aren't we strung out like the rest of the towns? You have the old business district, and then you just keep going along Route 66? Well, when the trains stopped here for lunch, the people got off the train and wandered around. Or when the trains were backed up because the tracks were blocked, or something.

They wandered around town, and they found out we had great restaurants that charged a lot less than the AT & SF dining rooms, and further more, we had great stores because Gallup was a business town.

We didn't have mining company stores. It wasn't a company town. So they wandered around, waiting for whatever was going to happen. So locals made a deal with the train men. They tested it first, the leaders in the community – and walked down Route 66 and had the engineers on the trains blow the whistle to let them know, "It's time for you to come and get on the train."

Well, we had the roundhouse, so that was easy to do, and they did. And when they had them blow the whistle, they found out that if you were at Third Street on Route 66, if you hurried, you could get back to the railroad station and get on the train. But if you were at Fourth Street, you couldn't do it – you couldn't make it! No matter what, unless you were a track star, that, up on the other street, if you were on Third Street, you could hear the whistle and you could get back from there.

And so, consequently, Gallup's downtown area, with the Y's on the end, was a very practical solution for garnering tourism.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's great. How – this is a broad question – how has life along Route 66 changed in Gallup? Let's take the first period from when you arrived in the Twenties to World War II, and then afterwards. How did the town develop in relation to Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Right now, we have a number of empty buildings down there, but we never have empty buildings longer than six months, because something moves into them. We have a number of buildings that were former curio stores. The dime store closed, that was downtown for years and years.

In Gallup, up until they built the malls and the strips – they've started that – they actually didn't affect our downtown that much. They did affect it, don't get me wrong, but we had developed, over the years, the largest jewelry trading business, buying and selling. You understand that our business district draws people for a hundred miles in any direction, and the Indian people come into town to sell their craft, and to buy the things they need.

So, it really hasn't made distinctive changes in the downtown, except that the buildings are getting older, and they have had new facades put on them, because the sandstone they were built of was beginning to disintegrate. Underneath all that plaster you see downtown are still brick and stone buildings.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So let's see if I understand this. In the beginning, when Route 66 opened in Gallup, what we saw were a series of curios shops and those catering to the railroad travelers right in downtown, near the railroad station, along Route 66.

SALLY NOE: Now, remember that curios didn't actually start until World War II as far as saying, "Okay, this is a trading post store." The traders were out on the reservation. They began to move into town – and my mother-in-law and Bill

Richardson's mother were the first two women to open trading stores in downtown Gallup. Richardson's is still on Route 66, and his mother was named Trula, and she was the child of traders that had been all over in New Mexico and Arizona, between the Grand Canyon and Gallup, and she chose Gallup.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Now, this is Bill Richardson, our governor?

SALLY NOE: No, this is Bill Richardson, Gallup's trader.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I need to take a small break here, so let's take a couple minute intermission while I change my material.

[Break]

DAVID DUNAWAY: Okay, I'm going to repin you here. Okay. Just to come back to our second point – I'm wondering if you could give me a brief narrative of Route 66 in Gallup. In the beginning it did this, and then later...

SALLY NOE: Okay. When it was identified as Route 66, immediately there was, "Oh! We're going to have fifty travelers a day on this road!" Now, you understand, it was a dirt road. It was not paved. It wouldn't be paved until the 1930s. But it ran right close to the edge of the red rocks, it ran through Gallup by the only access road.

But what Route 66 did – because all the buildings were already on Route 66, and because Gallup was a town where everybody came in and bought what they needed – it built Coal Avenue, and it brought in all of these corporations to build buildings in town. So we were known for being an upcoming and positive kind of downtown area.

We had movie houses, we had the wonderful El Rancho Hotel, which you know about, and that was built in the 1930s. You had theaters, that were – oh! You went to watch the movies, you just didn't forget those. You had the drug stores, where you could get ice cream, and of course, we had bars.

And Gallup was always known – always known – as a good-time town. We had bars – there was an article, that there was a dance in Gallup every evening, that you could go to one somewhere.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So how did this relate to Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Because the tourists knew – and we still are – we're one meal, one tank of gas, or one overnight, away from anything.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Well put. So the tourists came in. When did they really start coming through? Was it right after Route 66 was built? Or was that later in the '30s and '40s?

SALLY NOE: You have a very slow growth in tourism. As it grew, it's like – the Hotel El Rancho was out of town, and suddenly it's surrounded. In the '40s was when they started to build motels rather the hotels. But we had a lot of hotels downtown, and they all had – not all of them, but most of them – had garages underneath the hotel for the cars.

So consequently, as you drive down, you see that there are places that look like hotels and, yes, they were.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Like the Lexington, for example.

SALLY NOE: Yes. It's a brick building. It was built as a hotel, and it's been a hotel – still.

DAVID DUNAWAY: After World War II, you get more travelers, perhaps, and fewer tourists, at least during the war. When does the balance shift between people who just are here to get to California, and people who are classic tourists, who want to see the west?

SALLY NOE: We always had classic tourists. The only time that the tourist trade was really down was during World War II when gas was rationed. Then you didn't have that many tourists, and of course you didn't have that much building either. But the minute World War II was over, you began to have the construction of the tourist courts – the latest thing – and more restaurants and more service stations and some of the service stations that you can point out where they were.

They stayed up until ten years ago, or something like that. A lot of the buildings were – they built the tourist courts because that was the newest wave. If you had a family, you didn't want to stay in a hotel.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Right. Could you name briefly some of the more well-known early tourist courts?

SALLY NOE: Well, let's see if I can name them right off the top of my head, 'cause I need to look at a picture. The West Side Court was one that was on Route 66, but it was very interesting because all of the courts that were built before the roundhouse came down had access to Coal Avenue on the west end of town.

There were – that I can remember – five on the west end of town that were fairly large. They were very different from what you found in other towns, because they were built with a garage on the side, in case you got snow, like we got last night. They also were single cabins. Most of them were wood construction.

They were single cabins, with an overhang for the car, and they were all furnished on the inside with a coal stove for heat. You could go and get the coal yourself if you wanted to, from the coal bin, and all of them had Navajo rugs on the floor. There were no telephones in the room, and there were no laundry facilities in those courts because they just didn't do it at that point.

The West Side Court also had access – eventually – from Route 66, that Chicado's built a bridge over the Perky to allow cars to get to them.

Let's see. I can't remember the name of the court that was by the – not the brick plant, by Rico's. It was the same kind of court. And that whole strip from the west Y to about Fourth Street was motels, just lined up along Coal Avenue, because you couldn't get on Route 66.

Then, coming into town, you had the All-State Court, which was right at the junction of Coal Avenue and Route 66, and then you had auto courts all the way to just about Gallup Lumber. That would be about five blocks. On one side of the railroad tracks.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Now, in the earlier period, in the '30s, there were tourist camps, where tourists could camp.

SALLY NOE: Yes. That's where these auto courts were then built, before the '40s, before World War II, they converted. The first camp, the auto camp, was built probably about in the El Rancho location, because that was pretty close to – remember that Ceremonial became Gallup's trademark before the highways were built.

Consequently, the highway came in, right along the railroad tracks. All the wagons did. But if you had a wagon, and you were hauling stuff into Gallup, you could not cross into the downtown area. You could not leave your wagon in downtown Gallup, at all. It had to stay out of, away from where people lived.

And if you had a horse, it had to stay at the livery stable. You couldn't put it in your back yard.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So was there a time when these people coming to these early camps in the '20s and '30s would be a cause for business to open up along Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Oh, yes. They were interspersed with restaurants. The thing about Gallup was it had all kinds of possibilities, because a lot of the miners had come from Europe, and some of them opened up grocery stores so that the Italian people could buy what they were used to buying. Some of them were from Greece, and they opened up stores and some of them started businesses.

One of the Italian families, the Nechero family, started a service station, of all things, right there by the El Rancho. The family still lives here, and they have had city council members for a number of years.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's great. That gives me an idea of Gallup in the early days. Let's briefly take this story to its end. So during the war there was a drop off of tourists, but perhaps there were quite a number of people who were bringing trucks back and forth with materials?

SALLY NOE: There were the Army men that were being transferred to the West Coast, they continued to come through here, and they came through with their

families, if they had them, but a lot of them had to leave them their families at home. Right after the war was when tourism really blossomed because they were going from the East Coast to show them where they'd been, or the West Coast to show them where they'd been.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And how did you notice the difference in Gallup, with this new influx of tourism?

SALLY NOE: Well. I told you about my mother-in-law and Trula Richardson opening a store that was strictly Indian craft. We got really picky about our Indian craft in this area, and you realize that we still sell, in this area, 85% of the Indian craft that is sold worldwide, comes out of this community. The business had always been around it, but then it moved into town to serve those people.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And how about later on in the Route 66 story in Gallup, after this first flush of tourism into the late '40s and '50s?

SALLY NOE: It didn't change at all. It grew from there up until – actually, until they closed Route 66 and opened up I-40. All of the motels, all of the buildings, the town just – you can almost see it, how the town grew, with auto courts on either end of town.

Then, those are the newer ones. The businesses – when we got our first McDonald's down here, you can see the golden arches, we had it made, because that's when corporations began to move in here.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That would be in the '50s, or '60s?

SALLY NOE: About the '70s. And we – the I-40 was not opened up in this area until the 1970s. And it was built – they had to tear that mountain down to get it through there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Can you remember when Route 66 was closed and the traffic began to move on the interstate?

SALLY NOE: Yes, because we were moved out. When you drive on I-40, you drive through my kitchen. Eminent domain.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Tell me the story of that day.

SALLY NOE: We knew they were coming. And the people of Gallup did not want them to go north or south of Route 66, because this was our natural dividing point. Route 66, the highway, the Perky, the railroad tracks – that was a natural dividing point, and we didn't want to have happen what happened to other small towns when they moved the highway away from where Route 66 or the railroad was.

They wanted to move it 5 miles north or 5 miles south, and we sent a delegation to Washington and said, "Uh uh. We've already got a divider in our

town. We want to keep it there.” So under eminent domain, they moved 400 families out of where I-40 is now, and our family is one of them.

By that time, my husband and I were married and had three children. We’d lived there, on the property that belonged to his father, but we knew for 10 years we were going to have to move. We bought this property at that point. We didn’t know when we were going to have to move, but they came through every spring and surveyed. You knew it was spring, because the surveyors were out in the alley.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Was there any resistance to having a highway here to bypass Route 66?

SALLY NOE: No. We depended on Route 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That’s what I mean – the highway would bypass Route 66. Was there any resistance here, or people feeling we don’t want an interstate, let’s just keep 66?

SALLY NOE: We couldn’t. We were ordered. It was an order. That road was going to come across here, and it was either going to come through, or around. And you can see what happened to Grants.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you remember the day that the freeway opened and Route 66 was officially bypassed?

SALLY NOE: I don’t remember, actually. To me, it was just, “All right, it’s officially opened.” But when Route 66 was bypassed, most people don’t realize you cannot go anywhere in Gallup without crossing old Route 66. I don’t care where you live, you’ve got to get on it. Because everything dead ends at the railroad, and the Perky.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And when you spell Perky, how do you do that?

SALLY NOE: P-U-E-R-C-O. Puerco. But if you’re spelling Perky, it’s P-E-R-K-Y. And that’s what we all call it – the Perky.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Let’s begin now the second part of this interview. That is, specifically on the historical resources on Route 66 as they exist in Gallup and in the area around Gallup.

SALLY NOE: Oh, wow. All of that?

DAVID DUNAWAY: Well, what I’m trying to find –

SALLY NOE: I know. You realize that Route 66 in Gallup is actually 14 miles long, and it grew from 8 blocks to 14 miles, so you have a lot of landmarks that are

nearby, and then you have a lot that are on, and so what – what do you want me to talk about?

DAVID DUNAWAY: It's not so much that I want us to mention each business over that 14 mile stretch, but to try and get a sense for, if you didn't know anything about Route 66 in Gallup – and I know that's hard to imagine – but if you didn't, and you were a stranger coming to your town, and you wanted to know as much as possible about this road, where would you start, and where would you continue?

SALLY NOE: Depending on which direction you're going – I'm going to start out here on the east end, uptown. At the east end of town, when you are on Route 66, you're coming right by what is called Red Rock Park, and that is where Ceremonial was moved from downtown, out to that facility, which is a lot more modern than what was in town.

You take the overpass onto the frontage road, which is Route 66, and you head into Gallup. Now, you'll notice when you come in that there are buildings and business buildings and so on which have developed in the last fifteen or twenty years, but you don't really see too much in the way of housing development 'til you get closer to the town.

Rehoboth – you pass Rehoboth, headed west, and Rehoboth was one of the first Indian facilities, Indian schools, and it was also a hospital, and it was established by the Dutch Reformed Church.

And they had a high school out there and – oh, I forgot one thing. I have to back up. You can edit this out. When you turn off, you're going to turn off before Fort Wingate, and you will be driving by the igloos where all of the munitions were stored after World War II, and after World War I, shipped to Britain, and then the storage facility was intact for the Korean War. They built the igloos, and the storage facility was used for ammunition up until it was all shipped to Tuzela up in Utah, up to the military preserve. They're still blowing it up at Wingate.

Okay. You come in there, and then you pass right by Rehoboth, which is Rehoboth Christian School, and that is a reminder of how the reservations were organized, because Rehoboth had a facility at Zuni. That's a whole 'nother story.

Then you come on in, under the railroad tracks, and you're in Gallup, and from that point on, you're seeing motels, you're seeing housing developments – good heavens – over there on the hills, and those are the most recent. You see some across the tracks that's a huge development now, but started off as a one-man place.

You still have the railroad track, either the right or the left, depending if you're driving in or out. You don't hit a crossing of the railroad track 'til you get past Rehoboth.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Okay. So where are the collectors and the collections on Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Actually, what is available is in the collection at the Gallup Public Library, and of course that includes old newspapers. You can look through them, and so on. Then at the Rex Museum, they have a collection of memorabilia there.

DAVID DUNAWAY: What do they have? Tell me about it.

SALLY NOE: I really don't know what all they have. They have pictures. They have memorabilia from the mines that were around here, because the mines were so very important. They just have a cross-section of things that would be devoted to tourism in this area. Then, the Chamber of Commerce has a number of pamphlets that they have recently put out that are helpful.

The library has a great collection of books about this area, so you can get that.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I remember you told me the story about how they were getting rid of their special collections. You got a group of people to buy them up, then donated them back to the library.

SALLY NOE: Yes. Right! So they have kept the collection. But there have not been too many books written specifically about this area, and Route 66, because of all the different interests, and the number of Indian people. And people need to realize that Ceremonial was one of the things that made Route 66 a powerful entity in this town, because Ceremonial was opened up four years before Route 66 was even thought about, and the railroad brought the first tourists.

We depended on the railroad for the first tourists, and then after World War II, we depend on the automobile.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You had mentioned to me that a former librarian, after whom –

SALLY NOE: Octavia Fellin.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That at the time she ceased to be the public librarian, perhaps she has a collection of materials about old Gallup and Route 66?

SALLY NOE: She has some of it. But she has donated a lot of it back to the library, like the papers. You know, you can't store, in a house, everything, and I don't really know what she has now. She's been ill, so I have no idea.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Does she have a son or daughter?

SALLY NOE: No. She never married.

DAVID DUNAWAY: I'm interested to know what might become of those materials.

SALLY NOE: You need to talk to her. And you should give her a call.

DAVID DUNAWAY: She might, then, be persuaded to donate this material.

SALLY NOE: I believe so. She has a brother here, but – his name is Leonard Fellin. Her mother was one of the first nurses in Gallup's hospital. We had hospital facilities that no other town for a hundred miles had. We still have hospital facilities, 'cause that's part of the draw for this community.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You, obviously, have an enormous collection of photographs that we've looked at, and clippings about – I'm looking at a thick vertical file of old clippings – is there anybody else in town who has this kind of interest?

SALLY NOE: Not that I know of, because the people that were involved tended to dispose of their goods. You know, Route 66, for most of the young people, is long gone, and it's ancient history. Most of the people who knew anything about it. But I would suggest that you call Bill Nechero and find out if he has anything, because his father had the service station right next to the El Rancho.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about the Gallup Historical Society?

SALLY NOE: That's us. Jack Starkovich is the head of it right now, and they call me when they've got stuff that they don't know quite what to do with. Gallup Historical Society has – Tommy Gasprich, who's involved, is only interested in the railroads. Jack was interested in the mines. Me, I'm interested in everything.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So there isn't anyone who collects Route 66 here? Old signs, things like that?

SALLY NOE: Not that I know of.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about collections of historical photographs?

SALLY NOE: I've got 'em.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Is there anyone else who might have them?

SALLY NOE: Not that I know of.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Not John, not the other people in the historical society?

SALLY NOE: Some of the photographs that they have, they have borrowed from me to copy. However, there is a tape that the historical society put out of Gallup photographs, but it's not strictly Route 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And that's commercially available?

SALLY NOE: Through the Rex, yes.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So, really, other than you, if someone wanted to document Route 66, they would just go to the public library and see what they could find?

SALLY NOE: Yes, that's about it. There's no repository for it. UNM is trying to build, as I say, a repository, for memorabilia, but attitudes are funny. People move in and out. And when they move out, they don't really leave much until they move into a smaller house, or a bigger house, somewhere else.

I would suggest that they contact the librarian at Gallup Public Library, because that's probably the best collection at this point.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Let's move outside of Gallup. Would Rehoboth have materials?

SALLY NOE: No.

DAVID DUNAWAY: In their library, they wouldn't have historical photographs or anything like that?

SALLY NOE: Well, they might, but remember that that was a parish – not a parish, I call it a parish – it was a religious school, and they do have photographs, just like Fort Wingate had photographs of the football team and the houses where the officers lived. But collected? I don't know.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about even further a-field, a place like Thoreau?

SALLY NOE: No.

DAVID DUNAWAY: No? No resources there?

SALLY NOE: No, because the Jones family moved out, and they were the ones who had information.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you know where they went to?

SALLY NOE: They died.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you know what happened to their...?

SALLY NOE: No. I lost track of Pat, and I don't know where any of the things went.

DAVID DUNAWAY: How about west of here? Are there any kind of libraries or collectors, even into Arizona, that you know people that share your interest in Route 66?

SALLY NOE; I don't know of anybody. I have asked – Well, I'll tell you who you do have, at Lupton. You would have Armond Ortega. He can tell you some stories about Route 66. He owns the El Rancho.

DAVID DUNAWAY: He has a trading post further west?

SALLY NOE: Yes, his family lives further west.

DAVID DUNAWAY: He may have pictures and all of that. Is he still working the store?

SALLY NOE: No, he's retired. He has pictures of the movie era. And, you know, we had a huge movie era in this community, and that's what he has. And anybody that's interested in Route 66, they can't ignore the movies that were made in this area.

DAVID DUNAWAY: If we were to set up a list of people from Gallup who still remember Route 66 in its various eras, going back to people who may be even a little older than yourself, who might remember the building of the road, to people who might – until the late '70s, I guess, when it was bypassed around here – could we make a little list of people who should be interviewed for historical purposes?

SALLY NOE: Well. You've got Octavia. And you need to talk to my husband, but I think it's getting late, about it.

DAVID DUNAWAY: You've mentioned Armond Ortega, and Bill Nechero. Who else might we interview if there was going to be an effort here to do interviews?

SALLY NOE: I think you need to talk to my husband, and find out what – we've had an awful lot of our classmates die, recently, and this is late in the Route 66 era for our community. And a lot of them have moved, like Pauline Middleton, but she lives in Las Cruces now.

I have a picture of the auto court – she and I were good friends. But you have to realize that a lot of people who lived in the community have left, or have no interest. Joe DiGregorio's father died just recently. His father had the stores on Route 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Would the family have pictures?

SALLY NOE: They might.

DAVID DUNAWAY: He's still with us?

SALLY NOE: Well, he's in and out of Albuquerque, because his wife's been ill. And his dad had the first grocery on Route 66.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Octavia – what kind of condition is her memory in?

SALLY NOE: Oh, she'd be willing to talk to you. If she's feeling well enough.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Well, I have to thank you for all this time and bringing Route 66 to prominence in your books. When you sat down to write those books, you went just to the primary sources, such as these clippings you have?

SALLY NOE: No. I went to my memory.

DAVID DUNAWAY: And you also said you conducted a set of historical interviews?

SALLY NOE: Yes, from the calendar. I had talked to people 25 years ago about our centennial, and asked questions, and that's where that remark came from. Asked questions about Gallup and why they came here. What they did, how things started, and such. I got some really interesting materials.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Do you ever get people who come through town and want to talk to you about Route 66?

SALLY NOE: Oh, yes. They stop at the Chamber of Commerce. A lot of 'em are looking for – what do they call it – genealogy. I'm not interested in that.

DAVID DUNAWAY: So have you been interviewed by writers or others?

SALLY NOE: No.

DAVID DUNAWAY: That's unfortunate.

SALLY NOE: I've had some people contact me about, mainly, genealogy. That's the big thing right now.

DAVID DUNAWAY: Now, I want to make sure I have your permission to use this material in my research and in my broadcasting, to use this interview for those purposes. Is that okay with you?

SALLY NOE: That is fine. Do you want me to sign something?

DAVID DUNAWAY: I have a little release. Hold on just a second, I'm going to put this to sleep.