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Route 66 began through Flagstaff, and the obvious start is the old railroad depot, one of the most visible landmarks today. Now the old depot sits behind a building next door to the Visitors Center. The visitors center is located at 1897 Depot on the east side of Route 66. There are several places along the route that offer interesting insights into the route and the buildings which were part of it. The Self Guided Walking Tour of Route 66 begins at the Visitors Center and takes you on a walking tour of Flagstaff’s Route 66. From the Visitors Center walk 1 block east on Route 66 to the old train engine parked at Santa Fe Plaza. As Route 66 comes into downtown Flagstaff, it leaves the route of Beal’s trail and follows the path of the railroad. Behind you is the 1897 depot, which ultimately became the center of growth in Flagstaff. In the early days this stretch of Route 66 was called Front Street. As you look east you will see the lot for Babbitt Ford. The Babbitt family was very influential in the development of Flagstaff, and in promoting the automobile in Flagstaff. In 1910 Edwin Babbitt owned one of the only cars in town. Realizing that this was the wave of the future, he and the Babbitt family opened a dealership and garage. In 1958 the dealership moved to this Route 66 location, which prior to that had been the site of a Shell station and garage. Babbitt Ford has been a prominent Route 66 landmark ever since. The Arizona Music Pro building on the next block was the site of the Greyhound bus terminal. Greyhound started as a small business serving miners in Minnesota, but by 1927 the line ran buses along Route 66 to California on a regular basis. Greyhound became a familiar sight in Flagstaff, bringing tourists to the Southwest. The next building west comprises the oldest part of Flagstaff. This was our Front Street area. Once filled with saloons and gambling, it became a major spot for Route 66 commerce—boasting hotels, restaurants, and businesses. It still caters to the tourist trade as visitors come to shop and eat along Route 66.

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When you reach the corner of Phoenix Ave. and Beaver St., you have returned to the original alignment of Route 66 through Flagstaff, and the site of the first motel in Flagstaff. Here the route crossed the railroad tracks and began heading south and west out of Flagstaff. This spot was the perfect site for A.E. DuBeau to build his “Motel Inn” in 1929. DuBeau came to Flagstaff from Los Angeles and chose this spot to create a hotel designed specifically for “the better class of motorist.” The property rented rooms for anywhere from $2.50 to $5.00 per night and boasted such amenities as in-room baths and toilets, double beds, carpeting, and heated garages for the cold winter nights. The DuBeau continues to serve visitors to Flagstaff as an International Youth Hostel.

Cross Beaver St. and continue down Phoenix Ave. to Mike's Pike. Take a look at the concrete guard rail on the right. This is one of the spots where Route 66 crossed the Rio de Flag. The guard rail is part of that original bridge. Again along this walk you can see how Route 66 affected the area. The buildings you will pass were built as retail shops and cafes until 1940s. T o the south you can see where Route 66 turns west. To the north you can see the 1934 railroad underpass. This area has undergone major changes recently, but some of the old structures remain. The Knight’s Inn on your left started out as the Spur Motel, and just to the south is the Canyon Inn. Across the street is the Highland Country Inn and the “L” Motel (now a Rodeway Inn). The Furniture Barn, with its fanciful cow painting, was the National Guard Armory. All of these building have been here since the 50s and 60s. Victims of progress include the Flamingo Motel, which is now a Barnes & Noble, and Eddie’s Drive In, which is now a Jack in the Box. One of the original side streets that gave Five Points its name is now covered by Flagstaff’s new High Country Conference Center.

Continue to the Underpass. In the depression years several things happened along Route 66. Long lines of emigrants followed the route to California from the drought-stricken Midwest. This mass migration, as well as greater usage of the route in general, caused major traffic problems at the railroad crossing on Beaver St. At this time, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal projects included provisions to re-align and improve Route 66. Flagstaff applied for and received part of this federal aid, and on Dec 24, 1934, this underpass was completed and Route 66 went a great deal of change over the years. In the 60s this motel was a single story. The concrete drive-port attached to a house-like main building with the row of units behind it. This building, like many, evolved as automobile traffic on Route 66 increased. Ultimately, though, that traffic spilled the end of the route. By 1970 Interstate 40 had bypassed most of the cities along the route in Arizona, and finally Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985. Now the route is a historic byway and a renaissance of interest in the route has reawakened new life to this great American icon.

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3 DuBeau Motel

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4 Mike’s Pike & Cottage Ave.

Turn left and stroll down Mike’s Pike. Here you can see how use along this stretch evolved from residential to tourism, then industrial as Route 66 came and went. A great example of this is the B&K Auto Camp on the corner of Mike’s Pike and Cottage Ave. The building (a private residence today) is marked clearly with a 100 address. You can see the obvious original structure was a bungalow house built in 1896 by E.R. McGonigle. In 1926, when Route 66 arrived, Battista Mascherana bought the property, built the bouncy front building as a convenience store, added several small cabins on the property and created the B&K Auto Camp. Some evidences of the Auto Court can be seen in the sheds behind the house. Continue down Mike’s Pike and you will see Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. While not the oldest church in Flagstaff, it is the oldest standing Catholic Church, and was completed in the 1930s. The Double Circle Garage was built in 1926 to service the motor traffic along the route, and serves as a mechanic’s shop to this day.

5 Mike’s Pike & Sturgeon St.

Walk to the end of Mike’s Pike to where it meets with Bu zeal Ave. and Milton Rd. This is an area well known as Five Points, and is where the original alignment of Route 66 meets with the post-1934 alignment. The buildings here are much newer, all dating after the 1940s. To the south you can see where Route 66 turns west. To the north you can see the 1934 railroad underpass. This area has undergone major changes recently, but some of the old structures remain. The Knight’s Inn on your left started out as the Spur Motel, and just to the south is the Canyon Inn. Across the street is the Highland Country Inn and the “L” Motel (now a Rodeway Inn). The Furniture Barn, with its fanciful cow painting, was the National Guard Armory. All of these buildings have been here since the 50s and 60s. Victims of progress include the Flamingo Motel, which is now a Barnes & Noble, and Eddie’s Drive In, which is now a Jack in the Box. One of the original side streets that gave Five Points its name is now covered by Flagstaff’s new High Country Conference Center.

6 Granny’s Closet

Continue up Route 66 toward the underpass. The restaurant on your right is Granny’s Closet. This was built around 1960 as the Paul Bunyan Café, then became the Lumberjack Café. The wooden lumberjack on the south wall is a reminder of those days, and also a memorial to a bit of Route 66 history that no longer stands here. The Lumberjack Café was once guarded by a 40-foot-tall fiberglass lumberjack. This figure and many like it were called “Muffler Men.” Originally created by a muffler chain as an advertising gimmick, the idea caught on, and the giant figures quickly became Route 66 icons. Some were Muffler Men holding mufflers, some were Cowboys holding lariats, some held tires and some even held hot dogs. Our particular Muffler Man was a lumberjack holding an axe. Oddly enough the very first Muffler Man to roll off the assembly line was the lumberjack that stood in front of the Paul Bunyan Café. While the big lumberjack is no longer on Route 66, it still resides in Flagstaff and can be found near the Skydome at Northern Arizona University, where it has become the proud mascot of the NAU Lumberjacks.

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8 Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce

Continue up Route 66 along the curve, back to Beaver St. This is an area that underwent a great deal of change in the 1980s. The City Hall complex replaced gas stations, cafes, and a car dealership, but many evidences of the route remain. On your right as you were walking you passed another concrete bridge wall where the route crossed the Rio De Flag. The Pow-Wow Towers building across the street was the depot for both Greyhound and Continental Trailways buses in the 1960s and 70s. The Rodeway Townhouse Motel has undergone a great deal of change over the years. In the 60s this motel was a single story. The concrete drive-port attached to a house-like main building with the row of units behind it. This building, like many, evolved as automobile traffic on Route 66 increased. Ultimately, though, that traffic spilled the end of the route. By 1970 Interstate 40 had bypassed most of the cities along the route in Arizona, and finally Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985. Now the route is a historic byway and a renaissance of interest in the route has reawakened new life to this great American icon.

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