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On the Road: Vernacular Architecture as a Creative Response to  
Economic Opportunity

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Horseshoe Court  
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## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary vernacular architecture scholars have expressed concern over the loss of significant and ordinary structures of the recent past. Roadside architecture, in particular the motels, cafes, and service stations which formerly bordered our major federal highways, have become especially vulnerable and victims of their own success, as the American obsession with automobiles and highways grew beyond their two-lane boundaries. The architecture of these places and the period which spawned them is part of the unique cultural heritage of twentieth-century America, an automobile culture.

The focus of this study is the Horseshoe Court Motel. The motel, the gas station, the cafe, and the truckstop are children of the automobile, as well as symbols of American highway culture. The automobile profoundly changed the way Americans perceived the national landscape, and also changed the demands we made upon both commercial and domestic vernacular structures. Therefore, this study includes not only an oral history of the structure itself, but also a brief history of highway development and the development of leisure auto travel pertinent to the evolution of the motel, as it is impossible to understand the Horseshoe Court without this information.

## HORSESHOE COURT: A HISTORY, PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION, AND ANALYSIS

Many aspects of the early history and development of the Horseshoe Court neatly parallel the evolution of the motel in general, as shall be discussed. Construction of the Horseshoe Court Motel began in the 1930s. Through a gradual process of additions and improvements the motel was developed by its owners, Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Cornwell. Mr. Cornwell had operated a beer tavern at the site before deciding to add cabins to his establishment. He started out by building just one cabin and then adding others over the years. The location was given the name Horseshoe Camp. Use of the term 'camp' leads us to speculate that Mr. Cornwell may have also rented campsites at one time.

At the time that construction started, there were no other motels in the area for travelers to stay at. Therefore, the opportunity for a motel business presented itself. A local stonemason, Bill Brannen, constructed part of the first section of motel units located on the north side of the court, directly in back of the beer tavern. Years later, around 1935, a second section of units were constructed on the Bowling Green side of the motel. This section was erected by another local builder and stonemason, Francis York.

As is common in traditional building practices, York was assisted by his nephew Jimmy Linville, who was about ten years old then. During our interview with him, Linville commented on the stone that was used for construction of the units. He told

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us that the buildings are made from limestone rock which was quarried at the Whitestone and Keystone Quarries, formerly located near Blue Level Road in Bowling Green.

Wooden frame structures were also added to the motel complex. These were larger buildings for the most part and two were used as kitchenette units, complete with gas stoves and refrigerators. Of the original five buildings, four remain at this date.

In 1952, Mrs. Katherine Forrester and her husband bought the motel, mainly for the tavern business. The Forresters changed the name of the motel to Horseshoe Court. Two years later they applied for a whiskey license so they could sell packaged liquors exclusively, instead of beer by the drink. Three years after that, an election was held and the county was voted dry. This left the Forresters with just the motel business. The tavern was also used as a gift shop for a year after the tavern closed.

The Forresters tore down one of the wooden buildings after they bought the motel. One of the wooden kitchenettes units originally had two bedrooms and has now been converted into a horse barn. All of the units in the motel are now being used for storage of some type, except for one motel room which is occupied by Jimmy Linville, an employee of the Forresters for many years.

Situated at the center of the court is the house that Katherine Forrester has occupied for many years, which was originally a kitchenette unit, and now the core of the larger building. Starting in 1953, Mr. Forrester gradually added rooms

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to it until it was large enough for a family of four. The interior of the home is finished with knotty pine, similar to that used in the motel units.

There is a 75 foot well at the motel that furnished all the water for the guests until city water was made available. All the rooms had showers, except for one which had a tub. When the Cornwells owned the motel this well also provided water for laundering the motel's linens and towels. The family house also has a cistern that collects rain water. Gas was used to heat the motel rooms and is used in the family's home. Mrs Forrester stated that this type of heat was called 'panel ray heat' and "goes up the wall."

The motel rooms are paneled with knotty pine and the flooring is tile for the most part. Mrs. Forrester told us that when the motel was in operation, the room furnishings consisted of "a double bed, luggage rack, little table lamp, rocking chair and straight chair. A little dressing table with a mirror and a little stool." The furniture was very rustic in appearance.

Outside the motel rooms were picnic tables and chairs for the guests to use. Mrs Forrester recalled a picnic table that was made out of a solid slab of rock, with rock legs. She also commented on how nice the motel was landscaped, with lots of trees around the court. A horseshoe shaped flower garden was also in the front yard and many other varieties of flowers were cultivated.

Neon lighting was used on the outside of each unit along the roof edge and the gable. These lights were different colors for each room. Also lit by neon were several motel signs, including the one on the tavern roof and a horseshoe shaped sign near the front entrance. A flashing light was also placed on top of the office building. This light was so bright, according to Mrs. Forrester, that "you could see [it] from Park City."

The craftsmanship and care that went into the structures at the motel is still apparent. The stone buildings are still in good condition despite their abundant use over the past fifty years. Most of the wooden structures, however, have fallen into disrepair except for the one unit that has been converted into a barn. This building is more actively used since Mrs. Forrester still keeps her daughter's horse pastured in back of the motel. At this point, the stone buildings are good candidates for some type of adaptive use.

#### **A SYNTHESIS OF STRUCTURAL AND STYLISTIC ELEMENTS**

Located in between high architectural styles and vernacular buildings are the structures that show the influence of both. It is obvious that a large part of The Horseshoe Court is based on the repetition of the single pen. There are, however, two outstanding features that attract the observer's attention: the steeply peaked Gothic gables that are placed over each room and the garage stalls. Furthermore, use of natural stone lends itself to the Gothic Revival style, and the masons of these buildings used it to highlight some Gothic structural elements,

such as the craggy battlement atop the chimney of the tavern. Well crafted decorative light fixtures flanking the main entry of the tavern also reflect Gothic style.

What is most curious and interesting about the Horseshoe Court is how these stylistic elements of folk, gothic, and commercial converge:

Commercial (neon)	Gothic Revival	Folk
1. inexpensive	1. antiquity	1. stone (local material)
2. modern	2. aristocratic	2. singlepen/ repetition
3. attracts attention	3. stone	3. garages

Catherine Bishir writes about this convergence of forms as typical in vernacular architecture:

Typically the folk artisan responds to novelty of changing ideas by breaking down the new concept and translating it into terms compatible with the old. Usually this means that the artisan keeps the accustomed basic form and updates only the most obvious elements and those that are most easily changed. The result is a composite of new and old, "a novel and synthetic idea...a compromise of fashionable and unfashionable ideas." The fundamental rules of folk art--"the dominance of form and the desire for repetition"--rather than academic models govern the folk artisan. However convoluted it may become, the ornament is characterized by symmetry and repetition; it never obscures and, in fact, emphasizes the basic form (466).

Obviously one of the easiest elements to change at the motel was the roof type, since to do so would not alter the stone masonry in any way. At the Horseshoe Court, this use of selected elements of design and basic units of construction has produced a balanced harmony that is attractive to the casual viewer and also appealing to the person looking for overnight lodging.

## HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT: PAVING THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE

During the past century, travelers on American roads have seen many changes occurring to the highways that they journeyed upon. Starting just after the Civil War, more concern was given to road improvements as the public began to demand better traveling conditions. Although the railroads were an efficient means of transportation, better roads were desired by those people having to travel them on an everyday basis.

Farmers were among the first to campaign for improved roads because they used the roads extensively to market their goods. Also among the earliest groups crusading for better roads were the League of American Wheelmen. Largely a northern group, the Wheelmen were bicycle enthusiasts who felt that improved roads would make bicycling much more pleasurable. During the late nineteenth century, they did more than any other group to promote good roads. Because of their direct influence, Congress created a national highway commission in 1892. In the South, things moved at a much slower pace. By the year 1904, only 4% of southern roads were paved (Preston 11-13).

The introduction of the automobile in the early part of this century brought more interested persons into the movement. Both automobile owners and manufacturers sought better kinds of road surfacing for their motorized excursions. Previously, many roads were covered with brick, gravel, or planks. A more permanent surfacing, portland cement, was first used to pave roads in 1909 (Scott 6).



Although farmers in the South were the first to demand better roads, they did not want to be taxed for them. For two centuries, southern states had used a work exchange method to make road improvements. Everyone was supposed to do road work one day a year in lieu of highway taxes. Southern states also used road gangs consisting of convicts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These two methods, however, were based on untrained labor and resulted in variable road conditions from one county to another (Preston 20-22). Eventually, the south saw the benefits of a more uniform road building system.

Road improvement gradually became a popular concern of everyone, even politicians, because it was a 'safe' issue. It was hard to find anyone that was not in favor of better roads. During the 1920s, highway departments were set up in all the states (Scott 22). Eventually, financial commitment came on the federal level. A nationally designated system of numbered highways was named as a priority by the Committee on Interstate Highways (Anderson 38). Odd numbers were given to roads running north and south, even numbers to those going east and west. Still, by 1930 less than one quarter of American highways were surfaced. During that decade, however, WPA projects improved more than 250,000 miles of roads (Scott 6).

During the mid-fifties, interstate highway systems were developed throughout the United States. One of the main purposes of the interstate system was to provide a faster way to evacuate populated areas if an emergency made it necessary to do so

(Margolies 15). This new type of highway skirted around cities and towns. For many small businesses the interstate siphoned off their sources of livelihood. Once on the interstate, most people did not venture further than the exit ramp business establishments. Motorists found security in a road that brought no unexpected changes or surprises.

#### **THE DIXIE HIGHWAY: 31-W**

Highway 31-W passes through Warren County, Kentucky and for many years it was part of the main route traveled north and south between Chicago and Florida. This route was named the "Dixie Highway" (Preston 35). Highway 31-W saw its beginnings in 1833, when a private company was chartered to build a toll road from Louisville, Kentucky to Nashville, Tennessee. The road left Louisville and passed through Elizabethtown, Munfordsville, Bowling Green, and Franklin. The Louisville and Nashville stagecoach line used this road, traveling ninety miles a day and reaching Nashville in two days. Soon there were many businesses along the highway which were patronized by the travelers and freighters from the wagon trains.

With the introduction of steamboats and railways lines, many of the nation's turnpike companies began to lose profits. As a result, they stopped maintaining the roads. The highways' traffic decreased and the road surfaces disintegrated. Travelers resented paying tolls in order to travel muddy and dangerous roads. In Kentucky, the public demanded that the counties buy the turnpikes and open them up for free travel.

The first attempt to restore travel to the highways was organized by the League of American Wheelmen around 1890. As automobiles began to appear, motorists joined the campaign to improve the highways and the Louisville Automobile Club was established by 1903. In order to encourage motor travel, the Jackson Highway Association marked the Louisville and Nashville Pike with colorful bands which were placed around telephone poles and fence posts to guide motorists down an otherwise unmarked route.

31-W was designated to be a National Defense Road in 1940 when the Federal Highway Act was approved by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Vigorous efforts were devoted particularly to the removal of traffic bottlenecks in the vicinity of military camps such as Fort Knox. Construction of 31-W was completed in 1941.

For many years 31-W was one of the roads favored by travelers going between Chicago and Florida. The highway brought countless tourists to this area of Kentucky and was a financial asset to many local businesses. However, the construction of I-65 in the 1960s marked the beginning of a decline in the use of 31-W as a main transportation route.

#### **EARLY AUTO TRAVEL: AUTOTRAMPING**

*"Hemmed in by the restrictions of modern business life, people no longer . . . move by tribes or companies into new homelands. But the restlessness remains," (Belasco, 15 quoting Motor Camper and Tourist).*

Americans responded to the automobile, an utterly modern and tremendously powerful machine, not as a vehicle of the future, but as a means to connect with the pre-industrial past. Accustomed to the regimentation, impersonality and the bleak landscapes of rail travel, people identified the automobile with the carriage and stagecoach (horseless carriage). Early recreational use of the automobile, particularly autotramping, was structured by this notion.

Autotramping was one of the vernacular terms applied to a practice of early motorists which is familiar to many people today: camping via the car. In 1910, cars were available to many upper-middle class professionals (Ford's Model T introduced in 1908), for whom train commuting was a daily norm, and Pullman coaches and resort hotels were instruments of the summer holiday. But, for a number of reasons, people were beginning to tire of these options.

In the early years of autotramping there were no paved roads outside of major cities, and, in some rural areas, no roads at all. This lack of established infrastructure is primarily what drew motorists to autotramping. "Time and space are at your beck and call, your freedom is complete," noted one enthusiast (Belasco, 8).

Autotramping freed the middle-class professional to become the wanderer. By carrying camping equipment in his/her (there were some female trampers) car, the tramper could escape the tyranny of the rails, the protocol of the resort, and re-discover

a sense of wonder and adventure. Autotramping also required the traveller to practice rugged skills of outdoorsmanship and self-reliance. Cars were open to the weather, provided a rough ride due to poor roads and a primitive suspension system, and subject to frequent breakdowns. This reduced travel speed to the ambling pace of 20 mph, much slower than train travel. Those who chose autotramping as a vacation alternative revelled in the freedom to wear old clothes, get dirty, eat what they chose, stop and move on at will. Any pleasant wayside plus tent and bedding became the home of the autotramp. This was the appealing novelty of autotramping.

As noted, autotramping provided a welcome departure from the formality of the hotel or resort, where it was not unusual to change clothes three times a day, and where meals and manners were closely regulated by social conventions. Auto travellers generally avoided small town drummers hotels as well, except when the need of a shower and a bed seemed pressing. Although the early autotramp could well afford to patronize these hotels, they found them to be shabby and drab, the food heavy, and the sheets changed only weekly in some cases. Women travellers felt especially uncomfortable and unwelcome in these hotels, which were primarily run by and for men.

By 1920, the league of autotrampers had swelled dramatically as the car became more widely available, and auto camping came to be recognized as a wholesome and inexpensive vacation option.

A 1921 New York Times article estimated that of the 10.8 million cars in the U.S., 5 million were used for camping (Belasco, 74). Because of this tremendous growth in popularity, the 'tin can tourists' came to be despised by roadside property owners, who were tired of the littering, the fires, and the theft and vandalism perpetrated by some motorists. Furthermore, campers were not always mindful of their own safety; they drank polluted water or camped in areas prone to flash floods. These problems led to the development in the early 1920s of the free municipal auto camp.

The municipal auto camp was both a defensive response to protect rural property owners, and an attempt to draw tourists to the small towns to gain their patronage. Tourists welcomed the amenities of the camps, which ranged from water pumps and free firewood to electricity, showers, and communal kitchens and laundries. They also welcomed the sense of community and camaraderie the camps provided. Wives and mothers especially welcomed the additional conveniences provided by the camps.

The campgrounds rapidly began to experience over-crowding, and tourists demanded more services. By the early 1920s there were an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 municipal autocamps, mostly in the west (Belasco, 71). National parks were also adding campgrounds to their facilities. By 1922 two-thirds of the visitor to Yellowstone arrived by car, the rest by rail. In addition, some families of migrant farm laborers and other 'undesirable' discovered the camps and moved in. All of these

factors led to a fee system, (usually 50 cents a night), or, at smaller camps, a time limit was used to discourage transients (Belasco, 122).

The movement to a fee system at municipal camps opened the auto camp business to private entrepreneurs, usually roadside property owners. These businesses were more responsive to customer needs. This responsiveness led directly to the development of the motel.

#### **TOURIST CABIN TO MOTEL**

Private tourist camps looked to diversification in order to capitalize most efficiently on the tourist trade. Besides offering camping facilities, they served meals, did laundry, fixed cars, and sold gasoline and oil. The tourist season was short, and they needed to make the most of it. The desire to lengthen the tourist season was what prompted some unknown California camp owner to construct a small cabin for tourists desiring more protection from the weather. The cabin proved surprisingly popular, despite the fact it rented for \$.75 to \$1.00 per night. Soon other camp owners, mostly in California, Florida and Texas were building a few cabins to supplement the camping trade. "Residents of smaller towns discovered that there was money to be made . . . by building cabins on a convenient piece of vacant property," (Rae, 94). The so-called 'cabin camps' grew from 5,000 in 1927, to 20,000 in 1935 (Belasco, 88).

At first the cabins were crude unfurnished shelters which spared weary campers the trouble of setting up and tearing down

camp. Campers brought their own bedding and supplies so proprietors did not feel obligated to furnish the structures. The threat of theft also discouraged owners from furnishing the cabins. Cabin renters joined campers in using the shower facilities and communal kitchens, where they were provided.

Tourists proved not to be hardy campers after all. They could see that if cabins were furnished and provided bathing and cooking facilities, they could save themselves the money and trouble of investing in camping equipment and still travel more comfortably and less expensively than if they stayed at hotels. Families in particular pushed for more elaborate and comfortable cabins. Camp owners responded, and soon cabins were furnished with curtains, beds, tables and a gas ring for cooking. Correspondingly, tent sales, which had hit a peak in 1923-24, fell by 1929 to pre-1916 levels (Belasco, 131).

The cabin camp business continued to grow, although slowly, through the years of the Great Depression. Owners did not need to borrow money to finance improvements, cabins were relatively inexpensive to build. Most owners would add some new units or improve existing ones each year, as finances would allow. By the mid 1930s, the new motel industry was in full swing. Successful cabin camps moved out of the camping business entirely and developed more luxurious cabin or cottage units which included bathrooms and stylish decor. Business owners also strived to make the exterior of the buildings attractive, and created bold signs which would advertise the amenities their establishment



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offered to draw tourists in. Not only did former campers abandon their tents to stay in these cottages, but more affluent hotel travellers began patronizing cabin camps because they were more accessible and convenient than downtown hotels.

"Variously known. . . as motor courts, tourist havens, [and] auto lodges," the names of the camps were changed to reflect their new status (Bellamy, 196). The word 'camp', with its connotations of primitive facilities was dropped in favor of new titles, such as cottage court or tourist court or tourist lodge. The term 'motel' was coined by a California business owner who, no doubt, wished to appropriate some of the status of the word 'hotel' for his establishment, if only by association.

The independent motel industry sustained tremendous growth in the post-war era. This growth did not go unnoticed by the corporate world. The development of the interstate highway system in the late 1950s signalled the end of the road for many independent owners. The cost of buying and developing land along the interstate was prohibitively high for the successful small motel owner. As motorists abandoned the old federal highways for the interstates, most motels and other services along the old highways were forced to close.

#### **ORAL HISTORY OF THE HORSESHOE COURT**

In the study of architecture, understanding the human experience of creating, occupying and caring for buildings is as important to understanding a structure as knowing its exact measurements. Oral history is the only way to fill this gap in

many cases, especially in the case of vernacular roadside structures. As Keith Sculle notes, "Neither those who produced roadside architecture nor its consumers are the traditional elites which have captivated traditional historians," (Sculle, 87).

This study includes the reminiscences of Katherine Forrester, owner of the property since 1952, and Jimmy Linville, a retired employee of Mrs. Forrester. Mr. Forrester passed away a number of years ago, after the closing of the motel. Katherine Forrester and Mr. Linville, although they often could not remember specific dates, provided a wealth of information about the structures and the experience of operating a successful motel and liquor business.

#### **HARD WORK AND LONG HOURS**

Katherine Forrester enjoys talking about her years in the motel business, but she does not pretend that they were easy times. Many of the experiences she describes recall days of hard work and long hours.

Mrs. Forrester ran the motel business while her husband worked as a tuck-pointing contractor:

He was gone all the time, so I run the business. I was there from six o'clock until twelve every day. Naturally, our busiest time would be in the summertime. More or less tourists, going back and forth. I got to know some of them. When they got home they'd send me a card, or a letter. Most of them [tourists] would want to go to Mammoth Cave.

We had a big snow in '66. Twenty-three inches ! I'd get out there and shovel it around this circular drive. Shovel it all, so people could get in and out. My kids were little, they didn't help.

One winter we had a snow, I mean you couldn't get any place. We was filled up. And it came such a snow, they couldn't go

anyplace, they couldn't get out of here. So they had to stay. So you know what I did ? I cooked for every one of those tourists ! Every one of them ! I had bacon and eggs, and toast and jelly. I put them in aluminum pans and took them to everyone, and gave it to them. I didn't charge them, I just gave it to them [it is unclear if these two memorates are related to the same snowstorm.

Mrs. Forrester describes the motel and the early years of the business in great detail:

We bought this place for the beer tavern and the motel. It was the busiest place between Chicago and Florida, I would say, everyone thought it was. All the surrounding counties was dry, and Warren county was wet. We had a wonderful business. We had about eight tables in there [the tavern] and about six stools, And we were busy all the time ! We had Old Crow, Sterling, Ninety-Two [beer brands]. Ninety-Two was our most popular beer we had here at that time. And they had the openers, you know how the openers were. You punch a hole in the top [to open the beer can].

Running a busy tavern by herself was difficult. Besides serving beer and renting rooms, Mrs. Forrester also served sandwiches at the tavern. She said that every time she went back in the kitchen to make a sandwich, someone would want some more beer. Despite the fact that Mrs. Forrester has never drank, she remembered her customers fondly. She said that she worked hard to treat them well, even the African American customers she seated on the rear porch of the tavern. Most of the tavern customers were regulars whom she got to know. "We had a great business, and we never had any trouble."

Despite the fact that the tavern was doing good business, the Forresters decided that getting a package liquor license would be easier and more profitable:

He [Mr. Forrester] wanted a whiskey license, package, to-go. So we converted to package whiskey. And we still had business ! They'd come from Glasgow, Horse Cave, Leitchfield and all of Edmonson county. Of course, we'd have some customers from Bowling Green, too. We didn't sell to bootleggers.

We had people who worked for us that lived in some of the buildings. They rented the rooms [ran the motel] while we ran the whiskey store. They didn't have any children, they was good friends of ours. But he got to drinking, so they had to go. I got afraid to stay over there [at the motel office], people got mean. It [the county] went dry in '57. We only had it [the whiskey store] about two, three years and it went dry.

Mrs. Forrester regrets some of the time she lost with her children when she was working:

It's a headache. You don't get to do nothing. See, I had to take my daughter to town everyday, when she was little, when we had the whiskey store. I had to miss all the cute little things she did when she was growing up.

Katherine Forrester also gave a detailed description of the appearance of the motel in its heyday, as well as discussing some of the problems she had with tourists:

We was the first motel from Park City, and at that time there wasn't many motels in Bowling Green. It was shady, it was pretty. We had a pretty tulip bed out there, in the form of a horseshoe. That was real pretty. We put the chairs out there. Every cabin, we called them cabins back in those times. Each one had neon [in the gable], and every one of them was a different color, on both sides [of the court]. And the office had it [neon]. And you could see it for miles and miles. On 68-80, from Glasgow, you could see it. From Park City, you could see it. On top of the tavern we had a flasher, it went round and round. And honey, you could see that from Park City ! So we had a lot of gimmicks to this place. But that was pretty, those neon signs.

When we got this place we put knotty pine in all the rooms, and panel-ray gas heat. And we had Old Hickory [brand name] furniture in all the rooms. It was heavy. Why I could hardly pick up one of those chairs.

These tourists would steal anything. Once they stole a chair. They was from Palm Beach, Florida. And did you know, I called down to the state police there, I had their license number. I didn't catch them with the stuff, but they had rented a room the night before. I thought they [the police] could do something about it,

but they said I had to catch them with it. Some of them just don't care. I discovered that you couldn't have anything too good, or they'd take it.

At first it [the prices] was four dollars for a single [one double bed], and eight dollars for a double [two double beds]. Then we went up to eight dollars and ten dollars. And that's about the most we ever got, to tell you the truth, 'till we went out of business.

The Forresters experienced a series of declines in their liquor and motel business. Warren county was voted dry in 1957, thus they lost the most lucrative part of their business. About ten years later Interstate 65 was opened and the tourist trade began to dry up. Fortunately, Mr. Forrester's business as a tuck pointing contractor was successful enough to see them through. The motel did remain open for business, however, for a few stray customers until the late 1970s or early 1980s. As Mrs. Forrester grew older, she became more fearful of robbery or other trouble. It was easier to just close down. Mrs. Forrester discusses those difficult times with a mixture of regret and relief:

Then we put it [the former liquor store] into a gift shop [after the county went dry]. We had that about a year. Then they built I-65, and that by-passed us. So that left us with nothing but a motel. And then, of course, most people would travel on to Bowling Green, go I-65. They didn't come this way. They kept closing things up and down 31-W. Of course we still got some business from Park City. Or when they filled up in Bowling Green. We still had a business.

## CONCLUSION

The Horseshoe Court is an excellent example of commercial vernacular architecture that is worthy of further study. This motel structure was occupied by the owners, built by local builders and workers, and constructed of local materials. In

this structure we can see the juxtaposition of these traditional building elements with the high style features of Gothic Revival and the commercial eclecticism of neon. This hodgepodge is what makes the Horseshoe Court and other roadside architecture so unique and interesting.

Fortunately, historic preservationists are now beginning to see the importance of buildings such as the Horseshoe Court. The current awareness of the value of commercial vernacular architecture can be greatly enhanced through the work of folklorists, since much of the history of these structures has not been written down. It is largely through oral history that their role in America's roadside culture will be revealed.

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