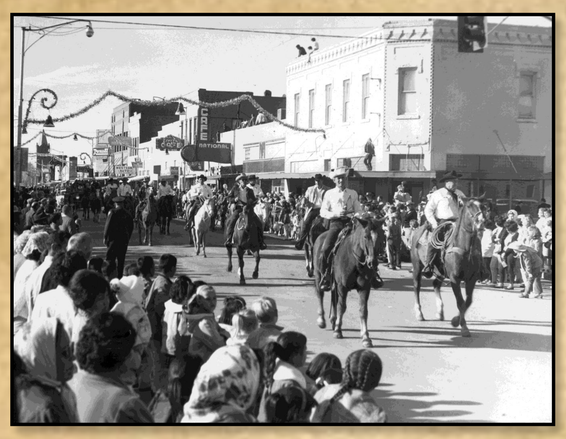
Old Trails Museum

# Journeys To Winslow

# Winslow Today: Tourism

## Winslow's Annual Christmas Parade



Winslow's Retail Trade Committee founded the annual Winslow Christmas Parade in 1946 to encourage citizens to do their Christmas shopping locally. The parade featured floats, Native American bands and dancers, and equestrian units like the one seen here in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of the Rhoton family)

Now a project of the Winslow Chamber of Commerce, the Winslow Christmas Parade continues to kick off the holiday season on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Hundreds of Hopis and Navajos set up jewelry, craft, and food booths along Historic Route 66 before the parade starts. Many of them still participate in the parade itself, like this Navajo princess and prince riding a float.

## Historic Route 66

Congestion, safety, and national defense concerns prompted the creation of the interstate highway system through the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. Interstate 40 bypassed Winslow's section of US Route 66 in October 1979, which was the death knell for the city's vibrant downtown. Winslow's downtown revitalization began when Route 66 received a historic highway designation in 1987. The city's transportation history became the foundation for its cultural heritage tourism efforts. More tourists began to pull off the interstate to slow down and experience the charm and authenticity of an earlier time. Some had been stopping on corners around town to take photos ever since 1972, when the Eagles hit *Take It Easy* declared, "Well, I'm a standin' on a corner in Winslow, Arizona . . ."

Floranel Troutner Earl, daughter of Wayne L. Troutner, stands in front of her business on Third Street in 2012, now part of westbound Historic Route 66. She reflected on returning to Winslow after its heyday had passed:

*"We came back here in '74 knowing that it was going to be bypassed . . . it wasn't the town that I had left . . . in the 1950s (it) had the forest industry and it had tourism and it had the Santa Fe Railroad . . . the town was a bustling town . . . you could hardly cross the streets downtown because of the traffic . . . We knew the freeway was going to come, but we really didn't know that it would have the impact it had.."*
Mary Tolan interview, 2009

Pete Kretsedemas, co-owner of the Falcon Restaurant on Route 66, described his reaction to the bypass:

*"I can tell you exactly the day and the hour that we got bypassed . . . I'm there in the restaurant . . . you see all this traffic go by . . . and all of sudden – nothing. Like you shut the water off in the spigot . . . and a knot got me here [points to stomach], and I thought, 'Oh, my god. It's going to be like this from now on?'"* Mary Tolan interview, 2009

Residents and visitors alike enjoy attractions and annual events along Route 66 including La Posada Hotel, the Winslow Visitors Center/Hubbell Trading Post, the 9-11 Remembrance Garden, the Standin' on the Corner Festival, and the annual Just Cruis'n Car Club Show, seen on the left. (Photo courtesy of Todd Roth)

Downtown Winslow received another boost in 1999 when the Standin' on the Corner Foundation dedicated a park of the same name at Historic Route 66 and Kinsley Avenue. Ron Adamson's statue of guitarist "Easy" in front of John Pugh's two-story mural provides an ideal photo opportunity for Eagles fans. An estimated 100,000 tourists stop at the park each year.

## La Posada Hotel and Gardens

Auto-tourists flooded Route 66 after World War II, but they sought more modest accommodations than Harvey grand hotels. La Posada closed in 1957 but escaped the wrecking ball because the Santa Fe used the building for its Third Division offices starting in 1963 (below, left). Meanwhile, the all-volunteer Gardening Angels tended the extensive grounds. The La Posada Foundation secured federal grant funds and got the building listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Owners Allan Affeldt and Tina Mion reopened the building as a historic hotel and gardens with partner Daniel Lutzick in 1997. Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* still stops here twice daily, both eastbound and westbound.

Founded in 1995, the all-volunteer Winslow Harvey Girls provide visitors with the history of the Santa Fe, Fred Harvey, and La Posada. They give guided tours of the hotel,and set up "trunk shows" featuring extensive displays of Harvey and Santa Fe china. (Photo courtesy of the Winslow Harvey Girls)

Owner Allan Affeldt reflected on transitioning from Southern California to Winslow: *"I started working with some local volunteers…to try to help them figure out what it would take to try and save the building. I had no intention of buying it and moving to Winslow . . . We didn't really think that this would become our home and our life. We just thought it would just be another adventure in a string of adventures, and maybe we'd save the building . . . there wasn't a meeting where . . . me and Tina and Dan…sat down and said, 'Yeah., let's move to Winslow and spend the rest of our lives there'. . . It just sort of became our lives as we got into it."*
Mary Tolan interview, 2008