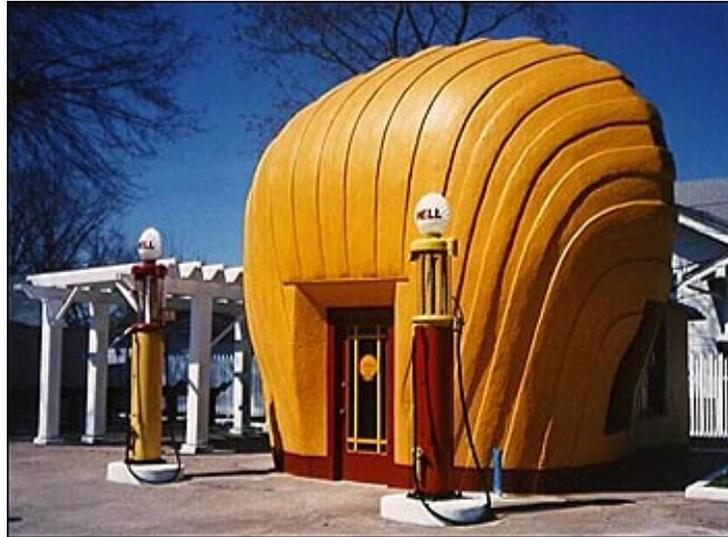




### Roadside Attractions



*(Photo by Martin Coble)*



*(Photo by Martin Coble)*

Have you ever bought your milk while inside a milk bottle? Paid for your gas inside a teapot or a sea shell? Slept in a wigwam? Climbed on a dinosaur? Have you compared your foot size with that of Paul Bunyan? These and many more such activities attracted hometowners and tourists alike as millions of Americans took to the road when the automobile revolutionized American life. Some set off on ambitious cross-country trips;



## *Roadside Attractions*

others on jaunts to neighboring states to visit newly opened national parks; and some simply crossed town for Sunday dinner or to pick up milk from the store.

In this lesson, students will examine five examples of roadside architecture built in the 1920s and 1930s and designed to catch the eye of passing motorists—three represented literalism in advertising, one was intended as a political joke, and one was designed to lure the traveler into spending the night in an "exotic" setting. The students also will examine two examples of colossal roadside sculptures that exemplify the concept of boosterism.



### Document Contents

#### **National Curriculum Standards**

#### **About This Lesson**

#### **Getting Started: Inquiry Question**

#### **Setting the Stage: Historical Context**

#### **Locating the Site: Map**

1. Map 1: United States

#### **Determining the Facts: Readings**

1. Reading 1: Representational Architecture
2. Reading 2: Wigwam Village No. 2
3. Reading 3: The Roadside Colossus

#### **Visual Evidence: Images**

1. Teapot Dome Service Station
2. Shell Service Station
3. The Big Duck
4. Benewah Milk Bottle
5. Wigwam Village No. 2
6. Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox
7. Dinosaur Park
8. Dinosaur Park

#### **Putting It All Together: Activities**

1. Activity 1: Designing a Building
2. Activity 2: Form, Fantasy, and Design



## *Roadside Attractions*

### 3. Activity 3: The Auto and the Local Community

#### References and Endnotes

#### Additional Resources



### Where this lesson fits into the curriculum

**Time Period:** 1920s and 1930s

**Topics:** The lesson could be used in units on popular culture or the rise of American motor tourism.

---

### **Relevant United States History Standards for Grades 5-12**

*This lesson relates to the following National Standards for History from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:*

#### **US History Era 7**

- **Standard 3B:** The student understands how a modern capitalist economy emerged in the 1920s.
- **Standard 3C:** The student understands how new cultural movements reflected and changed American society.

#### **US History Era 8**

- **Standard 1B:** The student understands how American life changed during the 1930s.
- 

### **Relevant Curriculum Standards for Social Studies**

*This lesson relates to the following Curriculum Standards for Social Studies from the National Council for the Social Studies:*

#### **Theme III: People, Places, and Environment**

- **Standard G:** The student describes how people create places that reflect cultural values and ideals as they build neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and the like.

#### **Theme VII: Production, Distribution, and Consumption**



## Roadside Attractions

- Standard B: The student describes the role that supply and demand, price incentives, and profits play in determining what is produced and distributed in a competitive market system.

### Theme VIII: Science, Technology, and Society

- Standard A: The student examines and describes the influence of culture on scientific and technological choices and advancement, such as in transportation, medicine, and warfare.
- Standard C: The student describes examples in which values, beliefs, and attitudes have been influenced by new scientific and technological knowledge, such as the invention of the printing press, conceptions of the universe, applications of atomic energy, and genetic discoveries.

### Relevant Common Core Standards

*This lesson relates to the following Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies for middle and high school students:*

#### Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.2

#### Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.5
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.6

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.7

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.10



### About This Lesson

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files, "Benewah Milk Bottle," "Big Duck," "Dinosaur Park," "Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox," "Shell Service Station," "Teapot Dome Service Station," and "[Wigwam Village No. 2](https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/88000180.pdf)" [<https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/88000180.pdf>] (with [photographs](https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Photos/88000180.pdf) [<https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Photos/88000180.pdf>]). It was written by Fay Metcalf, an education consultant. TwHP is sponsored, in part, by the Cultural Resources Training Initiative and Parks as Classrooms programs of the National Park Service. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into the classrooms across the country.

### Objectives

1. To explain the impact the automobile had on business as merchants and city leaders strove to gain financially from increased automobile traffic during the 1920s and 1930s;
2. To define and explain the motivation for literalism in advertising, place-product-packaging, and boosterism, and to compare current examples with those of the 1920s and 1930s;
3. To identify local structures that reflect "novelty" architecture;
4. To list the changes that auto culture brought to their own community.

### Materials for students

**The materials listed below can either be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.**

1. One map showing the locations of seven examples of roadside attractions;
2. Three readings describing the origins of these roadside attractions;
3. Eight photographs of the attractions.

### Visiting the site

- **Benewah Milk Bottle:** South 321 Cedar, Spokane, Washington.
- **Big Duck:** Route 24, Flanders, Suffolk County, New York.
- **Dinosaur Park:** Skyline Drive, west of downtown Rapid City, South Dakota. The site is maintained as a city park.

# Teaching with Historic Places

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## *Roadside Attractions*

- **Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox:** 3rd Street and Bemidji Avenue, Bemidji, Minnesota.
- **Shell Service Station:** Sprague and Peachtree Streets, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
- **Teapot Dome Service Station:** Old State Highway 12, southeast of Zillah, Washington.
- **Wigwam Village No. 2:** Highway 31W, 1.6 miles northeast of Highway 70, Cave City, Kentucky. The buildings continue to operate as a motel.



### Getting Started



**What purpose do you think this structure serves?**



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Photo Analysis Worksheet

#### Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

#### Step 2:

Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, activities--do you notice?

#### Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

#### Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

#### Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?



## *Roadside Attractions*

### **Setting the Stage**

Few inventions have had as great and as widespread an impact as the automobile. By 1920, more than 300 cities had roadside camping facilities for motorists and more than one million people used them. Streets and highways were quickly built or modernized and a uniform numbering system for highways was introduced in 1925; by 1930 nearly 27 million cars were registered. The production, sale, repair, and servicing of cars provided work for millions. The Great Depression struck the tourist trade a great blow. Expenditures for hotels, restaurants, vacation clothing, and travel supplies fell from \$872 million in 1929 to \$444 million in 1932. Clearly, the people who would stay in business during tough times would be those who could appeal to the smaller number of tourists on the road.

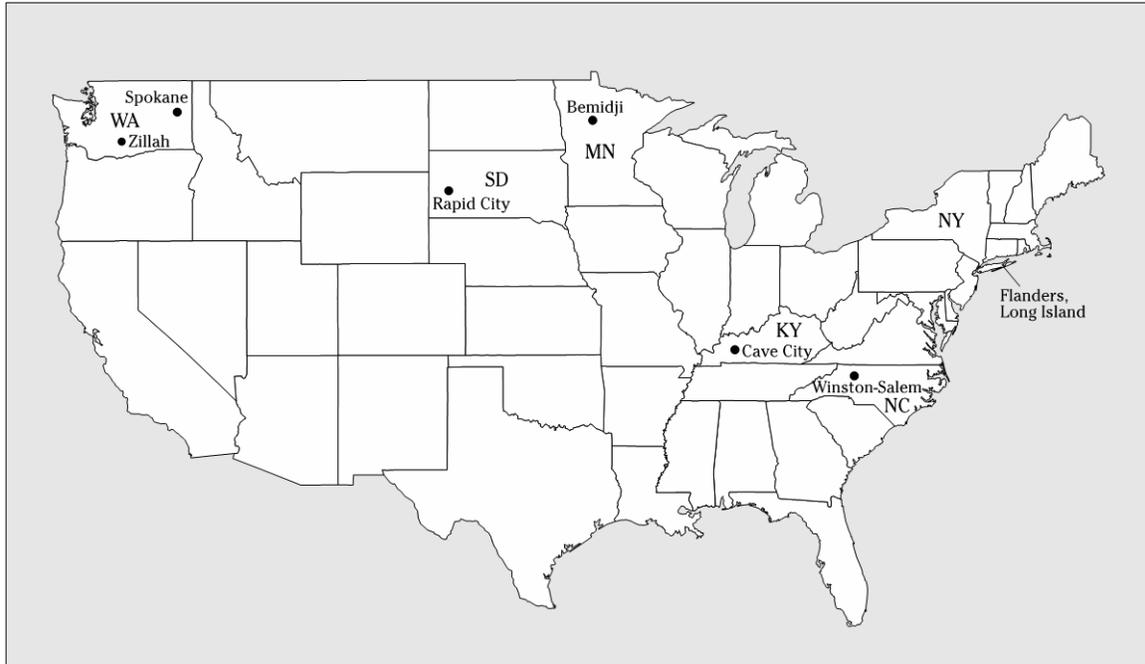
By the time prosperity returned, roadside advertising had become a normal operating cost for businesses. Fanciful buildings, signs, and colossal sculptures were a colorful feature of highway culture and commerce during the 1920s and 30s. Highly visible and usually humorous, these "roadside attractions" were designed to catch the eye of the passing motorist and entice potential customers. All in all, the 1920s and—in spite of the Great Depression—the 1930s literally changed the American landscape.



## Roadside Attractions

### Locating the Site

#### Map 1: United States



This map indicates the cities where the roadside attractions explored in this lesson are located. The examples include fancifully-shaped gas stations, stores, and motels as well as enormous roadside sculptures.





## Roadside Attractions

### Determining the Facts

#### Reading 1: Representational Architecture

By the late 1920s, an increasing number of unique buildings became visible on the highway landscape—a giant milk bottle, tea kettle, teepees, and even a duck. Previously limited to amusement parks, these follies attracted the attention of passing motorists. Many of these buildings were examples of literalism in advertising, that is, they were giant signs advertising the products sold inside.

#### ***Teapot Dome Service Station***

Located on Old State Highway 12 in Zillah, Washington, the Teapot Dome Service Station was built in 1922. A circular frame building with conical roof, sheet-metal "handle," and concrete "spout," it is an example of the roadside architectural follies built during the expansion of the national highway system in the 1920s and 1930s.

Selling oil products from a teapot-shaped structure was intended as a humorous reminder of the Teapot Dome scandals that rocked President Warren G. Harding's administration (1921-1923). That controversy sent U.S. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall to prison for leasing government oil reserves in Teapot Dome, Wyoming, and Elk Hills, California, to private producers. The Teapot Dome station continues to operate as a full service gas station and is a familiar sight to travelers in eastern Washington.

#### ***The Big Duck***

The Big Duck is a wood frame, wire mesh, concrete surfaced building designed in the shape of a Peking duck to house a retail poultry store. The building was constructed in 1930-31 on busy West Main Street in the town of Riverhead on Long Island, New York. It measures approximately 15 feet wide across the front, 30 feet long from breast to tail, and 20 feet to the top of the head. The eyes are Ford Model "T" tail lights. The interior is approximately 11 by 15 feet.

In 1937, owner Martin Maurer moved the Big Duck four miles southeast to Flanders, where it occupied a prominent roadside location near the duck barns and marshes of Maurer's new ranch. The Riverhead area, including Flanders, was the center of Long Island's well-known duck industry. By 1939 there were approximately 90 duck farms in the county.

Maurer's unusual tactic for enticing customers to purchase his ducklings was apparently a success. The Big Duck's prime location, on one of the main roads leading east from New York City to the Hamptons, earned it a lot of attention. Many criticized the Big Duck, especially in the 1960s and early 70s, but architect Robert Venturi claimed that it clearly combined functional and symbolic aspects of architecture, and therefore was noteworthy. In fact, Venturi coined the term "duck" to describe a building in which the architecture is subordinate to the overall symbolic form.

The Big Duck closed in 1984, and since 1988 it has been located in Sears-Bellows Pond County Park between Flanders and Hampton Bays on eastern Long Island. It now houses a retail gift shop operated by the Friends for Long Island Heritage.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### ***Benewah Milk Bottle***

A favorite and familiar landmark in Spokane, Washington, the Benewah Milk Bottle is an example of the concept of literalism in advertising. Completed in 1935, the bottle is stuccoed from its base to that section which tapers to the neck. The neck itself and cap are covered with sheet metal over a wooden frame. The entire structure originally was painted white.

Owner Paul E. Newport built two such milk bottles as retail outlets for his thriving Benewah Dairy Company. His advertising stated that the bottles were "designed to build better men and women by making dairy products attractive to boys and girls. No expense will be spared to make these new stores as sturdy as fine, and as good as the products they represent." To mark the opening of the new milk bottle stores, Newport sponsored a soap box derby on Post Hill, an event that was enjoyed by thousands of young people.

### ***Shell Service Station***

The Shell Service Station was built in 1930 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Shell Company had not begun marketing its products in North Carolina until the late 1920s. Therefore, the owners of the Quality Oil Company of Winston-Salem decided to attract customers with a series of shell-shaped service stations. Although at least eight of these stations were built in the area, the one-story-high structure at Peachtree and Sprague Streets is the only one known to remain.

The Shell station is yet another excellent example of literalism in advertising in the 1920s and 1930s. The building's form visually repeats the Shell gasoline brand and is a three-dimensional representation of the Shell trademark. The building is literally a sign, an advertisement that is read and immediately comprehended. The structure is an unusual survival of early 20th-century advertising techniques and merits recognition and preservation.

Recognizing its historical value, Preservation North Carolina spent a year and \$50,000 bringing the landmark back to its original luster. Workers chipped away layers of faded yellow paint to find the Shell's original yellow-orange color. They repaired the original front door and fixed a crack that had been patched with black tar. The carwash—a wooden, trellised shelter that allowed cars to be washed and serviced in the shade—has been reconstructed. Restored pumps and replica lamp posts donated by Quality Oil Company add the finishing touches to the restoration of this quirky and beloved landmark. Preservation North Carolina currently uses the former gas station as a satellite office.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Reading 1

**1)** Why would the Teapot Dome Service Station be considered a "folly"? Why is it considered a political joke? What more can you find out about the Teapot Dome scandal from a U.S. history book or an encyclopedia?

**2)** The Big Duck, Shell Service Station, and Benewah Milk Bottle are examples of literalism in advertising. What does this mean? Do you think it is an effective form of advertising? Why or why not?

**3)** Is the Teapot Dome station a "duck"? the Benewah Milk Bottle? the Shell Service Station? Explain your answers.



## Roadside Attractions

### Determining the Facts

#### Reading 2: Wigwam Village No. 2

The coming of the automobile broadened the concepts of recreation and leisure. Unlike travel by train—for decades the most common means of long-distance transportation used by Americans—motoring could be, itself, part of a vacation, not just the means of reaching a destination. In the early 1920s, "autocamping" became the rage, and campgrounds sprang up all over the country. By the end of the decade, however, the camps' latrines and common showers, and the increasing patronage by itinerants brought about by the onset of the Depression, made these facilities less desirable for many motorists. The next step was the cabin or cottage camp, or the proto-motel. The tiny individual tourist cabins usually emphasized the attractions of the region; for example, mock colonial houses in New England, adobe huts in the Southwest, and the wigwam in Kentucky.

Frank Redford turned his interest in Native American history into a business in 1933 when he built a teepee-shaped building near Horse City, Kentucky, to display his collection of relics. The following year he added a group of teepee-shaped cabins to entice visitors to stay the night and named it "Wigwam Village." Redford obtained a patent for his innovative building design in 1937, and that same year he constructed a second village in the northern outskirts of Cave City, Kentucky, near Mammoth Cave National Park. By the early 1950s, seven wigwam villages had been built in the south and southwestern United States.

The typical wigwam village consisted of individual teepee cabins placed around a larger teepee which served as an office and lobby. The 18 steel-and-concrete tepees of Cave City's Wigwam Village No. 2 vary only in size and number of windows. At 52 feet tall and approximately 35 feet in diameter, the gift shop and office is the largest. Each of the 15 sleeping units is approximately 25 feet in diameter and has two windows. The exterior walls are painted white accented with a bright red jagged lower edge at the top of the cone, a bold zig-zag band encircling the building halfway up the wall, and a narrow zig-zag band with small triangles along the inner edge of the window openings and marks similar to exclamation points at the corners. In the narrow bathrooms created by a partition at the rear of the sleeping units, the floor is covered with red-and-white tiles and the walls and stall shower repeat the zig-zag motif. Four slender metal poles project from the top in imitation of branches of wood.

In its fanciful emulation of an Indian encampment, Wigwam Village No. 2 exemplifies a unique type of architecture created for automobile travelers along the American roadside. It is one of the most historic forerunners of a practice that has been referred to as place-product-packaging—the commercial use of architectural imagery denoting product or regional design characteristics by service-oriented establishments along the American roadside. The motel placed items in the room that patrons could take home as souvenirs. These items, including ashtrays embossed with images of teepees, served as advertisements as well. The gift shop sold t-shirts and miniature plastic teepees. In addition, teepee-shaped signs along Kentucky's highways advertised Wigwam Village.

The golden age examples of roadside Americana began to disappear in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the burgeoning Interstate system. Superhighways took most of the tourist traffic away from the smaller U.S. roads like Rt. 66 and Rt. 31, and the motels along these routes began to go out of business. The Wigwam Villages were no exception: Today, only three of the original motels remain: Cave City, Kentucky; Holbrook, Arizona; and Rialto, California.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Reading 2

- 1) In what ways did the owner of Wigwam Village No. 2 try to entice travelers to stop at the motel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How is place-product-packaging different from literalism in advertising?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) If you had been a traveler in the 1930s, would you have been attracted to the Wigwam Village? Would a stay there seem like part of your vacation? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What does Wigwam Village tell you about ethnic attitudes of the 1930s? How does it stereotype Indian culture? Why might American Indians find Wigwam Village offensive?



## Roadside Attractions

### Determining the Facts

#### Reading 3: The Roadside Colossus

Like the examples of roadside architecture presented in this lesson, large roadside sculptures appeared as a reaction to the popularization of the automobile in the early 20th century. Its main function was to attract the attention of passing cars.

#### ***Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox***

Minnesota's first and best-known example of the "roadside colossus," the statuary grouping of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, is historically significant for its role in promoting tourism in the northern part of the state.

Located in a vast woodland and Lake Region, the city of Bemidji played host to a modest tourist trade as early as the 1890s. After the establishment of rail connections in 1898, promoters began developing lakeshore sites for summer cottages and constructing a variety of tourist hotels and resorts, primarily catering to hunters and anglers. Benefiting from the emergence of automobile travel and a state highway system, the Bemidji tourist industry experienced a boom during the 1920s, but suffered with the rest of the economy during the Great Depression.

In 1936, as a means of stimulating, or "boosting," tourism, a number of civic organizations and businesses decided to sponsor a winter carnival that would promote the city's resources for winter sports. The carnival opened on January 14, 1937. Taking its theme from Bemidji's former prominence as a lumbering center, the celebration focused on the mythical figure of Paul Bunyan, a giant lumberjack of formidable endurance and skill who had traveled with the folklore of the lumber camps from New England to Minnesota during the mid-19th century.

The carnival unveiled giant statues of Paul and his blue ox, Babe, to serve as mascots for the festivities. Both statues were designed and built by city residents. They became overnight sensations, garnering a full-page spread in *Life* magazine. Both were placed in a municipal park overlooking the lake and the city's busiest intersection. Although oversized statues have now become fairly common devices for promoting tourism, Bemidji's Paul and Babe were pioneer efforts in the field.

Paul Bunyan is approximately 18 feet high, measuring about five feet across at the base and about three feet from toe to heel. Babe stands about 10 feet tall, measuring about eight feet across the front hoofs and about 23 feet from nose to tail.

#### ***Dinosaur Park***

Dinosaur Park is one of the most elaborate examples of roadside sculpture in the state of South Dakota and an excellent example of vernacular public art. Mount Rushmore, about 20 miles southwest of Rapid City, became the site of the great carvings of four American presidents who played a major role in westward expansion. That sculpture was first dedicated in 1930, and by 1935, some 200,000 visitors had visited the unfinished monument. These statistics were not lost on the promoters of Rapid City. Tourism was big business, and the chamber of commerce was eager to make the connection between one successful sculpture and another.

The idea of dinosaurs as the subject of a new sculpture came from Dr. C. C. O'Harra, the president of the South Dakota School of Mines and a paleontologist who was fascinated by the



## Roadside Attractions

prehistoric dinosaur remains he had found in the Badlands of South Dakota. Others also liked the idea. The creation of concrete dinosaurs hit three nerves in the American aesthetic—a sense of the history of the West, an enjoyment of things larger than life, and a secret pleasure in being frightened. Dinosaur Park, located on a prominent hill above the town, was dedicated on May 22, 1936.

All five of the original dinosaurs were built in identical fashion. The frames are composed of two-inch-diameter black iron pipe set in concrete. Around the central frame, body forms consist of a steel skeleton covered with wire mesh to which the concrete skin is applied. Oral tradition has it that the park's dinosaurs originally were gray, but today they are painted vivid green, with touches of pinkish red. Built to authentic size, the measurements of the five dinosaurs are as follows:

1. Triceratops—27 feet long, 11 feet high, 40-inch horns
2. Tyrannosaurus Rex—35 feet long, 16 feet high, 4-foot-long head
3. Brontosaurus—80 feet long and 28 feet high
4. Stegosaurus—11 feet long and 7 feet high
5. Trachodon—33 feet long and 17 feet 6 inches high.

The brontosaurus, the largest of the dinosaurs, is visible for many miles and has become a local landmark.

In *The Colossus of Roads*, art historian Karal Ann Marling explains the appeal of the awesomely large prehistoric animals in this way: "Humor and fakery create situations that appear 'dangerous, horrible or uncanny' and then disperse the sensation of terror with the sudden realization that the whole thing was a hoax."





## Roadside Attractions

### Visual Evidence

Photo 1: Teapot Dome Service Station, Zillah, Washington



(Photo by Joan Bacharach, 1989)



## *Roadside Attractions*

**Photo 2: Shell Service Station, Winston-Salem, North Carolina**



*(Photo by Martin Coble)*



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Photos 1 & 2

**1)** In what ways are these two gas stations alike? How are they different? How are they different from a typical gas station today?

**2)** Do you think stations such as these would be built today? Why or why not? Would you like to work in such a building?



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Visual Evidence

#### Photo 3: The Big Duck, Suffolk County, New York



*(Photo courtesy of Beth Savage)*





## *Roadside Attractions*

### Visual Evidence

**Photo 4: Benewah Milk Bottle, Spokane, Washington**



*(Photo by Beth Boland)*



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Photo 4

1) Which advertising concept does this structure represent?

2) Do you think the building's design enticed people to purchase dairy products here? Why or why not?



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Visual Evidence

#### Photo 5: Wigwam Village No. 2



*(Photo by Beth Savage)*



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Photo 5

- 1) What is a teepee? What is a wigwam? Which is represented in this photo? Why might the name "Wigwam Village" have been chosen?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Would you like to stay at the Wigwam Village? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Do you think place-product-packaging helped the owners of the Wigwam Village attract guests? Why or why not?



## Roadside Attractions

### Visual Evidence

Photo 6: Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, Bemidji, Minnesota



*(Photo by Martin Ince)*



## Roadside Attractions

Photo 7: Dinosaur Park A



*(Photo by Beth Boland)*



## Roadside Attractions

Photo 8: Dinosaur Park B



*(Photo by Beth Boland)*



## *Roadside Attractions*

### Questions for Photos 6, 7, & 8

**1)** What are your impressions of the sculptures depicted in these photos? Why were they created?

**2)** How might young children feel when viewing these colossal statues? Do you think they react differently to the dinosaurs than to Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox? If so, how?



## *Roadside Attractions*

### **Putting It All Together**

The following activities will encourage students to consider the significance of roadside attractions that developed as a result of widespread use of the automobile.

### **Activity 1: Designing a Building**

This lesson has introduced a number of terms that may be new to the students. To see if they have grasped these terms, ask the students to sketch structures they might want to build that represent 1) literalism in advertising, 2) place-product-packaging, and 3) vernacular public art. They should be creative in their choice of design—no gas stations, motels or dinosaurs! Suggest that the students think of businesses or public art that would be particularly appropriate for their region. The students then share their completed, unlabeled drawings to see if classmates can determine which term has been represented.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### **Activity 2: Form, Fantasy, and Design**

Since the time of the Romans, many have claimed that the design of a building should declare its purpose; that is, you should be able to tell at first glance if a building is, for example, a school, a shoe-repair shop, an apartment house, or a bank. This concept is known as form follows function. The pop architecture of the structures in this lesson might better be described as form follows fantasy. In discussing such works, J. J. C. Andrews writes, "Anything is better than the boredom of formalistic architecture....I begin to see Big Duck [an actual building in Long Island whose design was controversial] as one building in a whole city of such buildings....You go to the orange for breakfast, read inside a huge open book, wash your car at the whale, pick up milk at the milk bottle, go out to dinner at the fish, and catch a movie at the duck."

In the 1920s and 1930s, such structures were a relatively common form of vernacular architecture. Most were constructed by their owners or by a local builder without the benefit of an architect. Some architects, in fact, dismissed the idea that a hamburger stand should look like a giant hamburger or a root-beer stand like a root-beer barrel. The general public, however, was enchanted by such structures.

Have students split into groups of four or five; each group redesigns a city block to include at least 10 buildings that are "ducks." These should include structures typically found in any city: a bank, a post office, a library, a barber shop, a restaurant, and clothing, furniture, drug, and toy stores. When each group has finished, tape the completed blocks together on the chalkboard. The class then votes on whether they would like to live in the city as it now exists or in the fantasy city they have created.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### **Activity 3: The Automobile and the Local Community**

Have students investigate the ways in which the automobile changed their community. They are to look for clues that show what their town was like before the coming of the automobile by answering the following questions:

1. Do most students ride buses to school? Did their parents?
2. Do many people work and shop near where they live? Did their grandparents?
3. Are there old gas stations or automobile showrooms downtown? How are they now used?
4. How many parking lots or parking garages are there in a given neighborhood or business area? What kinds of businesses have been specifically designed for customers traveling by car?
5. Have any buildings in the area been torn down to build a highway?
6. What kinds of signs do they see along the streets and highways in their community? Have they been designed to be read by pedestrians or motorists?

Next, have students explore whether any examples of the types of fanciful vernacular architecture or public art studied in this lesson exist or ever existed in their community. If they do find examples, they should discover if efforts are being made to preserve these artifacts of the past. If there are, the students might help with such preservation efforts as a class project. If there are currently no preservation efforts, students could write letters to local public officials to discuss the importance of preserving these places.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### References and Endnotes

#### Reading 1

Reading 1 was compiled from the following National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms: John Auwaerter, "The Big Duck" (Suffolk County, New York), 1997; Nancy Compau and Scott Brooks-Miller, "Benewah Milk Bottle" (Spokane County, Washington), 1986; Leonard Garfield and Richard L. Thomas, "Teapot Dome Service Station" (Yakima County, Washington), 1985; and Brent Glass and Mary Alice Hinson, "Shell Service Station" (Forsyth County, North Carolina), 1975.

#### Reading 2

Reading 2 was compiled from Claudia R. Brown and Keith A. Sculle, "Wigwam Village No. 2" (Barren County MRA, Kentucky) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988.

#### Reading 3

Reading 3 was compiled from Jeffrey A. Hess, "Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox" (Beltrami County, Minnesota) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987; and Carolyn Torma, "Dinosaur Park" (Pennington County, South Dakota) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990.



## *Roadside Attractions*

### **Additional Resources**

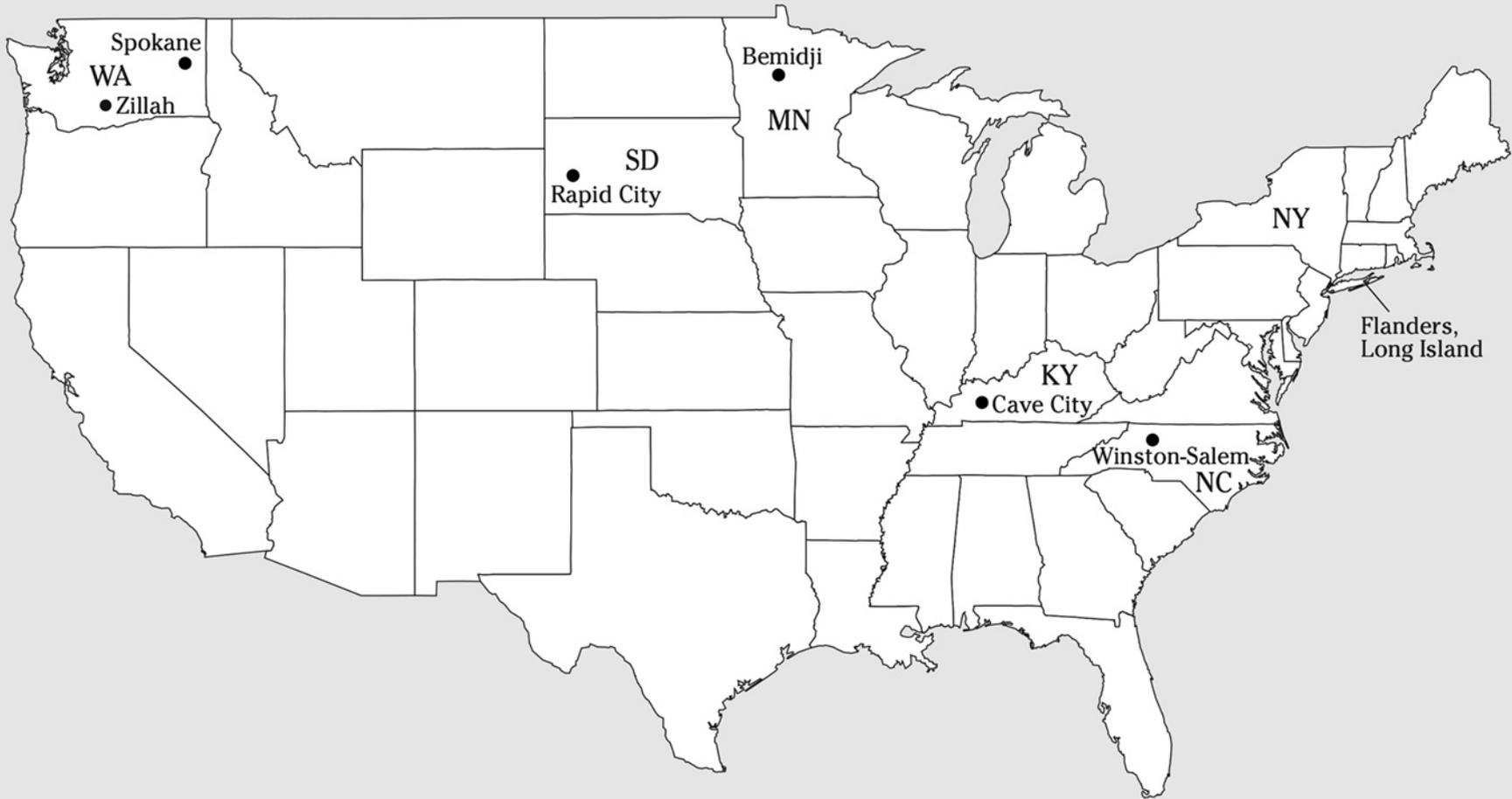
By looking at *Roadside Attractions*, students can explore the whimsical, extravagant architecture that accompanied American auto culture of the 1920s and 1930s. Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting and entertaining materials.

### **Society for Commercial Archeology**

The Society for Commercial Archeology (SCA) is the oldest national organization devoted to the artifacts, structures, signs, and symbols of the 20th-century commercial landscape. [SCA's Web page](#) offers links to a variety of sites related to historic highways and roadside attractions.

### **Minnesota Historical Society**

The Minnesota Historical Society's [Roadside Architecture Web page](#) presents a list (and some photographs) of various roadside attractions in the state, including Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox in Bemidji, Minnesota.





Good Remembrance  
OPENING THE WAY TO THE BEACH FRONT  
SPECIALTY SHOP FOR THE BEACH

WELCOME TO THE BEACH FRONT  
SPECIALTY SHOP FOR THE BEACH  
SPECIALTY SHOP FOR THE BEACH

YES WE ARE  
OPEN





THE  
BIG DUCK  
1930 - 1931  
100 - 101

BARN







BEMIDJI  
PAUL  
BUNYAN  
1937

