A Road Through History

How did you get here today? There's a good chance that you traveled along a route used by travelers for centuries. Nearby I-44 and the historic Route 66 follow paths used by American Indians for trade and travel more than 500 years ago.

In the 1830s, when Cherokee on the Trail of Tears used this corridor, Waynesville was just a small village. The town's proximity to early transportation routes helped it to grow. After the construction of a telegraph line connecting Saint Louis, Missouri to Fort Smith, Arkansas, people began calling this route the "Wire Road." During the Civil War, it provided the main route through the Ozarks, and troops followed it to skirmishes and camps in the region.

In 1926, the road became part of Route 66, the iconic highway that linked Chicago, Illinois to southern California. How are you using this route today?

The five-span concrete bridge you see before you replaced this metal structure in 1923.

Early Route 66 travelers passing through Waynesville.