

## Planes, Trains & Automobiles

Capitol Boulevard has had many incarnations. From its beginnings in the 1860s as a ferry crossing for prospectors and Oregon Trail Pioneers to becoming part of US Highway 30, this area remains important to Boise's transportation and civic history.

Known by different names throughout time, the boulevard was created in 1931 with the opening of The Memorial Bridge. Prior to this, the section north of the river was simply 7th Street, an undeveloped road that dead-ended at the river. The section of road south of the river was known as the 9th Street Pike, and connected to the city by way of the 1911 8th Street Trestle bridge. During the early 1880s, this was also referred to as "the Road to Kuna", since this was the most direct wagon route to access the railroad that had its nearest depot in Kuna until 1893 when a permanent depot was built along Front Street.

Rapid growth in the early twentieth century brought significant changes to the area. In 1914, visionary architect Charles Wayland saw the potential of creating a formal approach to the Capitol. Construction of the new Union Pacific Depot in 1925, and development of a Municipal Airport in 1926, transformed the area south of the river. Along the way, legendary personalities such as Charles Lindbergh and Harry Morrison would leave their footprints here.

But it was the automobile that would define Capitol Boulevard as the grand entryway to the capitol city. During the 1930s, America's first transcontinental highway, US 30, brought vacationers, salesmen and car-campers down the boulevard. Motels and tourist camps were soon to follow. During the Great Depression, federal relief programs transformed the area, helping fund construction of some of the boulevard's landmark structures, such as the Boise Art Museum, the State Historical Museum and the Log Cabin.

These stories and many others are told on a series of small signs mounted to the streetlights lining the east side of Capitol Boulevard extending from Julia Davis Drive to Boise Avenue.



## History on the Lights

by Mark Baltes

2007

History on the lights is a public art project funded by the Boise City Arts Commission's Percent for Arts Program. It was designed and constructed by Boise artist and preservationist, Mark Baltes. The project consists of sixteen porcelain enamel plaques integrated into the historic street lights that line the pedestrian corridor along Capitol Boulevard. Each plaque engages the viewer by first asking the question: Did You Know? accompanied by a picture and a tidbit of local history relating to a specific site. Walkers along the boulevard from Julia Davis Drive to Boise Avenue will be treated to glimpses of Boise's colorful past.

### Acknowledgements and Contributors:

Funding provided by Boise City Department of Arts and History, in cooperation with Boise City Parks and Recreation.

### Special Thanks to:

Idaho State Historical Society and Archive  
Boise City Historian's Office  
Boise City Public Works Dept.  
Barbara Perry Bauer  
Ann Felton  
John Bertram  
Kathleen Craven  
Arthur Hart  
The Prep Department  
Todd Shallat  
Mike Rhodes  
Tully Gerlach  
Dane Van Hooser  
Janelle Wilson

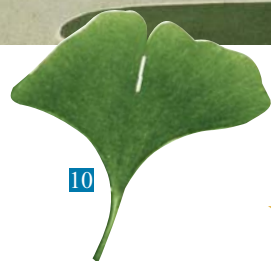
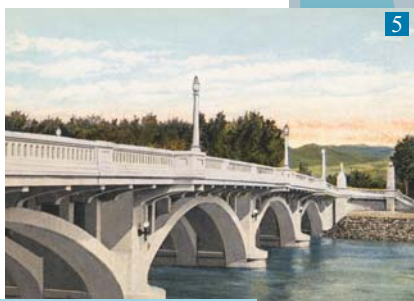
# Did You Know?

That a walk  
along Capitol  
Boulevard can  
be a step back  
in time?

History on the Lights  
**PUBLIC ART  
WALKING TOUR  
MAP**

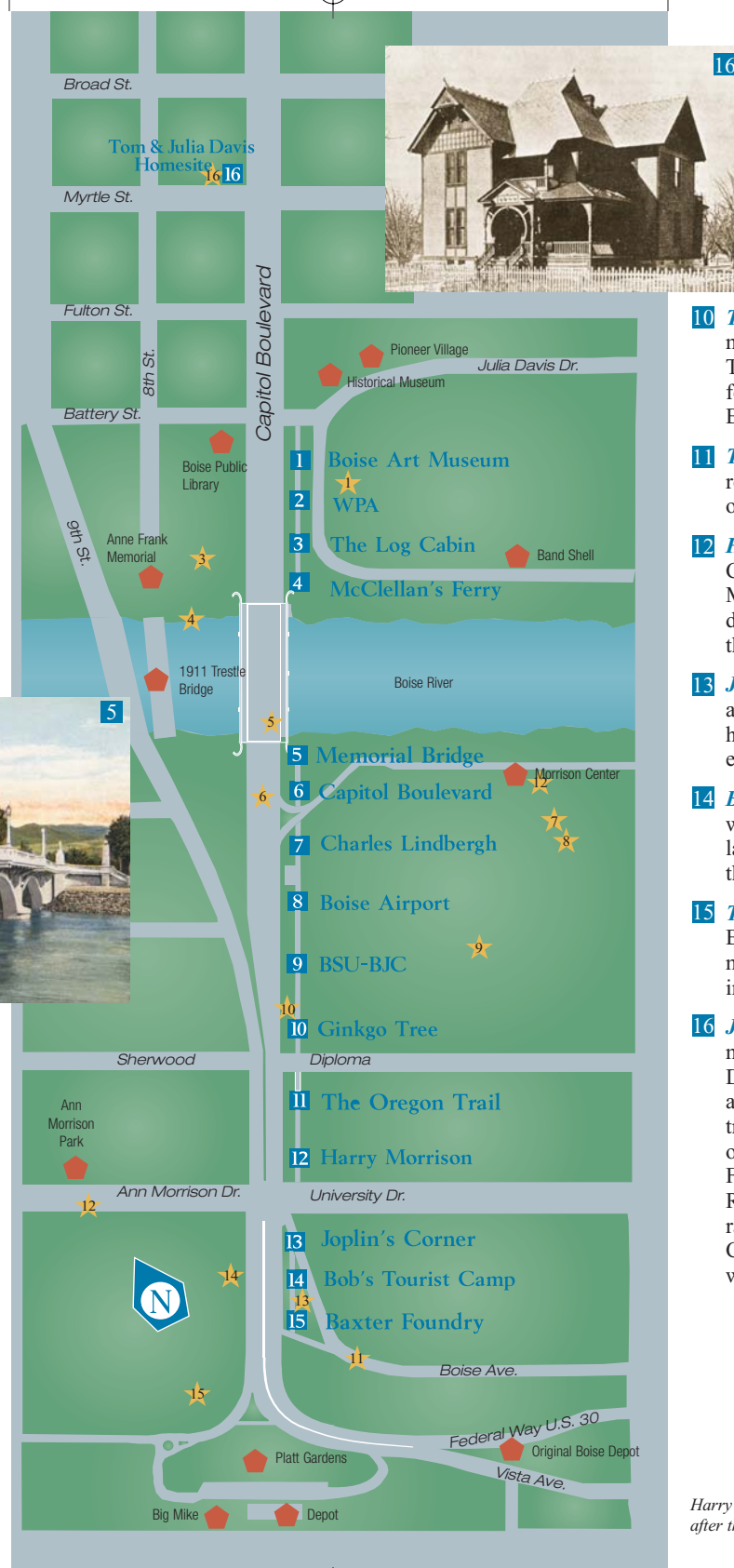


- 1 **Boise Art Museum.** Construction began in 1934; it opened as The Boise Gallery of Art in 1937 as a 2-room exhibit space for local artists to display their work.
- 2 **The WPA.** The largest and most popular of FDR's Depression era relief programs, the Works Progress Administration helped fund construction of many buildings along the boulevard and on the BSU campus.
- 3 **The Log Cabin.** Built by the Civilian Conservation Corp to house the State Forestry Department, The log cabin opened in 1940 in celebration of Idaho's 50th Anniversary of Statehood.
- 4 **McClellan's Ferry.** In 1863 John McClellan established a Ferry near this location. Predating any bridge, this was the first reliable means of crossing the river that was much wider at that time than it is today.
- 5 **Memorial Bridge.** Built in 1931 by the Morrison Knudsen Company, the bridge was restored in 1990. It remains an exquisite example of cast concrete bridge construction and depression era workmanship.
- 6 **Capitol Boulevard.** Upon its completion in 1931, it established itself as Boise's grand entryway. In 1940, FDR was the first of many visiting Presidents to motorcade into the city along this historic route.
- 7 **Charles Lindbergh.** The first man to fly solo across the Atlantic, Charles Lindbergh landed the "Spirit Of St. Louis" near this location in 1927 as part of a cross country promotion of his historic flight.



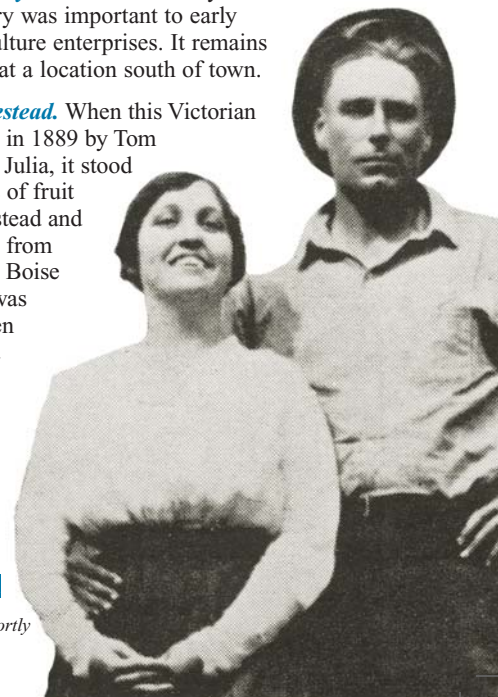
#### LEGEND

- 1 Narrative Sign
- ★ Actual Site
- Historic Point of Interest



- 8 **Boise Airport.** Built here in 1926, this airfield was home to Varney Airlines, a fledgling air mail and passenger airline that later became United Airlines. The airport moved to Gowen Field in 1938 to accommodate new, larger aircraft like the DC-3.
- 9 **BJC/BSU.** Founded in 1932, Boise Junior college (now Boise State University), began with an enrollment of 78 students and a faculty of 15. BJC built a new campus here in 1939 on the former airfield.

- 10 **The Ginkgo Tree.** Donated by Boise Cascade Corporation to mark the centennial of Idaho Statehood in 1990, the Ginkgo Trees are emblematic of long life. Considered to be living fossils, the hundred-plus trees extend the full length of Capitol Boulevard from the depot to the capitol.
- 11 **The Oregon Trail.** The Oregon Trail played an important role in the development of Boise. Boise Avenue follows the original trail route from Capitol Boulevard to Eckert Road.
- 12 **Harry Morrison.** Co-founder of the Morrison Knudsen Company, one of the world's largest construction firms, Harry Morrison made Boise his home. His love of Boise led to the development of Ann Morrison Park and the establishment of the Morrison Center.
- 13 **Joplin's Corner.** Early pioneer Stanton Joplin settled this area along Boise Avenue. Here he built a mercantile and meeting hall. This triangular area remained known as Joplin's corner even after the family left the area.
- 14 **Bob's Tourist Camp.** Established here in the 1920s, Bob's was the first modern motor-inn on Capitol Boulevard. It later became the Evergreen, and remained in business until the early 1950s.
- 15 **The Baxter Foundry.** Started in 1891 by James and Charles Baxter, the foundry was important to early mining and agriculture enterprises. It remains in business today at a location south of town.
- 16 **Julia Davis Homestead.** When this Victorian mansion was built in 1889 by Tom Davis for his wife Julia, it stood amongst hundreds of fruit trees. Their homestead and orchards extended from Front Street to the Boise River. The home was razed in 1931 when Capitol Boulevard was developed.



Harry and Ann Morrison shortly after their marriage in 1914.