



# **Traveling Virginia's Tobacco Trail: A Postcard Roadside History of U.S. Highway 301 From Dahlgren to Emporia, 1920-1965**

*Mr. Tim O'Gorman*

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In the 1940's and '50's, during the "Golden Age of the Automobile", U.S. Highway 301 was a heavily traveled east coast pathway to Florida, rivaling U.S. Highway 1 in popularity. Given the nickname of "The Tobacco Trail" because of its route through the tobacco growing states of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, Highway 301 extends from Delaware to Sarasota, Florida, a distance of 1,100 miles. Generously illustrated with over 430 images, 254 of which are postcards, Traveling Virginia's Tobacco Trail documents the roadside history of Virginia's portion of Highway 301 including motels, gas stations, restaurants, and other travelers' services that catered to tourists when the highway was at its peak. While some remain standing today, time has not been friendly to most as they have either been demolished, repurposed, or have become derelict. But taken together they are a reminder of the time when traveling meant driving through towns and country sides at much slower paces and when it was an adventure that offered a variety of experiences that today's interstates, with their monotonous roadways and homogenous and corporatized travel centers, can never replace. It is hoped that readers of Traveling Virginia's Tobacco Trail will be inspired to seek out the roadside structures along Highway 301 that still remain and appreciate their significance before they are gone.

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