



U.S. 101

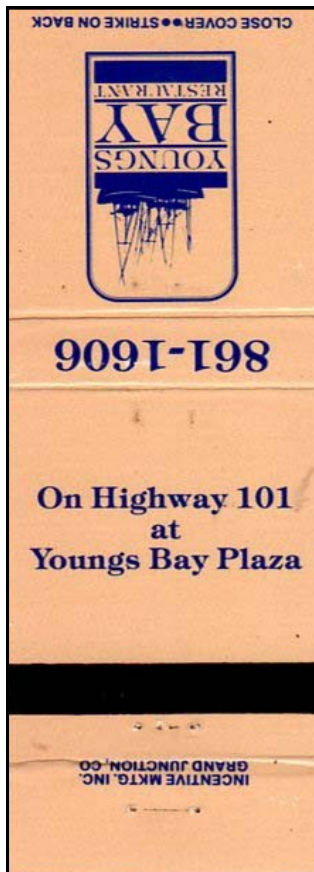


With the high interest level in Rt. 66 covers seen in the last few years, a number of collectors have taken to collecting their own favorite roadways. Thus, I put forth California's *101* as a suitable goal for such endeavors.

US 101 is perhaps the most historic highway in California. It follows the route Portola took in 1769 which later became El Camino Real, the King's Highway. This historic road connected the 21 missions of California and served as the main north/south road in California until the 1920s. North of San Francisco, it is known as the "Redwood Highway," which is considered by many to be the most scenic road in California. At one time it contained the famous Avenue of the Giants, which goes by the tallest trees in the world as it goes through Redwood State and National Parks. Even though this road has been surpassed by 99 and later I-5, it remains an important road linking cities along the coast of California.

US 101 was commissioned in 1926 as one of the original US highways. In Oregon and Washington, it followed just about exactly the same route it does now, starting in Olympia, WA, and following the coast south. In California, it followed practically the same route south as it does now to San Francisco, although some sections, like the Avenue of the Giants have been bypassed. From San Francisco south, it followed El Camino Real, again along virtually the same route as it follows now to San Diego.

As far as I can tell, there are no changes to US 101 outside of California. The only differences would be cosmetic changes to the road, and the fact that it now ends at I-5 in Olympia, WA instead of US 99. North of Los Angeles, US 101 has largely remained unchanged. With a few exceptions, it follows its original path, set down in 1926. In cities such as Eureka and Crescent City or even San Francisco, US 101 is still the main street going downtown with signals and all; it offers a valuable glance of how other US highways went through cities like them before being bypassed by Interstates. In the Bay Area, US 101 was transferred from El Camino Real (now SR-82) to the Bayshore Fwy (former BYP 101).



It is south of Los Angeles where US 101 was completely changed. Originally, from 1926 through the 1940s - 1950s, US 101 went nowhere near its final alignment with I-5 from Los Angeles to southern Orange County. The 1926 route followed old El Camino Real (The King's Highway) from Santa Rosa to San Diego. From Los Angeles to the Mexican Border, however, many sections were upgraded to freeways, which altered its course, and then it was decommissioned and replaced by I-5.

A *101* collection could offer the collector several bright possibilities, but think of what a display it would make—a giant map of California's *101* with covers from all of the towns and cities along the route to actually map the road on the display. An award winner, no doubt! Picture yourself trying to haul all of those plaques and trophies home—and you did it all with your *US 101* collection. What an ingenious idea!

[<http://www.gbcnet.com/ushighways>]