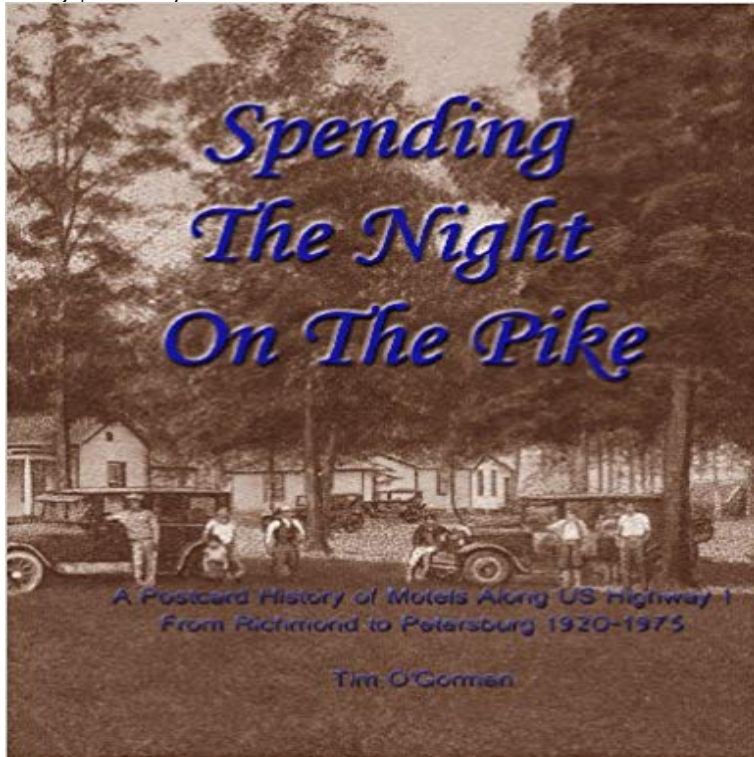


# Spending the Night on the Pike: A Postcard History of Motels Along US Highway 1 From Richmond to Petersburg 1920-1975



Staying here tonight. A beautiful motel as most of them are and there are so many. So wrote a traveler spending a night at a motel between Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia writing home on the motels postcard in 1955. U.S. Highway 1, before the arrival of Interstate 95, was considered Americas Main Street, the most heavily traveled highway on the east coast, running from the Canadian border in Maine to Key West, Florida. In 2010, Highway 1 was designated an Historic Highway. The stretch of highway between Richmond and Petersburg, long known locally as the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, or Pike for short, was an important stopover for tourists driving to and from Florida and the number, and variety, of travel accommodations attest to the Pikes popularity. Using over 160 postcards along with over 55 other images including some provided by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Chesterfield County Historical Society, the book provides a history of motels, tourist courts, tourist camps, etc. that flourished along Historic Highway 1 from 1920 to 1975. But *Spending the Night on the Pike* is not a history of postcards. It is a history of what postcards tell us about travelers in the first half of the 20th century and of the evolution of the lodging that accommodated them. For many tourist courts and motels, postcards are the only record remaining of these once vibrant businesses and are the source of clues that help identify buildings that still remain but are hidden or disguised. For those motels still operating, their postcards give us a glimpse of their former glory, when they were new and polished, before the arrival of the interstates that siphoned off the tourist business. And they tell of the time when motels were family-owned Mom and Pops and proudly advertised that fact on their postcards. It is also a nostalgic look back for those who remember the time

when road trips required driving through towns instead of around them and of a time that seems less complicated, less stressful, and less rushed. And for those who take the time to look, the motels, tourist courts, and tourist cabins still standing provide us a reminder of that earlier time.

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