"We came here (Tucson) to get away from the bad weather..."

To Tucson by Auto
Before the first highway system was completed across the United States, long distance automobile travel was inconvenient and hazardous compared to train travel. But by the late 1920s the United States Bureau of Public Roads began advertising the attractions that awaited the traveler on the newly completed highway system. Great improvements were made to the new highway system as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal plan. The highway system helped bring work to a nation suffering through the Great Depression. One of the cross-country highways was called the “Broadway of America”. It was advertised extensively
e orphans care. The group had days of crime ended permanently

nationally and with pamphlets produced by local businesses in the communities along the route promoting the communities’ amenities. One such pamphlet proclaiming Benson’s virtues was produced in 1928: “The climate at Benson, Arizona is indeed wonderful, not too hot nor too cold and is noted throughout the country for its healthful qualities. Located on the Broadway of America. Fine roads and beautiful scenery. Come to Benson.” By 1934 the highway system probably seemed like an inconspicuous way to take a break from the life of the wanted criminal.

The Congress Hotel Fire
The “tip-off” that led to the group members’ arrests started with the Hotel Congress fire. An "Arizona Daily Star" article on Jan. 23, 1934 describes the scene, “Ladders were on both sides, the North and the South, the large ladder truck being stationed near the rear entrance facing Tenth St. A dozen streams of water tore through the windows ...Three trucks were stationed at the corner of Congress St. and Toole Ave. while two trucks pumped water from the hydrant at Toole and Fifth Ave." Russell Clark and Charles Makley asked firefighters to rescue their suitcases from the third floor and rewarded them with a $12 tip. Their insistence, the large tip, and the fact that the cases were extremely heavy caused the firemen to still survive, although it is in poor condition. There

for the first time by automobile. Morale was high, and the group had their days of crime ended permanently

are efforts underway by the Tucson Fire Department to restore the 1928 Abrens Fox fire truck. Contact the Tucson Fire Department for more information.

Tucson Police Arrest
After some good detective work, Tucson officers arrested Malden and a local woman at Grable Electric Company at 26 E. Congress St. Russell Clark and girlfriend, Opal Long, tunneled out of theirLAT with officers Frank Eyman, Kenneth Mullaney, Mark Robbins, Ghet Sherman and Dallas Ford at the 2nd Ave. house and were taken to the station in two police cars. Interestingly, throughout the 1930s most Tucson patrolmen rode Indian Chief and Harley motorcycles. To transport arrested persons, the Department would simply use a taxi or one of the two autos, probably a Chevrolet Touring Car and/or a Snedbaker President Touring Car, belonging to the Department.

Cpt. Smith and officers Eyman and Nolan stopped Pierpont and girlfriend, Mary Kinder in their Buick with Florida plates and convinced them that all out-of-state vehicles must go to the police station to acquire a pass registering and authorizing the out-of-state car to drive in Tucson. Pierpont drove himself to the police station and surrendered after realizing that he had fallen for a clever ploy. An evening stakeout by Detective James Herron and officers Walker and Mulaney at the 2nd Ave. house ended in the arrest of Dillinger and girlfriend, Evelyn Frechette.

Hearing and Extradition by Plane and Train
Over five different states were seeking custody of Dillinger for crimes committed in their region. A Tucson judge held a hearing to decide which state would have the right to try Dillinger. Awaiting this decision created a heightened anticipation for the citizens of Tucson, and they were glad to see the issue resolved and Dillinger and the others finally leave the Old Pueblo some eight days after their capture. Dillinger was taken out of Tucson on a secret nighttime flight to Douglas, Local pilot Lt. Col. Louis R. Gonzales flew the airplane. The Arizona Daily Star reported that in Douglas, Dillinger was placed on an 11:44pm commercial American Airways flight to Indiana.

A much different extradition awaited Dillinger’s friends. Much of the town turned out at the train station on Toole Ave. to watch the famous group board a Southern Pacific passenger train. This specially chartered and guarded railroad car would take Pierpont, Makley and Clark to Ohio. Mary Kinder was extradited on the same train but transferred at Kansas City en route to Indianapolis. After his successful extradition from Tucson, Dillinger later escaped, and was shot to death by Police in Chicago. Within the next two years, the rest of the group had their days of crime ended permanently through prison or death sentences.

Introduction and Thanks
Have you ever wondered how Dillinger and his cohorts arrived in Tucson that fateful week in January of 1934 or how the group was extradited? The Southern Arizona Transportation Museum is proud to present this exhibit feature:

The transportation involved in the Dillinger capture. This exhibit will be displayed annually as Tucson commemorates their Police and Fire Departments’ accomplishment of capturing and successfully transporting criminals who had eluded police in over five other states and repeatedly, including once more after their extradition from Tucson, escaped the custody of the law.

For a more comprehensive story of the Dillinger capture in Tucson and to see the group’s confiscated weapons, visit the Arizona Historical Society’s Wells Fargo Bank Branch at 140 N. Stone Ave. We wish to thank Stan Benjamin, retired Tucson Police Department Historian, for his editing and tremendous contributions to this exhibit. The Smoke’s Signal has published “Without a Shot Fired: The Dillinger capture. This is an excerpt from a history written by Stan Benjamin covering his extensive research and collection of oral histories gathered from the people who were there.

Despite being touted as the “Dillinger Gang”, the group of criminals arrested in Tucson were only loosely associated with the criminal activity planned. As individuals they would not have considered themselves Dillinger’s gang. Surprisingly for the time, they arrived by car and not train, the predominant mode of long distance travel in the 1930’s. So what lured the group to meet up in Tucson by automobile?

January 19, 1934
John Dillinger, Harry Pierpont and Charles Makley arrive in.

January 22, 1934
Pierpont and Clark left for Bank in Chicago. On their way to the police station, Pierpont and Clark and girlfriend, Mary Kinder, were extradited by train.

January 25, 1934
The group is arrested in various locations and at various times. When captured Dillinger has $8,500 on his person, Russell has $1,264.70 and Makley $794.07.

January 31, 1934
Pierpont, Makley, Clark and Kinder are extradited to trial.

February 17, 1934
Exhibit was opened in 2007 for Dillinger Day by Laura Caywood Barker, Museum Director 2004-2008

The route of the Broadway of America showing connecting roads to many of the larger eastern cities

A 1934 photo of the Police motorcycles.

A typical American Airways airplane from the 1930s.