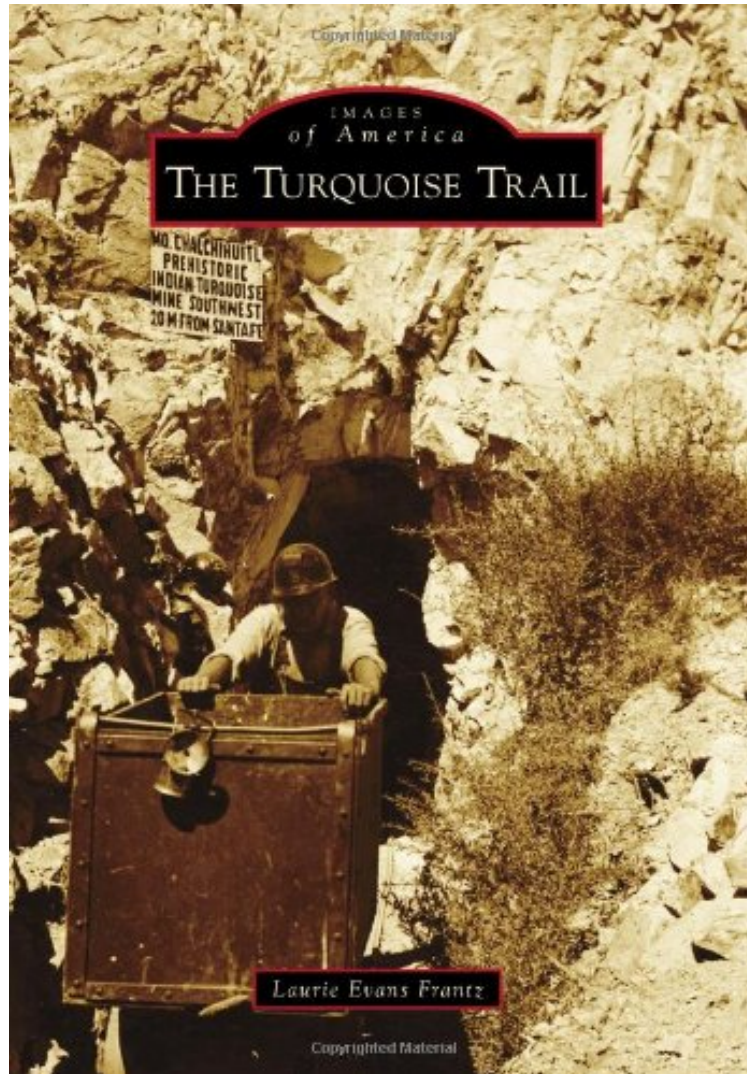


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The Turquoise Trail (Images of America)

Laurie Evans Frantz

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The Turquoise Trail is a quirky, alternative road stretching between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Before horses trod the

route, it linked three Native American pueblos. The earliest mining activity in North America took place along the trail; local Native Americans mined a huge vein of turquoise that was visible on the surface. In the age of horses and wagons, the road ran through dusty Wild West towns, mining districts, and mountains, which were once roamed by thousands of prospectors with dreams of finding the mother lode. When mining became unprofitable, the inhabitants packed whatever they could into their cars and pulled out, seeking employment elsewhere. But a time came when people realized there was still potential in these old ghost towns. The buildings that once housed miners and the businesses that supported them are now occupied by art galleries, boutiques, and modern pioneers. The route still has a flavor of the Wild West, but instead of cowboys and miners, it now attracts motorcycle enthusiasts, movie crews, and day-trippers who appreciate authenticity and local color.

About the Author Laurie Evans Frantz has traveled almost every road on the New Mexico highway map in her 23 years of working for the State of New Mexico. The Turquoise Trail is one of her favorite routes.