

Eisenhower and the highway

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In this oral history interview excerpt, Rob Amberg (the interviewer) and Stan Hyatt discuss how Germany's Autobahn influenced President Eisenhower when building the United States interstate system.

Audio

File:

Duration: 1:16

Transcript:

Rob Amberg: There's an interesting book out. It's a history of the interstate system. It's called Divided Highways, I think. I can't remember the author's name, but in reading that book he was talking about the initial motivation for the interstate highway system back in the early 50s. President Eisenhower basically was really enlightened when he was fighting Hitler in Germany and saw the road system.

Stan Hyatt: Saw the Autobahn system, and he realized the importance from national security standpoint more than anything, I think. To be able to move military machinery and people rapidly - from point A to point B - nation-wide. And he looked at the fact that the United States did not have anything that compared to that. That's my understanding of how the interstate system was born. He brought it back from Germany and said, "Let's build that in this country." I think he did it primarily for national defense, but also realizing that commerce and other things would benefit from it.

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