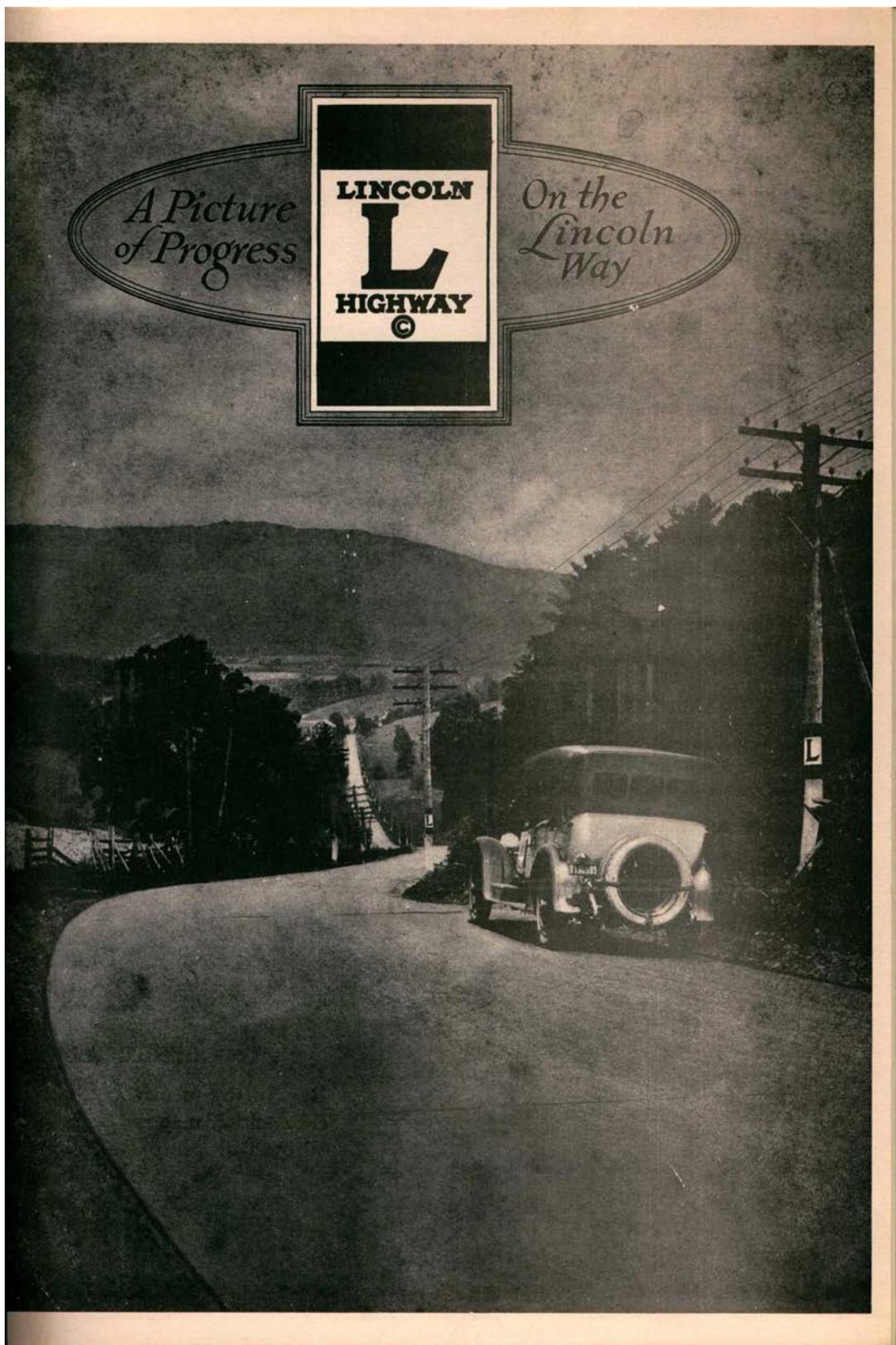


# Excerpt from “A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way,” 1920 (pg.1)



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Lincoln Highway Association, “A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way,” pp. 1, 20-22, 1920

# Excerpt from "A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way," 1920 (pg.2)



Where the Lincoln Highway is not brick or concrete in Indiana it is high grade macadam like the above. A type which necessitates excessive maintenance.

Mileage of new construction completed on the Lincoln Highway in Indiana, 1919:

COUNTY	MILEAGE	TYPE	LOCATION
Elkhart	7.0	Concrete	Ligonier west
Elkhart	3.0	Concrete	Elkhart west
St. Joseph	11.0	Concrete	Dyer east
LaVe			
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.0</b>		

### Entire Illinois Section Financed

Illinois, long stigmatized as one of the "mud states," has probably made more rapid progress in public sentiment, in providing road funds to meet the requirements and in actual construction, all toward climbing out of the mud roads category, than any other state in the Union in the last few years.

Despite the great wealth of the state, its vast number of motor vehicles and the tremendous transportation requirements of its rural roads, in view of its great agricultural area, it was along toward the bottom of the list of all the states of the Union in improved highway mileage until very recently.

The Lincoln Highway across Illinois has been for years largely dirt or, depending upon the weather, mud, which made travel almost impossible at times. Now all this is being changed and with a rapidity which reflects the greatest credit upon the state and its highway department.

With the best interest of the state and nation in mind and not without considerable opposition, the State Highway Department has adopted a far-sighted policy of concentrating available funds upon the first improvement of the most important roads, which are not only state highways, but important links in interstate connections.

As an indication of what has been accomplished since the state first undertook the policy of permanent connecting construction, it should be noted that the first advertising for bids on any of this work was

done in April, 1919, and before winter stopped work, more than 500 miles of concrete construction of the highest type, totaling in cost over \$16,380,000.00, was let and under way.

### Much Permanent Work Completed

Contracts were awarded for 77 miles of concrete construction on the Lincoln Highway, between Chicago and Fulton on the Mississippi River, during 1919 and approximately 35 miles of this work were completed at a cost to the state of over a million dollars. The balance of this construction will be completed in 1920, providing a high grade concrete road all the way from Chicago to the Mississippi. None of this work comes under the Illinois State Highway program that will be undertaken with funds derived from the \$60,000,000.00 bond issue authorized in November, 1918. With the proceeds of that issue and beginning in 1920 the State Highway Depart-



An example of the high grade concrete construction, 21 miles of which were completed last year in Indiana.

ment will undertake to network the entire state with a system of some 4800 miles of concrete construction. Included in this work will be that section of the Lincoln Highway between Geneva and Chicago Heights, Illinois—a section not at present contracted for.

In addition to the funds expended by the state during the past year, Cook County, utilizing the proceeds of a special bond issue, expended over \$218,000.00 on the Lincoln Highway from Chicago Heights west. Will County spent about \$35,000 in permanent improvement and Lee County considerably over \$70,000.

It will be noted that work completed and plans already financed for improvement on the Lincoln Highway in Illinois will, if the weather permits and the season is favorable, allow of the completion of the entire route before the end of 1920. This in connection with the work planned in Indiana and

Ohio will result in a permanently improved road of the highest type from the Hudson River to the Mississippi, over 1000 miles, providing the shortest, best and most direct route between New York and Chicago.

Mileage of new construction completed on the Lincoln Highway in Illinois, 1919:

COUNTY	MILEAGE	TYPE	LOCATION
Whiteside	35.0	Concrete	Between Geneva and Fulton
Lee			
Ogle			
DeKalb			
Kane			

### Iowa Now in Progressive List

"Iowa," to the motorist, has long been synonymous with "gumbo," which in turn denotes a particularly vicious and viscous and generally impassable brand of mud peculiar to that state. While a real start has not yet been made upon an adequate system of improved roads in Iowa, great strides have been accomplished toward removing fundamental difficulties which stood in the way of progressive action.

Iowa is not yet out of the mud, but she has definitely placed herself in the list of progressive states systematically undertaking to accomplish worth-while results.

The good roads proposition has had to be fought out to a finish in the State of Iowa, where for some years it was the football of politics. The campaign for the governorship of Iowa in 1916 was fought out almost entirely on the road question. There was the "mud roads" candidate and the "paved roads" candidate and to show the then relative strength of the two forces in that great state, which had one motor car to every seven of its population, and at that time had scarcely 400 miles of its 100,000 miles of highways improved with any form of permanent surfacing, the state legislature voted a tie on the question of assenting



One of the many gangs Illinois kept busy on the Lincoln Highway during 1919—laying modern permanent concrete.

# Excerpt from "A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way," 1920 (Pg.3)

to the provisions of the federal aid act of that year which offered to the State of Iowa for road improvement some \$2,000,000.00.

The legislature was evenly divided on the question of whether to accept the Government's \$2,000,000 or not because the state had to put up another \$2,000,000.00. In that year the legislature even wanted to abolish the State Highway Department—the "mud roads" governor was elected.

### Iowa to Pave the Lincoln Way

Times have changed since then. Iowa is the one state west of the Mississippi, through which the Lincoln Highway passes, which is fully capable of itself financing the adequate and permanent completion of the road. Antiquated legislation, which was the main barrier to proper highway improvement in Iowa, was superseded by a new law during the past year, which provides for a primary road system of inter-county hard-surfaced roads about 6000 miles in extent and embracing about one-third of the old county road system. The question of paving the various sections of this state primary road system has been put up to the counties and it has now become a question for local decision as to whether the available road funds in each county shall be permanently invested in proper lasting improvement, or dissipated as in the past in work of no lasting benefit.

Nine counties out of the thirteen traversed by the Lincoln Highway in the State of Iowa have so far voted on the question of permanent paving and of this total five voted favorably. In those counties which voted against the paving of the primary routes, the question at issue and the one which defeated the proposition was largely one of petty local jealousy as to the location of the routes selected by the State Highway Department.

A broader vision in connection with highway matters is bound to come. The general



*Illinois used to be a "mud state." But by the end of 1920 passenger and freight transportation on the Lincoln Highway in that state will find an all-weather concrete roadway, like this completed section in Kane County, extending for 125 miles from Chicago to the Mississippi River.*

sentiment of the state is for permanent work, as is indicated by the comments of the state press in regard to those counties which have failed to ratify proper construction. Within another two years the question will again come before the



*A reminiscence of Iowa's gumbo days. President Joy on the Lincoln Highway in Iowa in 1915.*

voters of the counties which have failed to pass the measure, and is then practically assured of acceptance.

### State Has Ample Road Funds

No argument as to whether they should or should not permanently pave all of Iowa's primary road system came to light during the last session of the State Legislature. The Chairman of the joint sub-

committee of the Iowa Legislature, charged with the preparation of the state highway law, brought out that the state could produce a revenue of about \$8,000,000.00 a year for "permanent highway construction" and added, "this fund will be devoted exclusively to paying for drainage, grading and hard surfacing of the primary road system, and to the retirement of any bonds which may be issued for such purposes."

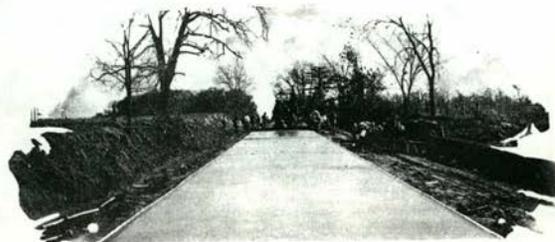
The Lincoln Highway across Iowa has been established as one of the primary state highways.

Iowa being a rolling country, expensive preliminary grading work has necessarily preceded any paving on main routes, and the majority of Iowa's expenditures on the Lincoln Highway in 1919 were for this form of work and for the construction of lasting concrete bridges. Over 22 miles of permanent new grade was established on the Lincoln Highway and more than 12 miles of it graveled for the temporary accommodation of travel.

The trans-Iowa road now as in the past is a boulevard in dry weather, but should not yet be attempted while wet. Next year will see an increase in the gravel strip which is gradually reaching across the state and lifting the travel out of the gumbo.

A little over a quarter of a million dollars was put into permanent work on the Lincoln Highway during 1919. The funds available for next year in the thirteen counties traversed by the route are, according to F. R. White, Acting Chief Engineer of the Iowa State Highway Department, \$2,226,837.00. In addition to these funds, which represent motor license fees and

equivalent federal aid, Clinton County, the first county west of the Mississippi, passed a bond issue for \$1,800,000.00 which will provide for the complete paving of the route across the county, and Greene County in the central part of the state passed a bond issue for \$1,000,000.00 in which is included a



*The illustration above and the one in the center of this page tell the Iowa road story. They might be entitled "Before and After Taking." The above scene shows a concrete Seedling Mile under construction on the Lincoln Highway in Linn County near Cedar Rapids, Iowa.*

# Excerpt from "A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way," 1920 (Pg.4)



Beauty as well as utility is embodied in this permanent and artistic bridge on the Lincoln Way in Iowa. Concrete and steel structures have replaced the old wooden bridges entirely across the state.

project already surveyed, for the paving of the Lincoln Highway for about six miles east of Jefferson.

### 1920 To Bring Great Improvement

In a letter to the Lincoln Highway Association under date of October 20, 1919, Chief Engineer White says: "It is safe to say that by this time next year we will have under contract or completed about 65 miles of paving and about 75 miles of finished grade work on the Lincoln Highway. It is unfortunate that a number of the counties along the Lincoln Highway have voted against hard surfacing. However, we should view these reverses as temporary only. I feel sure that as rapidly as the work can be reasonably done the Lincoln Highway will be hard surfaced and that we can look forward confidently to a paved Lincoln Highway across the state in a few years."

Mileage of new construction completed on the Lincoln Highway in Iowa, 1919:

COUNTY	MILEAGE	TYPE	LOCATION
Clinton	7.7	Graded	Clinton west
Linn	.8	Brick	Cedar Rapids east
Story	7.0	Gravel	Nevada and Ames
Boone	3.5	Gravel	Boone west
Carroll	.75	Gravel	Carroll east
Crawford	.6	Graded	Dennison east
Total	22.35		

### 'Nebraska's Problem Simplified

Nebraska should perhaps not be classified with Indiana, Illinois and Iowa in considering her highway problems, which are in a large degree more analogous to those of Wyoming, Utah and Nevada. The state has a tremendous area and a vast mileage of public highways, which combined with a comparatively small population have made it difficult to finance proper improvement.

Omaha on the Lincoln Highway and the Missouri River, claims to be the gateway to the West and is justly proud of that appellation, so perhaps the state should not be included under the middle western division of the Lincoln Highway. However, the Platte Valley, largely followed across the state by the Lincoln Highway on a water grade, partakes more of the nature of the Mississippi Valley traversed by the Lincoln Highway in Indiana, Illinois and Iowa than it does of the conditions existing between Cheyenne and the Sierras.

Nebraska has tremendous reservoirs of untapped wealth and is only beginning a development, both agricultural and commercial, which will bid fair to place it ultimately from the standpoint of both population and wealth on a par with any of the middle western states considered.

Nebraska's improvement problem on the Lincoln Highway has been much the same as that of Iowa with the exception that Nebraska has a greater mileage of roads and a much smaller population. The work accomplished there has necessarily been the preliminary grading requisite to future permanent construction.

As a result of new and progressive legislation, the entire route of



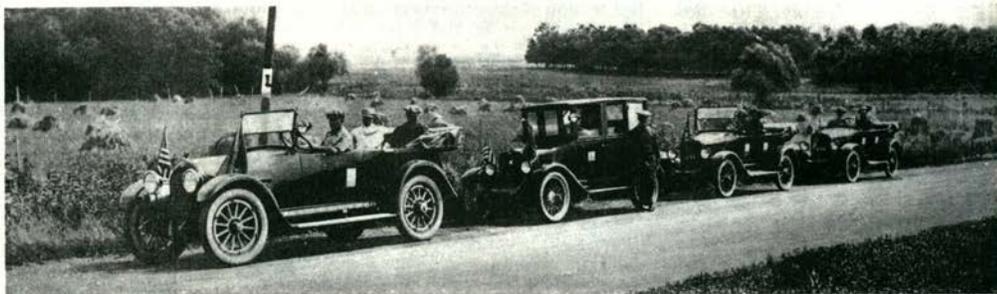
A glimpse of the kind of concrete culverts which have been installed under the Lincoln Highway in Iowa. The above view also shows the high type of gravel surfacing completed on over 200 miles of the route.

the Lincoln Highway was taken over by the state January 1, 1920, as a part of the established Nebraska State Highway System, upon which the state will concentrate its federal aid and the state funds. This move is a start toward the systematic and permanent improvement of the Lincoln Highway and will also inaugurate a system of continuous maintenance which will keep the route in the best condition possible.

### Much New Work Accomplished

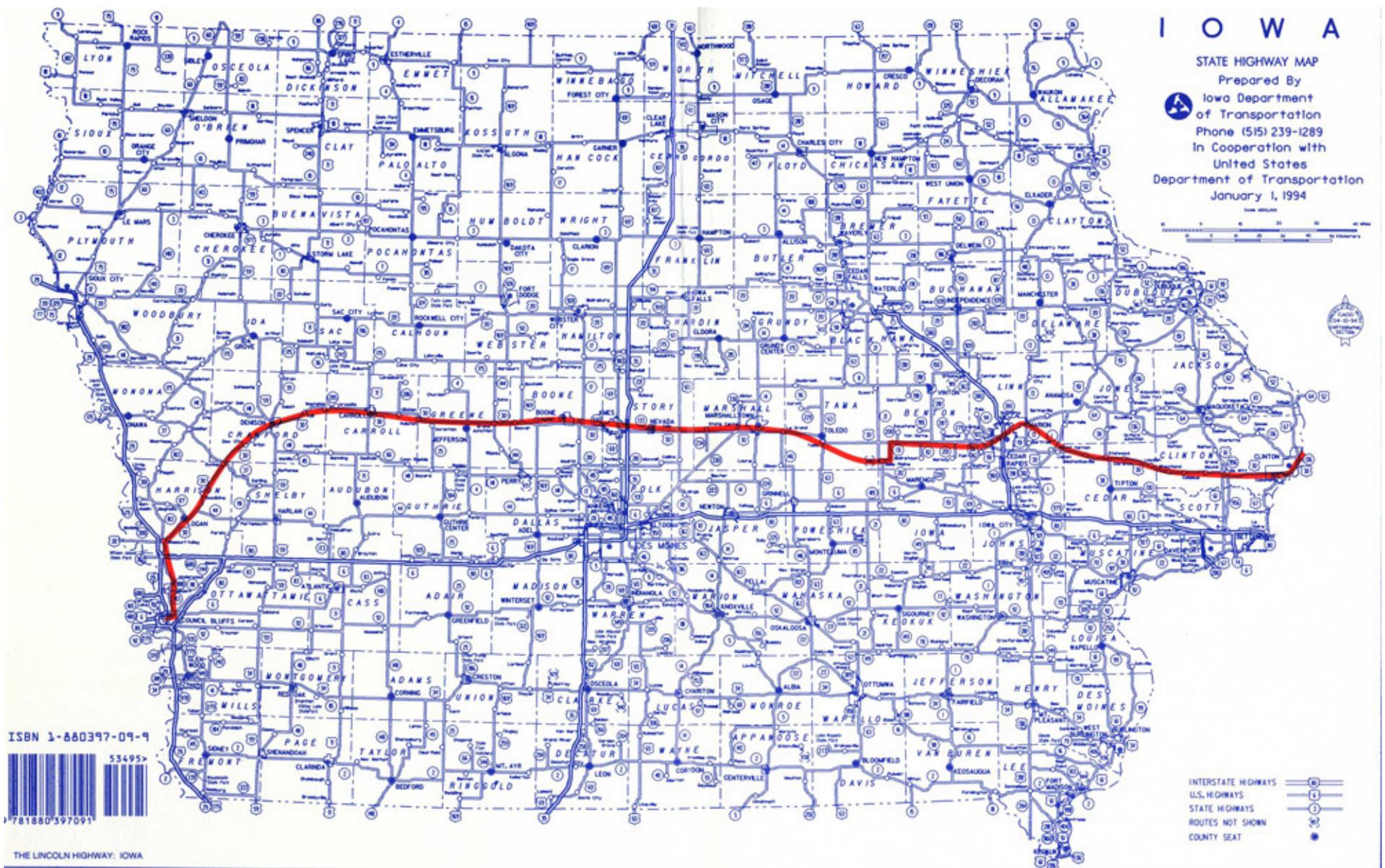
Sixty-three miles of new permanent grading was accomplished on the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska in 1919 and in addition the financing of the complete construction of the route across Douglas County, in which Omaha is located, was accomplished; this work being specified as part of the improvement to be accomplished thru the passage of a \$3,000,000.00 bond issue in the county. A start towards the work was made and it is expected that some 28 miles of permanent brick or concrete construction will be completed from Omaha west in 1920.

Dodge County, the next county west of Douglas, also financed the



In addition to showing some of the four hundred dollar farm land along the Lincoln Way in Iowa, the illustration shows the official Willys-Knight and the three official Overlands which accompanied the first Transcontinental Army Convoy over the Lincoln Way in 1919, carrying officials, speakers, and photographers. These cars with their drivers were loaned to the Association by the Willys-Overland Company.

# Iowa Road Map with the Original Route of the Lincoln Highway, 1994

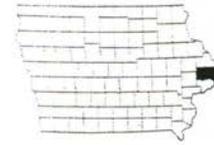


Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Franzwe, Gregory, "The Lincoln Highway," Vol. 1, 1995

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.1)

1

## The Lincoln Highway in Clinton County



*Eventually we saw ahead of us the superstructure of the bridge over the great river. Because of high waters caused by spring freshets, and melting snows, the abutments began far back on shore and the bridge was of enormous length beyond the width of the river itself. The floor of the bridge was of wood planking and just wide enough for passing. Altogether its width in proportion to its length looked pretty formidable, high above the wide water, and we were glad Mr. Milks' auto pre-*

*ceded us. It was rather scary to contemplate as we approached. What would we do if the engine failed in crossing!*

*You could almost feel the tenseness of everyone. Silence reigned. It was a great emotional crisis. . . . I kept reminding my subconscious mind that the bridge had been there for many springs and there was no reason why it should choose this particular time to collapse. . . . Now, at last, we were West!*

—Alice Huyler Ramsey, 1909

Alice Ramsey wrote those lines more than a half-century after she became the first woman to drive across the United States. Her vehicle was a new forest-green Maxwell DA-30 with a leather-like top—down more often than it was up. The twenty-one-year-old freckle-faced tomboy, mother of one, had responded to a plea from the sales people at Maxwell-Briscoe Motor Company, and now was more than one-third of the way across the nation. She was on network of roads, if they could be called that, which extended from Times Square in New York City to the Pacific Ocean at San Francisco. Four years later automobile magnates from Detroit would proclaim most of her route as the Lincoln Highway, America's first coast-to-coast highway. If it could be called that.

Alice Ramsey was not the first coast-to-coast motorist to cross the rickety structure. H. Nelson Jackson had herded a twenty-horsepower Winton over the bridge going the other way six years before. Riding with Jackson and his mechanic, Sewell K. Croker, was a bulldog named Bud, a stray they had picked up along the way.

In 1908 Montague Roberts, at the wheel of a two-ton Thomas Flyer, led a pack of five voyagers in the Great Race, New York to Paris. He roared across the bridge on February 29, heading for San Francisco. He would board a ship there for the Orient, and drive the rest of the way to France.

Against today's standards, the Fulton & Lyons bridge was anything but safe. It was completed in 1891—four steel trusses anchored to stone and steel pylons sunk in the bed of the Mississippi River. The approaches rose from grade and, when the first of the spans was reached, the floor suddenly flattened out. Approaching vehicles were out of sight until a few yards before arriving at the first span, and similarly, before the opposite approach was reached.

Kids loved bridges like this. They would leave the main spans at a high rate of speed, vault off the flat deck and be airborne above the descending plane for a few yards. It was an invitation to disaster but it was fun.

To add to the misery of drivers heading west over the Fulton & Lyons bridge, there was a sharp right turn over the west bank onto a ramp two

1

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.2)

Continue 3.2 miles west of Stanwood where U.S.30 turns half right. Take an odometer reading there. Proceed .6 mile to the point where the pavement begins to bend back to the west. Leave it at this point, onto a gravel road that slants to the northwest. It is marked "Old Lincoln Highway" and it crosses the C&NW tracks a couple of



Collection of Abraham Yalom

*This postcard, reproduced from The Lincoln Highway Forum, shows the Lincoln Highway coursing down the still-unpaved main street of Mechanicsville. It was mailed to Jack Coleman, with Company E of the 5th Engineers at Camp Humphreys, Virginia, with the "Transcontinental Truck Train" of 1919. The text: "Received Card this A.M. Sure Was surprised to hear from you so soon for I know you have so many to write to along the Way & I hope you get out of the sand & even the Mountain safe & sound. Park F. Yule, Mechanicsville."*



*The old Lincoln Highway through Mechanicsville, as photographed in 1994. The view is to the east across the Walnut Street intersection, several blocks east of the business district. The houses have been greatly altered since 1919.*

blocks ahead. In two more blocks it slants a little more to the northwest. This is the original Lincoln Highway. It has never been paved but it is fine all-weather gravel road today.

Follow that road for another mile and enter Mechanicsville, where the gravel ends and the pavement begins.

The *Lisbon Herald*, published a few miles to the west, reported that two young men had been arrested on Saturday afternoon, October 25, 1913, for speeding in Mechanicsville. They were nabbed in Lisbon after the Mechanicsville authorities called west to have the high-flying young guys arrested. They were returned to Mechanicsville where they were each fined \$25 and costs. The 1916 *Road Guide* listed the speed limit through town at 10 mph, but added that it was not enforced. Evidently it was in 1913.

Our freckle-faced Alice, traveling in her new Maxwell from New York to San Francisco in 1908, saw storm clouds gathering as she, her two sisters-in-law and a woman friend approached Mechanicsville:

Once more a sudden torrent descended upon us. We made quickly for the first shelter we could find. It proved to be the entrance to a livery stable, the door of which stood invitingly open. As we drove inside, there were several buggies standing around, the horses still hitched to them. To say the animals were astonished to be joined by a horse-less carriage from which came the noise of a pulsating engine is putting it mildly. There were a few hectic moments. We turned off the motor hurriedly and the stable gradually resumed its quieter mood. But the downpour went on and on, and we sat and waited two full hours before we could stir out.

No need for anyone to tell us we could go no farther that day! We didn't even consider the question. Unwrapping our cases from the muddy covering and leaving the auto housed in the stable for the night, we made for the Page Hotel. It was a queer little place, but we were happy to take refuge in it. We ate supper in the City Restaurant with some country lads sitting at a couple of nearby tables. Over in one corner stood an ancient-vintage piano. The sight of four women gave the proprietor the inspiration and courage to ask one of us to play it. I could imagine what its tone would be, but I felt the urge to relieve the tension of the day's driving, so I casually tossed off a couple of light numbers. The lads gathered around and seemed to enjoy the

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.3)

Cedar County

13

"something different," and we went back to the hotel and relaxed by the unexpected levity. It was to be expected that our youthful Hermine would enter into such a situation with fun, but it was always a pleasurable surprise to have my two conservative and almost haughtily reserved sisters-in-law react in similar fashion. But they took all things as they came and, in spite of the vexatious weather, they were beginning to get a certain thrill of adventure in our conquest of the Basin of Mud!

Alice decided to call the Maxwell dealer in Cedar Rapids but couldn't get "central" to understand her. She walked to the telephone office to explain in person that she wanted to make a long-distance call. The connection was made and the dealer sent an escort back to show the way to Cedar Rapids via the "Transcontinental"—the "coast-to-coast highway" that had been proclaimed years earlier but never promoted beyond placing the line on a map. The escort arrived in the morning just as another thunderstorm broke.

"Does it always rain like this in Iowa?" Alice asked a Mechanicsville native.

"Oh yes," he responded, "at this time of the year. You got right smack into the rainy season."

Continue straight through Mechanicsville without any turns and leave town on gravel, still on the Lincoln Highway. Continue to parallel the C&NW tracks for 2.1 miles, where the road slants slightly to the left at Delta Avenue. Just .4 mile west of there it turns abruptly to vault the railroad tracks. U.S.30 is on the south side of the railroad—turn right, take an odometer reading and head straight west for nearly three miles. Notice the black scars two feet inside the edge of the concrete? These mark the original limits of the paving.

Enter Linn County 2.7 miles from the point where the railroad was crossed and leave the highway there. At that point there is a T in the road—turn right down the shaft of the T onto the old Lincoln Highway, identified as East Main Street.



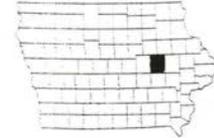
Iowa Department of Transportation

*The road which attacked the Ramsey party would have looked something like this one. This photograph was taken eleven years after her passage, in 1919.*

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.4)

4

## The Lincoln Highway in Benton County



Alice Ramsey and her Maxwell were still plodding doggedly to the west on the path which five years later would be declared the Lincoln Highway. Rain had soaked the roads so that the mud seemed to be bottomless. The enormous car plowed through the mud in low gear and it was too much for the radiator. Shortly west of the Benton County line it began to boil and Alice stopped the car.

It was imperative that water be added. Unfortunately, there was no water aboard. There was plenty in the ditches next to the road, but no bucket to carry it in. One of the passengers suggested that they form a "bucket brigade," dipping a few ounces of the water at a time with their set of cut glass toothbrush holders. It worked, and soon the Maxwell was again plowing ahead through the mud. They had to repeat this procedure three times before finding a place where they could replenish their supply of water and oil.

As they approached a crossroads they noticed a lone woman in a sunbonnet, sitting in a farm wagon. They stopped to talk, and the woman asked if they were the four people who were traveling from New York to San Francisco.

"Yes, we are," we answered in one voice.

"I'm sure glad," she added. "I read about you in the paper and I've come six miles to see you and I've been waiting for a long time. Yes, I'm sure glad I saw you!"

Present U.S.30 runs over the original route past the Tama County line, so stay on that road for the next 9.6 miles. (If this road seems boring, think how much more boring it would be on I-80,

twenty miles to the south.) An enormous old hulk of a building looms up on the right, on the near corner of the intersection where U.S. 218 turns north, away from U.S.30. That is all that is left of the Youngville Station, now boarded up but still open to vandalism.

In its heyday the Youngville Station served fine home-cooked meals and dispensed Skelley gasoline and oil for a generation of Lincoln Highway travelers. The Tudor-style building was home to J. W. Young and his daughter, the widow Elizabeth Wheeler. It was built by Young shortly after the death of his son-in-law in 1921. It is probably the largest 1920s filling station on the Lincoln Highway.



Anne Schoonover Collection

*The Youngville Station in its heyday, probably in the 1940s.*

The structure was in dire straits in 1994, but the Benton County Sesquicentennial Commission

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.5)

is attempting to raise enough money to restore it, as their contribution to the celebration of the anniversary of the admission of Iowa to the union in 1846. So once again the corner could be dispensing gasoline from antique pumps to Lincoln Highway tourists. Anne Schoonover (5939 15th Avenue., Garrison IA 52229, 1/319/477-6191) is accepting donations.



*Today the Youngville Station is in an advanced state of decay. The building, however, is restorable. The original Lincoln Highway, left, stretches to the west.*

Take an odometer reading at the Youngville Station and proceed another 1.5 miles west to a small bridge spanning Weasel Creek. It was here, in 1908, that Alice Huyler Ramsey got in a peck of trouble.

"[The creek] was now completely out of bounds, swollen by the repeated heavy storms," Alice wrote. She pulled off to the side of the road, pulled on her boots, arranged her bulky clothing and waded in to the swollen creek. "I didn't wade in very far, just far enough to make certain we couldn't go on at the present.

The four women dove into the hamper in search of their evening meal. They needed bread and water, so Hermine walked back to the nearest farmhouse to make a purchase. They dined in a patch of tall grass. By nightfall the water had shown no sign of receding, so they piled back in the Maxwell. Alice leaned back in her seat, put her feet up on the dashboard on either side of the steering wheel and, exhausted by a day of herding the heavy car through the mud, had no trouble finding sleep.

They were awakened before dawn by the baying of a pack of hounds which passed their car without noticing it.

As morning dawned about four, we noticed a decided abatement of the water and could distinguish continuous road ahead, furrowed as it still was with countless rivulets.

With our little Sterno outfit we soon prepared a very simple breakfast and started on our way. The road was awful, of course, but we did pull through it and were glad to be in motion once more.

From Weasel Creek proceed about 9.5 miles farther west, always on the route of all variants of the Lincoln Highway, and turn left on Highway 131. It is necessary to detour south between here and Tama to avoid the "Bohemian Hills," a series of nine ridges that made travel so difficult that it was easier to go ten miles out of the way than confront them. The distance between towns was also a consideration. Without Belle Plaine it would have been a long stretch between towns. Present U.S.30 did not go straight west here until 1936. Drive south for 4.5 miles to a T in the road. Here is a fine example of the Lincoln Highway in the heart of the corn belt—straight and narrow, and with an asphalt shoulder no more than a foot wide and often less. Turn right at the T and drive another 1.5 miles west to Belle Plaine.

There are differing opinions about the entry into Belle Plaine. Some local oldtimers say that the Lincoln Highway left 131 just west of the cemetery on the east edge of town, slanted two blocks to the north, and dropped down to the present highway a block west of the first north-south street. From the looks of that road one could conclude that they are right, but no primary documentation has survived to verify that route.

The town was as excited as any when it was announced that Belle Plaine would be on the Lincoln Highway. In the *Belle Plaine Union* of September 18, 1913, the headlines stacked up like this:

Belle Plaine Will Be On the Lincoln Road  
Transcontinental Highway is Planned  
from New York to Frisco  
Follows Main Traveled Road Thru Iowa  
Will Cost Ten Million Dollars

The story announced that Henry B. Joy had been over the route three times in the past six months, but advised, "Des Moines road boosters, who were desirous of bringing the highway thru the capital city, are somewhat disappointed at the selection of the Transcontinental road for its entire route thru the state."

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.6)

Another story in the same paper announced that Belle Plaine would soon have twenty blocks of "first class paving."

Enter town on 131, now identified as Thirteenth Street. Belle Plaine probably has more colorful reminders of Lincoln Highway days than any other town of its size along the way, and it certainly ought to change the name of its main street from the inane "Thirteenth Street" to "Lincoln Way."

One of the initial imperatives of the Lincoln Highway Association was to mark the road across the nation with the red, white, and blue logo painted on telegraph poles. The only authoritative guidebooks available were the *Blue Books* published by the Automobile Club of America. Since the LHA had announced in the beginning that the Lincoln Highway would generally follow the route of the old Transcontinental Route, the *Blue Book* editors simply changed the word Transcontinental to Lincoln and kept the same routing. However, the Lincoln Highway did in fact differ significantly from the Transcontinental in many places, so the *Blue Books* were not as accurate as motorists would have liked. In the early days travelers stopped often to ascertain the correct route of the Lincoln Highway.

The two-car caravan of the Louis Round family passed through Belle Plaine on June 23, 1914, heading back to Cleveland. He reported to *The Motorist* magazine, that "The roads so far are beyond my expectation—they are as a general thing well marked. Here and there we are compelled to resort to the blue book but from appearances I would say that within several months—the tourist may depend entirely upon the marked roadway—a great relief I can assure you, saving many inquiries and stops."

Thornton Round remembered Belle Plaine. "This town claimed a great distinction. It had a paved street! but we were not permitted to ride on that street. The police were routing traffic onto another detour, as the street was being repaired."

The March 16, 1915, issue of the Belle Plaine newspaper reported that vast traffic was expected on the Lincoln Highway this year, with many expected to drive to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. The great fair would celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal, but Lincoln Highway advocates would be well represented at the gathering.

Proceed west into Belle Plaine. The intersec-

tion of Thirteenth and Sixth Avenue is a historic one. On the left is the Lincoln Cafe, identified with a Lincoln Highway-era neon sign. On the right is the Herring Hotel, now an apartment house. It was never very fancy, but after the night on Weasel Creek it looked like the Waldorf Astoria to Alice and her friends:

Before eight we arrived in Belle Plaine where we supplemented our scanty meal with a real breakfast at Herring Cottage. My! that was good! When the family learned we had spent the night beside Weasel Creek—if not quite in it—the man sympathetically proffered a bag of delicious cherries—"to keep the wolf from the door!"

The "Herring Hotel and Garage with Filling Station" advertised in the 1924 *Road Guide*: "Half way between Chicago and Omaha. Most congenial spot on the Highway. Opie Read styled it 'A Bright Spot in the Desert'. Most cordially, Will P. Herring & Son; Jim Herring, Mgr." The younger Herring was the local consul for the LHA, and the hotel was the "control," from which distances to and from the towns are measured.



*The Lincoln Cafe (left) is across the Lincoln Highway from the Herring Hotel (right), now an apartment house.*

The F. L. Sankot Garage is on the south side of the street two doors east of the Lincoln Cafe. It was opened in 1914 and has stayed in the Sankot family ever since. But the real jewel of Belle Plaine is on to the west, on the near side of Fourth Avenue. There on the right is the famous station of George Preston, its wood siding plastered with an amazing concentration of metal signs, many of them dating back to the earliest days of the Lincoln Highway. Preston began collecting those artifacts when he started working in the station at the age of thirteen. Two concrete Lincoln High-

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.7)

way markers are in his collection.



*The restaurant is identified with a Lincoln Highway-era neon sign.*

On the east side of the station is a garage which houses a treasure trove of antiques, including a 1925 Model T which Preston bought for \$100 for his son Ron. The elder Preston was flown to Los Angeles on March 21, 1990, where he broke up Johnny Carson on the "Tonight Show." He was featured on an interview on National Public Radio with David Isay, plus countless magazine and newspaper stories. His death at 83 warranted headlines in the August 13, 1993, issue of The Des Moines Register and many other newspapers in Iowa. Preston's body was interred in the Belle Plaine cemetery, where, in accordance with his wishes, it is marked with a tombstone featuring the logo of the highway he loved so well for so long.

Some Belle Plaine citizens were unaware of what Preston had done for the town, and thought that his death meant that the Fourth Avenue "eyesore," now being watched over by Preston's widow, Blanche, and their son, Ron, could be removed. The funeral brought hundreds to Belle Plaine from all over Iowa, and since then thousands have visited the now-famous station. Busloads of delegates to the 1994 convention of the Lincoln Highway Association, held in Ames in August, stopped

to admire the station and dine in the Lincoln Cafe. Talk about removing the station and artifacts near it has died down in Belle Plaine, but a viable preservation plan has yet to be proposed.

Continue to the west a block. On the right is the Belle Plaine Welcome Center, where the Maid-Rite Cafe has been reconstructed. In 1994 it was moved here from the east edge of town.

Maid-Rites are sandwiches which are famous in this part of the Midwest. Essentially, they are disembodied hamburgers, but a special recipe gives them a unique flavor. They are served in a



© Drake Hokanson

*George Preston and his famous station were photographed in 1983 by Drake Hokanson. This photograph appeared in his book, The Lincoln Highway; Main Street across America, published in 1988 by the University of Iowa Press.*

coated wrapper which catches the hamburger crumbs as they fly away while the sandwich is being gnawed. They are invariably served with a spoon so that patrons can continue eating after the bun has disappeared.

The original Lincoln Highway turned north on Eighth Avenue, at the Herring Hotel, and proceeded several blocks to 19th Street. It turned left there for a block to Seventh Avenue, then turned north again for two more blocks to 21st Street. The first Preston filling station stood on the southwest corner of that intersection.

Take an odometer reading at the present Preston station, proceed to the northwest less than a mile to 21st Street and turn left there. The road is marked E66. That is the east boundary of Tama County.

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.8)

Viscomotor Oil. Before turning right look to the left—a concrete Lincoln Highway marker is on the near corner. Probably broken off, it is about two feet shorter than regulation. It is mounted incorrectly, with the directional arrow facing away from traffic.

Immediately upon turning right there is a magnificent old concrete bridge over the Lincoln Highway. The railing is topped with four ornamental lights which obviously date back to Lincoln Highway days.



*The old Lincoln Highway bridge over Otter Creek still stands, just north of Chelsea's business district.*

Unfortunately, Otter Creek, which is spanned by the bridge, floods so often that there is serious talk about abandoning the town. An even worse contributing factor is the Iowa River, a short distance south of town. That hasn't done the population situation much good. At the time of the 1924 *Road Guide* Chelsea was shown with 600 inhabitants. The 1980 census put it at less than 400. The town maintained a free campground on the Iowa River for Lincoln Highway travelers.

It is somewhere along here that we hear from Alice Ramsey again:

All of the moisture of the past few days had taken its toll on the ignition system; before long there was a skip in the motor. In a four-cylinder engine there's not much doubt about such a fact! Climbing down, I discovered the offending spark plug by the simple trick of holding a hammer head against each one and shorting it against the water jacket of the cylinders. [When the engine balked even more, Alice knew that the offending plug was not that one.] Plugs were manufactured then so they could be taken apart, cleaned with fine sandpaper or emery cloth and reassembled,

which I did on the spot. It was a dirty job but didn't involve too much time. The girls were interested in watching the process, so the time passed rapidly and we were soon on our way again. I could only wipe off the grime with a rag—no chance for a real clean-up until later. What would I not have given for the facilities of a modern filling station after such a business!

Proceed north for .4 mile and turn half-left to rejoin E66, still headed northwest. Arrive at U.S.30 4.3 miles ahead and turn half-left. The Bohemian Hills have now been bypassed. Cross over Otter Creek .7 mile ahead.

The *Mount Vernon Hawk-Eye* edition of January 27, 1916, reported that Tama County had agreed to put up the money necessary to pave a half-mile of the Lincoln Highway east of Gladstone on Otter Creek, provided the LHA donated the necessary cement. Obviously, this would be another seedling mile. The editor felt that the Tama Commercial Club could raise the money for another half-mile nearer Tama, giving that county a full mile of paved road. Nothing seems to have come of it.

On July 20, 1919, a Cedar Rapids newspaper reported that newspapers in Des Moines were spreading the word that failure at the polls of road issues in some Lincoln Highway counties, including Tama, has endangered the routing of the highway through those counties. But, reported the newspaper, that isn't true and furthermore, Tama County officials had arranged to get federal money to drain and grade the road across the county, meaning it would be ready for pavement within two years.

Stay on U.S.30 for another 4.4 miles, approaching Tama. On the right is the King Tower cafe. The King Tower was built in 1937 by Wesley Mansfield, who promoted it as one of the most modern twenty-four-hour truck stops in the Midwest. It consisted of a two-story restaurant building with an adjacent service garage, a filling station office, and a cabin camp in back. The cafe actually was air-conditioned. There was a flashing sign on a tower atop the station.

Both the filling station and garage were torn down several years ago, but the present restaurant manager, Joe Shaddy, wants to buy the place and reconstruct both buildings. A spectacular Indian-head neon sign was erected in 1950.

Once again the highway planners want us to bypass a historic community, so once again, just

# Excerpts from “The Lincoln Highway,” 1995 (pg.9)

down several times. Harrison said he was going no faster than 15 mph.

Sure, Bob.

Proceed west on Fifth Street to the heart of town and turn right at a stop sign onto Siegel Street. (Siegel is two blocks past U.S.63.) A turn to the left on Siegel would take one to the C&NW tracks two short blocks to the south. On the west wall of the building on the right, just north of the tracks is a mural featuring the famous Tama bridge. From Fifth Street drive four blocks (.2 mile) north on Siegel to a T—turn left there on Ninth Street. About a block and one-half west turn right on Harding Street. Tama has a twin city just to the north called Toledo, and this street was once Toledo Street. About the same size as Tama, Toledo is on U.S.30; but Tama is on the Lincoln Highway. So proceed north only four blocks (.3 mile) and turn left at a stop sign onto 13th Street. Take an odometer reading.



National Archives

*This photograph depicts the army truck caravan lumbering through a small town—the caption identifies it as Tama.*

At 1.6 miles west, pass over the C&NW railroad tracks. Travelers are now in the Mesquakie (formerly Tama) Indian Reservation. Alice Ramsey and her friends marveled at the Indians here: “None of us had ever seen so many Indians before and we were thrilled by the new experience.” (This was only nineteen years after the disaster at Wounded Knee, marking the end of the Indian Wars.)

From here to the west across the Iowa River bottoms the Lincoln Highway is now on a massive fill, lifting it from the muck below. Cross the bridge over the Iowa River, 2.3 miles from Tama, and take another odometer reading.

The area below is now a wetland which attracts an abundance of waterfowl. Henry Joy saw it before the highway was raised and didn't like it at all. His Twin Six had to have the engine cowls lifted to cool the massive twelve-cylinder engine as it churned the car through the mud.



Special Collections, University of Michigan Library

*Henry D. Joy plows his mud-caked Packard Twin Six through the bottoms east of Montour in 1915.*

There is a hill and a slight curve to the right exactly 2.6 miles west of the Iowa River bridge. It was on this hill, on June 8, 1920, that Henry C. Ostermann died.

Ostermann, the urbane, very popular field secretary of the Lincoln Highway Association, had taken a bride seven months earlier. The couple had attended a dinner party at the home of the Iowa state consul in Tama that evening. His wife, feeling ill, elected to stay with friends that night while he drove ahead to Marshalltown to confer with the consul there. Mrs. Ostermann would follow on the train the next day.

He settled into the white 1918 Packard Twin Six touring car and headed out on the road he knew so well. Driving the purring, immaculate white phaeton west, he headed toward Moutour at what is believed to be a high rate of speed—one account says in excess of 50 mph. A Model T Ford was laboring up this hill and Ostermann pulled over to pass. The tires of the Packard slipped on the wet grass on the left shoulder and the great car pulled to the left, turned over twice and landed on its wheels. Ostermann's head was crushed to an unrecognizable pulp against the steering wheel. He died instantly. He was forty-three years old.

# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway," 1995 (pg.10)



*The Lincoln Highway; Dodd-Mead  
Henry C. Ostermann*



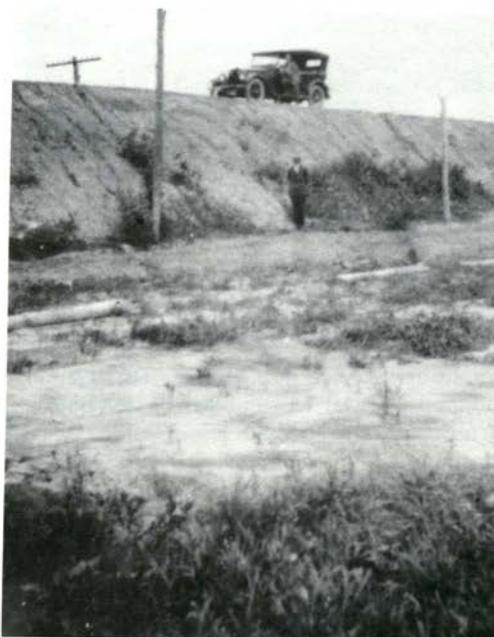
*"Betsy," the 1918 Packard Twin-Six that killed Ostermann, is shown beside the type of marker used to identify the Lincoln Highway in Ohio. This painting, by Denis K. Lange, was commissioned by the Buckeye Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association. The 12" x 18" full-color lithographs are for sale for \$10 each, plus \$3 shipping for up to five prints. Postcard reproductions are also available for \$1 each, plus 30c shipping for up to seven cards. The chapter is at 415 Buena Vista Ave., Ashland OH 44805-3833.*

Proceed 1.3 miles toward Montour. On the right is a set of Burma-Shave signs: "Dim Your Lights / Behind A Car / Let Folks See / How Bright / You Are / Burma- Shave."

The last sign is at the Montour city limits. Enter town on Lincoln Street. A later route of the Lincoln Highway continued straight through town on Highway E49 and proceeded 3.5 miles west, or one mile past the Marshall County line. (A construction marker is at the county line.)

However, these directions will guide the traveler over the earlier route. In Montour, turn right in the west part of town on South Main Street and drive north. Cross the C&NW tracks a block ahead and continue north about .2 mile to the point where the road veers to the left. It is identified as Lincoln Street also. Follow it to the northwest and notice the height of the fill.

The road twists around and reaches U.S. 30 two miles west of Montour and two miles east of Le Grand. Turn left and stay on U.S. 30 through Le Grand, crossing into Marshall County on the east edge of town.



Special Collections, University of Michigan Library

*The new fill on the grade west of Montour dwarfs the man standing at its base in this 1922 photograph.*

# “Brief History of the Lincoln Highway,” 2019 (pg.1)



## Iowa Lincoln Highway Association

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### Lincoln Highway History

#### Brief History of the Lincoln Highway

In the years before highways, railroads were the primary method of interstate travel. Whereas roadways were more used more locally.

Carl G. Fisher was an early automobile industry entrepreneur, he was one of the principal investors who built the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and was also a manufacturer of early gas headlights used in early automobiles. He had a dream of a transcontinental highway, and in 1912 he began to promote that dream. He believed the popularity of automobiles was dependent on the quality of roads, so if there was a nice road to drive on there would be more cars. He hatched the idea of a cross-country highway that would enable automobile travelers to get in their cars, get on the road, and enjoy traveling. Within months of pitching the idea, he had gathered \$1 million in funds. Major contributors included Teddy Roosevelt, Thomas Edison (both friends of Fisher), and then President, Woodrow Wilson.

Before development of the highway could begin, the idea needed to generate proper momentum so that it could be built. Thus, the Lincoln Highway Association was created on July 1, 1913 to “to procure the establishment of a continuous improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all description without toll charges.” Their job was to get the highway built, and promote it.

In July 1913 the LHA sent out a group of people called the “Trail-blazers” to scout the western route of the highway. They set it up as a tour that started in Indianapolis and ended in San Francisco. The “Trail-Blazer” tour spent 34 days touring through several states across America exploring possible routes for the Lincoln. However, when the official highway route was announced it didn’t necessarily follow the route the “Trail-blazers” took because the LHA President Henry Joy wanted as straight a route across the country as possible. The LHA officially dedicated the route on October 31, 1913. The dedication was celebrated all across the proposed route with parades, fireworks, bonfires, dances, and concerts.

Later that same year, the Essex and Hudson Lincoln Way in New Jersey became the first section of the Lincoln to be completed. It was dedicated on December 13, 1913. With the dedication of this section, the first automobile road across America was born. Upon the Lincoln Highway’s official dedication, it also became the first official memorial to Abraham Lincoln.



Digging a car out of mud near Tama by AF Bement and H Joy 1915 © Lincoln Highway Association Archive Transportation History Collection Special Collections Library University of Michigan

# “Brief History of the Lincoln Highway,” 2019 (pg.2)

Early travel on the Lincoln was about what you would expect in that time period. The Association determined that it would take a traveler 20-30 days to drive from the East coast to the West coast. The motorist would need to average about 6 hours of travel a day at 18 miles per hour. The Association thought that it should cost no more than \$5 a day per person, with the exception of car repairs. Keep in mind that traveling was only done during the light of day.

In 1914, the Lincoln Highway Association didn't have sufficient funds to sponsor large sections of the road so they started the “Seedling Miles” project. The Seedling Miles project (Iowa's is located outside Cedar Rapids) was intended to “demonstrate the desirability of this permanent type of road construction” to rally public support for government-backed construction. The first Seedling Mile was built in Malta, Illinois.

After years of experience with constructing roads the LHA began to design a section of road that could handle traffic for 20 years. Several highway experts convened between December 1920 and February 1921 and were able to come up with a special set of highway guidelines that should be followed. The most famous Seedling Mile that was built to these specifications is a 1.3-mile section that resides in Lake County, Indiana. It is named the “Ideal Section” and was constructed during 1922 and 1923. It was praised for its functionality and was visited and written about in technical papers across the United States and overseas. To this day, the Ideal Section is still in use and has aged so well that a driver wouldn't notice how old it was without the special marker bringing attention to it.



Seedling Mile in Linn County 6 miles east of Cedar Rapids  
1915 © Lincoln Highway Association Archive  
Transportation History Collection Special Collections  
Library University of Michigan

In 1926 a new highway numbering was adopted and states began putting up new signs to mark the highways. The Lincoln Highway was split into multiple numbered sections, but the entire route between Philadelphia and Granger, Wyoming was assigned “U.S. 30.”

After 1926, LHA donations diminished, and meeting attendance dropped. The Lincoln Highway dream had been made a reality and was actively being built -and even rebuilt- with a secure source of public funds as part of a national grid of interstate highways. Its goals fulfilled, the LHA disbanded on December 31, 1927 after having made a resolution to mark the route one final time. Even with the re-routings and the new federal highway numbers, the identity of the Lincoln Highway did not die with the LHA. The image made for the highway was by then too deeply seated. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, many piecemeal road relocations were considered as improvements to the Lincoln Highway, and not as hindrances of the Lincoln Highway.

The Lincoln Highway Association was reformed in 1992. Its mission was “...to identify, preserve, and improve access to the remaining portions of the Lincoln Highway and its associated historic sites.” Since then the LHA, and its state chapters, have been working to fulfill that mission to the best of their ability.

Explore author Brian Butko's websites for more expert information about the Lincoln Highway.  
<https://brianbutko.wordpress.com/> or <https://lincolnhighwaynews.wordpress.com/>

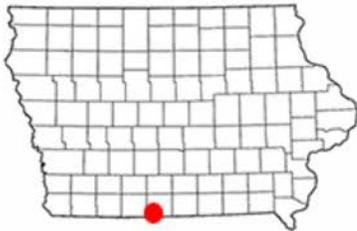


Grade on Honey Creek Hill, Pottawattamie County 1921 © Lincoln Highway Association Archive  
Transportation History Collection Special Collections Library University of Michigan

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg. 1)

## HISTORIC AUTO TRAILS

### HISTORY OF THE INTERSTATE TRAIL, JEFFERSON HIGHWAY AND JEFFERSON ASSOCIATION



#### INTERSTATE TRAIL: PRECURSOR TO THE JEFFERSON HIGHWAY

Before the Jefferson Highway Association's dream of connecting the nation from north to south was realized, an Iowa road association, known as the Interstate Trail Association, organized a route that connected Des Moines and Kansas City. Four years after the Interstate Trail Association had begun work on their route, the Jefferson Highway Association flooded the Missouri Valley with publicity and support for the Jefferson Highway. Many of the founding

members of the Interstate Trail later became integral figures in the development of the Jefferson Highway, while the path of Interstate Trail itself became part of the Jefferson Highway.

On March 14, 1911, the Des Moines-Kansas City-St. Joseph Interstate Trail Association was organized in **Lamoni, Iowa**, and the route officially located, and ordered marked by the association who received assistance from automobile clubs, commercial organizations, farmers, and other citizens in the cities, towns and countryside traversed by the trail.

The organizational meeting was called by W.A. Hopkins, banker and citizen of Lamoni. The bylaws of the Interstate Trail Association, which were subsequently established on March 11, 1913, indicated the highway route was a direct route between Fort Des Moines and Fort Leavenworth, making it a practical military road for the transportation of troops and "... a valuable aid in developing the resources of the counties traversed, a better means of social and business communication, and a lasting benefit to the communities through which it passes. . ."



Hugh H. Shepard  
Photo Credit  
Mason City Public Library

On Jan. 5, 1915, a meeting of the association was held at Mason City, at which time the original Interstate Trail was extended north from Des Moines through Nevada, Iowa Falls, Mason City, and Northwood, Iowa, and Albert Lea, Owatonna, Faribault, and Northfield to St. Paul, Minn., and the name of the route was changed to the St. Paul-Des Moines-St. Joseph-Kansas City Interstate Trail.

**Hugh H. Shepard** of Mason City called and organized the January 1915 meeting, and was selected as general manager of the northern division of the Interstate Trail from Des Moines to St. Paul. He was responsible for organizing the marking of the 271-mile trail section during the summer of 1915.

#### JEFFERSON HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION IS ORGANIZED

The Jefferson Highway and formation of the Jefferson Highway Association was the brainchild of businessman and political activist Edwin Thomas (E.T.) Meredith of Des Moines. Largely inspired by

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.2)

the Lincoln Highway, Meredith and his colleagues sought to create a sister route to the Lincoln Highway with the Jefferson Highway. Meredith was an instrumental good roads promoter for both Iowa and the nation, and he was pivotal in the establishment of the Jefferson Highway as president of the Jefferson Highway Association and later as vice president of the Iowa Good Roads Association.

## EDWIN THOMAS MEREDITH



Photo courtesy of the  
State Historical Society of Iowa

Edwin Thomas Meredith was born at Avoca, Iowa, Dec. 23, 1876, the eldest of seven children of Thomas Oliver and Minerva J. (Marsh) Meredith. For several years, his father was a farm implement dealer at Avoca.

In 1892 "Ed" was sent to Des Moines to live with his grandfather while attending Highland Park College (later Drake University). His grandfather, a prosperous buyer and seller of land, was the chief financial sponsor of a weekly reform newspaper, the *Farmers' Tribune*, considered to be a major organ of the People's or Populist Party in Iowa. It was in the offices of this small paper that Edwin T. Meredith began his great publishing career.

In the spring of 1894, Meredith became the general manager of his grandfather's paper. In 1896, at age 18, he became the owner and editor of what had become an ailing *Farmers' Tribune*. That year he was also elected secretary of the State Central Committee of the People's Party.



Meredith gradually transformed the *Farmers' Tribune* into a statewide farm paper and increased the circulation to about 30,000. In October 1902, Meredith began publication of a new monthly magazine designed expressly for the farmers of the agriculturally rich Midwest - *Successful Farming*. By 1908, over 100,000 farm families subscribed to the publication.

Meredith gave force to a publishing concept now called "service journalism." Meredith was aware of publishing trends, but he never strayed from the success formula that he discovered and was later was inducted into the Advertising Hall of Fame.

With the rapid growth of *Successful Farming* came nationwide recognition for its publisher, progressive Democrat concerned about political reforms affecting the lives of farmers and rural society.



Meredith was immersed in the political structures of Iowa from the mid-1880s through the late 1920s. He made two unsuccessful political bids as a Democratic candidate in Iowa, in 1914 for U.S. Senate and 1916 for governor.

Despite his defeats, Meredith's service on behalf of agriculture and the Democratic Party did not go unnoticed during President Wilson's second term. The president appointed Meredith to the American Labor Mission, which visited England and France in 1918, and the Treasury Department's Advisory Committee on Excess Profits. Meredith received his greatest honor when, in the closing months of his administration, President Wilson named him Secretary of Agriculture (1920-21).

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.3)

Following his term as Secretary, Meredith once again devoted his energies to publishing. He purchased another farm journal, the *Dairy Farmer*, which he incorporated into *Successful Farming*.



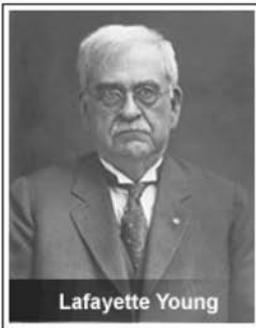
In October 1922 the first copies of yet another publication, *Fruit, Garden and Home* was published in Des Moines. Renamed *Better Homes and Gardens* in 1924, this magazine soon became, and remains, one of the nation's major publications in terms of circulation and advertising revenue.

Even with the increased demands on his time created by the new publications, Meredith never lost touch with the Iowa and national political and business scenes. Meredith served as the director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce from 1915-19 and once again 1923-28.

Meredith was hospitalized in 1928 at the Johns Hopkins hospital in Baltimore with complications resulting from high blood pressure. In April he entered a period of convalescence at his home in Des Moines, but after several weeks of improvement his condition suddenly worsened and he died June 17, 1928.

Since the [Meredith Corporation](#) was founded, it has grown to employ more than 3,300 people throughout the country, with its corporate headquarters still located in Des Moines, Iowa.

## JEFFERSON HIGHWAY



Lafayette Young  
Photo Credit  
U.S. Library of Congress

The Jefferson Highway was envisioned by Meredith as the “**great north and south highway**,” and named in honor of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, for his role in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase.

The first organizational meeting of the national Jefferson Highway Association was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, Nov. 15 and 16, 1915. This city was intentionally selected because of its link to the Louisiana Purchase and President Jefferson.

The meeting was called by Walter Parker, general manager of the New Orleans Association of Commerce, and presided over by former [U.S. Senator Lafayette Young](#) of Des Moines (editor and proprietor of *The Des Moines Capital*, a rival newspaper that later merged with the *Des Moines Register*). The convention was expected to attract 50 delegates, but six times that number attended.

## LOUISIANA PURCHASE

The Louisiana Purchase was the acquisition by the United States of approximately 530 million acres of French territory in 1803. The land purchased contained all of present-day Arkansas, Missouri, **Iowa**, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota south of Mississippi River, much of North Dakota, nearly all of South Dakota, northeastern New Mexico, northern Texas, the portions of Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado east of the Continental Divide, and Louisiana on both sides of the Mississippi River, including the city of New Orleans. In addition, the Purchase contained small portions of land that would eventually become part of the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The land included in the purchase comprises approximately 23 percent of the territory of the United States.

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.4)



New Orleans was an important port for shipping agricultural goods to and from the parts of the United States. Through Pinckney's Treaty signed with Spain on Oct. 27, 1795, American merchants had "right of deposit" in New Orleans, meaning they could use the port to store goods for export. Americans also used this right to transport products such as flour, tobacco, pork, bacon, lard, feathers, cider, butter, and cheese.

In 1798 Spain revoked Pinckney's treaty, which greatly upset Americans. Louisiana remained under Spanish control until a transfer of power to France.

As long as New Orleans was under French control, Americans feared that they could lose their rights of use to New Orleans. So President Thomas Jefferson decided that the best way to assure the U.S. had long-term access to the Mississippi River would be to purchase the city of New Orleans and nearby portions of Louisiana, located east of the river.

Jefferson sent negotiators to France to make the purchase of New Orleans on behalf of the United States. The negotiations with Napoleon did not go well. Originally, he expressed no interest in giving up France's possession of city.

However, Napoleon soon realized that he lacked sufficient military forces in America to protect the land should the United States or Britain decide to take it by force. At the same time, Napoleon's regime and his empire-building efforts were suffering on several international fronts.

Taking these matters into consideration, Napoleon gave notice to his minister of the treasury, Francois de Barbe-Marbois, on April 10, 1803, that he was considering surrendering the Louisiana Territory to the United States.

To the surprise of the United States, on April 11, 1803, Barbe-Marbois offered U.S. negotiator Robert R. Livingston all of the Louisiana Territory, rather than just the city of New Orleans it was seeking. Certain the United States would not accept such a large land offer, Livingston was prepared to spend \$10 million for New Orleans, but was stunned when the entire region was offered for \$15 million. The treaty finalizing the purchase was dated April 30, 1803, and signed May 2, 1803.

France officially turned New Orleans over to the United States Dec. 20, 1803. On March 10, 1804, a formal ceremony was conducted in St. Louis to transfer ownership of the territory from France to the United States.

During this early road-building period, highways or trails were generally organized and marked on a local or statewide basis. Rarely were they interstate or international, making the Jefferson Highway, with its terminal points in two countries and across many states, an anomaly.

At its first national meeting, the Jefferson Highway Association was formally organized and the Jefferson Highway's terminal points fixed at Winnipeg, Canada, to the north, and New Orleans, Louisiana, to the south.

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.5)

## MONUMENTS MARK NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN TERMINUS



A granite obelisk at St. Charles and Common streets in New Orleans' Central Business District marks the southern terminus of the Jefferson Highway. The monument was erected in 1917 by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

A monument that marks the northern terminus of the Pine to Palm Highway was erected Nov. 12, 1974, by the Royal Trust Company commemorating its 75th anniversary and the city of Winnipeg centennial.

It was at the first meeting that E. T. Meredith was named president of the Jefferson Highway Association and the bylaws of the association were laid out. The next order of business was to decide on the highway's path, which

would prove to be an ever-changing and ever-heated battle for the duration of the Jefferson Highway's existence.

Meredith's first thought was to have the Jefferson Highway routed directly through the land acquired during the Louisiana Purchase. He later dismissed that notion as simply "sentimental," not practical or efficient, since the route would have wandered as far west as Texas before returning north.

At the Jefferson Highway Association's first national meeting, there was overwhelming disagreement about the future path of the highway. Without a doubt, the first north to south trans-continental highway would have brought much prosperity to any towns and states through which it passed. Because of this, many states, cities and organizations attended the meeting to plead their case for the route to come to their area.

After two days of debate over the route, the Jefferson Highway Association settled on the "cardinal point" plan proposed by the board of directors. With this plan, the board was able to decide on the cardinal points or major cities, through which the Jefferson Highway must pass. All other decisions about the exact path of the route were to be made at a later date. The cardinal points were established - Winnipeg, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Des Moines, St. Joseph, Kansas City, Joplin, Muskogee, Denison, Shreveport, Alexandria, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.

Ultimately, debates over the location of the Jefferson Highway would lead to "branch highways" and "scenic loops." These offshoots would spur from the main Jefferson Highway artery and extend to other nearby communities, businesses and states that pleaded for access to highway. On the downside, the branch highways made the Jefferson Highway more confusing for tourists and made matters more difficult for the Jefferson Highway Association. On the upside, however, the branch highways broadened the domain of the Jefferson Highway and appeased the road association supporters in the outlying branch areas.

Iowans were well represented at the Jefferson Highway Association's organizational meeting. Delegates from the Interstate Trail Association were in attendance. They were there specifically for the purpose of furnishing the backbone for the new Jefferson Highway route with the more than 500 miles that group had already organized and marked between St. Paul, Minnesota, and Kansas City, Missouri.

Early Iowa-based organizers of the Interstate Trail Association later became international presidents of the Jefferson Highway Association, including W. A. Hopkins of Lamoni and Hugh H. Shepard of Mason City.

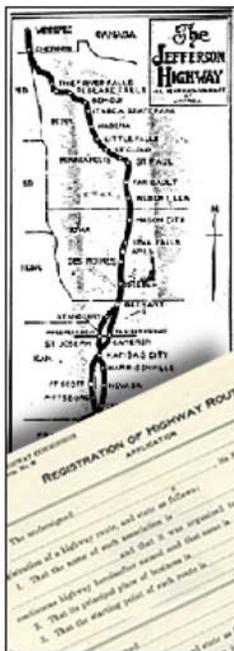
# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.6)

Following its organizational meeting, the delegates were charged with going back to their respective states to undertake the tasks of helping insure that the highway was constructed, marked and advertised.



The first meeting of the Iowa branch of Jefferson Highway Association was held at the Des Moines courthouse Jan. 5, 1915. It was attended by former Senator Young, T.R. Agg and Thomas H. MacDonald. It was reportedly a cold, stormy night and there were 115 people in attendance, including the Good Roads boosters.

One of the attendees, Hugh H. Shepard of Mason City, who later became the international vice president of the association, reported he was "quite discouraged over the apparent failure of the meeting." Senator Young told him to cheer up, because "sometimes the very meritorious projects grow from small beginnings." Young stated that he had been fighting for good roads for 20 years and that he hoped to live long enough to see the State of Iowa covered with a network of roads that could be traveled year round.



On December 10, 1915, Harry Herndon Polk, director of Harry H. Polk & Company of Des Moines and vice president for the Jefferson Highway Association, filed a letter with the Iowa Highway Commission requesting application materials to register the new name of the Interstate Trail, to be known as the Jefferson Highway, extending from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Winnipeg, Canada.

In the letter of application, E.T. Meredith of Des Moines was named as the president of the Jefferson Highway Association and Walter Park of New Orleans secretary.

On Dec. 13, 1915, the Iowa Highway Commission responded to Mr. Polk. The letter referenced the previously established route as the Interstate Trail, and explained that the Jefferson Highway could be registered as the Interstate division of the Jefferson Highway.

On May 23, 1916, E.T. Meredith filed the official [Registration of Highway Routes application](#) with the required \$5 fee.

*(Note: This was the first occurrence of recorded use of the Jefferson Highway Association's letterhead with the palms logo design amongst the official Iowa Highway Commission documents.)*

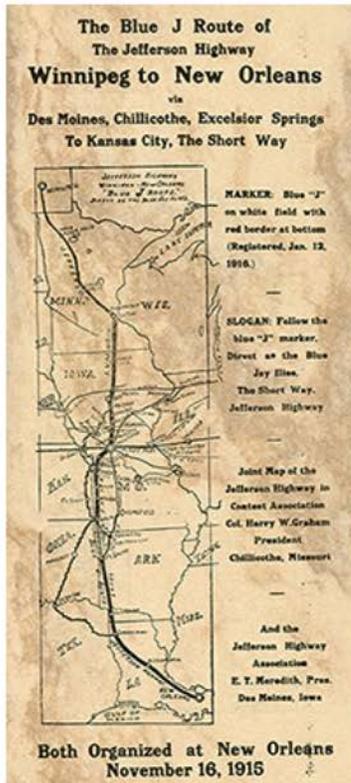
In the application, the route was defined as about 2,000 miles in length, with its starting point of Winnipeg and terminal point New Orleans. The principal place of business listed for the Jefferson Highway Association was Des Moines, Iowa.

It was also noted on the application that the Jefferson Highway was also to be known as the "From Pine to Palm" and "The Vacation Route of America" route.

On **September 26, 1916**, the Iowa Highway Commission forwarded to E.T. Meredith the certificate of registration for the Iowa division of the Jefferson Highway.

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.7)

## JEFFERSON HIGHWAY ROUTE MARKERS



Iowa's route registration application also defined the color combination and design for the route markers, which consisted of a six-inch band of blue above and below a 12-inch band of white, and the letters "J" and "H" in monogram (combined J and H) on the band of white.

The Jefferson Highway Association published the "[System of Pole Marking for Guiding the Traveler.](#)" which was used by members of the organization to properly mark the route in accordance with the international rules. At one point during the route's history, the Jefferson Highway Association claimed there were 2,000 metal signs and over 20,000 pole markers and monograms blazing the route.

In addition to metal signs and poles, monogrammed concrete markers were also constructed, like the one in the photo taken by Iowa Department of Transportation employee Hank Zaletel of a fence row route marker located one mile north of Colo on U.S. 65.

## ROUTE LOCATION IN IOWA

The Jefferson Highway crossed these counties in Iowa: Decatur, Clark, Warren, Polk, Story, Hardin, Franklin, Cerro Gordo, and Worth.

The official index of cities along the route included: Northwood, Kensett and Manly in Worth County; Freeman, Mason City and Rockwell in Cerro Gordo County; Sheffield, Chapin and Hampton in Franklin County; Iowa Falls and Hubbard in Hardin County; Zearing, Colo, Nevada and Cambridge in Story County; Ankeny and Des Moines in Polk County; Somerset, Indianola, Cool, and Medora in Warren County; Liberty, Osceola, Weldon, and Van Wert in Clarke County; and Leon, Davis City and Lamoni in Decatur County.

A portion of a [1917 map published by the Kenyon Company](#) map shows the route as it traversed Iowa.

## JEFFERSON HIGHWAY ROUTE NAME AND MARK IS CONTESTED

On December 6, 1916, W.A. Hopkins, vice president of the Jefferson Highway Association and president of the State Savings Bank of Lamoni, sent a letter to Thomas H.

MacDonald, chief highway engineer for the Iowa Highway Commission. In the letter Hopkins asked MacDonald to check on the status of the registration of the Jefferson Highway in Iowa in light of what had allegedly become a contest over road naming rights.

Hopkins said there was a road called the **Blue J Route** of the Jefferson Highway that went from Kansas City, by Chillicothe, Chariton, Iowa to Indianola to Des Moines. Col. Harry W. Graham of Chillicothe, Missouri, was identified as the president of that road association. Hopkins stated that the Blue J Route Association had attended the Jefferson Highway Association's organizational meeting in New Orleans and had made an unsuccessful attempt to get the Jefferson Highway located on

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.8)

their route. Following the New Orleans meeting, the Blue J Route Association had allegedly been advertising themselves as part of the Jefferson Highway, despite their failed attempt. The Blue J Route Association had also stated in their promotional materials that they were organized in New Orleans on November 16, 1915, registered Jan. 12, 1916, and tied to the Jefferson Highway Association under the leadership of President E. T. Meredith.

Their promotional materials carried the slogan, "Follow the blue "J" marker, Direct as the Blue Jay flies, the Short Way, Jefferson Highway."

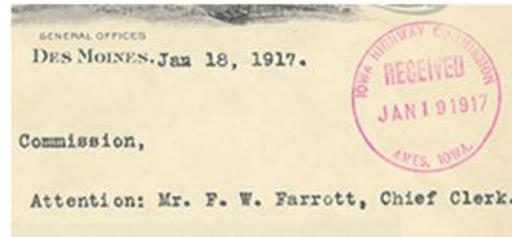
On December 20, 1916, in response to Hopkins letter, MacDonald reassured Hopkins that the Jefferson Highway was registered to the Jefferson Highway Association. In addition, the highway's mark and name were protected under the authority of the Iowa Act.



On December 29, 1916, H.W. Raymond, secretary of the Chariton Commercial Club, a group organized to promote the welfare of Chariton and Lucas County, filed a highway registration application for the "Jefferson Highway in Contest Association, Iowa Division." In a subsequent letter, the Jefferson Highway in Contest route was described as running from Kansas City to Des Moines, and the route's marker a blue "J" on a white background with a red band at the bottom.

The complete route description of the Jefferson Highway in Contest (Blue J Highway) and a route marker sample was included in the March 1, 1916, registration of trademark with the State of Missouri. An original copy of the application and sample mark is housed in the Iowa Department of Transportation's library.

In a [letter dated January 18, 1917](#), the Jefferson Highway Association filed a protest with the Iowa State Highway Commission against the registration of the Jefferson Highway in Contest as a decided infringement upon their rights, and as tending to confuse the traveling public. Obviously angered by the move, the letter also stated, "if it becomes necessary we could have a storm of protest against the registration of the Jefferson Highway in Contest from the south to the north boundary of the state, or if necessary, from New Orleans to Winnipeg as there are thousands of people who are taking a vital interest in the Jefferson Highway..."



A number of prominent individuals were among officers of the Jefferson Highway Association in 1917, including: E. T. Meredith of Des Moines, past president and life member of the board of directors; W. A. Hopkins of Lamoni, vice-president; F.J. Wright of Des Moines, treasurer; J. D. Clarkson of Des Moines, general manager; and the following state officials H. H. Polk of Des Moines, vice president; and directors James F. Harvey of Leon, H. H. Shepard of Mason City, and E. C. Harlan of Indianola.

On February 14, 1917, the Iowa Highway Commission issued a [letter to Raymond](#) with the Chariton Commercial Club informing him that the registration of the Jefferson Highway in Contest application was denied based on a decision that it would infringe on the right of the Jefferson Highway Association. The group was offered the opportunity to submit another application using a name that would not conflict with that of another association, proposing that the Blue J Trail would be a "very good name under which to register."

Adding to the controversy over naming rights, in April 1917 the Blue J Highway Association erected a sign at its junction with the Jefferson Highway in Warren County that read "Jefferson Highway."

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.9)

Angered, the Jefferson Highway Association quickly fired off another letter to the Iowa Highway Commission.

Following an investigation by the Iowa Highway Commission into the sign's placement, [Raymond wrote a letter](#) to the commission dated April 7, 1917, stating that the sign was not erected by the Iowa-based club of the Blue J Highway Association.

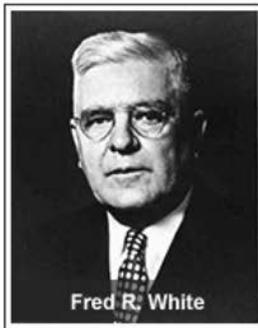
*It "was placed there by the Missouri men, while marking the route to Des Moines and boosting Excelsior Springs."* Raymond said that as soon as the weather permitted, they would send out a marking crew to remark the sign so that it conformed to the authorized marking of their association.

Future of the Jefferson Highway Association defined

On January 20, 1925, the Jefferson Highway Association held its 10th annual meeting in New Orleans. This event also marked the completion of the Jefferson Highway through the state of Louisiana, the first state to complete a road along the route. At the time, Minnesota was a distant second.



One of the major items on the agenda of this meeting was a discussion regarding whether the Jefferson Highway Association still filled an important community need that warranted retention of a separate road organization. This discussion was taking place in recognition that the state highway commissions had been organized, states were marking their highways and improvements to the Jefferson Highway were being made in a manner far beyond the expectations of the organizers.



Prior to the meeting, in a [letter dated January 12, 1925](#), to **Fred R. White**, chief highway engineer with the Iowa State Highway Commission, Hugh Shepard, international vice-president of the Jefferson Highway Association, sought White's opinion regarding the future of the association. Shepard relayed the fact that the work of the Jefferson Highway Association had "been of considerable importance during the last decade, and that we have really been of some assistance to the good roads improvement in the Mississippi Valley."

White responded to Shepard's letter stating, "Undoubtedly the Jefferson Highway Association and particularly those people connected with it have done an immense amount of good for the development of our highways. My feeling is that the association should be continued. I feel that there is room for such an association and for such a road, and then even though the states do adopt a standard number for such road and mark it in a uniform manner with the official state marker, it would be well to continue the Jefferson Highway marking and the Jefferson Highway organization."

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.10)

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY THROUGH IOWA



The Jefferson Highway was graded, graveled and paved over a number of years, and in different phases. Records housed in the Iowa Department of Transportation's library describe annual progress made in constructing and surfacing (gravel or paving) this route in each county during the early 1920s.

By January 13, 1922, Iowa State Highway Commission Maintenance Engineer W. H. Root was reporting that primary road #1, which corresponded very closely to the Jefferson Highway, was surfaced either with gravel or paving from the north Warren County line south to Des Moines to the Minnesota state line. It was also put to permanent grade from this same point south to the Missouri state line, with the exception of about eight miles north of Leon and a few miles south of Lamoni. Iowa's first federal-aid highway project --- Project No. 1--- also involved paving of a section of the Jefferson Highway between Mason City and Clear Lake. This route section was promoted as the highway to the "delightful summer resort, Clear Lake, only 10 miles away."

By January 14, 1925, the Iowa State Highway Commission was reporting that the Jefferson Highway was entirely built to finished grade or under contract for building to finished grade, except for a very short section (less than one mile) at the north edge of Warren County. The route had been paved across Polk County and graveled from the north

line of Polk County to the Minnesota state line. About 90 miles extending from the south line of Polk County to the Missouri state line had not been surfaced with either pavement or gravel.

Progress on completing the Jefferson Highway was also being made nationally at this time. An April 13, 1925, [letter from the Jefferson Highway Association](#) to Fred R. White of the Highway Commission indicated that the highway was completed through Louisiana; and by the end of the season, the graveling would be completed in northern Minnesota and Manitoba, Canada. So it would be possible to drive 835 miles from Des Moines, Iowa, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, over a completely graveled or paved roadway.

The Jefferson Highway Association's April 13, 1925, letter also referenced the fact that because the Jefferson Highway was significant militarily within the Mississippi Valley, it had been designated the "North and South Gold Star Highway" in Iowa.

Correspondence from the Highway Commission dated June 6, 1925, also referenced the cost to pave the Jefferson Highway south of Des Moines to the Missouri border would be \$22,000 per mile or less.

On December 29, 1925, Iowa State Highway Commission Chief Engineer Fred White wrote a letter to the Jefferson Highway Association. The letter was issued in response to that organization's inquiry regarding the possible condition of the Jefferson Highway in January 1926, when members of their group intended to cross the state on their way to the association's annual meeting in St. Joseph, Missouri. (In January 1926, the national headquarters of the Jefferson Highway Association was the Seventh Floor, Carby Building, St. Joseph, Missouri.)

In reply, White said,

*"... anyone who attempts, in January, to make a long drive over any Iowa road is taking a big chance, for the reason that January is the season of snows and snows are likely to come at any time. The*

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg. 11)

*highway may be in perfect condition one day and the next day it may be hopelessly snowbound. We are using every effort to keep the highways in this state, such as the Jefferson, free from snow so that it can be traveled throughout the winter. However, if a bad snow should come, say a day or two before these people should expect to drive across the state, they might find it utterly impossible to get across. So far this winter we have had a great deal of snow in this state and our roads have frequently been blockaded by snow for a short time.*

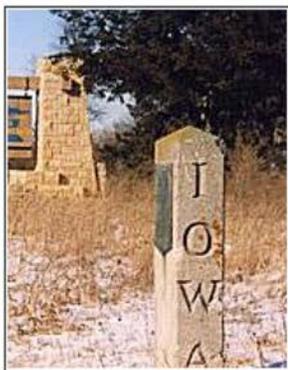
*In addition to the snow menace, there remains the fact that the Jefferson Highway from a few miles south of Des Moines to the Missouri state line is not surfaced with either pavement or gravel. It is possible that at the time they wish to make this trip that the road would be frozen over in a good smooth condition so that they could get over it without inconvenience. On the other hand, if a thaw should come a few days before they take this trip, they might find the road exceedingly slippery, or they might find it frozen up so rough that they could not get over it.*

*Personally, regardless of whether the roads were surfaced or not, I would not undertake a drive at this season of the year from Winnipeg, Canada, to St. Joseph, Missouri."*

## **BONDING FOR COMPLETION**

In a special session of the Iowa legislature in March 1928, the General Assembly voted to submit a constitutional amendment to the voters of the state at the general election to be held in November of that year that provided for a \$100-million bond issue that would complete the paving of the principal primary roads of the state and gravel the less important highways. If the bond issue carried, it was expected to complete the paving of the Jefferson Highway across Iowa by the end of 1929. The measure did not receive the support of the Iowa Highway Commission, and failed.

## **JEFFERSON HIGHWAY IN IOWA COMPLETED**



A four-foot high concrete monolith with a metal plaque was unveiled for the dedication of completion of the highway sections in Iowa and Minnesota. Completion of the route was defined as graded and graveled. Located at the Minnesota/Iowa state line on U.S. 65, the monument reads, "This marker dedicated October 30, 1930, by Governor Theodore C. Christianson of Minnesota and Governor John Hamill of Iowa, commemorates the completion of the Jefferson Highway across their states."

## **ROUTE IS NUMBERED AND LATER RENUMBERED**

The Jefferson Highway route name was abandoned in July 1, 1920, when Iowa's Primary Road numbering system was adopted and all highway/trail names were assigned a highway number. The Jefferson Highway route was numbered Iowa 1. The northern terminus of the

route was the Minnesota state line north of Northwood and southern terminus the Missouri state line south of Lamoni.

On February 25, 1924, Iowa 1 was straightened between Sheffield and Hampton. The old alignment followed what is now Franklin County Road S-43.

The Iowa 1 route number was decommissioned October 16, 1926, and the original route incorporated into two new U.S. route segments --- U.S. 65 and U.S. 69 --- when the U.S. route numbering system was adopted. (*Note: Iowa 1 was later recommissioned and used for a route from Brighton in Washington County to just south of Anamosa in Jones County.*)

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.12)

Today, U.S. 65 extends from the Minnesota state line north of Northwood, south to the Missouri state line at Lineville. At the time of designation in 1926, the segments from Mason City to the Cerro Gordo/Franklin County line and through Polk County were paved. The work paving U.S. 65 was not completed until 1968, when the segment from U.S. 69/Iowa 349 south of Indianola to Iowa 205 was paved.

U.S. 69 extends the Minnesota state line state line near Emmons, Minn., to the Missouri state line near Lamoni. All of U.S. 69 was unpaved at the time of designation in 1926, but it was entirely paved by the end of 1929.

## ROUTE SAFETY

In response to a June 1925 front page article published in the *Des Moines Register* about six motor vehicle fatalities occurring along the Jefferson Highway, the Jefferson Highway Association wrote a letter (dated June 23, 1925) to Iowa State Highway Commission Highway Engineer Fred White recommending that Iowa install safety signs on the roadway similar to those being installed in Minnesota, which read "loose gravel," "soft shoulders," "narrow road" or "sharp curve."

Jefferson Highway Association International President Hugh Shepard wrote, "*It is my belief that a number of lives will be saved on the Iowa highways, if a similar system of warning signs is adopted in the State of Iowa, and I would recommend this to you for your careful consideration and prompt attention, particularly on the Jefferson Highway and other roads where the traffic is heavy.*"

In the early 1920s, representatives from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Indiana toured several states, including Iowa, with the intent of developing a basis for uniform signs and road markings. The group reported its findings to the Mississippi Valley Association of Highway Departments in 1932. Their efforts resulted in standards for sign shapes and messages, some of which are still in use today and part of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices adopted for use by all states.

## 1928 U.S. GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION ADDRESS

An [address](#) was given by Hugh H. Shepard, Mason City, Iowa, Life Director and Past International President of the Jefferson Highway Association, before the 16th Annual Convention of the United States Good Roads Association at Des Moines on May 30, 1928. The remarks were published in the October 1928, *Annals of Iowa, A Historical Quarterly*, published by the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.

The address outlines much of the history of the Jefferson Highway Association and how it contributed to the building of the goods roads in Iowa and across the nation, assisted travelers through the marking of the route and fostered international relations through its connection to Canada.

## SOCIAL RUNS

As automobile ownership became more common, automobile associations, such as the Jefferson Highway Association, formed to promote automobile use and the needs of drivers for good roads. These associations organized and hosted sociability runs/tours, which were primarily taken to bring distant communities closer together. They also afforded auto owners an opportunity to drive to see what at that time were considered "novel" places.

Two notable social runs traversed the approximately 2,300-mile distance of the Jefferson Highway. The first occurred in July 1919. Participants traveled from New Orleans north to Winnipeg, Canada. The tour was organized by J. D. Clarkson, the general manager of the Jefferson Highway Association, and was called the "Palm to Pine Sociability Run" in honor of the designated starting and finishing points of the run.

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg. 13)



The Palm to Pine Sociability Run got underway July 1, 1919. The touring party was headed by J. D. Clarkson and his wife. Forty-two people started out in New Orleans, including Governor of Louisiana R. G. Pleasant. Also participating in the tour were: Manitoba's Attorney General Thomas H. Johnson; Mayor of New Orleans Martin Behrman; Mayor of Shreveport, Louisiana J. M. W. Ford; Louisiana State Highway Commissioner Duncan Buie; Vice-president of the Louisiana Jefferson Highway Association R. A. Nibert; Vice-president of the Minnesota Jefferson Highway Association J. H. Beek; and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Automobile Association A. G. Batchelder of New York.

Communities along the touring route were urged to host celebrations in honor of the motorists. They were also encouraged to send motorists to meet the touring party before entering a community. Newspapers along the route featured stories about the tour and community events organized in their honor.

The touring party had a strict schedule it was trying to keep, but by July 9, 1919, the local newspapers were reporting that, due to heavy rains in the southern United States, the sociability run would be delayed a day. This caused a number of communities along the route to cancel their celebrations.

R. B. Millard, a Little Falls, Minn. native who was serving as the state secretary for the Minnesota Jefferson Highway Association, published the following statement in the Daily Transcript on June 25, 1919: "We should make the afternoon a holiday in Little Falls. It has been suggested that all business houses along the line

decorate with flags and bunting to welcome the tourists."

The next major sociability run for the Jefferson Highway Association began Feb. 4, 1926, in the dead of winter. The cavalcade of 132 people in 32 cars, most of them from Winnipeg, completed the 13-day trip from Winnipeg to New Orleans to celebrate completion of the highway. The visitors saluted the granite obelisk erected in 1917 that marked the southern terminus of the route.

Nov. 9, 2009 — Jefferson Highway enthusiast and historian Mike Conlin of Metairie, La., retraced the entire route in what he has called a "Reawakening of an International Treasure" and mapping expedition. [Read full article.](#)



Photo Courtesy  
Mason City Globe Gazette

## ROUTE HISTORY RECALLED

An October 22, 1995, a [series of articles](#) were published by the *Mason City Globe Gazette*, titled "Take a Brief Road Trip with Us, Now, Back to North Iowa in the 1920s, 30s and 40s," and written by Kristin Buehner. These articles offer details about the building and navigating of the Jefferson Highway in northern Iowa, and how the highway gave birth to the Jefferson Highway Transportation Company, now Jefferson Lines.

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.14)

## HIGHWAY GAVE BIRTH TO THE JEFFERSON BUS LINE

The Jefferson Highway Transportation Company was formed September 1919 in Minneapolis by Emery L. Bryant and Ivan D. Ansell. It was named after the Jefferson Highway and followed its route. The first Jefferson bus line ran from Minneapolis to Osseo, Minn.

By the time of the Great Depression, a significant portion of the Jefferson Highway Transportation Company's business had become concentrated in Iowa. In June 1927, the Jefferson line included Mason City, Charles City, Decorah, Independence, Cedar Rapids, and Waterloo. Connections to Garner, Ames, Des Moines, and Kansas City were established in 1929.

Charlie Zelle, grandson of Edgar Zelle who purchased the Jefferson bus line in 1925, said in the 1995 *Globe Gazette* article, "Iowa's always been our core business. Iowa is very central for Minnesota and points south."

When this article was published in 1995, the Jefferson Line ran from Minnesota to Texas through 10 states.

## REMNANTS OF THE JEFFERSON HIGHWAY IN IOWA

Today, travelers can still see remnants of the historic Interstate Trail and Jefferson Highway in Iowa, including many gas station buildings strewn along the route that have been abandoned or converted to other uses.



One of the historic features along the route, which is being preserved through an Iowa Department of Transportation enhancement grant, is the [Reed-Niland "one-stop" complex at Colo](#). It was originally named the L and J Station because it was located at the junction of the Lincoln Highway and Jefferson Highway. The filling station, tourist cabins and restaurant are partially restored and open to the public.

Other remnants along the route include the tourist courts. One such court is located in Iowa Falls. The Scenic Inn, now a motel north of town, is still recognizable as the descendant of a one-stop begun in 1929 as the Scenic City Kabin Kamp. All but two of the cabins have been replaced with standard motel structures, and the building that once housed the gas station and restaurant is now rented out.

Another tourist court, located in Northwood, is the Royal Motel, which was advertised as being "Fit for a King."

Another treasure along the former Jefferson Highway is the abandoned Hotel Manly in Manly, Iowa.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Jefferson Highway Association shall be remembered in Iowa's transportation history books for: the pioneering of the good roads movement in the Mississippi Valley; linking communities, county seats, state capitals, industrial and population centers; opening up the avenues of travel, bringing a closer relationship between town and country, communities, and neighboring states; and establishing international goodwill between the U.S. and Canada.

In the words of Hugh Shepard, "The closer association of communities and individuals, both neighboring and distant, causes sectional lines to be obliterated and doubts and mistrust to be banished. In this work of promoting peace and good will, the building of good road and the establishment of trunk lines and international highways has played an important part."

# History of the Jefferson Highway from Iowa DOT, Date Unknown (pg.15)

## SOURCES AND LINKS

- Lyell Henry, "Along the Jefferson Highway", [Lincoln Highway](#) Association Newsletter, Along the Lincoln Highway.
- Mary Warner, "Jefferson Highway", Morrison County (Minnesota) Historical Society online. 2001.
- Timeline of Jefferson Highway in Cass County (Missouri) Democrat, compiled by Carol Bohl, 2003.
- The Jefferson Highway Association, Crawford County Division, Records, 1915-2005, contain items such as correspondence, minutes, maps, newspaper clippings and other related items to the Jefferson Highway, are housed at the Leonard H. Axe Library, and of the Kansas Technology Center Library - Pittsburg (KS) State University, <http://axelibrary.blogspot.com/2007/02/jefferson-highway-association-crawford.html>
- A mural to commemorate the Jefferson Highway was installed Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2007, on a building owned by Shelton and Sons Construction at 1201 N. Independence in Harrisonville, Missouri, which was on the route of the original Jefferson Highway. The mural was created on two aluminum panels by area artist Daniel Brewer. The 8' x 12' panel depicts the front of a Jefferson Highway tourist guide from the early 1920s, while the 4' x 8' panel is a map of the route of the highway from New Orleans to Winnipeg, Canada.

# **“The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg. 1)**

## **THE PERFECT SPOT**

**Iowa 80’s Journey From  
Iowa Cornfield To World’s Largest Truckstop**



# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.2)

## *Iowa 80: Safe Haven in Bad Weather*

**F**or 40 years, Iowa 80 Truckstop has been a place where truckers and travelers could take care of a variety of needs with one pleasant stop. They could fuel up, have repairs made, eat dinner, shop, visit a barber or dentist and much more.

But the World’s Largest Truckstop also has been a safe haven during storms, particularly the winter blizzards Iowa can serve up now and then.

Shirley Giebelstein, who has worked at Iowa 80 Kitchen for nearly 40 years, remembers a bad snowstorm in the early 1970s. A woman who worked as a cashier at

the time was diabetic and out of insulin. “Some of the drivers took it upon themselves to go into Davenport and get her insulin,” says Shirley.

“They’re good to us,” she says of the drivers. “Most of them are very nice.”

Shirley and everyone else who has spent more than a few years around Iowa 80 remembers the big snowstorm in the winter of 1978-79. It hit in December. “There was tons and tons of snow,” says Iowa 80 Kitchen owner-operator Bill Peel. “Nobody could move. The lot was just plugged.”

He says there were way too many

people in the building for its size during the snow emergency, “but where else were they going to go?”

Restaurant manager Wayne Meincke and his wife had bought a house in Walcott shortly before the snowstorm hit. He can’t remember if it was a Friday or a Saturday, but “I happened to be off that day, and they came and got me with a snowmobile.” Meincke says he then worked two days straight.

Hundreds and hundreds of people were stranded at the truckstop. But they were warm and safe. “You took care of them during the day and about 8 or 9 o’clock at night, they just kind of drifted off,” says Wayne, whose wife opened up their house so waitresses, who were transported back and forth in four-wheel drive trucks, could get five or six hours’ sleep between shifts.

“I came to work on Saturday morning and didn’t leave until



Carolyn Moon stands beside her car along County Road Y-40 in Walcott – 1978.

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.3)

## MIKE HUTCHISON

Mike Hutchison remembers all too well the winter of '78/'79. “I was working at Iowa 80 after school and on the weekends” recalls Mike, “But I was here 'round the clock for three days when the big storm hit. All of the interstates in Iowa were shut down, but Iowa 80 was still open and operating.”

Mike assisted with plowing snow, shuttling people and wrecker service during those three days. “We would pick people up and bring them to the truckstop, but we didn’t pull out their vehicle because we couldn’t find it under the snow.” says Mike. “Heck, we even plowed the exit ramps just so we’d have a clear spot to pull cars to once we found them.”

He also tells a funny story involving Bill Moon and the road grader. “I remember that we were plowing the lot after the storm quit and there was this one snow drift giving Bill some trouble so he just kept hitting it harder until he got through. Well, we found out what the hard spot was when out of the big snow drift rolled a VW bug.”

– Mike Hutchison, *Facilities Manager, Iowa 80 Truckstop*



Vehicles had to stay running or find a friend to give 'em a jump start – 1978.

Tuesday,” says Terry Peel, a now-retired Iowa 80 Kitchen owner-operator. “My oldest son Michael was off work that Saturday, and I had forgotten my billfold. So he brought it out, and he didn’t get home until Wednesday.”

Bill Peel had just returned from a trip to sunny Florida as the storm hit and arrived at the restaurant about 5 in the morning. “We didn’t get out of here until about 72 hours later,” he says. “Travelers and truckers were pouring into the truckstop as Interstate 80 was slowly closing down,” Bill remembers. “It continued to snow, and Interstate 80 was eventually closed to all traffic. There

were truck drivers and entire families stranded here for several days.”

Walcott firefighters and members of a Walcott snowmobile club plucked many stranded motorists off Interstate 80, and took them to either the truckstop, the Walcott church or some private residences in Walcott.

Snowmobiles and four-wheel drive trucks also shuttled dozens of folks from the truckstop to the church where they slept on pews, were fed chili and given blankets. The church received enough donations in the months following to buy cushions for those pews.

Bill Peel recalls that he and his brother Terry shut down the back of one restaurant dining room and

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.4)

tuned out its lights to also create a place for stranded motorists to sleep. Someone brought a TV to the front part of that dining room, and people either watched it or played cards to pass the time. “If you wanted to eat,” Bill says, “you had to get up and get in line out in front and wait your turn just like everybody else.”

Bill says Iowa 80 Kitchen never ran out of food during the snow emergency, “but our customers started running out of money. So we just served them anyway. You couldn’t let people go hungry.”

Some people, he notes, would discover their restaurant ticket six months or a year later, then show up to pay their bill.

One story nearly brings tears to



VW Bug in the distance ended up taking a wild ride in a giant snowball – 1978.



Halted in their tracks. Interstate 80 was closed across Iowa – 1978.

Bill Peel’s eyes. “I remember one young mother with three little children trying to stay awake to watch over them,” he says. “A truck driver asked if he could help watch her children so she could get some rest. He told her that he was away from his grandchildren and would enjoy it immensely. She was so tired, she agreed to it.”

The big trucker walked a baby around until it quit crying. “He fed it a bottle and changed some diapers,” Bill says.

Some other customers helped take care of the woman’s two younger children. “It was just that kind of atmosphere,” Bill says. “I think that happens anywhere. But it happened here. And it’s happened on more than one occasion where people have stepped up to help total strangers. It’s just really neat.”

Three days after the storm had hit with a vengeance, it was gone and the interstate opened again, the close-knit strangers left and the truckstop hummed with new travelers.

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.5)

## *Iowa 80 Truckers’ Warehouse Store: Bigger and Better*

**C**ustomer service is what brings people back again and again to the huge store at Iowa 80 Truckstop.

“That has to be number one,” says Jim Morris, who has managed the store since 1982. “There are a lot of places that carry similar items. But the only thing the customer is going to remember is how they were treated when they came here.”

**“It is really something to be part of a truckstop company that is among the top 10 in the world.”**

**– Jeff Corley, General Manager, Truckomat, Hebron, Ohio**

Following customer service, product selection is the most important attraction for customers, Jim says. He says he tries to go outside the trucking industry to find and buy products drivers are going to need.

Jim also notes that what product is hot at the moment is always changing. Then, when every



Drivers are amazed that there are more than 50,000 different items to browse.

truckstop is carrying the popular item, “you have to go out and find something different to keep the merchandise fresh and appealing to drivers.”

That philosophy must be working for Iowa 80 Truckstop’s store. Expansion tells the tale. Jim says the facility was just 1,100 square feet with three full-time and two part-

time employees in the early ‘80s when he joined the team.

It expanded to 3,000 square feet in the mid ‘80s and about 8,000 feet in 1988. Then, in the early 1990s, the store expanded to its present size, which is around 18,000 square feet.

“Today, there’s 42 full-time and 16 part-time store employees,” Jim says.

The ever-larger floor space has



# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.6)

**“Iowa 80 Truckstop is successful because the family continues to put money back into the business. We are also very aggressive. Bill Moon was a pioneer in this industry, and we have just carried on that tradition. We want to be first in class. We don’t just want to be the biggest truckstop; we also want to be the best.”**

**– Jim Morris, Store Manager, Iowa 80 Truckstop**

also led to a wider array of products in the store. In the early 1980s, about 4,000 to 5,000 products were available to the driver, Jim recalls. Today the store sells more than 50,000 items.

“Everyone who comes in here can find something that they need,” he adds.

A huge store with lots of merchandise and great customer service is important to truckers, says Jim. “Our customers are on the road 300 days a year, and they don’t always get to shop. During their down time, they have the time to browse here, and the men are probably tougher shoppers than the women.”

Women? Yes, that’s right. Plenty of the store’s customers are, in fact, women. “In the early days, it was mostly men who were on the road,” Jim explains. “Now it’s a lot of team drivers – husband and wife drivers, and solo women drivers.”

As for the merchandise he offers, Jim says the number of products available to Iowa 80 from suppliers in the 1980s was limited. “Log books, paper products and the basic truck supplies were the only things that wholesalers carried.”

But Iowa 80 realized they could be different from their competitors by providing professional drivers with a number of items that were not available at any other truckstop.

“It was an opportunity to make a



Did we mention that we sell lights, too?

name for ourselves and bring the customer back to us,” Jim says.

“There are many times people have said, ‘Wow, if you can’t find it at Iowa 80, it must not be made!’”

Some of the out-of-the-ordinary items the truckstop began carrying, says Jim, included chrome and stainless accessories. But it also includes products like cargo control equipment to make a driver’s job easier and safer.

“Drivers are professionals,” Jim says of today’s truck driver. “They need the right equipment in order to do the job right.”

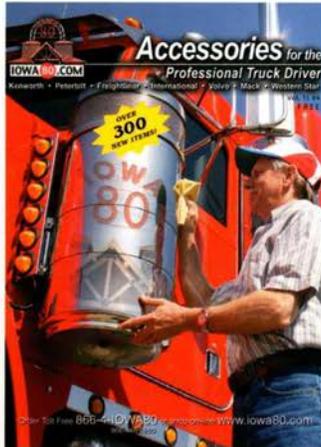
While the Iowa 80 store has changed drastically in size and the type of merchandise it has carried over the years, so has the type of driver who shops there.

Owner-operators now account for about 15 percent of the industry, Jim says. “And those are the ones who look for the shiny stuff – the chrome and all the accessories to deck out their trucks.”

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.7)

The other 85 percent are company drivers who need the right equipment to do their jobs. And both owner-operators and company drivers find what they want at Iowa 80.

That makes Iowa 80 Truckstop the place that truckers and motorists want to stop, Jim says. One trucker told him he had driven 200 miles out of his way to visit Iowa 80. “He said, ‘I



just had to come by here to see what new and exciting things you had.”

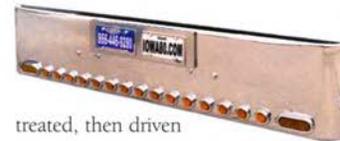
Iowa 80 doesn’t stop trying to serve customers, even if they can’t make it to the truckstop. In 1997, the Iowa 80 Catalog was born. This gave drivers the opportunity to get the items they needed from Iowa 80 from

anywhere in the country.

“We would hear many times from drivers that they wished they could shop here more often, but many times their route didn’t take them through here. We listened; and figured a mail-order catalog was the way to go,” says Jim Morris.

But, Iowa 80 didn’t stop at a printed catalog. In 2000, www.iowa80.com, an e-commerce web site that features over 30,000 items, was launched. This gave drivers 24-hour access to shop from home or their truck. “One of our goals is to be always open and accessible to drivers. This is one more way we can accomplish that and serve our customers better,” says Will Moon, President.

Jim Morris points out that customer service at Iowa 80 goes beyond helping the customer pick out the right bumper. Iowa 80 employees, for example, have driven truckers with non-life threatening medical problems to Davenport emergency rooms, stayed with their family members while they were



treated, then driven them back to the truckstop.

truckstop employees also regularly help motorists tie down mattresses and other shifting loads they’re carrying on their vehicle’s rooftop luggage carriers. “We will find plastic for them and duct tape, and we will help them secure that load to the top of their vehicle,” says Jim.

“You don’t get that kind of service at the mall,” he adds with a laugh. “And, you know, we do things like that all the time. Iowa 80’s reputation is known coast to coast. And I think it’s because we really enjoy our customers and we have a family atmosphere.”

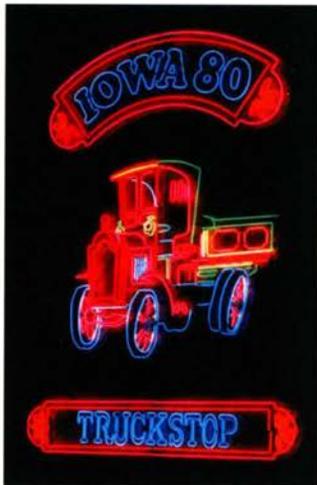
Jim Morris has worked at the Iowa 80 store for more than two decades now. And he says he’s there for the long haul.

“I enjoy this job and the Moon family is just a wonderful family to work for,” he says. “They put money back into the business to make it comfortable for professional drivers and other highway travelers.”

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.8)

## Iowa 80 Service Center: People With Pride

**T**he popularity and growth of the Iowa 80 Truckstop Service Center come as no surprise to Tom Houston, its general manager.



It has to do with pride, people and quality work. Those are things that make a difference to a customer whether he or she lives just down the road or is thousands of miles from home.

Tom says his technicians all take pride in their work, and they care

about their customers. It's what you'd expect of Iowans. "We have a good work ethic," he says.

Iowa 80 employees also stick around. Tom notes that the average time a technician serves with Iowa 80 is seven years, which he says by industry standards is "phenomenal. I think turnover in our business is what kills many operations. In our particular business here, we are fortunate to have many employees that have been working with us over 20 years."

**"Though Iowa 80 is large and serves thousands of people every day we really emphasize how important every individual customer is, even if he or she doesn't work for one of the huge trucking companies. We try to give everybody the same quality, care and concern."**

**— Ron Crino, General Manager, Truckomat, Walcott, Iowa**

Tom says customers prefer to drive up to a truckstop and see familiar faces. "In most of our industry today, every time a customer comes up, maybe once a month,



Iowa 80 Service Center can tackle everything from oil changes to engine repairs.

# “The Perfect Spot: Iowa 80’s Journey from Iowa Cornfield to the World’s Biggest Truckstop,” 2004 (pg.9)

they’re always seeing new technicians. And that scares them in the repair business.”

But the general manager says it makes him feel good to know that a customer can drive up to the service center at Iowa 80 and see the same technician who served him or her the last time they stopped.

Says Tom: “They see the same technician and get to know them. A customer can come up, for example, and say, ‘I want Lee to work on my truck,’ knowing that he’s been here a long time and gives good quality service.”

The current Service Center



Iowa 80 Service Center with a whopping seven bays – 2004.

opened on March 15, 1993. An additional service bay was added in September of 1998.

“We wanted to do something a little bit different than any other truckstops,” says Tom. “So we started doing tractor and trailer alignments in that new bay.”

“We built one of the bays to do more tire work,” he says, “but then we also added a bay dedicated to chrome installations for items like the chrome tool boxes and bumpers that are available at the Iowa 80 Chrome Shop.”

While pride, people and quality work set Iowa 80’s Service Center

**“In our company, customer satisfaction is the No. 1 priority. We like to showcase our truckstop and, in order to do that, we’ve got to take care of the customer.”**

**– Tom Houston, Service Center Operations Manager, Iowa 80 Group**

apart from others, Tom believes other factors are at work, too, including: Cleanliness. “We repeatedly win the TravelCenters of America Cleanest Shop Award every year,” he beams. “Our shop is by far the cleanest one out there.”

First-class training of technicians. More variety. “Right now, for example, we’re carrying six brands of tires! That’s basically unheard of.”

“I think our people care more than any truckstop around,” he says, noting that Iowa 80 is known nationwide. “The customers tell everyone on their CB radios that we have a good staff of people here, and we’re real friendly.”

And they’re right!

# Youngville Cafe on Lincoln Highway Added to National Register of Historic Places, 2007 (pg.1)



## Youngville Café

Built in the early 1930s as a one-stop roadside business on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway, the Youngville Café near Watkins is a great example of the new options available to female business owners in the early 20th century. Built by Joe Young for his widowed daughter, Lizzie Wheeler, the café developed a family-friendly atmosphere with fried chicken, homemade pie, live piano music, groceries, and even a few slot machines. Three small rental cabins completed the operation but are no longer standing. It also served as the living quarters for Lizzie and subsequent operators who ran the business for her when she moved to Cedar Rapids. The Youngville Café was in operation until 1967, when it could no longer accommodate the number of cars, trucks, and buses that stopped there. Designed in a Tudor Revival style, the distinctive building features a dynamic roof shingle pattern and bright red red trim. The facility was recently reopened, featuring a museum, café, and farmers market. Leah Rogers of Tallgrass Historians L.C. prepared the nomination for the owner, the Youngville Highway History Association.

## Louis C. and Amelia L. Schmidt House

The Louis and Amelia Schmidt House in Davenport is an excellent example of the middle-class interpretation of the Queen Anne style of architecture. The Schmidt House has a standard core of a two-story, hipped roof box with lower projecting gables. This asymmetrical arrangement is augmented with other Queen Anne elements, which provide further interest and detail, including fishscale wood shingles, dentils, beads, and multi-light windows. The interior of the Schmidt House reflects the style and craftsmanship of the original owner, with turned spindles, decorative newel posts, and carved detailing on the stairs, as well as large pocket doors, and a built-in china cabinet. Most likely built by Louis Schmidt in 1895, the house may also have served as an advertisement for his construction business. The later porch addition exhibits the Craftsman influence of the 1910s and 1920s, when Schmidt likely constructed it, too. Louis and Amelia Schmidt lived in the house until their deaths in the 1940s. Rebecca McCarley of SPARK Consulting prepared the nomination. She is also the proud owner of the house.



## Chevra B'nai Yisroel Synagogue

The Chevra B'nai Yisroel Synagogue in Council Bluffs is significant as a notable example of a public building designed by local architect J. Chris Jensen and for its significant association with the settlement and evolution of the Jewish religious and ethnic community in the Council Bluffs-Omaha region. The building was constructed in 1931 to replace the city's first synagogue, destroyed by a disastrous fire. The building's design is subdued and somewhat stylish with its tripartite facade and projecting main entryway. The architect was born in Denmark in 1873 and was working in Omaha by the time he reached his early 20s. One of only 14 remaining synagogues in the state, Chevra B'nai Yisroel represents what was once a thriving Jewish community. The prosperity of the congregation required the building to be enlarged in 1962, but today it struggles to maintain membership. The synagogue is one of the longest-lasting and most prominent symbols to represent the Jewish heritage of Council Bluffs. Leah Rogers and Megan Masana of Tallgrass Historians L.C. prepared the nomination for the current B'nai Israel congregation.



# Youngville Cafe on Lincoln Highway Added to National Register of Historic Places, 2007 (pg.2)

## New to the National Register

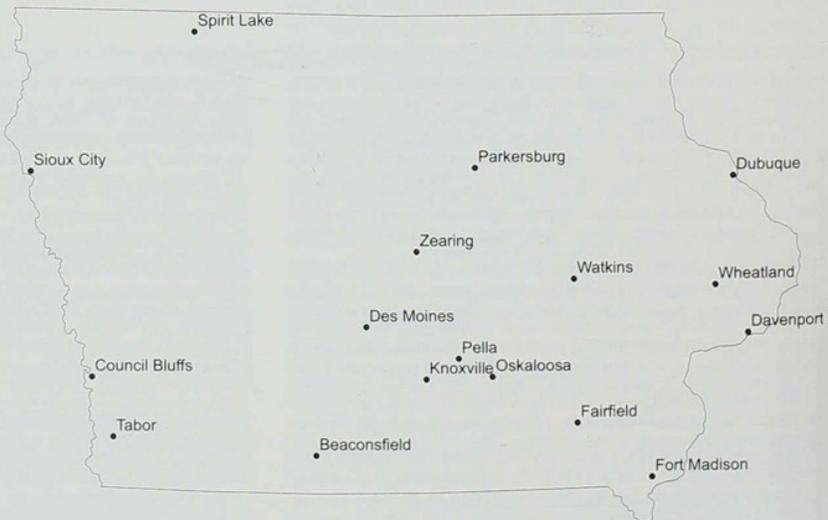


by Barbara Mitchell,  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's list of properties that are considered most worthy of preservation. The properties are tangible links to community, state, and national history.

Iowa properties listed on the National Register for 2007 are located across the state and represent a wide range of types: rustic, rural, and religious; commercial buildings and hotels; the homes of famous individuals; buildings used as advertisements; a brewery; and a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Curious about the National Register of Historic Places — and other matters related to historic preservation? The staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa can assist you.  
[www.iowaHistory.org/preservation](http://www.iowaHistory.org/preservation)  
Phone: 515-281-8743.  
600 E. Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319



# “Iowa All Over: Preston’s Station in Belle Plaine still a draw for passing drivers,” June 21, 2015 (pg.1)

## Iowa All Over: Preston's Station in Belle Plaine still a draw for passing drivers

### Filling up, telling stories

BELLE PLAINE — As Mitch Malcolm sees it, the art of roaming from place to place, in no hurry to get from point A to point B, has been lost.

Years ago, though, cross-country drivers were more likely to stray off the beaten path and perhaps wind up at an intriguing stopping point— such as Preston’s gas station in Belle Plaine, in Benton County.

“You have to think of how adventurous it was, the idea of going two or three states or across the country because literally you did not know what you’re going to find,” said Malcolm, president of the Belle Plaine Historical Society. “They had a map, and they were hoping that was going to get them where they wanted to go.”

Although Preston’s gas station isn’t operational today, travelers regularly stop to see an original Lincoln Highway gas station in Belle Plaine.

The Lincoln Highway was the first U.S. transcontinental road for cars, Malcolm said. At one time, the highway had three different routes that went through Belle Plaine.

Preston’s Station, as it’s now known, was built by Frank Fiene in 1912, a year before the Lincoln Highway was dedicated. The business at first was located on the former Lincoln Highway route on 21st Street.

In 1923, George Preston Sr., a junk dealer, bought the station for \$100. The station moved to 13th Street to accommodate a change in the highway route.

Today the tiny station is almost completely covered in old road signs, with a blue-and-yellow Goodyear Tires hanging out the front.

The sides of the station are plastered with signs, too, including a red-and-white circular Texaco Motor Oil sign, one for Red Crown Gasoline and another for Phillips 66.

Preston, who died in 1993, loved to bend visitors’ ears with stories and lore, Malcolm said. Local farmers, traveling salesmen and even guests at the motel would stop and listen to his stories, Malcolm said.

# “Iowa All Over: Preston’s Station in Belle Plaine still a draw for passing drivers,” June 21, 2015 (pg.2)

Although Preston’s station was simply a small-town gas station, it was George who drew visitors in.

“It was really more about George and the ability that he had as far as telling a good story and history that he remembered on the Lincoln Highway,” Malcolm said. “People knew that and would come and see him because of that.”

Today, George Preston’s granddaughter, Mary Preston, owns and is working to restore the station.

“People love to reminisce, they love to see how things were,” Malcolm said. “I think that’s Mary’s mission.

“It kind of looks run down, it needs some paint, and her mission is to really do this and to get some things to bring it back so it’s as though George is here and telling his stories again.”

Next to the gas station is what used to be a three-room motel and a garage. The trifecta of buildings — the gas station, motel and garage— lend the stretch of road the nickname of Preston’s Corner.

The nearby Belle Plaine Area Museum chronicles the town’s history and also the significance of the Lincoln Highway. Inside the museum, the Henry B. Tippie Annex showcases the life of the philanthropist and Belle Plaine’s son, who was born in 1927 near Belle Plaine.

The University of Iowa’s Tippie College of Business was named for him. Belle Plaine is also home to King Theatre and a pool and aquatic center.  
More on Belle Plaine

Belle Plaine, in Benton County, was founded in 1862. The town’s population is 2,534, as of the 2010 Census. The name “Belle Plaine” means “beautiful plain.” In the 1920s, the Lincoln Highway came through — the first transcontinental highway and brought many travelers into town, according to a history of the city.

# Application to Register Jefferson Highway's Route, May 6, 1916

The Jefferson Highway is also to be known as  
 the route "From Pine to Palm," and "the Vacation Route"  
 of America.

## Registration of Highway Routes APPLICATION

The undersigned  E. T. Meredith, its President,  
 and  Walter Parker, its Secretary, make application for  
 registration of a highway route, and state as follows:

1. That the name of such association is Jefferson Highway Association and that it was organized to promote the improvement of the continuous highway hereinafter named and that same is about 2000 miles in length.
2. That its principal place of business is Des Moines, Iowa.
3. That the starting point of such route is Winnipeg and the terminal point is New Orleans.
4. That the color combination and designs used in making such route is a six inch band of Blue above and below a Twelve inch band of White, and the letters J and H in monogram H on the band of White

Signed the 6<sup>th</sup> day of May 1916 by the President of  
the Jefferson Highway Association Association  
 By  E. T. Meredith President  
 and  Walter Parker Secretary

State of Iowa }  
Pott County } ss

Be it remembered that on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of May 1916 before the undersigned, a notary public in and for said county came E. T. Meredith and

personally known to be the persons whose names are signed to the foregoing application as President and Secretary respectively of the Association named, and each for himself and for such Association acknowledged the execution of the application for the registration of a highway route above named to be <sup>his</sup> the voluntary act and deed of each of them and the voluntary act and deed of such Association for the purposes therein named.

[Signature]  
 Notary public in and for  
Pott County, Iowa.

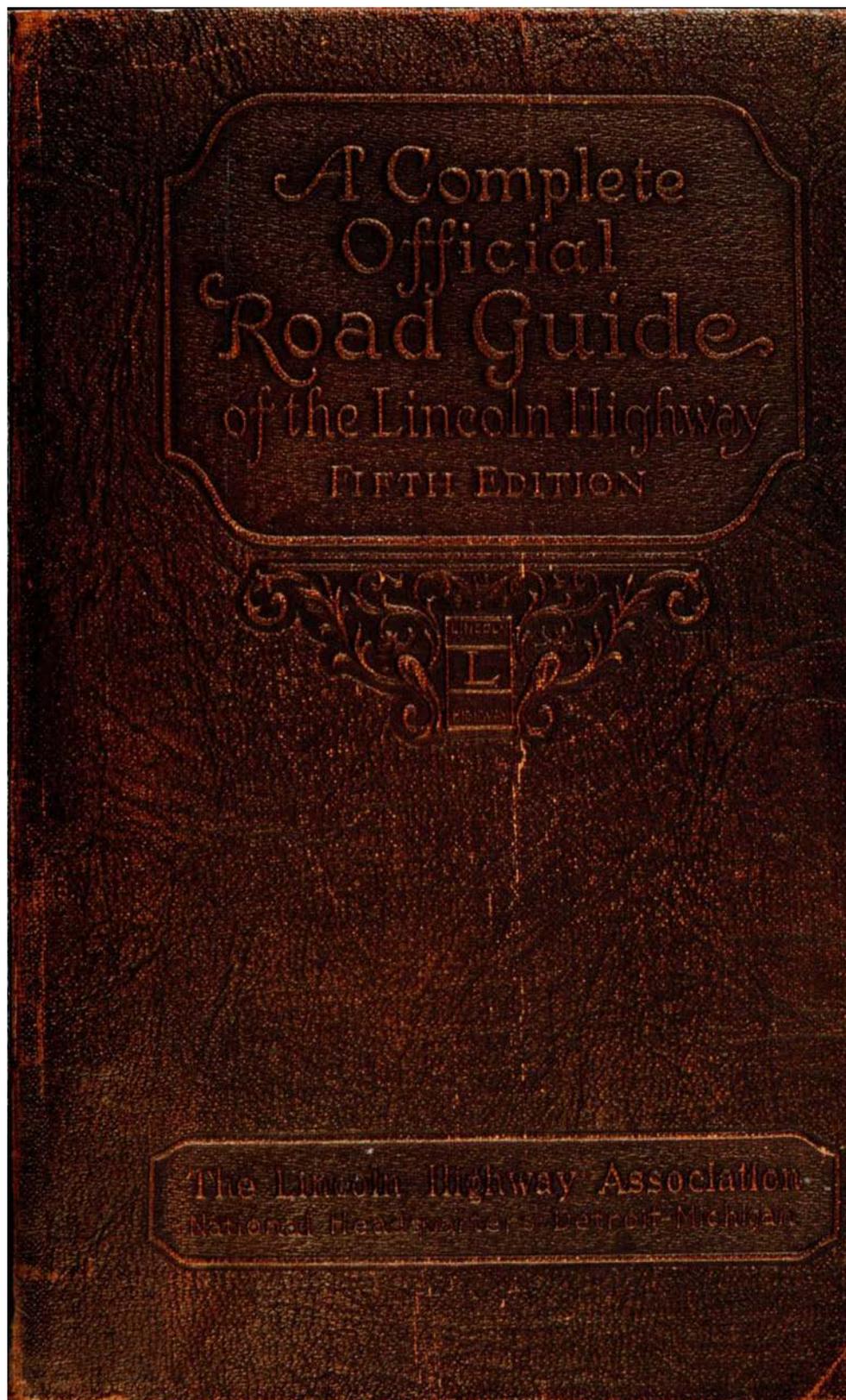
Filed the 25 day of May 1916.

**MAY 25 1916**

State Highway Commission  
 By \_\_\_\_\_

Fee \$5.00 paid \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recorded \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ in the State Highway Commission Register of Highway Routes at page \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate issued \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

**“The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition,” 1993 (pg.1)**



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Patrice Press, “The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition,” Patrice Press, 1993

# "The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition," 1993 (pg.2)

## The Complete Official Road Guide to the Lincoln Highway

### Iowa

The Logs shown here are for the convenience of Lincoln Way tourists who desire to divert north or south of the Lincoln Way to some of the principal points of interest. In showing these routes the Association has selected the shortest and best.

#### Iowa Lincoln Way Mileage at a Glance Main Points Only

00	Clinton, Iowa	354
19	DeWitt, Iowa	335
47	Clarence, Iowa	307
64	Lisbon, Iowa	290
80	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	274
115	Belle Plaine, Iowa	239
132	Tama, Iowa	222
153	Marshalltown, Iowa	201
189	Ames, Iowa	165
204	Boone, Iowa	150
231	Jefferson, Iowa	123
260	Carroll, Iowa	94
286	Denison, Iowa	68
332	Missouri Valley, Iowa	12
354	Council Bluffs, Iowa	00

#### CLINTON, IOWA to ST. LOUIS, MO. 496 Miles

#### Mississippi River Scenic Highway

*00	Clinton, Iowa	496
6	Camanche, Iowa	490
10	Shaffton, Iowa	486
14	Follets, Iowa	482
20	Princeton, Iowa	476
25	LeClaire, Iowa	471
30	Pleasant Valley, Iowa	466
39	Davenport, Iowa	457
54	Montpelier, Iowa	442
67	Muscatine, Iowa	429
121	Burlington, Iowa	375
241	Ft. Madison, Iowa	255
265	Keokuk, Iowa	231
322	Quincy, Ill.	174
337	Hannibal, Mo.	159
386	Rockyford, Mo.	110
399	Auburn, Mo.	97
447	Dardene, Mo.	49
472	St. Charles, Mo.	24
496	St. Louis, Mo.	00

\*On the Lincoln Highway.

#### CLINTON, IOWA to DUBUQUE, IOWA ST. PAUL and MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. 345 Miles

*00	Clinton, Iowa	345
10	Kiel, Iowa	335
14	Goose Lake, Iowa	331
24	Charlotte, Iowa	321
32	Delmar, Iowa	313
40	Maquoketa, Iowa	305
46	Hurstville, Iowa	299
50	Fulton, Iowa	295
61	Zwingle, Iowa	284
65	Dubuque, Iowa	280
93	Holy Cross, Iowa	252
134	McGregor, Iowa	211
176	LaCrosse, Wis.	169
215	Winona, Minn.	130
267	Lake City, Minn.	78
285	Red Wing, Minn.	60
313	Hastings, Minn.	32
335	St. Paul, Minn.	10
345	Minneapolis, Minn.	00

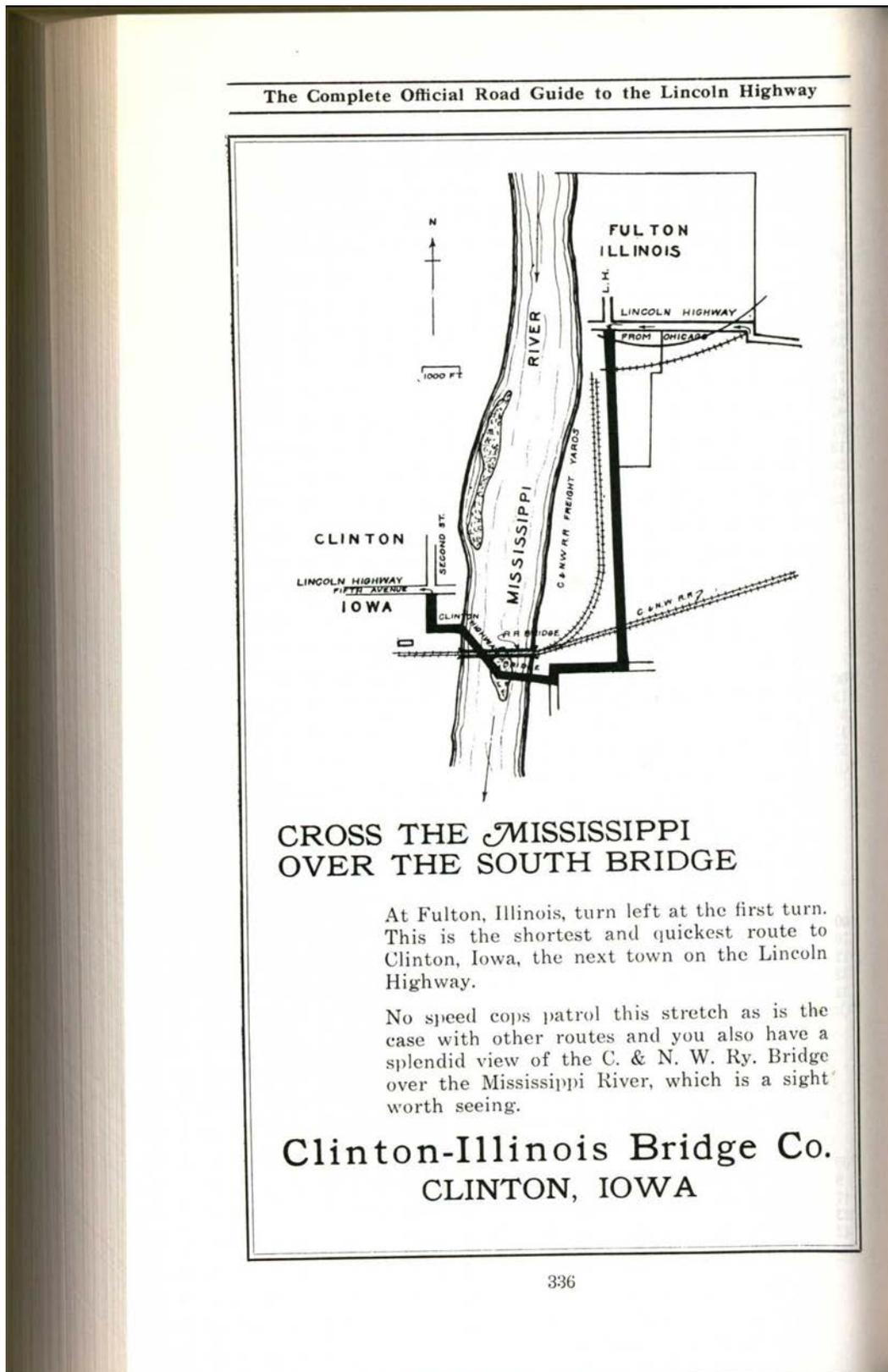
\*On the Lincoln Highway.

#### CEDAR RAPIDS to KEOKUK, IOWA 126 Miles

*00	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	126
10	Shueyville, Iowa	116
19	North Liberty, Iowa	107
27	Iowa City, Iowa	99
35	Hills, Iowa	91
40	Riverside, Iowa	86
55	Ainsworth, Iowa	71
60	Crawfordsville, Iowa	66
65	Wayne, Iowa	61
77	Mt. Pleasant, Iowa	49
88	Salem, Iowa	38
93	Mt. Hamil, Iowa	33
105	Donnellson, Iowa	21
120	Summitville, Iowa	6
126	Keokuk, Iowa	00

\*On the Lincoln Highway.

# “The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition,” 1993 (pg.3)



# "The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition," 1993 (pg.4)

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The Complete Official Road Guide to the Lincoln Highway

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY—NORTH AND SOUTH

COLO, IOWA  
to  
KANSAS CITY, MO.  
305 Miles

*00	Colo, Iowa	305
* 7	Nevada, Iowa	298
19	Cambridge, Iowa	286
45	Des Moines, Iowa	260
64	Indianola, Iowa	241
78	Medora, Iowa	227
95	Osceola, Iowa	210
128	Davis City, Iowa	177
165	Bethany, Mo.	140
176	New Hampton, Mo.	129
183	Albany, Mo.	122
199	Ford City, Mo.	106
222	Rochester, Mo.	83
241	St. Joseph, Mo.	64
270	Edgerton, Mo.	35
283	Smithville, Mo.	22
294	Gashland, Mo.	11
305	Kansas City, Mo.	00

\*On the Lincoln Highway.

COLO, IOWA  
to  
ST. PAUL, MINN.  
225 Miles

*00	Colo, Iowa	225
20	Hubbard, Iowa	205
36	Iowa Falls, Iowa	189
54	Hampton, Iowa	171
60	Chapin, Iowa	165
64	Sheffield, Iowa	161
71	Rockwell, Iowa	154
83	Mason City, Iowa	142
94	Manley, Iowa	131
105	Northwood, Iowa	120
116	Albert Lea, Minn.	109
139	Geneva, Minn.	86
157	Owatonna, Minn.	68
173	Fairbault, Minn.	52
188	Northfield, Minn.	37
202	Farmington, Minn.	23
210	Rosemount, Minn.	15
225	St. Paul, Minn.	00

\*On the Lincoln Highway.

## Iowa

LINCOLN HIGHWAY STATE CONSUL, D. E. GOODELL  
Tama, Iowa

### GENERAL INFORMATION

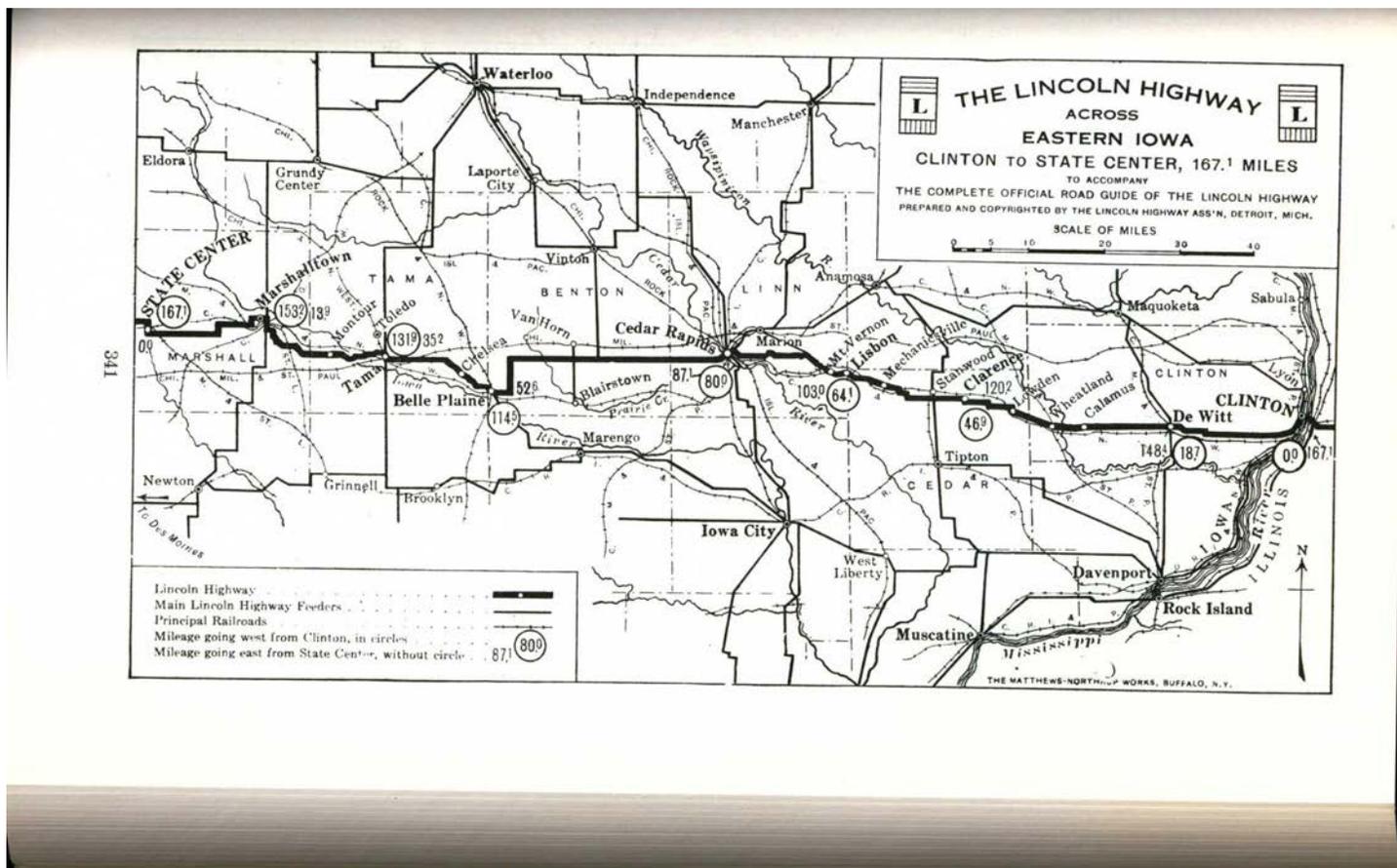
THE Lincoln Highway tourist crossing the state of Iowa will travel through one of the richest rural communities in the world. A trip by motor car across the state during the summer months is a revelation of the productive possibilities and agricultural resources of this wonderful "garden state" of the Union. The Lincoln Highway across Iowa traverses a gently rolling open country, a beautiful and interesting drive.



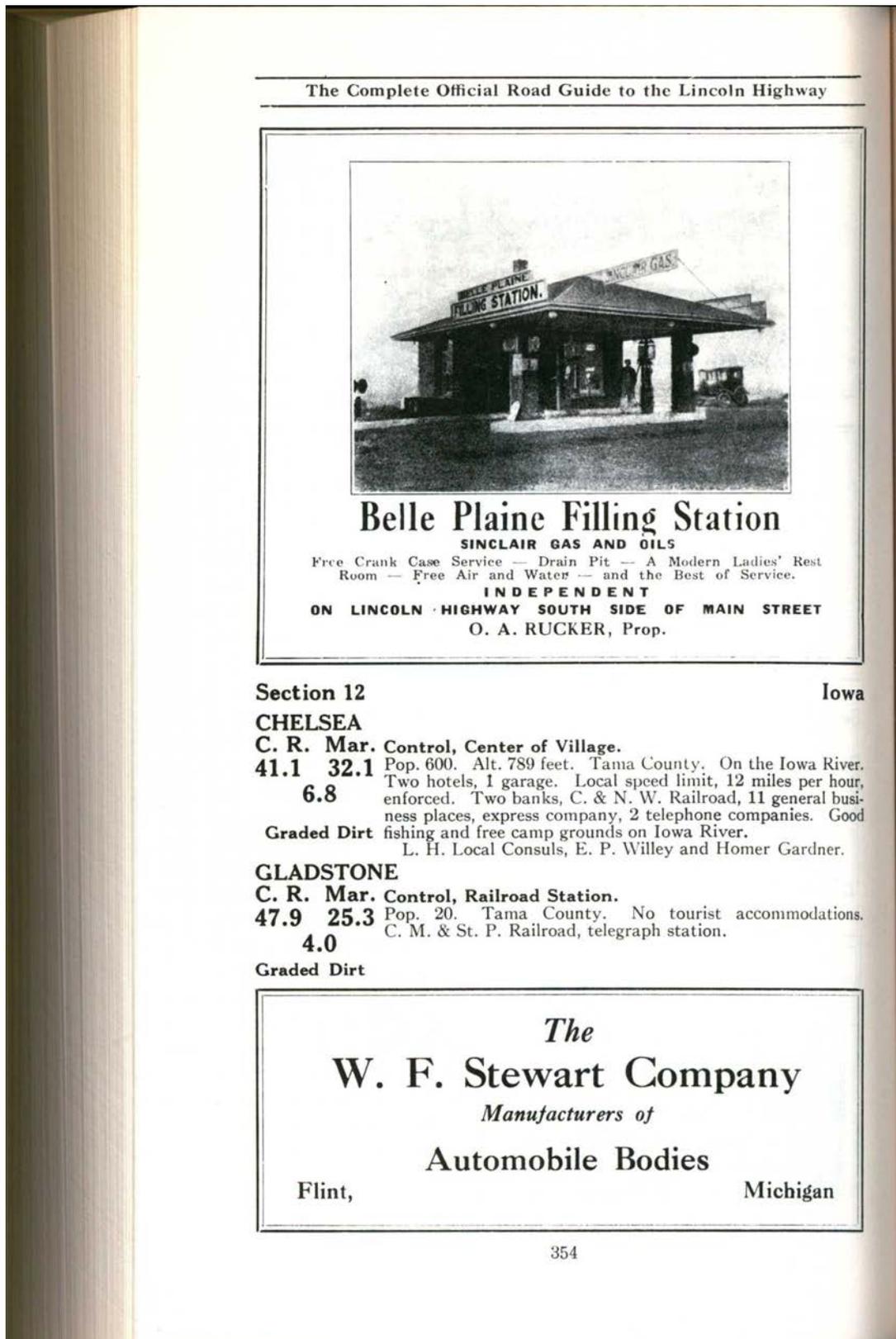
An Iowa beauty spot on the Lincoln Way

Up to the very recent past legal restrictions prohibited the anticipation of public revenue for the construction of hard-surfaced roads, by bond issue. Proper highway development in Iowa is still retarded by a very inadequate highway law which puts the development of economically surfaced through highways at the mercy of county option. Any one reactionary county

# “The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition,” 1993 (pg.5)

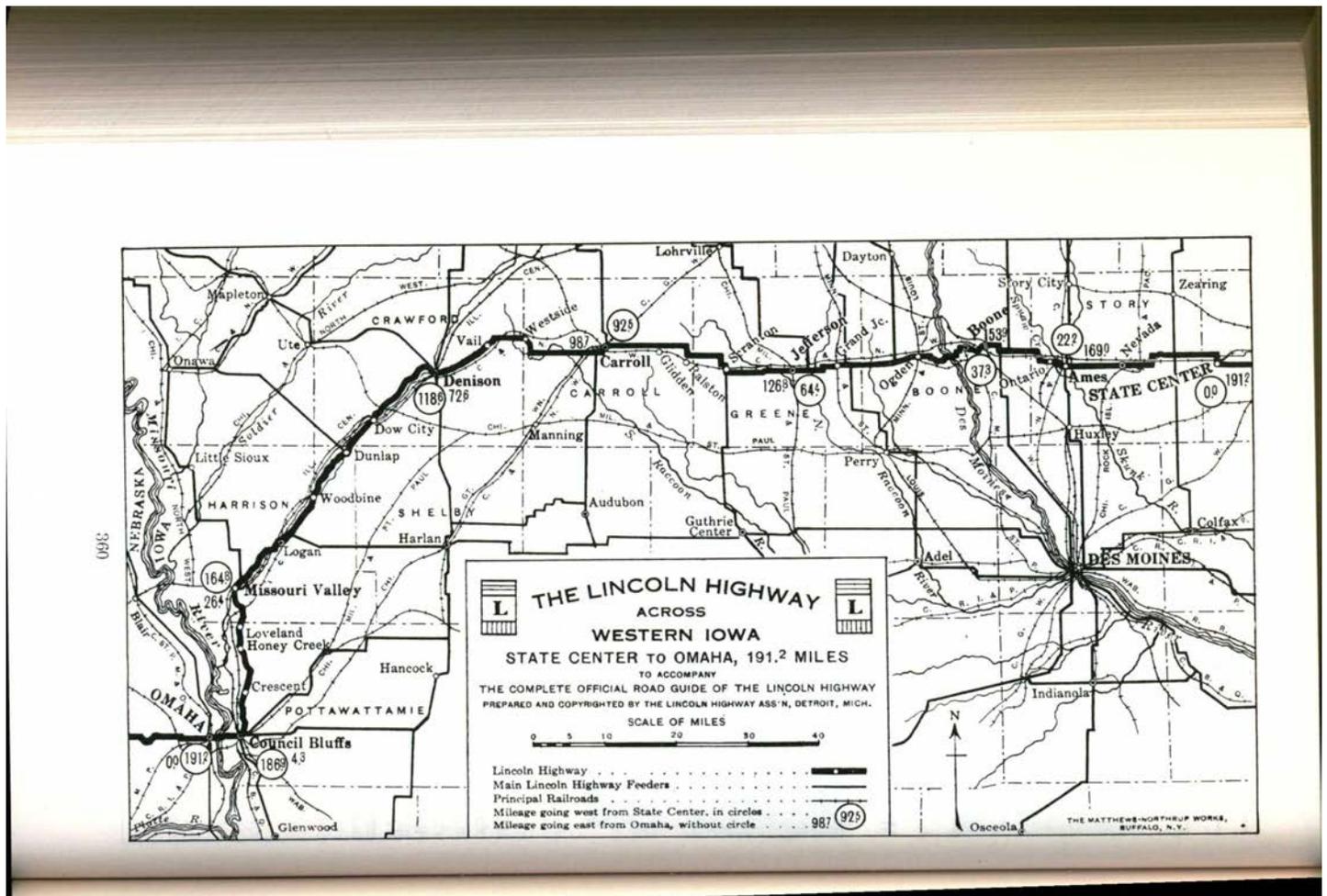


# "The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition," 1993 (pg.6)

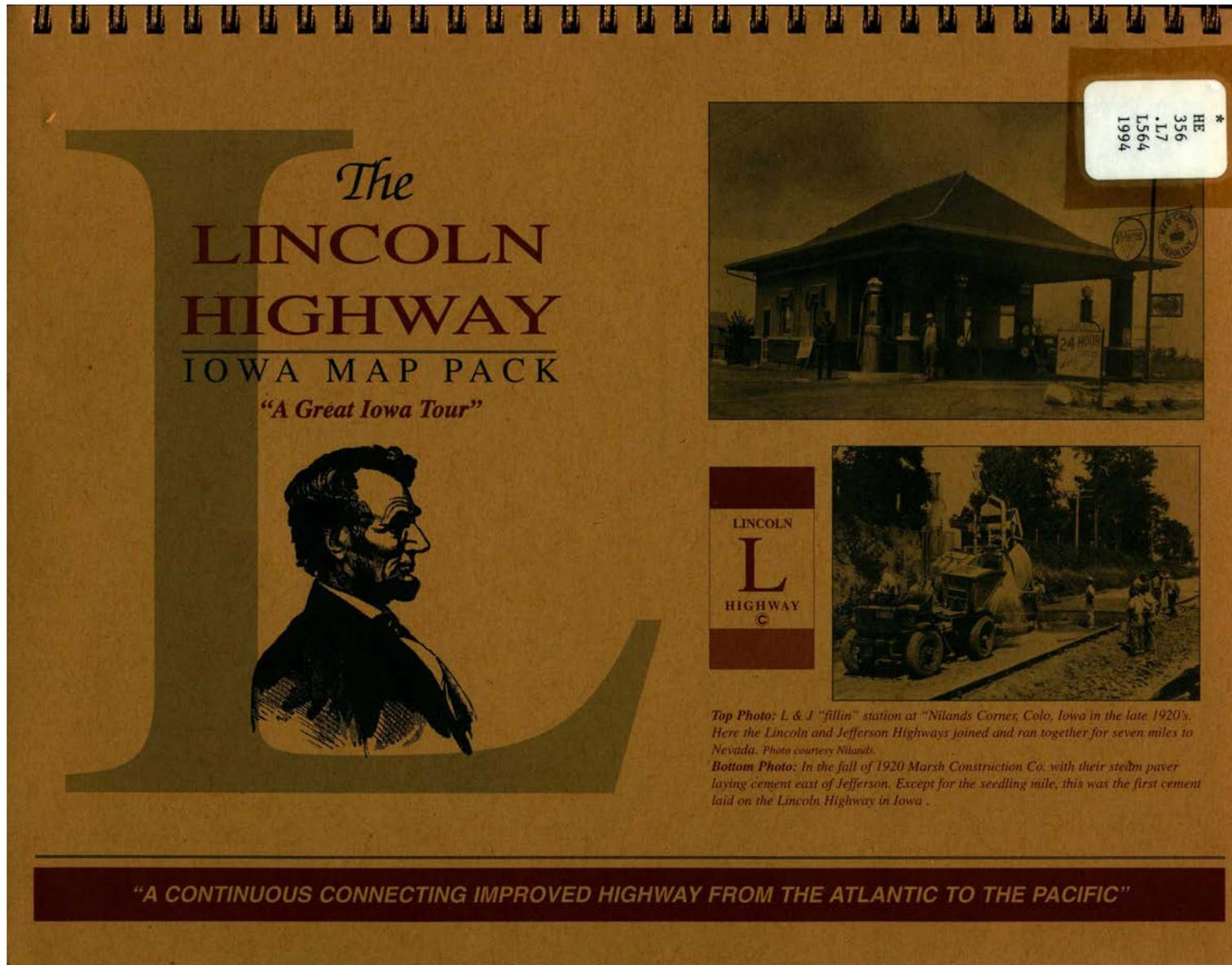


Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Patrice Press, "The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition," Patrice Press, 1993

# “The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway - Fifth Edition,” 1993 (pg.7)



# Excerpts from “The Lincoln Highway Iowa Map Pack: A Great Iowa Tour,” 1994 (pg.1)



# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway Iowa Map Pack: A Great Iowa Tour," 1994 (pg.2)

**BENTON COUNTY**

**WHAT TO SEE IN PRESENT DAY BENTON COUNTY**

**Belle Plaine**

George Preston's station (4th Ave. & 13th St.)  
 George's Cabins  
 Original site of George's station (7th Ave. & 19th St.)  
 Maid-Rite (3rd Ave. & 13th St.)  
 Sankot's Garage - Case sign (8th Ave. & 13th St.) NRHP (National Register of Historic Places)  
 Lincoln Cafe (8th Ave. & 13th St.)  
 King Theatre (12th St.)  
 Main Street, including bakery  
 Highway 131 - outstanding section of original Lincoln; right of way and rural landscape  
 Large rural farmhouse

The Lincoln rejoins US 30 to take flat route straight to Cedar Rapids after avoiding hills of Tama and Benton County.

Craft shop (old station) (US 30)  
 Roadhouse Youngville Station  
 Refurbishing project

**Other Sites of Interest**  
 Amana Colonies




**COMMERCIAL CAFE**

DAY AND NIGHT SERVICE  
 "All American"

1912

BELLE PLAINE, IOWA

LINCOLN  
**L**  
 HIGHWAY  
 ©

L. E. Malcolm  
 Garage

Automobile Agency  
 Trouble Finders  
 Gasoline, Repairs

1912

Opposite Official Hotel. Look Us Up.

Belle Plaine, Iowa

**THE BURLEY HOTEL**

J. J. FERGUSON, Proprietor

American or European Plan  
 Rates: \$2.00 American 50c European  
 Catering to Tourist a specialty

Phone No. 137      BELLE PLAINE, IOWA

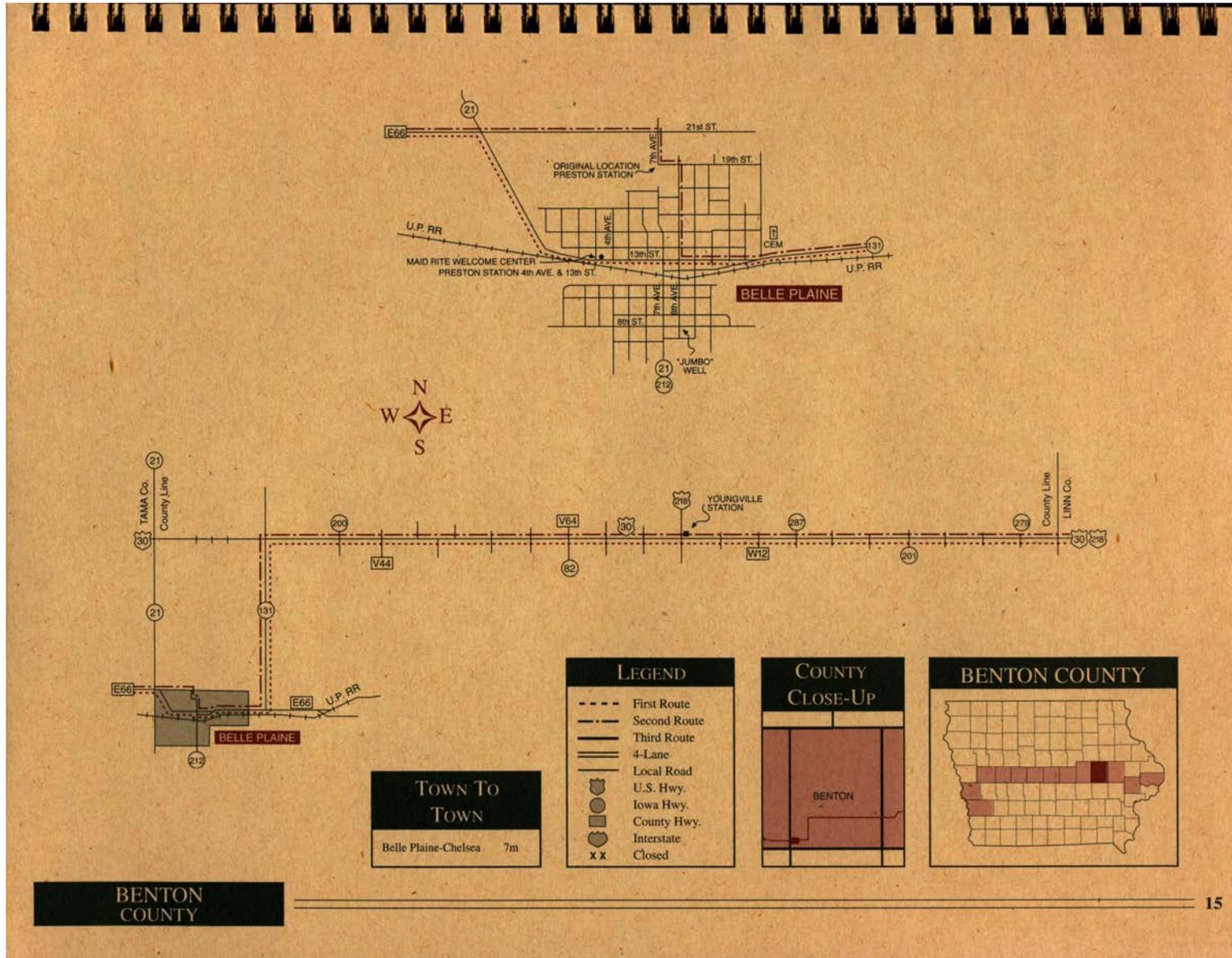
**Top Photo:** The "gravel spotter" does his job on a road improvement project. (In 1914 or 1915) Photo courtesy of the DOT.

**Bottom Photo:** The George Preston station in the 1920's at Belle Plaine. Preston Family photo.

**BELLE PLAINE**  
 Pop. 3,887. Alt. 824 feet. Benton County. Three hotels, 3 garages. Local speed limit, 12 miles per hour, enforced. Three banks, 1 railroad, 75 general business places, express company, telephone company, 2 newspapers, Commercial Club, Camp grounds. L. H. County Consul, O. C. Burrows; L. H. Local Consul, James Herring.

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# Excerpts from “The Lincoln Highway Iowa Map Pack: A Great Iowa Tour,” 1994 (pg.3)



# Excerpts from "The Lincoln Highway Iowa Map Pack: A Great Iowa Tour," 1994 (pg.4)

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TAMA COUNTY

**WHAT TO SEE IN PRESENT DAY TAMA COUNTY**

The Lincoln turned south at Le Grand, probably to avoid some hill country.

**Chelsea**  
 Lighted Lincoln Highway Bridge  
 Wood carver (Irish St.)  
 Conway Feed ghost signs  
 Dvorek Mtr. Co. building

**Gladstone**  
 (abandoned) (in 1916 Guide)  
 East of Gladstone, the Lincoln turned south to follow the Iowa River Valley and to avoid the hills. US 30 was rebuilt to bypass Chelsea and Belle Plaine in the mid-1930's.

**Toledo**  
 (the other half of the Twin Cities)  
 Tama County Courthouse, Jail (NRHP)  
 County seat square & NRHP bldgs. 1950's commercial architecture (US 30)

**Tama**  
 Lincoln Highway mural (3rd and Siegal)  
 Lincoln Highway Bridge (5th St. E.) NRHP  
 King Tower Cafe (US 30 east)

**Montour**  
 Two early service stations (not in use) (on LH)  
 Burma Shave signs (E. LH)  
 Osterman accident site (1/2 mile E.)  
 Rubes Steakhouse

**Butlerville**  
 (abandoned)



**1924**



**Top Photo:** Postcard of one of the first "truck stops" in Iowa around the early 1940's. Photo Courtesy of Lyell Henery  
**Bottom Photo:** Family of Elmer Times looking down the road at the Lincoln Highway gateway pillars on 13th St., in 1921.

**1924** **CORY & PITKA GARAGE**  
 Genuine Ford Parts  
**WRECKING SERVICE**  
 SERVICE - McQUAY-NORRIS BEARINGS  
 PISTON RINGS AND PISTONS  
 FREE ROAD MAPS OF IOWA  
**TAMA, IOWA**

**TAMA, IOWA** greets the tourist with a beautiful Bathing Beach and Tourist Park, everything free, within two blocks of the business center of town. Electric lighted; good water and shade. A cordial welcome. Come and camp with us for a night or throughout the season. Hundreds through our bathing during the hot weather-none better or safer in the West. Good hotels, restaurants and theatres. Prices to tourists same as to home-folk.

The Mesquakie Indian Reservation adjoins the city on the west.

**1924**

**BUTLERVILLE**  
 Tama County. Post Office address "Montour". No tourist accommodations. L. H. Local Consul. Frank Lewis.

**MONTOUR**  
 Pop. 500 Tama County. One hotel, 3 garages, Local speed limit, 15 miles per hour, enforced. One bank, 1 railroad, 5 general business places, express company, telephone. L.H. Local Consul, J. M. Buchanan.

**TAMA**  
 Pop. 2,500. Alt. 827 feet. Tama County. On the Iowa River. Two hotels, 2 garages. Route marked through town and county. Two railroad crossings at grade. Two banks, 3 railroad, 50 general business places, 2 express companies, 1 telephone company, 2 newspapers, 2 public schools, electric lights, water works, Commercial Club. L. H. Country Consul, D. E. Goodell.

Three miles west of here the Highway passes directly through the Sac and Fox Indian Settlement, the only settlement on the Lincoln Highway east of the Missouri River.

The Indians settled here, coming from what is now Oklahoma, in 1855 and still cling to many of their habits as to dress and traditions.

**CHELSEA**  
 Pop. 600. Alt. 789 feet. Tama County. On the Iowa River. Two hotels, 1 garage. Local speed limit, 12 miles per hour, enforced. Two banks, C. & N. W. Railroad, 11 general business places, express company, 2 telephone companies. Good fishing and free camp grounds on Iowa River. L. H. Local Consuls, E. P. Willey and Homer Garden.