

Ola Babcock Miller:

Circumventing Political Barriers for the Benefit of Public Safety

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Historical Paper

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Iowa Secretary of State Ola Babcock Miller began the Iowa State Patrol in 1934 to reduce the growing number of highway deaths. Though she acted without proper authorization from the Legislature, her courageous actions broke political barriers and paved the way for safer roads and highways in the state.

Motorized vehicles had become popular across the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Between 1895 and 1904, the number of cars driven in Iowa increased from four to over 55,000.¹ To deal with this exponential growth, the Iowa State Highway Commission was created in 1904 to improve the quality of Iowa roads to ensure the safety of Iowa drivers. The commission's main duties were to investigate Iowa's road problems, formulate criteria for highway renovation, and manage public highway demonstrations.²

Travel was hazardous on Iowa's early roads. They were not well-maintained and rarely able to withstand bad weather.³ The popular phrase, "Choose your ruts carefully; you'll be in them for a long time," was used frequently by both locals and travelers.⁴ Many farmers attempted to keep their sections of a road passable by smoothing them down with tractors. However, it took several years to build up a road surface capable of withstanding freezing temperatures and precipitation without turning into what was commonly referred to as "gumbo."⁵

¹ Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004. 9.

² "Early History of the Iowa State Highway Commission, 1921." *State Library of Iowa*, Iowa DOT Library, publications.iowa.gov/22216/1/IADOT_Early_History_Iowa_State_Highway_Commission.pdf.

³ "Truck on Lincoln Highway between Ames, Iowa, and Nevada, Iowa, 1918." *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Acofmed_172.

⁴ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 11.

⁵ Thompson, William H. "Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary." *Iowa DOT History*, iowadot.gov/history/transportationiniowa. 95.

Iowa's first death by auto accident took place on September 29, 1905, when a man lost control of his vehicle while going down a steep hill.⁶ His death marked the beginning of a long list of fatalities that occurred on Iowa's highways.

Though Iowa's roads had improved somewhat by the 1920s, there were few enforced speed limits and many accidents. At the time, neighboring states were beginning to organize highway law enforcement patrols. Illinois Governor Len Small, who ran on the slogan "Take Illinois out of the mud," organized the Illinois State Police in 1922.⁷ In 1929, the Minnesota State Legislature created the Minnesota Highway Patrol to protect the growing number of drivers.⁸

By the early 1930s, Iowa politicians had been debating the need for an independent highway patrol for nearly twenty years. Unfortunately, the Legislature was unable to come to an agreement. Labor and agricultural leaders were concerned that patrolmen would be used by management to break up strikes. County sheriffs feared that highway patrolmen would infringe on their territories.⁹

In Iowa, it was neither the Legislature nor the Governor who took a stand for public safety on the roads. Instead, it was sixty-year-old Ola Babcock Miller, Iowa's first female Secretary of State. Elected to deal with voter laws and rules, Miller exceeded her role by starting the Iowa State Patrol without proper authority.

⁶ "Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones." *Iowa DOT*, iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf. 16.

⁷ "Illinois State Police Office--Route 66: A Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/illinois_state_police_office_pontiac.html.

⁸ "Minnesota State Patrol." Learn More about DPS, Divisions, Programs, Boards and Committees, dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp/about/Pages/history.aspx.

⁹ Thompson, William H. "Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary." *Iowa DOT History*, iowadot.gov/history/transportationiniowa. 182.

Eunice Viola "Ola" Babcock was born on March 1, 1871, on a farm in Washington County, Iowa, to Nathan and Ophelia Babcock.¹⁰ She attended the local public school and graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College in nearby Mount Pleasant. Ola taught in rural schools near her hometown before marrying newspaper editor Alex Miller in 1895. They had two daughters, Barbara and Ophelia. Alex was an active member of the Democratic Party and Ola volunteered to help secure the vote for women. Alex ran for governor in 1926 but was defeated.¹¹ Ola continued to stay active in the Democratic Party after her husband's unexpected death in 1927, traveling across the state to speak out for social reforms.¹²

In 1932, the Democratic Party placed Ola's name on the ballot for the Iowa Secretary of State in appreciation of all the work she had done for the party. A woman had never been elected to the position, and no Democrat had won it for 76 years. Ola said she never believed that she would win, but that it would have pleased her husband. She called her campaign "a martyrdom to the cause."¹³ Her family supported her candidacy, and her son-in-law, George Gallup, Iowa native and inventor of the Gallup poll, conducted his very first poll on her race.¹⁴ He asked voters what was important to them in the upcoming election and found that the idea of highway safety was very popular. Ola became even more motivated to improve road safety after a friend's son was killed in an auto accident.¹⁵

¹⁰ "THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF IOWA." *Details Page - The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa - The University of Iowa Libraries*, uipress.lib.uiowa.edu/bdi/DetailsPage.aspx?id=271.

¹¹ "Page 2." *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3AAtc_55513_55511. 2.

¹² Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004. 10.

¹³ "Looking Back: Historical Hall, 1899-1904; State Historical, Memorial and Art Building, 1905-1999; Ola Babcock Miller Building, 1999-Present, June 2013." *State Library of Iowa*, www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/IF/782981.pdf. 249.

¹⁴ Ola Babcock Miller, 1871-1937. Library of Iowa, State, <http://publications.iowa.gov/9022/1/Babcock-miller-brochure.pdf>

¹⁵ Partsch, Tammy. *It Happened in Iowa: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. TwoDot, 2017. 98.

Much to her surprise, she won by nearly 3,000 votes.¹⁶ Franklin Delano Roosevelt had won the presidency by a landslide, sweeping many Democrats down the ballot into office.¹⁷ She quickly adjusted to her new position and worked to educate the public. To promote the importance of safe and responsible driving habits, Ola spoke at schools, businesses, and church groups across the state to persuade them to reflect upon their driving habits. At one of these events, Ola explained her mission. “I have not come here tonight to amuse or flatter you. I pray that I can make you uncomfortable about your driving and frighten you into driving more carefully...the specter of death on the highway is always on my mind and I want to embody it in yours. Your husband may be the next to die.”¹⁸

Ola’s words are just as meaningful today as they were nearly one hundred years ago. Seth Stadtmueller, a current Iowa State Trooper, explained how the job has changed throughout the years. “I would say that the biggest change is probably technology, but we still have the same driving principles, which is reducing fatalities and making the roadways safer.”¹⁹ While technology in the form of a cell phone can be a distraction to a driver, improved safety features have increased the chance of survival in an accident.

Doug Dawson, whose father, Lyle, became a patrolman in the 1930s, remarked on this issue. “Cars were much harder on people’s bodies. They weren’t as protective and the accidents were really quite gruesome.”²⁰ Doug recalled his dad coming home exhausted after working at horrific car crash scenes.

¹⁶ Stock, Janice Beck. *Amazing Iowa*. Rutledge Hill Press, 2003. 116.

¹⁷ “Ola Babcock Miller.” *DesMoinesRegister.com*, data.desmoinesregister.com/famous-iowans/ola-babcock-miller.

¹⁸ Wall Text, Iowa State Patrol Exhibit, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Johnston, IA

¹⁹ Stadtmueller, Seth. Personal interview. 10 Mar. 2020

²⁰ Dawson, Doug. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2020.

Nearly two years after her election, there was still no law authorizing a highway safety patrol. On August 1, 1934, without any official authority to do so, Secretary of State Miller established a group of 15 motor vehicle inspectors with the assignment of stopping traffic violators.²¹ Though her actions seem reasonable to modern sensibilities, she took a risk by establishing a new organization that the Legislature had not agreed upon. According to current Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, “It’s one thing to violate a law where there is a law that restricts you, and it’s another thing to do something that you don’t have authority for.”²²

She told the patrolmen to “save lives first; money after.”²³ Each man patrolled five to six counties and was to keep careful documentation of his activities. Officers wore official uniforms, paid for out of their own pocket, after drivers complained about being pulled over by men dressed in civilian clothing.²⁴

The state quickly saw change. Within the first year, the average number of injuries from traffic accidents decreased by 3,731. Fatalities in Iowa dropped 15 percent while the national average increased 17 percent.²⁵ In addition to citing driving infractions, patrolmen were also responsible for detecting faulty vehicles and equipment. From 1934 to 1935, inspectors found 220 broken brake systems, almost 100 improper lights, 100 cars without lights, and 96 damaged steering systems.²⁶

An editorial published in the *Des Moines Tribune* on November 5, 1934 praised her abilities. “Mrs. Miller deserves re-election as Secretary of State on her record of Economy and

²¹ “Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones.” *Iowa DOT*, iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf. 29.

²² Miller, Tom. Personal interview. 9 Dec. 2020.

²³ “THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF IOWA.” *Details Page - The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa - The University of Iowa Libraries*, uipress.lib.uiowa.edu/bdi/DetailsPage.aspx?id=271.

²⁴ *Ola Babcock Miller, 1871-1937*. Library of Iowa, State. 1-2.

²⁵ Briedinger, Bill. *Iowa State Patrol: 50th Anniversary Album, 1935-1985*. The Patrol, 1985. 18.

²⁶ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 22.

service to Iowa. The first woman ever elected to head a major state department, Mrs. Miller has demonstrated that women are capable of shouldering the responsibilities that go with high public office.”²⁷ Ola easily won re-election in 1934 and again in 1936.²⁸

In May of 1935, Governor Clyde Herring signed the Act of 1935, a law creating a 50 member patrol group.²⁹ Included was sufficient funding for an organized training camp at Camp Dodge, a National Guard base near Des Moines. Ola and her staff quickly drafted a list of law enforcement employees who would be capable leaders of the patrol. John Hattery was selected as the first chief. Hattery stated that it was his job to “...provide directions, outline the work, and see that it was done.”³⁰ Mr. Hattery and his two assistants, Ed Conley and Harry Nestle, began by designing a military-style training camp.

The new positions paid \$100 dollars a month and over five thousand applications were received.³¹ Interviews took place in the basement of the State Capitol Building, many of which were conducted by Ola herself. Applicants were required to be Iowa residents, have a height of at least 5 feet 10 inches, be at least 25 years old, and possess a “good moral character.”³² Around 100 men were selected for the first training academy and were required to report to Camp Dodge on June 15, 1935.³³

²⁷ “Democratic Candidate for Re-election.” Des Moines Tribune, 5 Nov. 1934, p. 11. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/47267925/des-moines-tribune-november-5-1934/>.

²⁸ “Ola Babcock Miller.” *DesMoinesRegister.com*, data.desmoinesregister.com/famous-iowans/ola-babcock-miller.

²⁹ Partsch, Tammy. *It Happened in Iowa: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. TwoDot, 2017. 97.

³⁰ Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004. 18.

³¹ “Looking Back: Historical Hall, 1899-1904; State Historical, Memorial and Art Building, 1905-1999; Ola Babcock Miller Building, 1999-Present, June 2013.” *State Library of Iowa*, www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/IF/782981.pdf. 249.

³² Boshart, Rod, and Globe Gazette Des Moines Bureau. “Iowa State Patrol: 75 Years of Keeping Iowans Safer.” *Mason City Globe Gazette*, 16 Aug. 2010, globegazette.com/news/local/iowa-state-patrol-years-of-keeping-iowans-safer/article_f89e14d2-a8ed-11df-a5fc-001cc4c03286.html.

³³ Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004. 21.

Each man was paid \$40 throughout the duration of the seven-week camp. Courses included court procedures, first aid, auto mechanics, motor vehicle law, statutory law, public relations, self-defense, and accident investigation.³⁴ Participants were chosen or dismissed according to physical abilities and performance on written and oral exams. The men deemed worthy for the available spots were formally known as the “First Fifty.”³⁵ In Chief Hattery’s address to the patrol’s first graduating class, he differentiated the role of the Highway Patrol from that of other law enforcement agencies. “You are not policemen. Your efficiency will not be judged by how many arrests you make, but by the increased safety of Iowa’s highways.”³⁶

Badge numbers 25 to 74 were assigned to the new members according to height. Every man worked a 72 hour week, often working on weekends and holidays.³⁷ Uniforms included khaki breeches, long sleeved shirts, tall black boots, black ties, and brown visor caps. Doug Dawson recalled his father’s thoughts on the long sleeved wool shirts that they wore year-round. He remembered his father, Lyle, saying many times over the years, “Oh, they’ve got to change these uniforms, they’re so hot!”³⁸

Each officer received a Colt .38 Special revolver and either a patrol car, primarily Ford V-8s or Indian Model 74 motorcycles.³⁹ The motorcycles were ridden from early spring to late fall and then replaced with a car during the winter months. The Iowa Highway Safety Patrol

³⁴ Briedinger, Bill. *Iowa State Patrol: 50th Anniversary Album, 1935-1985*. The Patrol, 1985. 18.

³⁵ Olsen, Marilyn. *State Trooper: America's State Troopers and Highway Patrolmen*. Turner Pub., 2001. 142.

³⁶ Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004. 22.

³⁷ Thompson, William H. “Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary.” *Iowa DOT History*, iowadot.gov/history/transportationiniowa. 182.

³⁸ Dawson, Doug. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2020.

³⁹ Partsch, Tammy. *It Happened in Iowa: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. TwoDot, 2017. 99.

began officially patrolling on July 28, 1935.⁴⁰ The first week was considered as practice and no weapons were carried.

In addition to the regulatory tasks envisioned by Ola and assigned to the fledgling organization, “motorist assists” became a significant part of the patrolmen’s responsibilities.⁴¹ This was due to both poor roads and aging vehicles that were prone to break down. The Iowa State Patrol also undertook school bus inspections every fall to ensure the safety of students. Despite these precautions, hazardous weather could cause unforeseen dangers for school bus passengers. Doug Dawson shared a story in which his father, patrolman Lyle Dawson, was on duty during a blizzard. When he came across a school bus stuck in the snow with children inside overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning, he pulled them from the vehicle.⁴² Dawson put the children in his own patrol car and took them to the doctor. Minimizing the incident, he described the event in his daily log simply as a “motorist assist.”⁴³

Patrolmen met for regular training sessions at Camp Dodge where they shared and reviewed road patrol experiences. In a letter addressed to the Highway Safety Patrol, Ola Babcock Miller wrote, “I know that your days are long, and your tasks are difficult, but I also know that you are making friends much faster than you realize. People are beginning to see that you really are their friends and not their enemies; that while you are firm and just, playing no favorites, you are also courteous and helpful.”⁴⁴

Her words proved to be true. Over 40 years later, in 1978, the *Des Moines Register* asked people to rate how they felt about 39 different government, business, religious, and social

⁴⁰ Stock, Janice Beck. *Amazing Iowa*. Rutledge Hill Press, 2003. 117.

⁴¹ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 37.

⁴² Dawson, Doug. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2020.

⁴³ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 43-44.

⁴⁴ Letter, Iowa State Patrol Exhibit, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Johnston, IA

institutions. With a 91% approval rating, God placed first. The Iowa State Patrol came in second with an 84% approval rating, illustrating the deep confidence that Iowans had in the patrol.⁴⁵

Though the public was generally appreciative of the patrol, their jobs remained dangerous. A tragedy on April 29, 1936, caused the Iowa State Patrol to rethink certain guidelines and procedures.⁴⁶ On that day, while Patrolman Oran Pape - a former Iowa Hawkeye football player and one of the “First Fifty” - was finishing up his shift, he came across a stolen black Chevrolet sedan. The armed driver of the vehicle ordered Oran into the sedan and shot him in the head. Oran died the next day.⁴⁷ Officers were quickly pulled off of the road to receive additional training. They were also given permission to approach vehicles with revolvers drawn if they felt the situation warranted it.⁴⁸

After collecting several years’ worth of statistics, Miller confirmed the effectiveness of the Iowa State Patrol. Raising the license price to 50 cents allowed for sufficient funds to expand the force. Added at that time were drivers license examiners. Although their purpose was to administer written and behind-the-wheel exams, they were expected to pass the same training as patrolmen so that they could be transferred to road duty when needed.⁴⁹

Even after the Iowa State Patrol was successfully established, Ola continued to travel the state to give lectures about highway safety. She became ill, and even though she had influenza and a high temperature, she refused to miss speaking engagements. Her condition deteriorated,

⁴⁵ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 43-44.

⁴⁶ Briedinger, Bill. *Iowa State Patrol: 50th Anniversary Album, 1935-1985*. The Patrol, 1985. 19.

⁴⁷ Boshart, Rod, and Globe Gazette Des Moines Bureau. “Iowa State Patrol: 75 Years of Keeping Iowans Safer.” *Mason City Globe Gazette*, 16 Aug. 2010, globegazette.com/news/local/iowa-state-patrol-years-of-keeping-iowans-safer/article_f89e14d2-a8ed-11df-a5fc-001cc4c03286.html.

⁴⁸ Thompson, William H. “Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary.” *Iowa DOT History*, iowadot.gov/history/transportationiniowa. 182.

⁴⁹ Briedinger, Bill. *Iowa State Patrol: 50th Anniversary Album, 1935-1985*. The Patrol, 1985. 19.

and she was admitted to the Iowa Methodist Hospital in Des Moines.⁵⁰ She specifically asked that no one send her flowers. When the patrolmen sent dozens, Miller declared, “That’s the only time they have ever been guilty of insubordination.”⁵¹

Ola Babcock Miller died of pneumonia on January 25, 1937, at the age of 65.⁵² Statehouse offices were closed on the day of her funeral, and 1,500 people attended the service at the Washington Methodist Church in her hometown.⁵³ The original 50 highway patrolmen took their places as her pallbearers and honor guard. Miller was buried next to her husband in the Elm Grove Cemetery in Washington, Iowa. To this day, members of the Iowa State Patrol visit Ola’s grave on her birthday to honor her memory.

In 1975, Ola Babcock Miller was inducted into the Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame.⁵⁴ The Old Historical Building on East Grand Avenue and East 12th Street in Des Moines, Iowa was also renamed in her honor in 1999.⁵⁵ Despite this recognition, few people outside of law enforcement have ever heard of Ola Babcock Miller.

To those who serve, however, Ola Babcock Miller is best remembered as “The Mother of the Iowa Highway Patrol.”⁵⁶ Her response to a personal tragedy made for safer highways in Iowa. The patrol’s 13th chief, Colonel Patrick Hoye, said in 2007, “Even though our uniforms have changed, our weapons have changed, our cars have changed, really the core mission of the

⁵⁰ *Ola Babcock Miller, 1871-1937*. Library of Iowa, State. 1.

⁵¹ Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013. 50.

⁵² “Washington Evening Journal Archives, Jan 27, 1937, p. 4.” *NewspaperArchive.com*, Washington Evening Journal, 27 Jan. 1937, newspaperarchive.com/washington-evening-journal-jan-27-1937-p-4/?utm_ . 4.

⁵³ Stock, Janice Beck. *Amazing Iowa*. Rutledge Hill Press, 2003. 117.

⁵⁴ “Ola Babcock Miller.” *Iowa Women's Hall of Fame*, 25 Aug. 2007, publications.iowa.gov/3881/1/07_HOF_Book.pdf.

⁵⁵ *Renaming the Old Historical Building*, publications.iowa.gov/135/1/executive/1-9.html.

⁵⁶ Partsch, Tammy. *It Happened in Iowa: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. TwoDot, 2017. 98.

Iowa State Patrol is what it was 75 years ago, to reduce injuries and fatalities on Iowa's highways."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Boshart, Rod, and Globe Gazette Des Moines Bureau. "Iowa State Patrol: 75 Years of Keeping Iowans Safer." *Mason City Globe Gazette*, 16 Aug. 2010, globegazette.com/news/local/iowa-state-patrol-years-of-keeping-iowans-safer/article_f89e14d2-a8ed-11df-a5fc-001cc4c03286.html.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Newspapers

“All Ready for the Regular Sunday Motorist Parade.” The University of Iowa Libraries, Des Moines Register, 8 Aug. 1937, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Aiding_5273.

This comic was part of a serious effort to draw attention to the dangers of driving. It implored the reader to be more cautious while traveling on Iowa’s roads.

“Democratic Candidate for Re-election.” *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 Nov. 1934, p. 11. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/47267925/des-moines-tribune-november-5-1934/>.

This editorial emphasized all of the great work that Ola Babcock Miller had done during her first term as Secretary of State and pushed for her re-election. It stated that Ola had shown what good things women were capable of.

“Mason City Globe Gazette Archives, May 27, 1937, p. 22.” *NewspaperArchive.com*, Mason City Globe Gazette, 27 May 1937, [newspaperarchive.com/mason-city-globe-gazette-may-27-1937-p-22/?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fnewspaperarchive.com%2Bpage%2Bto%2Bfriend%2Bemail&utm_medium=email&utm_term=share%2Bpage%2Bwith%2Bfriend&isininvite=1%2F](https://www.newspaperarchive.com/mason-city-globe-gazette-may-27-1937-p-22/?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fnewspaperarchive.com%2Bpage%2Bto%2Bfriend%2Bemail&utm_medium=email&utm_term=share%2Bpage%2Bwith%2Bfriend&isininvite=1%2F).

An article published in the Mason City Globe Gazette praised the recently formed Iowa State Patrol. It proved what I had read in secondary sources about the early success and popularity of the organization.

“Truck on Lincoln Highway between Ames, Iowa, and Nevada, Iowa, 1918.” *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Acofmed_172.

This clipping showed an image of a vehicle stuck in the mud near Ames, Iowa. Unfortunately, no newspaper was credited in the digital archives so I cannot include that information in my citation.

“Washington Evening Journal Archives, Jan 27, 1937, p. 4.” *NewspaperArchive.com*, Washington Evening Journal, 27 Jan. 1937, [newspaperarchive.com/washington-evening-journal-jan-27-1937-p-4/?utm_](https://www.newspaperarchive.com/washington-evening-journal-jan-27-1937-p-4/?utm_).

This newspaper article was written directly after Ola’s death. It provided information about the attendance of the funeral, including the “First Fifty” who acted as her pallbearers and honor guard.

Maps

“Highway Accidents Resulting in Fatalities, 1936: State of Iowa.” *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Atestiadep_1829.

This map provided a visual of the locations of fatal accidents throughout the state of Iowa in 1936. It differentiated types of accidents: vehicle with vehicle, vehicle with pedestrians, and all others. I noticed that there was a higher concentration of accidents in the Des Moines area.

“Iowa Road Map Showing Condition, January 1, 1925.” *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Asheetmaps_58.

This map was made in 1925 to warn Iowans about road conditions on major highways. It explained to drivers what material the road was made of - paving, gravel, grading, and net built - as well as the distance of the road.

Museum

Iowa State Patrol Exhibit, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Johnston, IA

The Iowa State Patrol Exhibit at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum had a large collection of primary documents that I had not found anywhere else. The display did a great job of highlighting the major changes in the patrol throughout the years.

Brochure

“Page 2.” *The University of Iowa Libraries*, digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Aatc_55513_55511.

This campaign brochure, dated from 1926, explained why people should vote for Alex Miller in the Iowa governor’s race. It was interesting to read about the campaign that he ultimately lost. In less than ten years, Ola would be elected to a state office.

Document

“Early History of the Iowa State Highway Commission, 1921.” *State Library of Iowa*, Iowa DOT Library, publications.iowa.gov/22216/1/IADOT_Early_History_Iowa_State_Highway_Commission.pdf.

This document talked about the Iowa State Highway Commission, which preceded the patrol. Their main concern was the state of the roads, rather than the safety of the motorists.

Interviews

Miller, Tom. Personal interview. 9 Dec. 2020.

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller explained what could have happened if someone had disagreed with Ola's decision to start the patrol. It clarified the risks she took in her actions.

Dawson, Doug. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2020.

Doug Dawson's father, Lyle Dawson, was one of the "First Fifty." Doug was 13 when his dad retired from the patrol. His childhood memories helped me to better understand the life of one of the original patrolmen.

Stadtmueller, Seth. Personal interview. 10 Mar. 2020

Trooper Seth Stadtmueller described what the Iowa State Patrol was currently working on. The organization hopes to pass a bill in the Iowa Legislature that would make it illegal for drivers to be on a cell phone while in motion.

Secondary Sources

Books

Briedinger, Bill. *Iowa State Patrol: 50th Anniversary Album, 1935-1985*. The Patrol, 1985.

Though I searched for books about the Iowa State Patrol from the time period of the 1930s and 1940s, the closest I could find was this anniversary album. It had a large number of photographs and intimate knowledge of the patrol.

Fisher, Scott. *Courtesy-Service-Protection: the Iowa State Patrol*. AuthorHouse, 2004.

This book contains statistics about the success of the Iowa State Patrol in terms of the reduction of accidents and fatalities on the highways. It proved the usefulness of the patrol and backed up anecdotal stories found in other sources.

Fisher, Scott. *Iowa State Patrol*. Arcadia Pub, 2013.

Iowa State Patrol was the most useful book I found while researching. It includes information on the first members of the Iowa State Patrol and their personal stories. As I was reading through it, I came across a story about one of the "First Fifty" that my family has a connection to. It reminded me that they were real people with families.

Olsen, Marilyn. *State Trooper: America's State Troopers and Highway Patrolmen*. Turner Pub., 2001.

I got a feel for the conditions the “First Fifty” served under after reading this book. I learned about their 72-hour workweek with no holidays or weekends off. It showed how dedicated they had to be in order to lead that kind of life.

Partsch, Tammy. *It Happened in Iowa: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*. TwoDot, 2017.

I used a chapter from this book to learn about the start of the Iowa State Patrol. It helped me to better understand why there was such a need for the services that it provided.

Stock, Janice Beck. *Amazing Iowa*. Rutledge Hill Press, 2003.

This book contained information about the first 15 motor vehicle inspectors. Most other sources focused solely on the “First Fifty,” so information on other duties performed by the men illustrated that the patrol was multifaceted.

Government Publications

“About the DOT.” *History - Iowa Department of Transportation*,
iowadot.gov/about/organization-history.

This paper talked about the early history of the Iowa Department of Transportation. Because it went back to 1904, it provided background on the Iowa State Highway Commission. Their purpose was to improve Iowa’s highways and roads.

“Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones.” *Iowa DOT*, iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf.

One major milestone in the history of transportation in Iowa was the first auto accident in 1905. It would be the first of many fatalities that would occur on Iowa’s roads and highways.

“Looking Back: Historical Hall, 1899-1904; State Historical, Memorial and Art Building, 1905-1999; Ola Babcock Miller Building, 1999-Present, June 2013.” *State Library of Iowa*, www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/IF/782981.pdf.

I used this paper to learn about public opinion on the Iowa State Patrol after it was started. The polls showed that it was immediately popular with Iowans.

Ola Babcock Miller, 1871-1937. Library of Iowa, State, <http://publications.iowa.gov/9022/1/Babcock-miller-brochure.pdf>

This brochure documented Ola’s campaign for highway safety that continued beyond the creation of the Iowa State Patrol. She spoke at churches, schools, and community events to educate the public about highway safety.

Renaming the Old Historical Building, publications.iowa.gov/135/1/executive/1-9.html.

When the Old Historical Building in Des Moines was renamed the Ola Babcock Miller Building in 1999, attention was drawn to her story. I learned how dedicated Ola was to the cause.

Thompson, William H. "Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary." *Iowa DOT History*, iowadot.gov/history/transportationiniowa.

This source explained the poor condition of Iowa's early roads. They were so bad, in fact, that people often chose not to travel because it was difficult to get around. It helped me to grasp one of the challenges of the time for motorists.

Websites

"Illinois State Police Office--Route 66: A Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary." National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/illinois_state_police_office_pontiac.html. Accessed 19 May 2020.

To learn more about highway patrols in other states, I did a search to find when and how surrounding states organized their patrols. I found that Illinois was one of the first states in the Midwest to start a highway patrol in 1922.

"Minnesota State Patrol." Learn More about DPS, Divisions, Programs, Boards and Committees, dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp/about/Pages/history.aspx. Accessed 19 May 2020.

The Minnesota State Patrol was founded in 1929 by the Minnesota State Legislature. This information showed how unusual it was for the Secretary of State to organize a patrol group. Public sentiment was most likely influenced by seeing other states take initiatives.

"Ola Babcock Miller." *DesMoinesRegister.com*, data.desmoinesregister.com/famous-iowans/Ola-babcock-miller. Accessed 17 Nov. 2019.

I started my research with a Google search of Ola Babcock Miller. The first entry was this website, an informative piece about her political career. As I continued searching, I found that there are very few resources with additional information about her professional life. I came back to this website often.

"Ola Babcock Miller." *Iowa Women's Hall of Fame*, 25 Aug. 2007, publications.iowa.gov/3881/1/07_HOF_Book.pdf. Accessed 2 Feb. 2020.

When Ola was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 1975, this was the biography provided about her. It explained the qualities she possessed that caused them to honor her.

“THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF IOWA.” *Details Page - The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa - The University of Iowa Libraries*, uipress.lib.uiowa.edu/bdi/DetailsPage.aspx?id=271. Accessed 2 Feb. 2020.

The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa had more information about Ola's personal life and family. Her husband, Alex Miller, had made a name for himself in politics before she decided to run for Secretary of State in 1932.

Newspaper

Boshart, Rod, and Globe Gazette Des Moines Bureau. “Iowa State Patrol: 75 Years of Keeping Iowans Safer.” *Mason City Globe Gazette*, 16 Aug. 2010, globegazette.com/news/local/iowa-state-patrol-years-of-keeping-iowans-safer/article_f89e14d2-a8ed-11df-a5fc-001cc4c03286.html.

Though this is a newspaper, I did not consider it a primary document for the simple fact that it was published in 2010. Written at the time of the 75th anniversary of the Iowa State Patrol, it provided information about the training the recruits had received at Camp Dodge.