

ALONG THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
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Hope for Clinton County Lincoln Highway

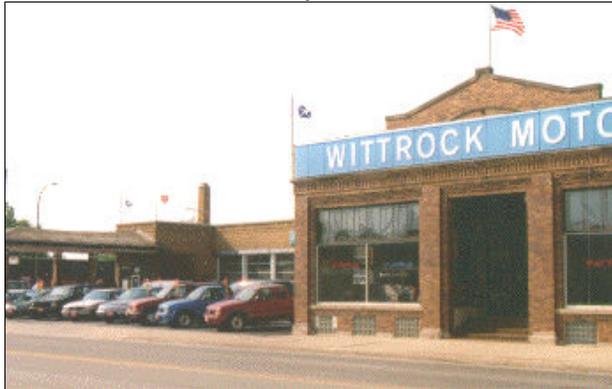
Efforts to preserve the Lincoln Highway in Clinton County may be paying off, although nothing is yet "in concrete." The Clinton County Engineer has determined the Lincoln Highway should be closed due to a series of aging bridges on a stretch between Calamus and Wheatland. Residents and the LHA have announced opposition to the proposal, hoping to seek other alternatives and keep the roadway open.

Under the current plan, the roadbed would be removed to mitigate wetlands. State Coordinator Roger Riley and State President Bob Ausberger have both attended meetings and met with reporters to tell the story of the historic Lincoln Highway and why it should be saved.

It was a local Lincoln Highway Association member who may be getting our message through to the supervisors. Elmer Ketelson of Calamus has had some discussion with the supervisors about keeping the road intact after it is closed. This could be developed as a bike or walking path, according to Ketelson. The supervisors plan is to let a contract to remove the pony truss in December. We'll keep you informed as to what's happening.

Much to See on the Lincoln Highway This Fall

The Iowa Lincoln Highway Association has been on the road literally this fall. Starting with the state meeting at Carroll, a visit was made to the newly rennovated Wittrock's auto dealership with its double-canopy building.



This tour also included a stop at the Carroll Railroad Depot which is ready for a restoration project to begin.

The Iowa Lincoln Highway 150 had over twenty people in attendance. Thanks to the Ogden Community Development Company for hosting a send-off breakfast. Highlights included a visit to Nic-O-Let Park, a 1920s-era park that had a dance hall and pool, and a stop at the former site of the Jordan School, where its former principal, 91-year-old Harold Schmickley of Boone, gave us a rundown of what it was like in Jordan.

Due to a construction detour, the group also stopped to look at the Ames drive-in theater, which is scheduled for the wrecking ball. In Colo, the group walked over the grounds of Niland's Corner and saw the Jefferson Highway marker (now Highway 65) where the two highways joined. At State Center there was a tour of Clar's, which is now a restaurant. In 1915 it was a hospital. The kitchen is in what used to be the operating room, and the woodwork and frosted glass have been retained. Watson's turn-of-the-century grocery was a fascinating stop.

The Marshall County Historical Society hosted the group at the end of the tour with ice cream, cookies and coffee. Thanks to Dale Benskin and the Marshall County folks for a warm welcome. Lots to see at the Mid-Iowa Automobile Museum including spark plugs made in Marshalltown.

Last Chance Tour

The most recent tour featured Clinton County, including the stretch slated for closure. The delegation visited the site where

the Lincoln Highway entered Iowa at the old Fultons-Lyon bridge. This unique bridge was demolished in 1974, but had featured a 90-degree turn off the approach on the west bank of the Mississippi River.



The group visited an abandoned stretch of the Lincoln Highway on the property of the Frontier Best Western (photo above) and stopped at the Coen Marker site. In west Clinton County, Bob Ausberger briefed the group on the pony truss bridge which is slated for removal, and everyone paused for a picture:



Some hardy (crazy) tour members scaled creek banks and mud to get to the famous abandoned stretch near Lowden. Everybody did get to drive on part of the abandoned road, with the owner's permission, of course.

We ended at Red Oak Antiques in Clarence and had supper at Oster's Drive-Inn in Clarence. A long day, but plenty to see.

Nic-O-Let Park

Excerpted from the Boone County Historical Society Trail Tales - 1975

Travelers crossing the Des Moines River on the new Highway 30 bridge may wonder at the few scatterings of small white buildings standing amidst a forest of dead elm trees standing gaunt and ghostly. This area was at one time during the 1920s one of central Iowa's most popular and well-known vacation and recreation spots, called Nic-O-Let Park.

In 1920 Cadd Alexander pulled out of Spring Lake and joined Dave Conn in an endeavor to set up a park closer to Boone. They picked a beautiful location along the river easily reached from the east, west, north, and south, although the north road from the old Clyde Mine at the bottom of the hill seemingly led nowhere and was beyond most hill-climbing ability of the early-day auto, with most of the "T" models being forced to back up on all the hills due to the fact that old "Henry" must have figured gasoline would run uphill.

In 1922 the dance pavillion was enlarged from the former 60' x 40' x 64' and the bandstand was placed in the center, which was an innovation at this time. In addition to baseball and kiddie wading pool was a large swimming pool. This pool was 100' wide x 120' long, had a maximum depth at the west end of 10 feet, and received fresh water pumped from wells with a 50hp electric pump to spray out into the pool through an elevated spray pipe on the south edge. At the northeast corner of the pool was one of four flowing wells located in the park for drinking water. Just south of the pool three isolated cabins were built for those who desired a little more privacy.

Editor's Note: *The walls of Nic-O-Let Park pool are all that is left. The filled-in pool can be found on the south side of new Highway 30 (Nic-O-Let proper is on the north side) at the base of the hill and back in the woods.*

Mailing Costs Double

New postal regulations covering bulk mail have doubled the cost of this mailing!

Lincoln Highway for Christmas!

LH Notesheets: \$4.00

Sesquicentennial LH Book: \$4.00

Iowa Map Pack: \$5.00 (add \$1.50 for shipping)

Reno Lincoln Highway Conference Video: \$20.00 (\$3.00 shipping)

Send to: **Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, P.O. Box 14, Ogden IA 50212**



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