

# Along the Lincoln Highway

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association  
June 1997 ..... Volume 2 Issue 2

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## CAR CARAVAN TO OHIO!

The Fifth Annual National Conference

We are in the process of forming a car caravan to go the national conference in Mansfield, Ohio. The dates of the conference are June 25-28. The caravan will start out on Saturday, June 21, as we participate in the Cedar County Lincoln Highway Tour.

Saturday night we will stay in DeWitt, and on Sunday we will visit the "Wapsipinicon Floodplain" segment of the Lincoln Highway before heading east. The itinerary includes Elvira, several alignments in Clinton, the Lincoln in Fulton, Illinois, the rural segment to Morrison, and the Lincoln Highway "wonders" of Morrison including a mural, a log-cabin cabin camp, and Hillendale. We are considering staying at the Hillendale Bed & Breakfast.

Day two will take us to Franklin Grove where we will visit the national headquarters and the restoration project there. Other Illinois sites include "The Mile the Moose Built" at Mooseheart, the bridges of Aurora, the plank road market at Plainfield, the intersection with Route 66 at Joliet, abandoned sections in Chicago Heights, and the Ideal Section at Dyer, Indiana.

Tuesday we will tour the old route in Indiana which includes some nice rural sections and a trip past the University of Notre Dame at South Bend. We'll see how our time works out, but we will want to be close to the Ohio border by Tuesday night. We plan to be in Mansfield by noon Wednesday. (There is also the Dusenburg Museum in Auburn that is worth seeing.) **L**

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR SUCCESSFUL

The Economic Development Seminar in Ogden was a good success. We had 40 people in attendance from 18 communities. Feedback, information and ideas are coming into our Ogden office from participants. We need people and input to compile a list of Bed & Breakfasts and antique stores in the Lincoln Highway Corridor.

Lila Lawton, who has been our "one-day-a-week volunteer," will continue to help us as a one-day paid and one-day volunteer helper. We are looking at several ways of filling the other three days at the Ogden office. If anyone would want to help out one day a month as a volunteer, please let us know and we will work out a schedule. **L**

## REVISIT the LINCOLN HIGHWAY

by Art Swarzenruber

(Reprinted by permission from *Time Lines*)

*The first half of this article concluded with the author describing the Lighthouse Supper Club on Mt. Vernon*

*Road, and proceeding across Highway 13 past a 1861 brick home that was owned until recently by the Weakland family.*

Down the highway a piece comes now a point of interest known as "Dead Man's Curve." This is a tricky sharp curve approaching a one-lane old style iron bridge (near the entrance to Camp Good Health/Tanager). Some fifteen years ago the curve was reduced and a new modern bridge was erected across Big Creek. Overlooking this valley to the right stands Jim Olney's beautiful Swiss Chalet-type home.

This notorious curve was the sight of many accidents and several deaths, and thus it truly earned its reputation as "Dead Man's Curve."

As our tour heads east to the next long curve to the right, you approach one of the most historic miles on the entire Lincoln Highway in Iowa. Until the last several years it was not properly identified. Now it is - watch for the signs. Until five years ago, it was called, "The Seedling Mile," one of six such demonstrations paved areas across Iowa. Curious people came from all over eastern Iowa, mud roads and all, to check it out. They drove back and forth to experience and marvel at its comparatively smooth ride.

The seedling mile program was later discontinued as this successful demonstration was no longer needed to convince the public about the virtues of surfaced roads. A small gas station long ago deserted still stands at the halfway point on the right side of the test mile.

Soon you'll approach Abbe Creek School. Well preserved, it's properly identified as one of the oldest schools west of the Mississippi River. Open on weekends, it's worth a visit. Your youngsters will be amazed that grades kindergarten through eight could be ably taught in one small room.

Another couple of miles through winding productive countryside brings the journey into historic Mt. Vernon. It's especially scenic in the fall with an abundance of oak and maple trees, and is home to Cornell College, one of the fine small colleges in the Midwest. Founded in 1853, this beautiful campus with its many limestone structures is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Drive slowly and look around. There's a lot of history to be enjoyed.

Just east of Mt. Vernon is Lisbon, also noted for many old but well-preserved 19th century homes. This is the end of the suggested trip on just a small section of Mr. Lincoln's historic roadway. He'll appreciate your family's honoring and remembering him. You'll surely agree it's a treat to get off the speedy interstates, savor Iowa's beautiful countryside, and learn a little more about Iowa's proud history. L

*Art Swarzenruber is a retired executive of Vigortone Feeds.*

## **CONGRATULATIONS to the UTAH LHA CHAPTER**

The Utah chapter of the LHA has begun their own newsletter, entitled "The Other Heritage" (as opposed to Mormon). *Volume 1/Issue 1* has just been received by our office, and can be viewed on the Iowa LHA web site at <http://soli.inav.net/~pwalker> in the Utah link. The newsletter is edited by Rollin Southwell. With Utah there are now eight state chapters publishing newsletters.

## **WELCOME to OUR NEW LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION MEMBER!**

Joan Wahl of Jefferson

## CLINTON COUNTY UPDATE

Congratulations are well deserved by our friends in Clinton County. The Clinton County Board of Supervisors approved change orders which will save the "Wapsipinicon Floodplain" section of the Old Lincoln Highway along with its bridges and abandoned section.

While the change order applied especially to the 1924 Pony Truss Bridge (the only one left in Iowa on the Lincoln) over Calamus Creek, it will lead to the creation of an interpretive site/outdoor classroom/hiking and biking trail/country park situation covering the three-mile segment of previously doomed highway.

Groups that came together to turn near-disaster into a model victory include the Lincoln Highway Association led by Elmer Ketelsen, the Clinton County Conservation Board, the towns of Calamus and Wheatland, the schools of those towns, the Clinton County Preservation, a snowmobile club, and several individuals. **L**

## WITTRUCK MOTORS HONORED

Congratulations to Wittrock Motors in Carroll for being the recipient of the "Large Commercial Building" award in Iowa's Best Preservation Awards sponsored by the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance.

The award ceremony was held in Governor Terry Branstad's Capitol office on May 15. Wittrock's was presented with a certificate citing its contribution toward preserving our state's historic treasures.

Wittrock is the Chrysler, Plymouth, Dodge, Jeep and GMC pickup dealer in Carroll. It occupies the building constructed by W.B. Swaney for Swaney Motors in 1913. Later additions including the double canopy gas station were added in the 1930s. Swaney was the local Lincoln Highway Consul and his building was the Lincoln Highway Control Station.

The 1996 restoration was done with careful planning and therefore retains good integrity of workmanship, materials, feeling, association, and setting. Especially impressive is the showroom which today appears almost exactly as it did in its early years. **L**

## GREENE COUNTY LH PRESERVATION GROUP MEETS

Another good meeting of the Greene County Lincoln Highway Preservation Group was held in Jefferson. We met at the under-restoration Milwaukee Depot and Bike Trail head. Reports were given of progress on the bike trail and progress of the depot by Dan Towers, Director of Greene County Conservation.

Lincoln Highway member Jim Andrews gave an interesting talk and photo display on the depot and the Milwaukee line, and also had photos on the Lincoln Highway. (The depot is on the Lincoln Highway, and will have an LH display.)

LHA member Mike Beckner gave an entertaining talk on his 40 years of being a service station helper and owner on the Lincoln Highway. Bob Owens donated two miniature markers as door

prizes.

Fifty-one people were present, and we shared some Lincoln Highway memories and enjoyed viewing three antique cars that were on display. **L**

## **ON to OUR NEXT CHALLENGE...**

Our latest crisis is the proposed reconstruction of the Mt. Vernon Road from Mt. Vernon to the "seedling mile." We realize that this segment needs repair, but don't like the looks of the county plan to completely reshape this historic section. After a meeting in Mt. Vernon, it appears that the Lisbon, Mt. Vernon, and Linn County Preservation Commissions will request a meeting with the Linn County Board of Supervisors on this issue. Call for information or updates. **L**

## **LINCOLN HIGHWAY PRIMER for YOUNG READERS**

Mary Anderson's book on the Lincoln Highway, *Link Across America*, is now available for purchase. It is targeted toward elementary students and would make a great gift for a young reader. I am excited about it and especially like the part where the question is posed, "How wide shall we make the road?" The cost is \$14.95 with \$2.00 postage. **L**

## **A CHANGE in LEADERSHIP**

Roger Riley, who has been our State Coordinator for the past year, has taken a job with radio station KASI (1430) in Ames. We wish Roger the best of luck and know that the Lincoln Highway will receive good coverage from his broadcasts. **L**

*All the best, Roger, and thanks!*

## **LINCOLN HIGHWAY EVENT CALENDAR**

- **June 14** - Possible summer LHA Board meeting and tour with Belltower Festival in Jefferson
  - **June 25-28** - Fifth Annual National Conference & Tours in Mansfield, Ohio
  - **July 9** - Fun Days Parade in Ogden
  - **August 22-24** - Lincoln Highway Days in Nevada
  - **September 13** - Fall Lincoln Highway Membership meeting in Missouri Valley
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