

Along the Lincoln Highway

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
October 1997 Volume 2 Issue 4

BOB AUSBERGER to STEP DOWN

Dear Iowa Lincoln Highway Association Members:

I have made the decision to resign as president of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association. Therefore, the board needs to elect a replacement at the fall meeting in Missouri Valley. I wish to have someone, or several people, step forward so that they might be considered by the board at that meeting. It is possible and even desirable for the executive to be a husband and wife team. Before you all say "oh, I can't do this" or "it's not the type of thing I like to do," let me tell you why I am excited about the future of our small but important organization. First, we have an almost complete group of great directors who are working hard in their counties or areas of expertise. (We do not have directors in Pottawattamie and Crawford counties.)

Second, the interpretive site program is moving forward with definite plans shaping up for the state entry points at Clinton and Missouri Valley, and a regional site at the Lions Club Tree Park at Grand Junction.

Third, other major projects (which may become interpretive sites) are moving forward or are funded. These include the Wapsipinicon Flood Plain Section, the railroad viaduct at Mt. Vernon, Youngville, brick streets in Woodbine, statewide survey, etc.

Fourth, the Merchants Association pilot project was very successful and should be able to move forward to all of the towns connected to the Lincoln Highway.

Fifth, a great newsletter is being sent out every other month.

Sixth, a survey of all known existing markers is being undertaken.

And more: a list of antique dealers is being compiled, and walking tours of Ogden (pilot project) will be fall, winter, and spring projects for several art students at Ogden High School.

While these and other projects and ideas may need some guidance and nudging by a president, they are already staffed, funded, and moving forward.

The president will need to organize four meetings a year for the Board of Directors. Typically, two of these meetings have been spring and fall general membership meetings. The other two are strictly Directors meetings.

I will continue to act as director for Iowa to the national association, vice president of the national association, work with the interpretive sites, and help expand the Merchants Association. And I will certainly be willing to assist the new president. **L**

ILHA Fall Meeting October 10-12

Our plan is to have two general membership meetings a year. Last spring we met at Gwen's in Lisbon and toured some of the Lincoln in Linn county. This fall we will meet in Missouri Valley and tour some of the Lincoln in Harrison County.

The response to last month's article was good so we will charter a van for the tour. We will meet at the Missouri Valley Welcome Center which is three miles east of Missouri Valley. ILHA members who have not indicated that they want to participate still have time to do so by calling Bob at (515)386-4521.

On Friday, October 10, we will have a board meeting at the Super 8 motel west of Missouri Valley (just west of Interstate 29). The public is invited and hopefully a presidential candidate will show up. Meeting time is 7:30 p.m. Members coming from eastern Iowa should be aware of the detouring around Highway 30 construction from Carroll to Denison.

For those coming earlier on Friday, a visit to the newly opened Lewis and Clark Trial Center in Council Bluffs is recommended. A visit to the DeSoto Bend Wildlife Refuge and the Steamboat Bertrum museum should be a must for every Iowan.

Pick up a Harrison County Visitors Guide and also a Loess Hills Scenic Byway map at the Missouri Valley Welcome Center. These give a wealth of ideas for things to do in Harrison County.

On Saturday, October 11, we will meet at the Welcome Center east of Missouri Valley. Our schedule:

8:00 - 9:00 am Coffee, rolls, and tour the center and its museum/village.

9:00 - 9:30 am Meeting to discuss the proposed expansion and development of a state entry point for the Lincoln Highway interpretive program.

9:30 am Tour of the Lincoln Highway, probably including lunch at Dunlop and a tour of some of the beautiful Loess Hills points of interest in the afternoon.

Saturday evening: An informal get-together to be announced later. L

Lincoln Antiques is now open for business in Ogden. Wayne and Shirley Jaques of Ogden have opened the store on Main Street. We wish them luck and hope they will join our Merchants Association. Let me know if any other businesses have adopted the "Lincoln" name.

A Loss in Greene County

After many positive happenings on the Lincoln Highway, we have come up with a big negative in Greene County.

A half-mile segment at the west edge of Jefferson is being widened to 33 feet, and, with the cut and fill, this action pretty much ruins the integrity of this National Register piece of our nation's first transcontinental highway.

Of course, we are very disappointed not only that this was done, but that no alternative plans were considered that would have improved the highway and at the same time preserved the historic integrity.

There were approximately 70 miles of the Lincoln that are eligible for the National Register in Iowa. While loss of this half-mile may seem insignificant and small, the importance of the loss lies in three points:

1. City and county planning officials who don't consider the highway important as a heritage tourism asset;
2. Disruption in the continuity of segments, which is already fragile and should be enhanced rather than destroyed;
3. The fact that this was a pristine section that offered a modern traveler the same feeling that a 1920s traveler experienced.

...But More Good News Than Bad!

The Merchants Association pilot project, which seems full of promise, will be one of the major topics of discussion at our Missouri Valley meeting. Hopefully the board will consider implementing some form of this program across the state. It also appears that the Illinois State Lincoln Highway Association is interested in extending the program to their state.

The state Lincoln Highway survey continues to move forward with the team of professionals doing hands-on observation of information provided by many of our Lincoln Highway members.

This survey will give a clear and coordinated idea of what the Lincoln Highway has to offer to tourists and travelers, how to arrange this information in a hierarchy of importance, and how to save and preserve these features.

The next step is a video tour of the Lincoln by a Kansas firm. This will provide video and computer information.

A history of Ogden and a lesson in architecture will be emphasized in a walking tour guide being prepared by Lincoln Highway member Helen Miller and Ogden art teacher Kara Bishop. The project will involve students interested in art and art history. The guide will be patterned after one developed in Evanston, Wyoming. This is another pilot project and another means of entertaining a tourist in a small Iowa town.

The Ghost Town Tour from Colorado certainly opened our eyes to the fact that tourists like to shop, eat, and learn what is unique about our towns, including simply walking our streets and listening to small-town and Lincoln Highway stories while talking with residents.

We need guides, brochures, programs, promotions and unique ways to present out towns to travelers. We also need to involve our young people and schools in these projects. **L**

The LINCOLN HIGHWAY in LOWDEN

by Jan Olive Nash

(Reprinted by permission from *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, Spring 1997 issue)

Iowa Heritage Illustrated is a history magazine published by the State Historical Society of Iowa. The Spring 1997 issue includes an article on the Lincoln Hotel, a National Register of Historic Places property in Lowden. Located on a Main Street of the Lincoln Highway, the hotel was among the first of several downtown Lowden businesses established to serve the automobile trade and traveler. Iowa Heritage Illustrated can be ordered by calling Publications Sales, SHSI, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240-1806, (319)335-3916. Part two of the article is reprinted below.

With the September 1914 announcement that the Lincoln Highway would run through Lowden, the newspaper editor roused local citizens: "A meeting will be held in every town along the Transcontinental Highway in Iowa on the night of October 31st to ratify the selection of it as the Lincoln Highway across the state... Every town from coast to coast has been requested to hold meetings and as Lowden is in a very important position on the route, plans should be made by some of our road boosters for this meeting."

Although backers of the Lincoln Highway originally tried to raise \$10 million for improvements to the highway, that idea eventually was scaled back to paving "seedling miles" of concrete and promoting the highway in other ways. One was the marker program. "At the encouragement of the [Lincoln Highway] association, civic groups, business people, and general citizenry from communities along the route fanned out to paint Lincoln Highway markers in patriotic red, white, and blue stripes on barns, trees, rocks, telephone poles, and fence posts," Hokanson [Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway, Main Street across America*] explains. "What the marking job lacked in standardization or neatness it made up in enthusiasm. Anybody lucky enough to live or do business along the Lincoln Highway was proud of the fact." The markers, along with published guides and maps, would keep the wayward traveler on the jigs and jags now christened the Lincoln Highway.

In Lowden, a traveler heading to California on the new Lincoln Highway would turn right at the corner of Main and Clinton Streets, jogging north and leaving town before ever getting to the main business district. And at this jog in the route, Celia Daehn Clemmens took advantage of the opportunity offered by an empty corner lot. On March 1, 1915, Celia's husband, A.F. Clemmens, purchased the lot.

With the Lincoln Highway route announced and California's Panama-Pacific International Exposition pulling adventurous auto travelers westward, Celia Clemmens no doubt knew that once the Iowa mud dried, the trickle of auto travelers through Lowden would increase dramatically, and these travelers - midway between Clinton and Cedar Rapids - would be looking for food and lodging. Working with builder Emil Mahlstedt, the Clemmenses had no time to waste. Excavation for their new Lincoln Hotel commenced immediately, despite Iowa's notorious March mud.

Opening for business on June 17, 1915, the Lincoln Hotel offered rooms for \$2 per night and steak dinners for 75 cents. The next day the Lowden News pronounced it "one of the finest buildings in the town" and predicted that, "situated as it is on the main corner of the Lincoln Highway, it will no doubt receive good patronage."

To further their hotel's association with the highway, a few days later the Clemmenses placed an ad in the newspaper featuring a picture of the Lincoln Highway Association pennant that association members were to display on their automobiles as they traveled.

The Clemmenses' daughter Vera remembers living in the family's quarters and helping with the noon meals that drew not only hotel guests - she remembers them mostly as tourists and traveling men" - but locals, too. On occasion, the big dining room would be used for special events, such as the local firemen's banquet.

Emily Post, author of etiquette books and writer for Collier's magazine, was in one of the estimated five to ten thousand autos that traveled the Lincoln Highway in 1915 to the California exposition. Coming west from New York, Post certainly must have driven through Lowden. She told her readers: "Every town through the Middle West seems to have a little grill of brick-paved streets; an splendid post-office building of stone or brick or marble; a courthouse, but of an older period generally; and one or two moving picture houses; two or three important-looking dry-goods stores, and some sort of hotel, and in it a lot of drummers [traveling salesmen] in tilted-back chairs exhibiting the soles of their shoes to the street."

Sheltered by a wide porch supported by Tuscan columns, the Lincoln Hotel's front door opened into the lobby, beyond which were the guests' parlor and dining room, and the Clemmenses' living quarters. A dogleg staircase of yellow pine rose from the lobby to the second-floor central hall, where doors opened into a dozen guest rooms.

The hotel's modest style was born of function and commercial necessity, but the shallow-pitched hipped roof, wide overhangs, and heavily textured, buff-colored stucco also reveal the influence of Prairie School architecture as it was often interpreted by local builders. These vaguely Prairiesque features furthered its commercial attractiveness and projected a modern, up-to-date appearance. Part of the Lincoln Hotel's local historical significance today is that it is one of a very few buildings in Lowden, and likely the only commercial building in town, to have been influenced by the Prairie School style of architecture.

But more significant, the Lincoln Hotel marks the transition in traveler accommodations from existing railroad hotels to the soon-to-come motor courts and tourist cabins. Like America's earlier railroad hotels, the Lincoln Hotel was located near the center of town rather than in the countryside, and it offered meals to the traveler and town residents alike. But like the later motor courts and tourist cabins that would dot American highways in the 1920s, the Lincoln Hotel was built to attract automobile travelers and soon became neighbor to a variety of new businesses that located nearby in order to attract tourist dollars.

When the Clemmenses built the Lincoln Hotel, a large livery stable was behind the lot, still serving horse-drawn transportation. But across the street was Lowden's first auto garage, owned by the Kemmann family. Like Celia and A.F. Clemmens, the Kemmanns had been quick to spot the trend toward automobile travel - but then they'd been in the transportation business for some time. H.D. Kemmann had arrived from Germany in 1875 to operate a blacksmith's shop. Together with his sons, he had expanded the business to include selling buggies, surreys, and farm implements. By 1912, they began selling marathon cars, adding Ford cars in 1913, Case in 1914, Overland in 1915, Chalmers in 1916, and finally, Chevrolet in 1923. **L**

Jan Olive Nash is an architectural historian and a partner in Tallgrass Historians L.C. in Iowa City.

Lisbon Lincoln Highway Art Festival a Success

Becky Hess of Canton Studio reports that the first Lisbon Art Festival (a part of Lisbon's Sauerkraut Days) was a great success, with artists participating in painting, pottery, sketching, stained glass, basket weaving, woodworking and weaving displays.

The Second Annual Festival next year will take place on the third weekend in August and promises to be expanded as the participants and the crowds really seemed to enjoy the event.

Celebrating 100 Years - Now That's "Olds"

A tour of Oldsmobiles departed California on its way to a 100th birthday party commemorating the building of the first Oldsmobile in Lansing, Michigan. The tour has traversed the Lincoln Highway in California, Nevada, and Utah.

In Iowa, about 70 cars and more than 100 individuals followed the Lincoln Highway corridor from Carroll to Clinton. Guide service was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Crook, Ty Cassotti, and Joyce Ausberger. Their stay in Iowa was brief but again illustrates the potential for heritage tourism and its economic potential. The group was led by Utah Lincoln Highway member Greg Childs. In Illinois the Illinois LHA provided guide service. L

A Bevy of New Members!

The Iowa Lincoln Highway Association welcomes the following new members. Hats off to the wonderful supporters in Jefferson and the other towns.

Bee & Herald Publishing Co ... Jefferson

Blaess Shoes ... Jefferson

Rodney Brink ... Ames

Drug Town Pharmacy ... Jefferson

Durlam Electric ... Jefferson

Fudge's Flowers & Gifts ... Jefferson

John's Appliance & TV ... Jefferson

John's Studio ... Tama

Lambert Varieties ... Jefferson

Larry's Restaurant & Lounge ... Jefferson

McAfee Tire Service ... Jefferson

Ogden Ace Hardware ... Ogden

Peoples Trust & Savings Bank ... Grand Junction

Printer's Box Ltd. ... Jefferson

Ryan Furniture ... Jefferson

Scranton Telephone Co. ... Scranton

Bob Stinson ... Des Moines

John & Electa Strub ... Mo. Valley

The Tea Garden ... Jefferson

Time Out Restaurant ... Jefferson

Gas, Food, and Lodging

There are a number of establishments where association members can stay while in Missouri Valley:

John and Electa Strub own the **Apple Orchard Inn B&B** in Missouri Valley. The Apple Orchard Inn is advertised in the Summer 1996 edition of *The Forum* on page 38. Call (712)642-2418.

Some others:

Hillside Motel ...(712)642-3408

Rath Travelers Inn ...(712)642-2723

Sunnyside Motel ...(712)642-2420

Super 8 Motel ...(712)642-4788

Last Minute Notes

We have the word that a movie is being made with the location being the Star Motel at Grand Junction. (Postcard p24 Iowa Map Pak). This originally was the Camp Cozy Cabin Camp and was an early "one stop" - gas, food and lodging - on the Lincoln Highway. The story is about a man, abused as a child, who has spent much of his life in a mental institution. He does not speak. Upon release he takes up residency in an abandoned motel, is befriended by a lady who helps him regain his ability to speak, and "who knows what else will happen."

Fall Meeting:

Our view of the fall meeting tour route in western Iowa makes us even more excited about the Saturday Tour October 11. We are especially interested in visiting the Dunham Barn where it appears that a "grandson Dunham" will be with us to explain the significance of that historic register building in the Lincoln Highway Corridor. Also, the view from the new Loess Hill "Preparation Canyon" overlook is absolutely stunning. Also, we have a very rare "Pennsylvania" Truss Bridge to visit. L

We are seeking sponsors for the newsletter. If there are businesses, events, or individuals who would like to provide copy that can serve as advertising in *Along the Lincoln Highway*, please contact Bob Ausgerber.

LINCOLN HIGHWAY EVENT CALENDAR

October 4-10: *Motor Iowa*, a 100+ vehicle tour of Iowa, part of it on the Lincoln

October 5: TBS's National Geographic Explorer program will have a segment on American highways, including a bit about the Lincoln; look for scenes from our LH video

October 10-12: State Lincoln Highway meeting and tour in western Iowa

June 17-20, 1998: National Conference in Salt Lake City - Let's get lots of Iowans there!!

LINCOLN HIGHWAY CONTACT PERSONS

- Committees:
- Database or list of all Iowa Lincoln Highway markers - call or write John Carver, 2501 Falbrook Drive NE, Cedar Rapids IA, 52402, (319)393-4295.
- Walking Tours of towns: Helen Miller is working on this for the town of Ogden
- Merchants Association information: call LeeAnna Ausberger (515)386-4694
- Parade and Float Committee: call Ty Casotti (515)432-2796, or Bob Owens (515)386-3419
- Interpretive Sites: state, regional or local, contact Bob Ausberger
- National Education and Curriculum Committee: Sue Jacobson, RR 3, Box 347A, Jerico Road, Aurora IL, 60506
- Utah Map Pack available (\$10): Jesse Peterson, 67 Benchview Dr., Tooele UT, 87074
- Newsletter and Web Site: Paul Walker, (319)358-7056,