

Along the Lincoln Highway



The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
 Winter/Spring 1999 Volume 4 Issue 1

Grants Fund Lincoln Highway.

Greene County has been a front-runner in efforts to preserve and promote the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast road for automobile traffic in the United States.

Those efforts were rewarded recently when the county was awarded two grants to further promote the transcontinental landmark.

Bob Ausberger, a Jefferson farmer, said the two grants will be used to publish a guide to historic bridges and a book about bridge construction in Iowa.

Both matching grants were awarded by the Iowa Department of Transportation through its Transportation Enhancement Funding program. The two grants were part of \$2.7 million in federal money disbursed statewide for 11 projects. Greene County was the only applicant to be awarded two Enhancement grants this year.

The first grant for \$68,385 will be used to publish a 96-page paperbound guide to historic bridges, both rail and highway, in the Lincoln Highway corridor. The Lincoln highway Association will match the grant with an additional \$27,279.

Plans call for publication of 3000 guides that will be distributed at various tourist locations throughout the state.

Ausberger said the association hopes to have the booklets, entitled "Guide to the Bridges of the Lincoln Highway Corridor in Iowa," to be printed by September 2000 and ready for distribution early in 2001.

"It will be oriented toward tourists' interest in heritage," Ausberger said.

The second grant of \$98,923 will help publish a book that covers the development of bridge construction in Iowa. The book will show how this development fits into the general development of the transportation system, and will include both highway and rail bridges.

The bridge construction book, to be titled "The History of Bridge-Building in Iowa," will be prepared on the same time schedule as the tourist guide booklet, with release in 2001.

Ausberger said this project will be more technical than the first, oriented as a reference or textbook on bridge construction. The Highway Association will use assistance and additional funding from Iowa State University Press for the book project, according to Ausberger. Matching funds for this project will total \$42,396, of which the Highway Association will furnish \$18,600.

The Greene County chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association is working with the county board of supervisors on both projects. The supervisors and the DOT will oversee publication of both the tourist guide and the book.

Greene County residents who are active in the association and its projects include Ausberger and his wife, Joyce; Bob Owens and Wayne Taylor, both of Jefferson; Marge and Clare Robson of Grand Junction, and Kirk Citurs of Scranton. L

Travel the Lincoln Highway in Woodbine.

One of the few original bricked segments of the Lincoln Highway exists in Woodbine, and is the longest section remaining in the state of Iowa. The highway brought the world to the small communities, and enriched the lives of the people. It exposed them to cultural and historical influences which greatly influenced their lives and shaped their destinies.

Many of the lovely homes of the era were built along the Lincoln Highway which passed through Woodbine. It was a point of pride with the residents to make certain their properties were neat and well kept, since they were constantly exposed to public scrutiny by those traveling by.

Many of the homes still exist, with very few exterior structural changes having been made. Their owners still take pride in appearance, and in preserving the original architectural style, or restoring it.

The people of Woodbine also take pride in the fact that the unique "stair-step" portion of the highway has been made eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. A large crowd attended the dedication of the old highway, now know as "Lincoln Way," several years ago. A number of events using the Lincoln Way/ Lincoln Highway theme have drawn attention to this old brick street steeped in tradition and history.

But the Lincoln Highway, now U.S. Highway 30, was re-routed to bypass Woodbine years ago. Since the city is now more remote, today's travelers on U.S. 30 are not aware of the remaining portion of the roadway, or

that it even exists, for the most part. And Woodbine, like most smaller communities today, is economically disadvantaged, with limited cultural resources. For these reasons, the people interested in preserving and protecting this part of their heritage are seeking ways and means to once again bring the world to their door.

A special project was needed, so a planning committee was formed, and after a number of brainstorming sessions, they developed a format for a day of commemoration, education and celebration. The program agenda planned for the event has been designed to keep in mind the historical significance of the area, and the intent to convey to the people of western Iowa and beyond the importance of pride in their heritage. Every event has as its basis either literature, art, history, music, architecture or genealogy.

The program will take place on Saturday, June 26th in the Woodbine Community Building. Some of the programs sponsored will include:

- 1) A writers seminar, with presenters Phil Hey and Drake Hokanson. These men are literary figures who have written about the history of the Lincoln Highway and the lifestyles of the people of that period.
- 2) A presentation of replicas of old postcards, transferred to slides, showing scenes of the Lincoln Highway from the early 1920s and 30s (when it was still a mud road) and after.
- 3) A presentation by Bob Ausberger, including an update on current activities, progress of naming the remnant to the National Register of Historic Places, proposed projects, etc.
- 4) A vintage style show by Valerie Van Kooten, featuring fashions of the past, an insight into the social structure of the days when the Lincoln Highway was prominent.
- 5) Oral histories - the memories of Wilma park and Beulah Pelton, who lived along the highway as children and young adults.

The program is planned as follows:

Friday 25 June

7:00 pm - Writers Seminar

Saturday 26 June

10:00 - Welcome and remarks by Bob Ausberger, Iowa LHA past president.

10:30 - John Fitzsimmons, Lincoln Highway artwork.

11:00 - Concurrent offerings of bus tour of the homes and business buildings from the Lincoln Highway era, or slide show.

12:00 - Lunch catered, with entertainment from the men's choral group "The Noteables."

1:00 - Concurrent bus tour or slide presentation.

2:00 - Vintage fashion show, Valerie Van Kooten, presenter.

3:00 - Oral histories by Mesdames Park and Pelton.

4:00 - Wrap-up by project director Elaine Ehlert.

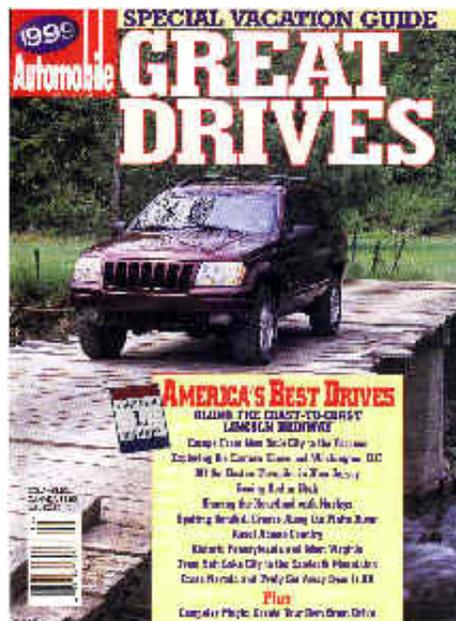
The Lincoln Way Restoration Committee, with Bill Whitmore as chair, agreed to sponsor the project.. Members of the project steering committee are Norma Coret, Nick Cleveland, Arlene Kenkel, Linda Dickman, Janette Lager, Bill Whitmore, Elaine Ehlert, and Lou Waite.

All information, artifacts, and photos will be made available for research purposes, and copies placed at the Harrison County Genealogy Center and the Lincoln Way Restoration/Lincoln Highway files. L

Going the Lincoln Way.

*A GMC trade article appeared in our last issue; this excerpt is from the 1999 **Great Drives** edition of Automobile Magazine, a trade guide of the Chrysler Corporation.*

Ford has not yet jumped on the Lincoln Highway bandwagon - little change since 1913!)



The Lincoln Highway has claimed a hold on our collective imagination here at Automobile Magazine ever since we traced its route on a ten-car drive nine years ago. Conceived half a century before the birth of the Interstate highway system, at a time when most roads ended at the city limits and railroads were the only viable means of overland long-distance travel, the construction of the Lincoln Highway was a seminal event in the history of the auto.

We enthusiastically greet Jean Jennings's idea to use its route as a jumping-off point for all our drives. Not only did it assure that the drives would be spread out democratically across the country, but it also gave us an excuse to revisit the fascinating subject of the Lincoln Highway itself.

For our historical briefs on the Lincoln highway we turned to Drake Hokanson, who, in addition to being a widely published writer and photographer and an assistant professor in mass communication at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota, edits the "Road in American Culture" book series for Johns Hopkins University Press. He is an expert on this storied road, having authored *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America*.

Hokanson further assisted us by getting us in contact with James Fox of the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan. The Special Collections Library houses the materials of the Lincoln Highway Association and was an invaluable source of artwork to illustrate the historical pieces. Paging carefully through those seventy-year-old photo albums gave us an appreciation for the Association's heroic undertaking and renewed our desire to set off on the road ourselves.

Dictators, kings, queens, and socialist governments can wave their wands and make big public projects like transcontinental highways happen in a flash. In a democracy, it's a more difficult process, and it often falls to the private sector - operating in the area known as enlightened self-interest - to get things going. Such was the case in 1912 when Carl Fisher assembled a small group of pioneer automotive men to discuss this idea for America's first transcontinental highway. Europe already had first-class roads, but there was no single highway linking America's east and west coasts.

Local communities were urged to create short demonstration sections, and the Lehigh Portland Cement Company provided for "seedling miles" scattered across the Midwest. What became the Lincoln Highway was a sort of connect-the-dots series of roads of varying width and surface, very little of it paved, but by golly, an estimated 150 vehicles traveled the length of the Lincoln Highway in 1913. By 1924, more than 20,000 had made the trip, and Portland Cement was being poured right across the country.

For the last thirty years, my parents lived above their antique shop in an old hotel (built around 1835) in New Pittsburg, Ohio. One of my first discoveries about their home was that the Lincoln Highway (there named "Old Lincoln Way") ran through that area only some four or five miles away. The idea of the Lincoln Highway never fails to excite me. The way it came to be is so American! This year, we've chosen the gorgeous countryside traversed by the old Lincoln Highway as the connecting link for all of these Great Drives. This is America at its typical best. Each of these drives holds tribal memories for every one of us. Start the car! L

Lincoln Highway trip reports will appear in our upcoming issues.

Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

Minutes of the Winter 1999 Iowa LHA Board of Directors Meeting.

9 January 1999.

Tama, Iowa.

Submitted by Joyce Ausberger, Secretary.

The meeting was opened by co-presidents Jeff and Margaret. Jeff reviewed the Lincoln Highway Interpretive Site plans. Each site is planned to have a specific story of the Lincoln that it will tell. The Youngville site was reviewed and discussed.

Consul Reports

Benton County

Anne Schoonover reported that mid-November the contract for Youngville rehab was let to a contractor in Belle Plaine for \$73,900. Its completion schedule is July 1st, 1999. It is also anticipated that the cabins just east of Youngville will be moved to the site. The Youngville group continues to look for more manpower and money for ongoing projects. They are carefully deciding what will be appropriate to have displayed. Some original photos will be among the display.

Boone County

John Fitzsimmons reported that he had repainted several of the poles with the logo and plans to do more in 1999. He also reported that Shirley Walrod and he are hoping to get notecards with Lincoln Highway photos and artwork on them. *Ty Casotti* passed around postcards of cabins located by the old Highway 30 bridge. He mentioned cabins that are still in Boone that were once located on the Lincoln.

Carroll County

Norma Berns is visiting another historic city - London! Carroll County applied for an ISTEA (T21) enhancement grant to interpret the Lincoln Highway and allow green space between the railroad and U.S. Highway 30 (old Lincoln Highway).

Cedar County

Keith Whitlatch has been working with the community of Lowden and their effort to purchase the old canopy gas station, once Phillips 66 station [see last issue]. An ISTEA enhancement grant has been applied for.

Crawford County

Ardith Sporleder has arranged for our next spring meeting location to be the Cronk's Cafe in Denison on Saturday, April 10th. The tour will be after lunch.

Greene County

Bob Owens reported that during the Greene County LHA Christmas party a list was made of challenges for 1999. The bust of Abraham Lincoln to be reset on the Moss markers, work on the 1918 Army box, consideration of location of a Quirk cabin and its rehab, and consideration of replicating the Eureka Mill by Eureka bridge.

Harrison County

Elaine Ehlert has set June 25th and 26th as the dates to be in Woodbine for special programming and the kick-off for their tour of Woodbine homes on the brick Lincoln Highway.

Linn County

Lyell Henry reported that Iowa LHA still maintains that we would like to see the seedling mile between Mt. Vernon and Marion remain eligible for the historic register. A letter is being prepared to send to the Linn County engineer.

Pottawattamie County

Bob Tomlinson worked with the Union Pacific to make it possible for the Greene County Lincoln Highway interpretive site to use some culvert limestone that had been abandoned.

Story County

Margaret Elbert reported that the New Frontier motel on old U.S 30 was gone. Also the Ash House, located on the old Lincoln Highway. The Ames Motor Lodge - built in 1925 - is still there. Lyell Henry expressed a desire to have the old motel put on the historic register. Margaret asked if anyone had heard the term "Shun Pikers," and Ty Casotti had. Members agreed it is a good thing to be.

Tama County

Ron Cory reported that Tama had done several things in 1998 to enhance the community. New banners, painting, general clean-up as well as the planning for a new city library. Their LH Bridge Festival this year will be May 14th and 15th. It will be their 20th anniversary celebration. The LHA will have a display set up and material available. L

Denison Site of ILHA Spring Meeting.

The Spring (snow or no snow!) Meeting of the Iowa LHA will be in Denison on Saturday, April 10th. Persons attending should notify Bob or Joyce Ausberger, or Jeff or Margaret Elbert-Benson so arrangements can be made for lunch and bus reservations.

The schedule follows:

9:00-9:20 Coffee, rolls, registration.

9:30-10:00 Business meeting and reports from directors.

10:00-11:30 Report from new owner of the Park Motel.

Report from Cronk's, including history, etc.

Report on the Donna Reed center, theater, soda fountain.

Report on Denison's Queen Anne bed and breakfast

Report on McHenry House and its LH marker.

11:30-12:30 Photo opportunity and visit to the Park Motel (across from Cronk's)

12:30-4:30 Crawford County tour from Denison west to Dunlap, including sites in Denison, and the original highway (gravel) stops in Arion and Dow City. At Dow City we will visit the Dow House, and return via a county road to Charter Oak to drive by Helen Ausberger's childhood home as well as visit Charter Oak's gateway park. We want to imagine how it could be used as a model for Lincoln Highway towns' gateways. We will return to Denison via Highway 141. Please note - the

return trip will not be on the Lincoln Highway but will travel through some beautiful Loess Hills landscape. L

American Safety Razor Acquired.

*Reprinted from The New York Times,
15 February 1999.*

J.W. Childs Equity Partners II L.P., a closely held investment company, agreed today to buy the American Safety Razor Company, the maker of **Burma Shave** shaving cream, for about \$298 million in cash and assumed debt.

American Safety Razor, whose founders invented the safety razor in 1875, said Childs agreed to pay \$14.125 a share for all of its outstanding common stock. That is a 43% premium to American Safety's closing price of \$9.875 on February 12. Childs will assume about \$125 million in debt.

American Safety Razor's products are sold under retailers' private-label names as well as under the Gem razors, Personna, Flicker Legmate and Bump Fighter brand. L

Rampaging Rustics!

by David Ivins

In case you city dwellers and suburbanites haven't noticed, be warned: the countryside is slowly creeping up on you. Like a rapidly growing weed that smothers everything in its path, rural areas are encroaching on our cities and suburbs, and no one - not our elected officials, public interest groups or citizens - is doing anything to stop this rural sprawl.

In countless confrontations, rural extremists are preventing businesses from building industrial parks, shopping malls, condominiums, single-family homes, theme parks, airports and sports arenas. They are even fighting the construction of new highways! What would the country be without the network of freeways and parkways linking our cities, suburbs, shopping malls, theme parks and sports arenas?

Rural sprawl began quietly with the infiltration, in ever-increasing numbers, of wildlife - squirrels, rabbits, songbirds and other small, cuddly, apparently innocuous creatures - into our suburbs and the fringes of our major cities. Now it seems that these small animals were only the advance guard of a cunningly planned invasion that also includes deer, coyotes, beavers, mountain lions, bears and other despoilers of our cherished suburbs and urban habitats.

Areas that otherwise would be given over to job creation and highly profitable logging, strip mining and oil drilling are being expropriated by wild animals, which are inherently valueless since they contribute nothing to our economy. Once these beasts establish themselves, shielded by hellbent wildlife-protection groups and misguided politicians from Al Gore to Christie Todd Whitman, they can never be dislodged.

But these animals are only the unwitting servants of the quaint-seeming "country folk" whose diabolical plan is to eradicate or make unlivable our suburbs and cities by covering our streets, sidewalks and highways with grass, shrubbery and trees. They want to inundate shopping malls and sports arenas with lakes, ponds and streams; replace our condo developments with "picturesque" villages and hamlets and our suburban tract homes with drafty, old-fashioned farmhouses.

The ultimate goal of these fanatical rustics is to return all of us to lives of unsophisticated rural primitivism. Is this the kind of life we want? Fight rural sprawl now, before it's too late! L

*Reprinted with a wink from
The New York Times, 25 February 1999.*

Last Minute News & Upcoming Events.

Lowden's Kreinbring Phillips 66 Station featured in our last newsletter will be visited by Jennifer Bridge who will spend two days gathering information for the station's Historic Register nomination. In addition, the station's grant application has cleared the first of five reviews.

Boone/Greene County's Lions Club Tree Park Interpretive Site will have a ground-breaking ceremony on **April 14th**.

Salt Lake City has a Lincoln Highway section in an interpretive site recognizing historic transportation routes entering the city through Parley's Canyon (today's Interstate 80).

The Museum Committee is active and is working on creating a funding source and plans to be included in an October 1st TEA21 grant application.

The grant application for the Iowa and Lincoln Highway Bridge books was successful - publication is set for the end of 2000.

The Corridor Management Plan is moving ahead and we hope to have a complete report at the April meeting in Denison.

The LHA National Headquarters are now officially open for business in the restored building in Franklin Grove, Illinois.

And let's not forget...

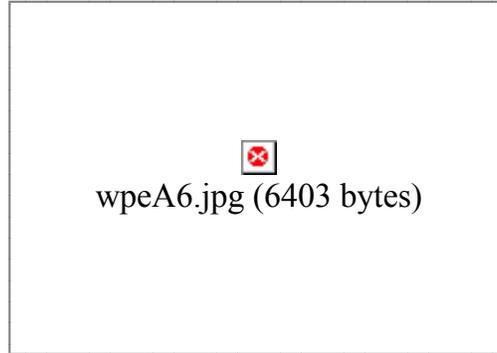
June 15-19 is the LHA National Conference in Rochelle, Illinois!

Feature Photo.

This issue's mystery photo is actually no mystery. It's a 1940s/50s era postcard featuring Denison's Park Motel, advertised as "Air-Conditioned, Steam Heated, 24 Rooms with Innerspring Mattresses and Tub or Shower."

Nearby stands Cronk's Cafe, another long-time Denison landmark, "Open All Night, and Specializing in Tourists Breakfasts."

Both buildings will be featured at the April state meeting of the ILHA. We'll run another "mystery photo" in the next issue of *Along the LH*.



The mystery photo in our last issue fooled almost no one, as several persons recognized the Sheldon Lodge on Sheldon Avenue (LH) in Ames, including all the officers of the ILHA, Van and Bev Becker of Cedar Rapids, but Betty Gulliver Johnson of Minneapolis was first. Ms. Johnson reports that her grandparents owned the Lodge from 1957 until 1973, and she has fond memories of Christmases spent there. L
