

Along the Lincoln Highway

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
Summer/Fall 1999 Volume 4 Issue 3

Lincoln Highway Preservation: Meeting of the Minds

by Bob Ausberger

County engineers representing eight Iowa counties were accompanied by county supervisors, state historical society and Iowa tourism officials, an IDOT representative and several of our own LHA members at the “Context Sensitive Design Workshop” on July 27th in Ames at the Federal Highway Building. The discussion centered on preservation of the Lincoln Highway in conjunction with institutional progress toward continually improved and safer roadways.

The county engineers were thanked for what they had already done to preserve the Lincoln Highway, ranging from assistance with grant-writing to historic bridge preservation. It was made clear that much of the early LH alignment is now in the counties’ domain, and therefore the future of historic segments and structures is in their hands.

ILHA president Jeff Benson recapped the progress made in the Association’s short history. He emphasized the recent AAA decision to include the LH in their state guidebooks, and the House of Representatives’ bill recently introduced by Congressman Ralph Regula of Ohio. Outlining the progress made across the state and nation, he emphasized the importance of the county engineers’ help in continuing that progress.

Leah Rodgers and Lowell Soike discussed keeping Historic Register-eligible segments and engineering structures on the Register after they have been rehabilitated, and focused on preservation of the *integrity* of a segment or structure. Integrity includes workmanship, materials, setting, location, feeling or impression, and association with the site. In other words, after the road has been rehabilitated, does it still seem like an old road..

In the discussion that followed, LHA members pointed out that keeping the road on its original right-of-way is important for integrity. The county engineers were generally in agreement that the row usually needed to be widened to provide safety and bring the road up to modern standards.

The afternoon was given to the county engineers to explain their projects involving the LH, and which may lead to destruction of integrity in certain areas. The issues were narrowed to the two most problematic: the Mt. Vernon road—four miles running northwest from Mt. Vernon which include Iowa’s only seedling mile—and the 1928 through-truss bridge over the Des Moines River west of Boone. This bridge is scheduled to be dismantled this winter. A modern replacement will be constructed next year.

The issue of liability was brought up time and time again.

The meeting closed with LHA preservationists and county engineers more informed but still with quite a gulf in their thinking. One concrete idea that everyone agreed upon was proposed by an engineer from Tama County. He felt that the ILHA should have the early alignments well-marked across the state. On this positive note, the meeting was adjourned. L

Marsh Rainbow Arch Renovated

James Marsh (1854-1936) was one of America's most prolific early bridge builders. One of his bridges—and the last remaining of his arch design in Iowa—was rededicated on Sunday, July 25th in Ogden at the Leonard Good Community Center.

Built in 1919 on an early Boone County alignment of the Lincoln Highway, this bridge reflects his esthetic sense and his masterful handling of the medium of reinforced concrete which made his bridges appeal to both public taste and the public pocketbook.

The preservation project has been an exciting venture for the ILHA. For the rededication ceremony, Association officers Joyce Ausberger and Margaret Elbert sponsored a fund-raiser. Sandwiches and homemade ice cream were provided, and LHA bridge expert Jim Hippen gave an outstanding program on the story of James Marsh and the history of the bridge. Copies of his well-reviewed booklet *Marsh Bridges of Iowa* were available free to the public.



The Association donated \$1000 to Boone County for the renovation, which included the money raised at the July presentation. Donations are still accepted and welcome. Please contact Secretary Joyce Ausberger to help out.

After the program, participants toured to the bridge where a bottle of Beaver Creek water was broken over the arch to christen it. Contractor Ed Shaw and his crew were on hand to display some of their handiwork in the rehabilitation process.

The bridge is located four miles west of Ogden and just north of Beaver. Take U.S. Highway 30 to Beaver

and at the west end of town turn north on B Avenue. Drive one mile and turn east for 1/4 mile. Park carefully on the edges of the gravel road to the east or west. L

Chasing Lincoln.

Motorcycle Cruiser is a magazine for motorcycling enthusiasts. Two staff writers recently rode the Lincoln highway across the country to promote the new Polaris Victory, (manufactured in Spirit Lake, Iowa) and a Harley-Davidson Dyna Convertible. Their best promotion, however, was for the Lincoln Highway itself.

Jamie Elvidge wrote of their adventures in the article below. Watch for her continuing story in subsequent issues.



PAINT BY NUMBERS

Art and I finally completed the stretch to York, Pennsylvania, although we were five hours late meeting our photographer at the Harley-Davidson Museum. York's other historic leg-up is its claim to have been our nation's capital in 1777, when the Brits drove Congress out of Philadelphia.

Riding through Pennsylvania you begin to realize the roadside has layers, like coats of paint on an old barn. If you tune in you can pick out the scenes and structures that were there before the Lincoln Highway, those established as it grew, and structures relevant to its heyday. Motels, for example, didn't even exist until the 1930s.

Looking off to the right or left of U.S. Highway 30 you sometimes see original sections of the old road snaking across the land in a less aggressive course. The original highway didn't move with the forthright, dynamite-driven attitude of later highways. It took a more tentative path... like the first stroke of a painter's brush on an empty canvas. If highway building is an art, the first roads were impressionistic. Those soft lines are now mostly lost in our efficiently modernistic roadways. [This is one of the best metaphors for the Lincoln Highway I have ever read, *ed.*] As the highway system grew more impersonal and bypassed the quiet country lanes and slow-moving city streets, the intimate names given to roads were replaced by numbers.

I'd ridden across the country three times this summer, almost entirely via interstates. In my first day of exploring the Lincoln I felt more connected to the country I was traveling through than in all the other thousands of miles combined. On an interstate, you know when you're leaving one state and entering another. On the state and secondary routes everything blends into one impression.

As we began our ascent into the Alleghenies it grew dark. Earlier roads didn't breach this range. Most driving routes had gone to great lengths to skirt them. The Lincoln plowed up and over in a fashion that must have daunted early motorists. The braking systems of that era were nominally functional as the turnouts at each summit remind us. Wise businessmen set up shop on these peaks so travelers could cook their heels along with their brakes.



The most famous of these rest stops was built at Grand Point, which boasts a view of seven counties. What started as a roadside stand was eventually turned into a three-story ship called the S.S. Grand View Hotel (above). The project required 63.5 tons of steel, at a cost of \$120,000 – which in 1931 was a shipload.

GIRL POWER

Our slow-motion journey also inspired mental wanderings about what it would have been like to travel this way 80 years ago. The Lincoln was mostly dirt until it was paved in 1931. I live on a dirt road, so I know what that really means. It was either a dusty road or a muddy road; only a few days a year was it just plain dirt.

Ever hear of the Van Buren sisters? Adeline and Augusta? On July 4, 1916, these two young women left New York alone on two Indian Power Plus motorcycles bound for San Francisco via the new Lincoln Highway. They encountered all sorts of horrific weather and slogged their way through countless miles of slippery mud. In one section of Illinois, they rode through 40 continuous miles of deep sand. At the time, women weren't even allowed to vote. The Van Buren sisters arrived safely in San Francisco almost two months after leaving New York, smiling and seemingly none the worse for the wear.

After three long days of riding, Art and I had mastered map-reading enough to reach Fort Wayne, Indiana, home of the Lincoln Museum. We discovered a temporary exhibit called "Coast to Coast on the Lincoln Highway" (open until January 31, 1999). It was quite a feast for two people famished for Lincoln Highway facts. That evening Art broke away to hand off the Victory, like a relay baton, to Evans. L

Next issue: Iowa!

Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

Minutes of the Summer 1999 Iowa LHA

Board of Directors Meeting.

10 July 1999.

Community Center, Ogden, Iowa.

Submitted by Paul Walker, Acting Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Secretary and Acting-President Joyce Ausberger at the Community Center in Ogden (on the Lincoln Highway).

Ausberger announced plans to order additional Lincoln Highway tri-color banners. The new banners will cost \$56.50 each for a set of 100. Approximately the same size as the existing banners, the colors are closer to LH red and blue and should be more colorfast.

Plans are finalized to send reminder postcards to Iowa members of the LHA if their membership is soon expiring or has already expired.

Lyell Henry gave an update of progress in the Niland's Corner Interpretive Site. Current plans by the city of Colo - the present owner of Niland's - call for the restaurant to re-open soon. The town is working on ways to raise money to renovate the site and how to run the roadside attraction.

Bob Ausberger reported that the Lowden Phillips 66 gas station renovation is proceeding. A decision must be made whether to fix the cottage-style station and service bay, or the station alone. Both are eligible for National Register of Historic Places nomination. Ausberger noted that the station is unique due to the placement of the chimney on the side, instead of Phillips usual front chimney. The Phillips company will be solicited for help in repairing the station.

Joyce Ausberger reported that the Woodbine lecture and tour-of-homes program was successful, and plans are underway to duplicate the program in Ogden. National as well as Iowa LHA members were involved in the Woodbine presentations. At present, a guide to Ogden's historical architecture is being compiled for the local program - dates to be determined.

Van and Bev Becker of Cedar Rapids are cataloging the 1928 LH concrete markers in Iowa. If any county directors or members are aware of an unrecognized marker anywhere in the state, they are asked to notify the Beckers at 319-362-5447

Ausberger and President Margaret Elbert are heading up the effort to raise funds for the renovation of the Marsh Rainbow Arch Bridge north of Beaver on the original LH. The repair work should be finished by press time.

On 27 July Bob Ausberger will be meeting with the County Engineers and Supervisors from most of the Iowa LH counties, as well as federal and IDOT officials. They will be discussing ways to repair old roadways and incorporate them into the highway system. Bob wants to work from the idea of preserving the integrity of the road, *and* make it safe for modern use. An example is the old Highway 30 bridge at the west end of Boone slated for demolition this winter. County engineers would need \$200,000 to build a new road to a different location if the existing bridge is to remain in place.

The Treasurer position in the ILHA is open. Tama County director Ron Cory has been nominated. Although approved by the national membership, Paul Walker's position as State Director requires a vote by the state membership. Elections will be held at the fall meeting.

COUNTY REPORTS

Boone

John Fitzsimmons reported it has been too wet this summer to paint poles. There will be an LH story in Boone County's upcoming "Senior Sounds" publication. Ty Casotti reported that tour guides for the Mamie Eisenhower site are now given instruction in LH history and directions.

Tama

Ron Cory reported that the LH Bridge Festival was successful. The county has had a large number of new members. A nine-year effort to get a library built in Tama recently passed. The King Tower one-stop is doing good business. Long-time owners the Taylors recently sold the establishment, so the status of the neon Indian head sign is uncertain. Application to the Mansfield Trust (Mansfield was the original owner) will be considered.

Benton

Joyce Ausberger announced that the Youngville Station building in Benton County will be open for business by August. The next step in the project is relocating the "one-stop's" original cabins to the rear of the main building.

Greene

Bob Owens commented that the Jefferson/Perry radio station KDLS 1310am is giving good coverage on LH events. In the future, LH news releases will be routed to the station regularly. Owens reports a friend of the LHA has discovered original plans detailing the 1920 paving of the Lincoln Highway in Boone County – an exciting find indeed.

Crawford

Ardith Sporleder reported that there will be an LH display booth at the county fair in August, with a tape of the KCRG Lincoln Highway broadcast playing. Owners of the Park Motel in Denison are working to get the motel on the National Register.

Story

The LHA is planning to have a table set up at Nevada's Lincoln Highway Days.

Carroll

Tony Vorstein was part of the ILHA reception at Wittrock's auto dealership to welcome the Al Hathaway ten-millionth-Ford party.

Linn

The director position is open and nominations are welcome. Unfortunately, the Happy Valley gas station on the west end of Iowa's only Seedling Mile has been torn down against the wishes of the Linn County Engineer. Lyell Henry is doing an article on the Ames Tourist Court for Drake Hokanson's new book.

Harrison

Two firms are working on getting enhancement grants to cover the renovation of Woodbine's main brick streets.

The meeting was adjourned at noon. Directors and members retired to the Chit-Chat Restaurant in downtown Ogden for lunch. L

Luxembourger Likes Lincoln.

They came from near and far to learn more about the Lincoln Highway, but across the sea just about beats them all.

Tyge Jantzen came all the way from Luxembourg, Europe to attend the Lincoln Highway Seventh National Conference in Rochelle. He became interested in the Lincoln Highway after researching and traveling on Route 66. His interest in Route 66 began when he saw a show about it on German television. Jantzen then came to the United States in 1992 with his family to explore the route. They started in Baltimore and caught up with the historic route at St. Louis. The family then followed the road to California.

Jantzen decided to come back by himself to drive the route from start to finish the summer of 1994.

Driving the whole route took five weeks. During that time Jantzen “met a lot of nice people and bought a lot of goods.” The next few summers, from 1995 to 1997, were spent driving on the route.

“I know it by heart,” Jantzen said.

Jantzen had heard about the Lincoln Highway and thought it could be interesting to know about other roads.

In 1998, Jantzen came to North Carolina, where one of his three sons is attending college. He and his son traveled on part of Lincoln Highway, east from Chicago. However, when Jantzen went looking for more information, he didn't find anything about it.

“The only thing we knew was that it was mostly on U.S. Route 30,” Jantzen said.

He came back in August of 1998 with another son and traveled west from Chicago on Lincoln Highway.

They came across Franklin Grove, home of the new Lincoln Highway Association National Headquarters, where Jantzen found lots of books and guides.

Since then Jantzen has become a member of the Route 66 Association and the Lincoln Highway Association. He has gone on numerous motor tours of both roads. This is his first national Lincoln Highway convention.

In August, Jantzen plans to travel with his brother, his brother's wife, and Jantzen's wife and son on Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles, California [its entire route], up to San Francisco, and back to Chicago on the Lincoln Highway.

Jantzen is a retired worker of the European Union, which is based in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Jantzen is Danish, but has lived in Luxembourg over 20 years. He had four sons and a daughter from two marriages. He is part of a family of travelers, as his children live in China, Spain, France and the United States. L

Bet They'll Still Hide in the Trunk.

It is true that the men behind the first and only drive-in movie in Russia overlooked a few things, such as telling the audience that films are best viewed with headlights off. Also, popcorn. Somehow, a drive-in isn't quite the same munching on cabbage pie.

But those are nits. With a hastily built 56-by-30-foot screen and a projection booth mounted on stilts, three Moscow entrepreneurs staged a two-night dry run this weekend of the quintessentially American motion picture experience, and appeared to have a hit on their hands.

Once the sun set this weekend the Moscow Kinodrome could well have been the Kenwood in Louisville or the Moonlight in Pittsburgh instead of what it was: a deserted parking lot by an equally deserted velodrome built for the 1980 Olympics.

Drive-ins may be a dying breed in America, where their number has shrunk to about 500 from 10 times that at the peak of their popularity. But the story may well be different in Moscow, a place desperately short of theaters and where the economics of movie-going is completely different.



While most American drive-ins aim for the teenage crowd seeking a cheap night out, the backers of the Kinodrome have their sights on a slightly older, more upscale crowd. When it reopens – the theater is in hiatus after its two-night premiere – it will cost 195 rubles per person, or \$8, for a movie and a light meal.

Aleksandr Volkov, who came up with the idea after seeing drive-ins in Hungary and Germany, said in an interview that the backers decided to expand on one partner's successful experience running nightclubs.

“It's based on the idea that in Moscow in the summertime, a great number of people are living the night life,” he said, “and secondly, that Moscovites love to watch films. We found that there are a great number of people who haunt these clubs during the night and prefer to sit not inside, but outside. They ask to move their tables to the open.”

And so the Kinodrome sports an outdoor café at the rear of the parking lot, where filmgoers can buy apple, mushroom and cabbage pies, fruit-stuffed pirozhki, or pastries, American soft drinks, beer and – soon – vodka.

The drive-in itself is a decidedly makeshift affair. The parking lot, equipped with green gates to keep freeloaders out, holds only 150 cars and lacks a ticket booth. The screen is anything but oversized.

Although the Kinodrome promises the best in Russian and foreign film, the main events Thursday and Friday were on American sci-fi potboiler, "Virus," and a Mel Gibson vehicle, "Lethal Weapon 4."

College girls and boys strolled up and down the rows of obediently lined-up Audis, Mustangs and other imported cars. On the road by the theater, more cars – including one police cruiser – squeezed onto the gravel shoulder on Friday night seeking their own free view. Still more people simply walked in and squatted on the pavement, straining to catch the sound track broadcast from the projection booth to car radios. At the first showing on Thursday, drivers in the front row had to be told to switch off their headlights. Some who came on motorcycles or in cars with out radios were disappointed to find that they were watching a silent movie. The viewing season is also brief: The Kinodrome will close for the winter in October, a projectionist said, because the oil in the projectors freezes.

Still, at least one oversight is about to be remedied. When the Kinodrome reopens later this month, Mr. Volkov said, it will serve popcorn.

*Reprinted from The New York Times,
21 June 1999.*

Dear Iowa LHA,

I would like to enroll my father as a member. He is 98 years old. When I read the small brochure to him, he was so interested. He had me drive him to the west end of Lisbon to show me the first route of "30." Then we drove from Lisbon to Marion, showing me the original route, around hills, etc.

He can remember the building of the road through and around Mechanicsville. He was born there in 1901. He told me of a "Mr. Fisher, slept on his front porch with his team harnessed, ready to pull cars. The boys used to drive from one end of Mechanicsville to the other – only paved road around."

He told of driving his uncle's Haines car to the interurban depot in Lisbon to go to University of Iowa games.

Good luck with this ongoing project.

Sincerely,

Sue Davies

Wausau, Wisconsin

Feature Photo.

This issue's Feature Photo scores a 10 in difficulty for anyone who wants to play "spot-the-culvert." Clues: One of the larger culverts existing on the original LH, this concrete semi-bridge is on an abandoned alignment that, as shown, is still used by the farmer who owns it—definitely an off-the-beaten-path location.



Lincoln Highway enthusiasts have no problem recognizing LH landmarks from the stratosphere. Last issue's Russian satellite image of the LH bridge in Tama and the King Tower one-stop (above) was identified by Cecil Stewart of Ames, Chuck Brandt of Kansas City who grew up in Toledo, Chris Smith, and repeat winners Van and Bev Becker of Cedar Rapids. If you know the location of the mystery photo, call or write: walkerpaul@home.com.

Outside Iowa in the LHA.

*From the Heritage Corridor
Lincoln Highway Journal of central Pennsylvania.*

It's not too late— 100 have already registered. The route has been determined. The stops have been confirmed. The **4th Annual Lincoln Highway Road Rally** is an opportunity to SLOW DOWN and enjoy the many interesting sites along the Route 30 Corridor.

Rally motorists (driving vintage/classic, contemporary cars, even limos) will kick off the beautiful fall day at the Mountain Playhouse in Jennerstown, enjoy a brief LH slide show, followed by a gourmet brunch. We should all be rolling into Old Bedford Village around 2 p.m. to tour the re-created pioneer village.

The LH Heritage Corridor's Interpretive Plan is taking shape. [We] have developed a prioritized list of interpretive projects along the 150-mile Corridor. The "short list" offers a variety of projects: indoor/outdoor exhibits, interpretive/marketing brochures, children's activity book, oral history documentation, and first-person interpretation for special events. Interpretive Committee members have identified fourteen sites along the LH Heritage Corridor as possible sites for wayside interpretation.

Meet You in Jefferson!

The next meeting of the Iowa LHA will be Saturday, October 9th in Jefferson. This will be the Association's semi-annual general membership meeting, with a tour planned for the afternoon. The meeting is open to members and non-members alike.

We will meet at **9:30** at the Greene County Community Center on Lincoln Way and Highway 4. The morning program will include a presentation by the Greene County LH Preservation Group. In addition, the updated Iowa Lincoln Highway video will be shown. Lunch will be downtown.

The bus tour begins at 1:00 p.m. and includes a stop at Deal's Orchard just off the Lincoln. Greene County can claim some of the most ardent LH enthusiasts in the state, not to mention some of the most interesting historical artifacts, too numerous to mention. Combined with the fall colors, this meeting should be one long-remembered.

Remember...

By checking the renewal date on your mailing label and resubscribing well in advance of the date, you will save your ILHA from having to send renewal notice letters.

Thanks!

And greetings to our newest member!

Larry Forney... ..Colo

Emerson & Phyllis Seim... ..Ames

Since our last mailing, there have been ten new Iowa memberships!
