

Along the Lincoln Highway

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
Spring/Summer 2000 Volume 5 Issue 2

Summer Board Meeting at Marshall County Courthouse.

The summer meeting of the Iowa LHA Board of Directors will be held at the 19th-century Marshall County Courthouse in Marshalltown on **Saturday, 8 July**. Coffee and conversation commence at 9:00, with the business portion of the meeting underway by 9:30. Everyone is welcome to attend. It will be held in the same room as the Summer 1998 meeting — make you way to the south door of the Courthouse at Center and Main and the follow the signs. Space is reserved at Stone's Restaurant for lunch, under the 3rd Avenue viaduct, on the original Lincoln Highway.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

9 June—National Register of Historic Places Nominations, Review Committee meeting at 2:35 to consider Lowden's Kreinbring Phillips 66 gas station. State Historical Building, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Classrooms A & B. Public invited.

10 June—Jefferson Bell Tower Festival

14-18 June—LHA National Conference. New Jersey.

17 June—State Center Rose Festival

18-24 June—Donna Reed Festival, Denison.

25-27 August—Lincoln Highway Days. Nevada, Iowa.

7 October—Iowa LHA General Membership Meeting. Pottawattamie County. Election of Association President.

Welcome Aboard!

Hearty greetings to our newest members:

Eugene & Marlene Robinson	Ames
John Pollock	Madison WI
Joe Harper	Colo
Carroll Chamber of Commerce	Carroll
Tim and Pat Downs	Tama
John Harvey	Waterloo

LH Golfathon and Reed/Niland Corner Tailgate Party.

The purpose of the Golfathon is three-fold: to promote the Reed/Niland Corner “One-Stop” Restoration Project on the Lincoln Highway, provide a free meal to the community and project supporters, and raise additional dollars for the success of the restoration project.

The Golfathon kicks off at 8:00 am on Friday, June 8, with two Colo golfers hitting alternate shots, starting at tee No. 1 at Lincoln Valley Golf Course, next to the Lincoln Highway and east of State Center. They will be the only two golfers, and will continue playing alternate shots along the Lincoln Highway to Reed/Niland Corner in Colo.

The Tailgate party will take place at Reed/Niland Corner, with a free lunch served from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. The public is invited to participate in the meal and the special activities planned.

After lunch, the two golfers will continue west along the Lincoln to Nevada and on to Prairie View Golf Course located between Nevada and Ames. The 21-mile Golfathon course will end at the No. 3 green at Prairie View. Consulting with golf superintendents and professionals, *par for the 21-mile Golfathon has been set at 555 strokes.*

ILHA members can show support for the restoration project by pledging dollars for every stroke the two golfers shoot under par for the 21-mile course. Contact Joe Harper to help out, 515-377-2449. L

Priorities for Politics, Projects and People.

by Jeffrey Benson

The beginning of a year, a century and a millennium seems like an appropriate time to pause to consider the past, present and especially the future. Based on recent discussions with your Directors and others, the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association has accomplished much and has much more to accomplish. As we pass the presidential post on in the fall, here is our take on the months and years ahead, which we think of in terms of politics, projects and people.

Politics:

Road Improvements and Preservation

The coming five to ten years may be the most significant ever in preserving the history of the Lincoln Highway.

The Iowa DOT will be rebuilding much of U.S. Highway 30. Their five-year *Transportation Improvement Plan* includes other projects that may impact the Lincoln Highway. With unprecedented sums of money now flowing into highway construction, many Lincoln Highway segments that are now county or city roads will also be rebuilt

This could mean some resources will be lost. Or, with proper foresight and design, it could mean opportunities to preserve historic resources and improve signs, access, and other help for visitors. To make the best of the future we must get involved with the planning, which is happening now.

The following actions will help us move forward:

Meet with Iowa DOT officials to promote involvement in planning and design

Push Iowa DOT to sponsor a context sensitive design conference

For these priority projects, have local members attend all public meetings:

- o Iowa Highway 131 in Belle Plaine east to E66 junction

- o Bridges east of Stanwood and west of Calamus

- o Possible city acquisition of Tama Bridge Park

- o U.S. 30 from Missouri Valley to Logan in Harrison County

Develop specific preservation actions for each of these projects

Projects: Preservation, Restoration and Interpretation

We can make visitors' experiences of the Lincoln Highway in Iowa second to none.

We have had success by coordinating with local groups on preservation, restoration and interpretation project grants. These projects are part of our program of interpretive themes tied to interpretive sites across the state. Owing to this success, our commitments to help raise required matching funds for these projects could reach \$200,000 over the next three years. We need to focus on these funded, ongoing projects:

- Youngville Station interpretive displays and staffing
- Regional Interpretive Site at Lions Club Tree Park in Greene County
- State Entry Interpretive Site in Harrison County
- Books on bridge design in Iowa and Lincoln Highway bridges
- Canopy gas station in Lowden
- First phase of the restoration of Reed/Niland Corner in Colo as a Regional Interpretive Sites.
- Reconstruction and restoration of Woodbine's brick section of the Lincoln

How can we support these projects?

- Volunteer time for researching, writing, assembling, publicizing, mounting and staffing exhibits
- Spread the word to build local support
- Fund and install new tri-color banners to make the Lincoln more recognized
- Sell our publications and other products to a wider audience
- Seek out potential grant sources for matching funds and preparing applications
- Identify likely charitable partners and people who can contact them
- Get these partners meaningfully involved with our projects
- Conduct coordinated local fund-raising events across the state
- Organize a membership-wide fund raising campaign (mail and phone).

People: Membership Service, Expansion and Involvement

The Iowa Lincoln Highway Association is fortunate to have the largest state membership.

Achieving our goals will require strong and expanding membership. On the other hand, the visible and exciting projects above can help fuel membership growth. Involving people in these projects breeds support and support breeds expansion and success at achieving the organization's goals. Some of the ways we can all help preserve and expand membership include:

- Contacting potential renewing or new members
- Communicating with current members to discover their interests
- Connect members to local projects in their areas through local social events
- Involving local members in the local projects, through writing or signing letters of support, providing volunteer hours and organizing local project fund-raising events, booths at local festivals, articles or photos in local papers
- Involving local members in the funding and installation of banners
- Taking available brochures to local libraries, community centers, etc.
- Asking local businesses to sell map packs (they can make \$5 on each!)
- Purchasing and donate map packs and books to local schools and libraries
- Selling LHA products at local festivals and events
- Volunteering this summer to be the new Secretary, Vice President/President-Elect or President in October.

Please review these ideas and make additional suggestions. We have a strong organization and need this strength for continued success. We have a heck of a lot of fun, but we also have a heck of a lot of work to do. Let's all get to it! L

Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

*Minutes of the Spring 2000 Iowa LHA
General Membership Meeting
Boone, Iowa.
15 April 2000.
Submitted by Norma Berns, Secretary.*

President **Jeff Benson** called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Thirty-three members were in attendance.

Charles Irwin, Boone County Historian, welcomed us to the Center and gave an interesting history of the building. Built in 1907 at a cost of \$25,000, it became the Boone Co. Historical Center in 1990. It has a Lincoln Highway cement marker in front.

Bob Ausberger reported on the Lowden project to restore the Phillips 66 gas station, and updated members regarding the paths being built at the Lions Club Tree Park in Grand Junction.

As fundraiser for the Youngville Station project, stoneware crockery was discussed. The crockery could have images of the Lincoln Highway and local points of interest. Jeff Benson suggested the creation of a Lincoln Highway crockery series, using images from LH counties to give it broad appeal and make it collectible.

Ron Cory announced the Lincoln Highway Days celebration at Tama on 29-30 May. Parade is Saturday morning.

President Jeff Benson proposed a resolution creating a special title for **Lyell Henry**, whereas Lyell's knowledge, dedication and commitment to the Lincoln Highway is so important. "Let us honor him with the title of 'Noble Sojourner.'" Passed.

Paul Walker gave a national report and commented that the current budget will cover this year's expenses but will leave nothing to carry over to the next year without taking some action now.

Discussion centered around proposed goodwill donations from our membership, and also corporate sponsorships for the Forum. It was suggested that the "lapsed" issues of the Forum be dropped and that the next issue be current with the season.

Lyell Henry proposed cutting back publication of the Forum to two per year while raising the standard of scholarly contributions to it, and then publish a biannual newsletter for the other, more broad content, which would keep the number of annual publications at four. Walker will report opinions of ILHA back to the national president, Jess Petersen.

The Eighth Annual LHA Conference will be held 14-18 June at Edison, New Jersey. The Ausbergers plan to rent a van to travel to the conference. Contact them if interested in attending the conference.

Larry Forney reported on the progress at Niland's Corner at Colo. The Colo group has received a grant for \$250,000, but they still need \$190,000. Larry is accepting donations. Phase I of the project is centered on the station (pictured), and Phase II will concentrate on the cabins and restaurant.

Joyce Ausberger expressed the need for a copier, and whether to repair the one formerly used at the Ogden office. The issue was tabled until the July business meeting. The Iowa newsletter costs about \$110 to copy.

The Iowa LHA Board of Directors meeting will be held Saturday, 8 July in Marshalltown. Walker will make arrangements and send a flyer to directors.

The presentation portion of the meeting continued with **Ed Mondt** presenting an interesting program of historic sites in Boone County. His family owned the Mondt Hotel, built in 1892, which burned down in the great Boone Fareway fire of February 1964.

From 1914 to 1972, Ed's grandfather owned a farm across the river from the Nic-O-Let Amusement Park, which was on the Lincoln Highway. The Elks owned Nic-O-Let. Ed's mother played organ at the park. The swimming pool there (*still* there) was one hundred feet wide and two hundred feet long, and eleven feet at its deepest.

Another historic site is the Mamie Dowd Eisenhower home. Mamie's father, John Dowd, had the Montgomery Stockyards east of Boone on the Lincoln, and the Shamrock Restaurant.

Following lunch, a tour of the county followed the Lincoln to the swimming pool foundation of Nic-O-Let Park, the southwest pier of the old Rose Ferry Bridge, and the restored Marsh Rainbow Bridge north of Beaver. L

Have Spare Tire, Will Travel

By Van & Bev Becker

Bev & I visited Willis and Catherine Bachman of Cedar Rapids the afternoon of May 8, 2000. We know this couple through our circle of amateur radio friends. Some months ago, Willis mentioned that he lived for awhile in the filling station on the Seedling Mile between Mt. Vernon and Cedar Rapids.

We came prepared with notepads and a tape recorder, confident that the recorder was working properly. Upon returning home, we found the tape to be blank, probably an operator problem. Regardless, we had a pleasant and informative chat with a charming couple about life on the Lincoln Highway in days gone by. From our notes, we will share some of their thoughts.

Part I

Willis, his parents and brother lived in the small station that was demolished along the Seedling Mile in Linn County. Catherine, his teen-age sweetheart, lived two farms away. Willis' parents rented the station from Harry Stoneking, grandfather of the current owner, Dick Moore.



Willis and Catherine Bachman.

Willis and his family of four lived in the small station before World War II, 1938-1942. He was 14 years old when they moved from Newton, Iowa, where there was no work, to rural Linn County to live in and manage the Happy Valley station.

The station sold Skelly gasoline and oil. The supplies came from Cedar Rapids and the gasoline sold at 6 gallons for the dollar. There were two hand-operated gas pumps and eventually one electric pump. The electric pump was used intermittently as the electric power was not very reliable. The family also operated a lunch counter inside the station. A row of booths, a counter serving only cold meat sandwiches and pop. No beer. There were two pool tables in a back room (how was it possible to play

pool without beer?), a small kitchen that served the entire family, one bedroom barely large enough for two double beds, and an indoor bathroom about the size of a small closet containing only a stool.



Happy Valley and the Seedling Mile, 1995.

In the winter the station was heated only by locally cut wood. Willis worked for two wagonloads of wood as his share of the wood he helped a neighboring farmer cut from his timber.

Before the war years, the station and area immediately to the west were known as Happy Valley. The grassy area, now overgrown, was cut using a hand push mower, from the station to the fenceline of the first farm to the west, and from the highway to the creek on the south edge of the property.

On Sunday mornings, the neighbors would come to the station to pick up their newspapers. By afternoon there were baseball games (home plate down by the creek; right field up by the highway) and the lunch counter menu expanded to include the only hot food item—hot dogs. By evening, there were midget races. Yes, automobile races! A close neighbor brought a scraper and shaved about 3 inches of sod to form an oval track west of the baseball diamond. The track was flat with no banking or pit area. The cars were what we refer to today as midget racers. The name of local star/owner/driver Dick Hobel was mentioned as a prominent organizer and racer.

Part II will appear in the next issue of AtLH.

New Banners Ready.

A fresh batch of red, white, and blue Lincoln Highway banners have been manufactured and are now for sale. Made of a more durable grade of tough vinyl, the new set of lamppost banners should last longer and be more colorfast than the last issue—which are five years old and still “hanging in there” on city squares and roadways across the state.

Cost of a banner and bracket pack is \$100, while the banner alone is \$60 (used with your existing bracket). Shipping and handling is \$10. Direct your order to Joyce Ausberger. L

GREAT GRADES.

Our feature photo is a bonus for members attending the Spring 2000 ILHA meeting in Boone. The afternoon tour visited the site

of the old Rose Ferry Bridge, where one could touch the pre-Civil War stones of the southwest bridge pier, view the piling in the middle of the startlingly low Des Moines River, and catch a glimpse of the timber-enshrouded pier on the northeast side.



That side is not so easily visited by curious LHAers. You either have to walk under the old U.S. 30 bridge to water's edge and make your way downriver, or do as some ILHA members did and trek the abandoned grade of the original Lincoln Highway, as seen on page 1.

These photos are from that day in April, including this view from the more remote, northeastern side. The grade is tricky because hikers encounter crossroads that can divert them away from the correct route. And by late May, the path is nearly impassable with weeds. To tackle this great grade of the Lincoln Highway, call Boone County director Ty Casotti. L