

# Along the Lincoln Highway



The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association  
Spring/Summer 2002 . . . . . Volume 7 Issue 2

## Woodbine: Bricks and Brickbats.

by Brian Bloom, Woodbine Twiner  
March 20, 2002.

The City of Woodbine learned last week that they would be awarded \$807,000 by the Iowa Department of Transportation to help defray the costs of infrastructure and the re-laying of bricks from Second Street to the middle of Sixth and Seventh Streets on Lincoln Way. This award goes with \$300,000 in enhancement funds given by MAPA (Metropolitan Area Planning Agency) more than a year ago.

Despite the grant, Woodbine’s City Council must still find an additional \$1.25 million to renovate Phase II of the three-part Lincoln Way project.

The \$807,000 was granted after Woodbine unsuccessfully applied in two previous years. In that time, cost projections for the Lincoln Way restoration have risen from just over \$3.2 million to more than \$4,182,000 according to George Parris, an engineer representing JEO Consulting Group.



“There’s places to bring costs down but you’ll have to make some decisions,” Parris told the council.

The most significant cost increases came from infrastructure replacement. Archaeological and engineering studies showed Woodbine’s existing sanitary and storm sewer systems to be insufficient to handle the increased demands of its citizenry. Woodbine currently has 18” pipe, the majority more than 50 years old.

Parris acknowledged Woodbine may be served by laying another 18-inch pipe next to the existing line but said the junction boxes required to connect the two could eat up any potential savings.

According to Parrish, Phase I, from the railroad tracks to Third Street, is expected to cost \$489,640, \$184,500 more than anticipated. The majority of that increase is grading, drainage, surfacing and engineering.

Phase II costs, to cover construction from Third to near Seventh Streets, are expected to cost nearly \$500,000 more than anticipated. Phase III costs, to complete the project to Bus Brown Drive, also increased.

According to Parris, the proposed rebricking of the street would call for a 12-inch stabilized subgrade, four inches of gravel sub base, a seven-inch concrete base, another sand base and the brick pavers.

“The best we can do is estimate truck traffic and those 18,000-pound axel loads. We know this is a farm-to-market road and we need to design it to handle the load.”

Woodbine’s Lincoln Way is a 3,600-foot-long stretch of the original Lincoln Highway, in service for more than 75 years. Woodbine’s City Council must now seek funding alternatives to complete the project. L

## Outside Iowa Along the ~~Lincoln~~ Other Highway.

### Auburn Brick Road is Saved.

Our story begins before there was a **Route 66**. A 1.4 mile piece of Portland cement road, 16 feet wide, was known as Route 4. Then from 1926 to 1930, this little piece of hard road became a link of the new highway called [U.S.] Route 66. This original alignment twisted and turned but folks found it great because all of it was paved.

In 1931, the more direct routing was ready and Route 66 moved farther east. Our little road had proudly served its purpose; it went back to being a country road.



In the 1930s, for some unknown reason, this section of Route 66 was resurfaced. The original Portland cement was covered with brick, and the grade widened to a width of 20 feet [left].

For years the road was lightly used by locals and farmers. In 1997, Illinois DOT began a project to pave half of our historic brick road. Their plan was to tear it up and modernize it. After all, they surmised, it was only an old, useless, piece of brick road. History meant nothing to the designing engineers. They operated with the idea of “The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.” Our brick road was in the way.

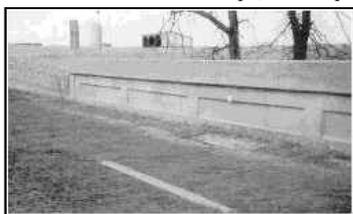
The hand-laid brick was in fantastic condition. The 16-foot wide Portland cement curve was still there along with two 1920 bridges. But how do you stop progress for the sake of history?

In 1998, IDOT previewed their plans, open to the public. We were outnumbered 10 to 1 by what we referred to as “the suits.” Everything looked doomed.

Later that year we applied to have the two bridges declared historically significant with inclusion in the Historic Bridge Survey—we succeeded. Then we prepared the paperwork to have the entire roadbed included in the National Register of Historic Places, which the Historic Sites Advisory Council unanimously approved. While this does not guarantee protection, it did create a problem for IDOT.

Our only ally was the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). Because of the National Register status, they became the official voice.

Lots more talk and paperwork followed, and the paving project was put on hold. One official actually said to me, “Okay, we will put all this off for 2 or 3 years. By then the road will be in such bad shape, we can proceed due to safety concerns.”



The road did not give up. Time and trucks could not hurt her.

I have recently been informed that IDOT has canceled its plans to extend its original paving project. *They are working directly with the IHPA to completely restore the brick surface.* They will not harm the original Portland cement curve. The only change—and it is sensible—is that both bridges will be rebuilt. But, they will be rebuilt in the 1920s style.

The message here is to target your projects and act. Don’t expect someone else to do it. And never give up.

Please visit when you are in the area. She is a lovely lady!

*by John Weiss, Chair  
Preservation Committee  
Route 66 Association of Illinois*

*Fellow travelers*—If you wish to visit this original section of brick Route 66, Auburn is located on **IL 104** ten miles south of Springfield on I-55. [*ed.*]

## Lincoln Highway Memories of Ames.

*By Jeff Bensen and Margaret Elbert,  
Story County Co-Consuls.*

### Part II: 1925

It is 1925, and much of the Lincoln Highway through Ames has changed dramatically. There is an astounding number of cars on the road and businesses are springing up to meet their needs. Entrepreneurs have figured out that, as predicted, there’s money to be made meeting the needs of people who travel by automobile.



Although in 1915 there were only two places for travelers to stay, now visitors have several choices. The grandest is the brand new Sheldon Munn Hotel down on Main Street, which has some of the finest accommodations in the Midwest. One of the owners, Parley Sheldon, helped get the Lincoln Highway routed through Ames. The Sheldon Munn Hotel is the control point for Ames in the *Official Road Guide for the Lincoln Highway*, 1924 edition.

Another choice are tourist camps, such as the one by the cemetery up at Maxwell Park, open for a few years. In 1921, the city and college talked about opening another tourist camp near Squaw Creek, but nothing came of it. However, the Ames Tourist Camp did open about this time on the Lincoln at the east end of town. It will have a number of modern ideas in the coming years, and *will still be serving auto travelers in the 21st century.*

A number of other businesses catering to automobile traffic have replaced houses along Lincoln Way, such as Ames Auto Repair near the Ames Tourist Court, and, at the intersection of Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue, the Standard Service Station occupies the southeast corner with H.L. Minert on the southwest corner. Minert sells and services Dodges (but probably tows *any* make). Minert advertises in the *Official Road Guide*.

In 1928, two blocks west on a corner of Kellogg Avenue, Mayor Parley Sheldon will deliver a speech inspiring Boy Scouts to place concrete markers along the Lincoln all

through town - just like hundreds of other mayors will on that day. Some of the markers will last into the next century. The speeches will not.



On Lincoln Way at Grand there is the Interurban railroad depot and the brand new Iowa Highway Department headquarters. There are at-grade crossings for railroads coming from all four directions near this intersection!

The Squaw Creek bridge opened in May, 1921, and replaced a concrete bridge that collapsed in the 1918 flood. From Squaw Creek, the Lincoln has been paved west to the Iowa State College campus and beyond. All of the homey little cottages are still there on the campus along the north side of the Lincoln, but a group of new women's dormitories has been built, later to be known as Richardson Court. There are many nice houses on the south side of Lincoln Way at this east end of the campus. The Ash House is now known as Club La Verne, often also called Club Va Lerne!

One block west, the diagonal railroad crossing is still there and so is Edwards Coal. One of houses on the hill above is now used by the Episcopal Church to serve students, next to the house built by the Congregational Church. On the campus just near here, the College students, faculty and alumni have just decided to site their student union, which will memorialize students and staff who died in the great war.

In the block across from Lake LaVerne, the Ames Theater has only been showing moving pictures for just a few years. What was Champlin Livery Barn is now Champlin Garage and Storage and the Champlin family has been building out this block in between. West of the College Savings Bank there is a brand new Collegiate Methodist Church.

Things have changed around the corner on North Lincoln, too. Brand new brick columns with ornate concrete details announce the west entrance to the College, still called West Gate. Nearby West Gate Lunch will see 2002, but one fraternity will burn down or be converted to a rooming house. The Brileys live along here and operate a grocery next door, from where Briley delivers groceries in an old truck with a waving hand hood ornament.

Up the road, there is a bit of a mystery brewing. A family named Grinstead may occupy a house near where the Lincoln Highway turns west for Ontario. In 1928, a Grinstead's Auto Camp advertises its location "two miles east of Ontario," which would be about here, but it will leave no trace behind.

A man named Jensen has bought most of the orchards from Iowa State College west of here. He has a house and barn and a canopy gas station.

Ontario—before Ames swallows it up — is now booming, with three grain companies, including Ames Reliable, who thirty years later will build one of the most modern livestock and poultry feed mills around. It, too, will greet the 21st century. Ontario also has a railroad depot, drugstore, two general stores, blacksmith, grocery, shoe store, two churches and a school – and designs on getting even bigger!

Some things don't work as planned. L



## Have Spare Tire, Will Travel

By Van & Bev Becker

The Lincoln Highway in the southeast quadrant of Cedar Rapids is known as Mt. Vernon Road SE. The project to widen the improve the street was to be completed in only six months, but has lasted for the last year and a half.

The merchants along the torn-up stretch of street, our beloved Lincoln Highway, have suffered along with the motorists. Those merchants, in an effort to improve their business and lure new customers as well as old, have devised a plan.

Calling themselves "The Mount Vernon Road Association," they banded together to make lemonade with the lemons the construction handed them by adopting landscaping with an LH theme. The plan called for flower plantings in red, white and blue, LH banners on power poles, city street signs marking the Lincoln Highway and even a special park in a city lot now too narrow for a building that would include a reproduction marker and concrete benches. To participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in Cedar Rapids (part of the weeklong Freedom Festival), the Mount Vernon Road Association (MVRA) is planning a marching entry with merchants and residents dressed in LH tees, polo shirts, and hardhats while carrying shovels and brooms. They will sport a banner proclaiming "We survived the construction."

Bev and I applaud their efforts! We had planned to help the MVRA by making LH banners and shirts available, but they have opted to design their own items and have them produced by merchants in Cedar Rapids. Some MVRA merchants absolutely insist that they have their own identity separate from the LHA. We still feel that it would be to their benefit to affiliate themselves with the LHA, and we hope that they will come to realize that.

When we talked with a representative of the group, they were still planning to use the LH logo with the words **Mount Vernon Road** across the top of the banner, with the words "America's Main Street" across the bottom in script. This will allow the Lincoln Highway to be recognized while the MRVA can proudly display their own identity as well. At last word, the association planned to place 25 to 30 banners on utility poles. The local utility, Alliant Energy, has approved their installation and may assist with that work. Thanks to Alliant.

We wish the MVRA the best of luck and will remain in continued contact. We stand ready to help them promote their businesses and the Lincoln Highway. L

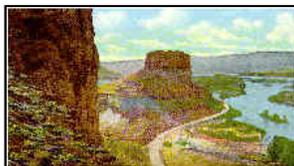
## GREAT GRADES.

No, we're not in Iowa anymore. The national Lincoln Highway Association Conference just completed was a doozy! California has a fascinating highway history, and before that, a strong railroad and pioneer tradition.



For the few and the brave—like Bev and Van Becker—the best part of the trip was actually driving the Lincoln Highway to Sacramento.

**Sixteen Iowans** were able to attend the four-day festival and witness spectacles like the Donner Summit Bridge. To acquaint the rest of us with the Lincoln Highway of the west, there will be an LH slide show at our October meeting in Carroll.



Newsletter editor Paul Walker will share photos of his drive from Council Bluffs to San Francisco, highlighted with an attempt to reproduce the famous 1930s view overlooking Green River, Wyoming (left), plus the abandoned King's Canyon Road in Nevada, the view from Cave Rock on Lake Tahoe, and capped off with the Boy Scouts planting the Western Terminus concrete marker at Lincoln Park in San Francisco. L

## Welcome to the LHA!

Hello and a Hearty Welcome to our New Members.

Su Ellen Aros	Carroll (LH)
Don Beattie	Commerce MI
Neil Bratney	Omaha NE (LH)
Kenneth Dwyer	Dunlap (LH)
Jim Hoffner	Cedar Rapids (LH)
Rita Hyland	Churdan
John Kostelnick	Lawrence KS
Matthew Kostelnick	Nevada (LH)
Denis Kozlovsky	Pylesville MD
Cindy Lundine	Alburnett
Catherine Noble	State Centre
Elaine Pruet	Lincoln NE
Rob Russell	Jefferson (LH)
Tom Sargent	Baytown TX
Mike Selberg	Ames (LH)
Chuck Willard	Council Bluffs (LH)
Ogden Community Development	Ogden (LH)

## Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.

*Minutes of the Winter 2002 Iowa LHA Meeting*

*Stin-Rossow Funeral Home, Jefferson.*

*13 April 2002.*

*Submitted by Norma Berns, Secretary.*



Every crook and cranny of the Lincoln Highway Headquarters "Clubhouse" at Jefferson was filled as members gathered on Saturday, April 13, 2002 for the annual spring meeting.

Co-President **Van Becker** opened the meeting at 9:30. Minutes of the January meeting were approved as published. **Joyce Ausberger** gave the Treasurer's report, and reported a balance of \$3,233.32. A \$3000 grant was obtained through the Leonard Good trust in Boone for the next printing of our brochures. State Director **Paul Walker** reported that state websites have the opportunity to be hosted by the same service provider as the national website at no charge.

### County Reports

**Clinton:** Consul **Elmer Ketelsen** told of the widening of the road into Mt. Vernon. Trees are being planted courtesy of free labor.

**Cedar:** **Bob Ausberger** reported for **Keith Whitlatch** that Highway Gardens Ballroom in Stanwood, a Lincoln Highway-era roadhouse, is for sale. Highway Gardens hosted numerous well-known big bands in its day. Ausberger reported Lowden's Kreinbring Service Station project is moving forward.

**Benton:** Iowa State U. doing research highlighting the Farmers' Market at Youngville. Plans for the Museum are progressing. Anne Schoonover and Mike Kelly are considering selling their special brand

of "Hiway Blend Coffee," and reminded all that Youngville crocks are still for sale. **Ron Preston**, son of late George Preston, has purchased his brother's interest in the Belle Plaine Preston Gas Station. **Lyell Henry** is researching a report on Tippy's Corner and Wayfarer Cabin Camp, probably the first cabin camp in Iowa.

**Tama: Ron Cory** reports work on refurbishing the lone cabin remaining on grounds of King Tower Cafe. This is 16th year of the Lincoln Highway Bridge Festival, May 17-18, in which Tama/Toledo volunteers clean the creek area around the famous bridge.

**Marshall: Catherine Noble** reported working on the \$500,000 Main Street Project at State Centre, Iowa's Rose Capital.

**Boone: John Fitzsimmons** continues his pole painting as well as sketching the bridges and "characters" of Boone County.

**Greene: Bob Owens** related the history of the Greene County "Clubhouse" LHA Headquarters on Lincolnway, famous in 1928 as the 5-Spot Cafe. Ausberger reported an Ohio company is making replicas of 1928 concrete markers for \$350, and he had one on hand for inspection.

**Carroll: Norma Berns** told of the Carroll Mayor's plan to revitalize the Highway 30 corridor. She issued an invitation for the Fall 2002 state meeting in October to be in Carroll, an invitation happily accepted.

**Harrison: Elaine Ehlert** said an award has been obtained to restore 4000 feet or 9 blocks of brick streets from the RR tracks to 3rd street. New period lighting will also be added. Ehlert sported a t-shirt with a map of Iowa with all the towns on the Lincoln Highway, which she purchased at K-Mart.

#### *New Business*

Ten years since Iowa reorganized the LHA, Fitzsimmons proposed a project to locate and survey charter Lincoln Highway members from 1992 to learn where they are, and their perspective of the LH today.

Election of officers will take place at the October meeting. President-Elect Mike Kelly will take over the position of President. A new (Vice)President-Elect will be chosen, as well as Secretary and Treasurer. Terms are two years for all. The State Director is chosen by the national board for a three-year term. Walker was approved for his second and last term this spring.

The group crossed the street to the Slinger-Gibson Funeral Home to continue the meeting. Marion Gibson gave a history of the home started in 1919, including funeral and burial of Merle D. Hay, first Iowan killed in WWI, now buried by the Lincoln Highway in Westlawn Cemetery at Glidden.



After lunch, a car caravan proceeded west on Lincolnway past Krieger's Greenhouse, over Eureka bridge, and right on Jordan Ave. to the native stone rail grade separation near the 1913 route. Members drove "Danger Hill" to the abandoned **Hillcrest Motel** to hear Bill MacGregor's stories of the motel in its salad days.

The caravan stopped at the **Holden house** in Scranton and spied the 1918 concrete driveway and now dilapidated home; then a trip on the original LH to Moss Corner to see the Lincoln busts which were dedicated in July 2001. A U-turn on another farm home on the LH and we were headed back to Jefferson. L

## Road Closed.

*By Bev Becker, Linn County Consul.*

The Seedling Mile between Cedar Rapids and Mt. Vernon is closed for construction, with dreaded "improvements" underway. When the heavy construction equipment is parked for the weekend, the road can be driven with care. I drove this stretch two weeks ago in my Volvo wagon. It was slow and rough, and the wagon bottomed out occasionally. The ditches have been widened, the utility poles set back, trees and brush cleaned to the fence-line and the tops of the hills have been shaved or, in county highway-speak, "the vertical curves have been minimized."



As this article is written on June 22nd, the original highway surface is gone, and the roadbed has a wide, thick, coarse gravel base. No concrete has as yet been poured.

When the new surface is laid and the "Seedling Mile" edges marked, we will update this report. Meanwhile, choose U.S. 30 and save the bottom of your vehicle.

In answer to the many of you who have asked, the homemade "Start of the Seedling Mile" sign was still in place as of two weeks ago. It is splattered with mud and bears a distinct stripe of pink paint along the bottom—the DOT marker signaling pending removal. L

## Criminy, Get Out of the Heat and Cool Off in Ames.

Iowa LHA Board members will meet in Ames for the Summer 2002 Directors' meeting, held **Saturday 13 July**, [ILHA meetings always take place on the second Saturday of October, January, April, and July].



Coffee and conversation will commence at 9:00 am. If you're coming in on the old Lincoln Highway, turn north at Clark Street and go 3 blocks to the Ames City Hall building, which is **515 Clark**. Room 135 has been reserved, but Ames municipal parking spaces have not—you will have to plug the meters in the lot across the street to the east. There are 4-hour and 10-hour meters available, which should more than accommodate our meeting.

Lunch may be had at a variety of restaurants and delis in beautiful downtown Ames.

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Board of Directors (County Consuls),  
and Staff

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