Along the Lincoln Highway

The Newsletter of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association
Summer 2004 ......................... Volume 9  Issue 2

Reed/Niland’s Corner Grand Opening.

By Jim Harper
Rood/Niland Project Leader
Cedar, Iowa

The Iowa Lincoln Highway Association has identified the Reed/Niland Corner as one of seven key sites for presenting the history of the Lincoln Highway in Iowa. The Reed/Niland Corner was found to be the most intact and best preserved commercial "one-stop" sites on the highway in Iowa and possibly the entire country.

Reed/Niland Corner provides a self-guided walking tour of the renovation project. On the pathways you can read its history and view the actual metal facilities and gas station, full of period artifacts. Complete your tour by walking into the Niland’s Café to experience a large display of the original site and actual Lincoln Highway landmarks.

The Grand Opening will be from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, July 11, with a Dedication Ceremony from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the site. Visitors are asked to park at the high school, visible from U.S. 30 to alleviate congestion at the site.

There are two questions that are inevitably addressed at any Lincoln Highway gathering. The first is usually a spirited discussion of the route of the original Lincoln Highway, and the second “Where were those old cabins? What ever happened to them?”

The mandate to locate, preserve, and protect the last vestiges of Lincoln Highway cabin courts is being addressed to varying degrees in all of Iowa’s Lincoln Highway counties, and the Youngville site could help to unify these efforts.

Website Spotlight.

The national LHA has had its own website for two years, and various states have similar version. Many sites have been listed here in the past, but there are many more interesting and profession highway sites that are getting their chance now in the spotlight.

www.highwayman-routes.com
www.route40.net/index.shtml
www.roadsidephotos.com/
www.roadfan.com/

Youngville: Life Goes On.

by Mike Kelly

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On May 1, 2004, at approximately 11:00 pm, a car was seen speeding out of Youngville’s driveway and heading east on U.S. 30. The car was stopped by a state trooper. As National Arson Week officially began at midnight, three Lincoln Highway landmarks burned to the ground.

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The café, fortunately unscathed, was able to open on schedule Tuesday, May 4th, with all three local news affiliates covering the story. The farmer’s market season opened May 28th with the ominous backdrop of the cabin cinders.

Ironically, the unsolicited and unplanned extra publicity hopefully will be the impetus for additional volunteers and support locally as well as nationally. It now remains to receive messages of support from Lincoln Highway members, local pie lovers as well as groups like the Ames preservation group who refurbished a similar ruin back at their Boone cabin site.

We are vigilant in identifying threats to Lincoln Highway landmarks and implementing strategies to protect them. Unfortunately, there is no defense against random acts of arson. When that occurs, we are all victims.

As of now, the cabin court remains an active crime scene, with the Sheriff’s Department following up on potential leads. Make no mistake—it is a major setback. But in the meantime, a hopeful next step emerges.

After debating whether to attempt to rebuild replicas, a local farmer called to offer a cabin he had on his property. We are looking into whether this original Lincoln Highway cabin, moved to his property in 1950, might be the first step of rebuilding the dream.

Summer has sprung, and it’s once again travel and tourism season. Most important, it’s time for a road trip along the Lincoln Highway. No trip is complete without a short spin along our Seedling Mile. This year, you’re ready for a pleasant surprise.

Here’s the backstory of 2004, now re-enacted in the Highway area via our cozy eyes upon and remaindered.

At the west end of our Seedling Mile stands a new monument, complete with the traditional Lincoln “L” and a brass plaque telling the story of the Seedling Mile on this site. The marker notes the important dates and provides a brief description of the concrete. It rests on a piece of concrete each removed from along the Lincoln route during previous construction. The site is landscaped with surrounded rock and clipped hedges for wind protection.

“Of course it isn’t exact,” you say. Well, consider this: As you approach the spot to your right toward Cedar Rapids, about 4-½ miles west, you will find the abandoned dead end piece of Lincoln Highway near Wilder Street SW, just west of IA 23. This spot, “The Bridge to the Past,” has a stone with the Lincoln “L” and brass plaque. The landscape is nicely subdued, as if it is concealed.

That makes two memorials to the Lincoln Highway this spring. And both arrived at no cost to you or to the Lincoln Highway Association, and for that we are grateful.

Linn County constructed these monuments based on the five-year-old agreement between the County and the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association. When they were created to move up and "improve" the Seedling Mile and the surrounding county highway. The ILHA acceded to the destruction of the original paving for the welfare and safety of drivers.

However… we gotta keep an eye on ‘em all the time!

The County used historically accurate plaques at both sites. Despite the bridge site being 4-½ miles west of the Seedling Mile, its plaque also states, “This is the site…”

Unfortunately, this is a 4-½ mile historical and geographic error. After a brief, intense email of correspondence with Linn County engineers and elected officials, we have been assured by the Chair of the Linn County Board of Supervisors that the engineers will be instructed to correct the bridge plaque.

As with all public projects, we will monitor progress toward a steady correction and resolution of this discrepancy.

In the meantime, plan a visit to both iconic markers.

“Have a spare tire, will travel.”

Larry & Vicki Anderson
Clarence, Cedar County

Steve Kroeger
Casey, Guthrie County

Bob Merritt
Carroll, Carroll County

Kathy Rohling
Wheatland, Clinton County

Central Iowa V-8 Club
Adel, Dallas County

See YOU on the Lincoln Highway! This issue’s new members.

Noble Sojourner
Lyell Henry

Ramblings Along the Lincoln Highway.
(Memoirs of the Summer 1998 Iowa LHA Meeting)

Paul Walker
Noble Sojourner
Lyell Henry
Approximately 31 members and guests attended the April 10 ILHA Spring meeting held at the Community Center in Colo, Iowa. Our hosts, Joe and Phyllis Harper, provided coffee and pastries.

President Mike Kelly called the meeting to order at 9:33am. Minutes of the January 10, 2004 meeting held in State Center were approved as published in the Spring 2004 ILHA Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report

Van Becker reported the checking account balance of $3,033.55 (EQD of which is held for the Ogden walking tour booklet due out in June), savings account $6,405.06. In 2003 monies made from logo'd merchandise sales totaled $1,163. Financial records are available for anyone interested in this effort.

Membership Report

Cedra Koolman reported Iowa has 275 national members and 24 Iowa members. Approximately 40 newsletters were mailed including 30 to the ILHA national officers and 21 complimentary copies to historical societies, city governments, etc. Membership dues do not cover the costs of newsletter mailings. ILHA receives a "good deal" from the printer and of course the much appreciated volunteer services of the Van and Van Becker in this effort.

State Director's Report

Paul Walker presented a 2004 Lincoln Highway calendar to Jeff & Catherine LaFollette, for travelling the most miles to attend the meeting.

* * *

A "Place on the Highway" slide presentation was given by Lynll Honey – celebrating the story of Reed-Niland's corner.

County Consul Reports

Clinton – New Consul Jeff LaFollette has been making contacts with tourism boards, DAV/VIH City Council, and Chambers.

Cedar – no report

Van – Van Becker reports the Lincoln Cafe in Mt. Vernon, the Iowa Lincoln shop on last year's count seat anniversary tour, will be the subject of an article in the May issue of Oprah's magazine.

Jeff's funding issue of our newsletter. Along the Lincoln Highway, achieved a milestone when Paul Walker transmitted it electronically to the Grant Wood Area Agency in Cedar Rapids for printing, which should result in higher quality photos.

A "Bridgeport Pass"-Linn County is building a bridge on an abandoned alignment of the LH from vintage scavenge parts just east of the Cedar Rapids City Limits. Check finished bridge will include a stone monument reading "Lincoln Highway."

Brett – Mike Kelly tells Brett Youngberg will open park in May, open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They are hoping soon to expand the days open.

Tama – Ken Cary announced the May 14/15 Tama Bridge Festival. 2004 marks the 15th year for bridge maintenance. Phase 3 (pavement) for the remaining King Tower One Step Bridge is finished with project completion in the fall. Tama County is also looking up markers on all three bridges.

Monmouth – Catherine Noble relates that the Rural Heritage Center Grand Opening is scheduled for May 14. State Center's Rose Festival is June 18/19. They are looking for a vintage car for the parade to promote the Lincoln.

Iowa City – Jeff Benson is working on the Lincoln Highway Studio Artist Tour brochure, and will send each Consul a copy.

Cedar – John Fitzsimmons has two new drawings available, the "Tama Bridge Showdown" and "Setting a Marker." Co-Consul Joe Moore is freshening up telephone pole markers, and says a "new" section of the highway has been uncovered in the Des Moines River valley.

Clinton – Bob Owsen (Jeff's Cat) is working with the LBI Designs offices in the Iowa tourist brochure.

All Iowa Consuls – NPS newsletter contains LH article; continuing to write articles for the Carol Today. Asked for ideas on how to "spice up the image of" on the back of LH metal signs (12" x 15") posted on "street" markers on LH roads. Fisher Monument Concept drawings revised and shared.

Cedar – no report

Monmouth – n/a report

Pottawattamie – no report

Meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Lunch was served at Niland's Café following a walking tour of the grounds and the restored service station. Joe Harper, project leader for the renovation, conducted the grounds tour and hosted the bus trip following. The bus tour explored the old Lincoln Highway and U.S. 30 grade at the Union Pacific underpass west of Colo, and a Jefferson Highway end south of Hubbard.

Cedar County Garden Walk; Clarence At It Again.

By Eric Jefferson

Cedar County Garden Club has planned a Garden Walk on June 13th, 2004 from 9:00 to 4:00 at various locations. This is their 4th annual event and is free to the public.

For more information, please call: 860-0890.

Honey Creek Overlook Nears Completion.

By Brett Paul

Pottawattamie County Consul

Now the Honey Creek grade, the Lincoln Highway Overlook Deck is taking shape. Consul Brett Paul comments that, "our design was四项and final bids opened, and construction began.

This tall in Texas, left with angles and curvature. Consul currently working on text for Gate绝对是igail will include photos and text regarding the Honey Creek Grade.

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This deck in Cedar Lake has many angles. Consul currently working on text for Gate绝对是igail will include photos and text regarding the Honey Creek Grade.

From the deck, visitors will be able to look into the remnant cut and enjoy the fantastic view to the north and northwest. The structure is treated lumber with a deck lighting built with a product call Timber Tech, a recycled plastics/wood composite that allows oil to flow out of it and save hundreds of hours in maintenance.

Regarding the co-op project, Brett reports he opened for business on May 15th, with the first cabin rentals on Memorial Day weekend.
We had Buffalo Grass sod (local native grass) laid the week of May 3rd, which should be the final major step. Our cabins will feature furniture made from red cedar that was harvested from the preserve. And the bunk beds are gorgeous.

The Crescent Connection (Crescent, Iowa) has been running a series of articles on the Lincoln Highway and on the Honey Creek grade, and it's generating some local interest. Brett is working toward a feature in the Council Bluffs Nonpareil that will highlight the campground and its colorful history—including the highway and the infamous "angry farmer" former landowner.