



Iowa Lincoln Highway Association

Fall 2022 Newsletter | Volume 27, No. 3

President's Corner

by Mary Helen Preston

With this edition of the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association newsletter, we celebrate 30 years of the reorganization of the Lincoln Highway Association. The reorganization stems in part from the foresight and dedication of Bob and Joyce Ausberger leading the charge. As you will read in the article included within this newsletter, written by John Jackson (LHA Treasurer; republished with his permission from the LHA Winter 2022 Forum), forty-four individuals met in Ogden on October 31, 1992 to discuss reforming the Lincoln Highway Association. Five of the thirteen states linking the Lincoln Highway across the country from New York to California were represented. Of those forty-four attending, Iowa was represented with THIRTY-SIX individuals expressing their interest and support with the remaining 5 representing various other states. Having 36 individuals attend this meeting speaks volumes for Iowa and our dedication in promoting Lincoln Highway.

With October, being the anniversary month of the reorganization of the Lincoln Highway Association, we found it appropriate to go back to where it all began and meet in Ogden. Additional details for the October 8, 1992 meeting are on the last page/back cover.

Thank you Bob and Joyce for attending the symposium in 1991, recruiting members, educating and promoting the importance of the Lincoln Highway. Thank you for your commitment and dedication in keeping the history of the Lincoln Highway alive. Thank you for blazing the trail for all of us.

To those reading this newsletter - It will take ALL of us to plan, execute and sustain the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association.

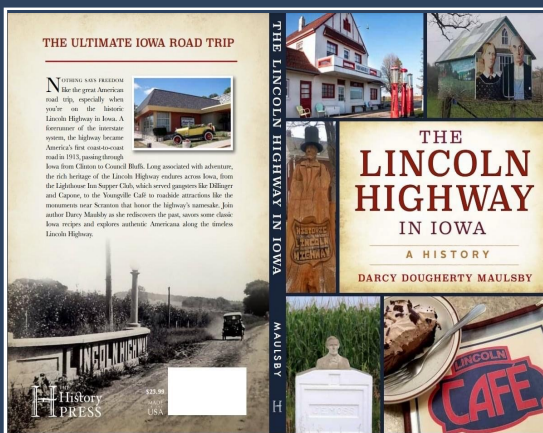
Thank you for your continued commitment to the Lincoln Highway - the Past, the Present and the Future.



The Lincoln Highway in Iowa: A History

The Lincoln Highway has been an integral part of Iowa history for more than 100 years. Now it's the focus of the latest book by Darcy Dougherty Maulsby, an author and historian from Lake City, Iowa, known as "Iowa's Storyteller." Here's a description of her new book, *The Lincoln Highway in Iowa: A History*, from The History Press:

"Nothing says freedom like the great American road trip, especially when you cruise the historic Lincoln Highway in Iowa. A forerunner of the interstate system, the Lincoln Highway became America's first coast-to-coast road in 1913, passing through Iowa from Clinton to Council Bluffs. Long associated with adventure, the rich heritage of the Lincoln Highway endures across Iowa, from the Lighthouse Inn Supper Club (which served gangsters like Dillinger and Capone) to the Youngville Café to roadside attractions like the monuments near Scranton that honor the highway's namesake. Renew your spirit as you rediscover the past, savor some classic Iowa recipes and explore authentic Americana along the timeless Lincoln Highway."



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The Lincoln Highway in Iowa: A History contains fascinating history, contemporary stories, recipes and 100+ vintage and contemporary photos from sites along and near the Lincoln Highway, from Clinton County to Pottawattamie County. The book will be released October 10, 2022. Signed copies of the book will be available through the online store at Maulsby's website (www.darcymaulsby.com). The book will also be available through Amazon.com, The History Press and other booksellers. For more details, contact Maulsby at 515-971-4415 or yettergirl@yahoo.com.

State Chapter of the Year

At this year's Lincoln Highway Association Conference in Joliet; Iowa was named State Chapter of the Year for efforts to preserve the historic Lincoln Highway Bridge in Tama and being designated as a National Scenic Byway.

Thank you everyone for your dedication and efforts to preserve our rich history and keeping the Lincoln Highway alive.

Iowa is the best!



Pictured l-r: Garry Hevalow, Megan Ganier, Mary Helen Preston, Charlotte Brookshire and Joyce Ausberger (holding the award), Jennifer Morrison, Joe Goodlove, Fred Clark, Bob Ausberger, Jeannie Parr and Dean Parr

Mission Statement

The Lincoln Highway Association shall identify, preserve, interpret and improve access to the Lincoln Highway and its associated sites, pursue the appropriate measures to prevent further deterioration, destruction or alteration of the remaining sections, publicize and seek public awareness of its goals and activities for preserving and developing the LH, facilitate research about the LH, and publish a magazine for articles and news of activity relevant to the LH, work with local communities and businesses to promote the LH as a tourism destination, and be exclusively charitable and educational within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Visit our website to read the minutes from our last meeting.
www.iowalincolnhighway.com/latest-news

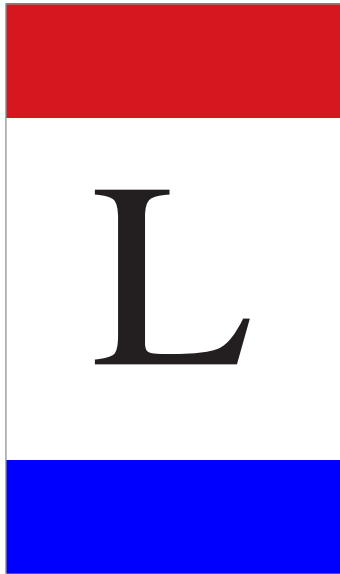


@IowaLincolnHighwayAssociation
 @LincolnHighwayHeritageByway

LHA Celebrates Its 30th Year

The story about how it came back into existence

By John W. Jackson



The Lincoln Highway Association, as we presently know it, is in its 30th year of operation.

Nearly 65 years intervened between the dissolution of the original Lincoln Highway Association in 1927 and its reactivation in 1992. That's not to imply that the saga of the nation's first transcontinental highway ever quite went away in the interim.

There are many people whose memory of the Lincoln Highway is vivid throughout their lifetime. The name was firmly attached as an alternative identifier no matter what federal highway number was assigned to it or street names imposed by local jurisdictions.

For me, growing up outside of Philadelphia, it was entirely optional whether we referred to it as Lancaster Pike, Route 30 or the Lincoln Highway. Any of these terms had equal recognition and everyone knew what you were referring to no matter which label you used. In talking with association members across the country it is evident that much the same was true in their home areas. It could be called Lincolnway in LaPorte, Indiana or Route 50 in Zephyr Cove, Nevada, and the locals understood it because between 1927 and 1992 it also continued to be known as the Lincoln Highway. It was the consistent nomenclature that their parents and neighbors used that filtered down through the generations.

This wasn't true for that segment of the national population who didn't live along the old road. For most of them, then and now, the Lincoln Highway is somewhat of a mystery. But not enough of a mystery that

a best-selling author wouldn't use it for the title of his just-published novel entitled "The Lincoln Highway".

The name never really went away because it picked up a colloquial meaning that kept it alive until it could be "rediscovered". In the process it survived two major onslaughts: first, the federal government assigned numbers to all major highways in 1926 which were meant to displace the use of proper nouns by which all roads were previously known; second, the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 promulgated an initial network of 41,000 miles of continuous, multi-lane, no stop light highway travel across the length and breadth of the country. Construction of this interstate system was largely completed by 1980 thus detaching the serious motorist from the need to slog through the old two-lane routes traversing interminable small towns and businesses vying for attention.

One of the original reasons for the "good roads" movement in the first half of the 20th century was to direct people to those towns and businesses. Municipalities fought hard to get on those routes and either benefitted accordingly if chosen or suffered a slowly consuming torpor if not selected. Now the interstate system often detoured around these city and

town centers or benefitted mostly those commercial enterprises clustered around spaced-out interchanges.

Nostalgia wasn't something that mid-century civil engineers were paying much attention to nor did they pay more than lip service to historic preservation. Those were considerations that the locals were free to



Signpost in Malvern, PA. Photo: John Jackson

work out on their own while the nation went ahead with property condemnations to build high-speed expressways, cloverleaves, multi-lane bridges and the accouterments necessary to get from here to there in the shortest possible time.

The nation's traveling public flocked to these new travel innovations. The next decades saw families whizzing back and forth with the kids in tow experiencing as much of America as they could cram into their vacation allowances. Commercial transportation responded with larger and faster trucks employing strategically spaced mega warehouses

to further concentrate business in the hands of those cities fortunate enough to be located near an interstate. All the while, life still percolated in the hinterlands albeit at a diminished pace.

When the families ran through their travel years and the kids left the house the parents looked for something to do with their time. For many, part of the consideration was to re-experience some of the aspects of their youth or

to visit places that characterize a kinder, gentler time. Media had an influence on their choices: movies, TV, travel books portrayed things they had not yet seen or may have forgotten about; things that kids wouldn't have been interested in. This kind of purposeful exploration was termed by many as heritage travel.

Stirrings for promoting such attractions occurred throughout the country and certainly was true along the Lincoln Highway during the early 1980s. As with most new concepts these promotions surfaced as one-off local events without any wider connection. The Lincoln Highway lent itself to developments such as these because it was still there, had an interesting history and had people who cared enough to organize a connection to their little piece of it.

This was happening in localities all along the thirteen-state route of the highway. It wasn't exclusive to any one place but more of it seemed to be happening in Iowa. A prime example of this was the launching of "Lincoln Highway Days" in Nevada, Iowa in 1983. In the same time frame University of

Iowa professor Drake Hokanson was doing research for his eventual landmark book finding little in the way of signs or markings but a rich trove of photographs and Lincoln Highway lore. His book entitled *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* was published in 1988 by the University of Iowa Press. It helped to demystify the old road and had a profound effect towards energizing interest in the highway's history. It remains a primary reference source today.

Hokanson's book was part of the motivation for Bob and Joyce Ausberger of Jefferson, Iowa to get

more involved in their own Lincoln Highway activities. Preservation and conservation were high on their list of objectives as evidenced by their implementation of no-till farming in the late 1980s and Bob's role on the Board of Supervisors for Greene County. From his vantage point on the county board Bob fought for land and water conservation and historic preservation. When the politicians didn't act on

these goals decisively enough, he resigned to join with his wife in initiating their own solutions. One of their prime pursuits was saving the Eureka Bridge on the Lincoln Highway from demolition and placing it and other landmarks on the Historic Preservation List. In the process they formed the Greene County Lincoln Highway Association in 1990.

Less than three years after Hokanson's book was published enough interest had been generated in the Lincoln Highway that the Society for Commercial Archeology (SCA), a national group dedicated to roadside culture and history, scheduled a symposium on the subject of the Lincoln Highway to be held in March, 1991 at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. This would turn out to be a real convergence point along the path to the formation of the national Lincoln Highway Association, unbeknownst to anyone in attendance.

Drake Hokanson was a lead presenter. Bob and Joyce Ausberger were in the room. Brian Butko had traveled from Pennsylvania in his capacity as an SCA



Joyce and Bob Ausberger at the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association Museum in Grand Junction, Iowa. Photo courtesy of The Jefferson Herald.

Director. Lyell Henry, another professor at University of Iowa with a strong interest in the LH was also there. Only Hokanson and Henry knew each other but a tornado warning was going to change that. When the siren sounded everyone repaired to the tornado shelter. In those close quarters the aforementioned people got together, discovered their mutual interest in the Lincoln Highway, and expanded on Brian Butko's remark during his presentation at the symposium that there should be a national Lincoln Highway Association. The spark was lit.

Everyone went back home with the feeling that maybe something would come of all this but without a plan. The Ausbergers resumed their local preservation work, which included legal proceedings, and partnered with Dr. Rebecca Conard towards placements on the National Register of Historic Places.

The three of them went out in the early summer of 1992 to take field measurements for a bridge preservation application. In the process the tape measure broke before the measurements were completed. To purchase a replacement in that part of Greene County, it was closer to travel to the hardware store in Glidden rather than going back to Jefferson, so they headed just over the line into Carroll County.

The owner of the hardware store was Sterling "Rusty" Franzwa. A typical rural hardware store conversation ensued with Rusty asking them the nature of their project. When he discovered that the group was taking measurements to help protect a historic bridge on the Lincoln Highway, he exclaimed that his brother, Gregory, would be extremely interested in talking with them about the Lincoln Highway. The spark lit in the Ames, Iowa tornado shelter was soon to be a raging fire.

Iowa native, Gregory Franzwa, then living in Tucson, Arizona, quickly came back to his home state to visit with the Ausbergers and he brought a lot with him. Greg had immense experience in creating and operating a large membership group; he was also an author, a publisher, a promoter and a keen administrator. In 1982 he had founded the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) of which he was still President with a membership roster of over 2,100

people. In addition, he wanted to write a series of books with each book dedicated to one state's Lincoln Highway experiences. He came away from this meeting in Iowa with the determination to bring all of this into being and immediately set out to achieve it along with the Ausbergers.

Over the next several months in 1992, Bob and Joyce traveled to many states on the Lincoln Highway to promote the cause and recruit members. Bob often attached LH markers to utility poles while Joyce visited with the local newspaper staff. They would seek out prospective members whom they knew about or had turned up through other kinds of contacts. In this way they met future LHA stalwarts like Esther Oyster in Ohio, Randy Wagner in Wyoming and Jesse Petersen in Utah and many more of these types of people received their personal attention. They continued this campaign for many years entirely at their own expense.

Meanwhile, Greg Franzwa was applying his own brand of promotional effort through press releases, phone calls, emails, mailing lists and other ways to spread the message. He also created the organizational structure so necessary to manage an association. OCTA provided a ready model for this exercise since it had been operating so effectively for ten years under his tutelage.

He recruited a friend who would lend significant leadership to the cause. Jim Powell was a Certified Public Accountant in St. Louis and the President of the Route 66 Association of Missouri. His experience in running this other similar organization complemented the management objectives that the nascent Lincoln Highway Association needed to establish.

He would eventually be instrumental in providing the LHA with its Bylaws, Mission Statement and financial management structure.

With these four people acting as the core development team it began to appear that there were enough prospective members around the country who were interested in joining a national Lincoln Highway organization. This potential was put to the test by sending out the call for a meeting to form the association.



Gregory Franzwa



Founding members of the Lincoln Highway Association. Front row (kneeling) from left to right: Greg Franzwa, Joyce Ausberger, Earl Givens, Bob Tellsen, Keith Cooper, Ken Huffaker and Harry Gardner. Back row from left to right: Carrie Clough Petersen, Bill McGregor, Harry Monier, Joan Lingren, Doris McGregor, Unidentified, Helen Ausberger, Carl Telleen, Opal Telleen, Helen Smith, Lucille Adwers, John Fitzsimmons, Brandi Conklin, Bob Adwers, Clare Frantz, Ty Casotti, Ruth Frantz, Margaret Elberts, Andy Bock, Carol Ahlgren, May Ann Beecher, Lyle Conklin, Jax Kuster, Larry Adams, Jim Powell, Tony Hempten, Bob Owens, Bob Ausberger

On October 31, 1992, forty-four people gathered in Ogden, Iowa for the meeting to form the new Lincoln Highway Association. Many others from across the nation had expressed their support but were unable to attend. Surveying the actual attendees there were eight people from five states other than Iowa while the other thirty-six were residents of Iowa. On the surface it didn't appear to constitute a national mandate. None of the persons who had congregated at the March 1991 SCA symposium were present, except for the Ausbergers. But the organizers carefully weighed all of this and decided to proceed.

Gregory Franzwa was named President of the new Lincoln Highway Association. He cited himself as the founder of the group in later writings and, in some respects, he deserves consideration for that. Regardless of the credit, he was part of the core group who saw the potential, toiled to bring it about

and stayed with it during the tentative early stages that confront every new enterprise.

Some have considered Gregory as somewhat audacious, another trait which comes in handy for the leader of a new start-up. He was so convinced at the prospects for success that he prevailed upon Brian Butko to put together the initial Lincoln Highway Association Annual Conference to be held less than eight months later. That might conjure up something comparable to the saying associated with another famous event held in Iowa – “Build it and they will come”.

These Lincoln Highway Association pioneers proved to be right. The conference started on June 9, 1993 in Bedford, Pennsylvania attracting a good turnout of attendees. At the Board meeting held that week it was reported that the association now had 15 directors, 244 members and seven state chapters would be in place before the end of the year.

The rest is our history.

Interview contributors:

Bob Ausberger
 Joyce Ausberger
 Brian Butko
 Lyell D. Henry, Jr.

Drake Hokanson
 Jesse Petersen
 James R. Powell, CPA
 Russell S. Rein

Due to space constraints, references and resources used for this article, Editor's Note and Active Charter Members are not included. To learn about those, please refer to The Forum's Winter 2022 edition. Dean Parr, and Bob and Joyce Ausberger were able to identify 3 individuals not identified in the picture above. The woman in front of Bob Owens is Mary Gift, others include Marj Robson and Jeff Benson's wife, Margaret Elbert.

The Facts About That!

Fun & interesting facts about this great state.

Iowa is the largest corn producing state in the country. With the extremely rich, fertile topsoil, Iowa produces more corn than any other state in the country. In 2015, Iowa produced 2.5 million bushels of the total 13.6 million bushels harvested in the United States. Much of this corn is not grown for direct human consumption (i.e. sweet corn), but instead is harvested mainly to be used as animal feed or in the production of ethanol.



<https://bestthingsia.com/fun-facts/>

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Annual Dues

Iowa Lincoln Highway Association dues are \$15.00 annually. You may pay up to three years. Make checks payable to Iowa Lincoln Highway Association. Please send membership info and payment to:

ILHA
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If you have any questions, please write to the above address or contact:

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(319)366-0552 or drparr51@gmail.com

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As you travel along the Lincoln Highway be sure to stop in Grand Junction to visit the Museum, Lincoln Highway Garden and the Green Cable Cabin.

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**The next ILHA meeting is October 8, 2022
at Ogden Community Center in Ogden**

Meeting begins at 9:30am

Bob and Joyce Ausberger will be hosting our October meeting at the Ogden Community Center located at 114 SW 8th Street. Enter through the lower level on the west side. Please let Joyce and Mary Helen know if you'll be attending so we can make appropriate arrangements. Lunch is being planned at the Lucky Pig immediately following.

Upcoming Iowa LHA Meeting

January 14, 2023

Location: ZOOM

FIRST CLASS

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Grand Junction, Iowa 50107

