



Along The Lincoln Highway



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION

President's Corner

By John Fitzsimmons, Co-President
Iowa Lincoln Highway Association

I hope you will accept a story from the co-president, since our young college co-president is very busy.

My entire family was from Harrison and Crawford County originally. With our conference looming in Denison, Iowa, I thought a story that about Denison related to me by mother, Rosemary, would be fitting.

My mother was born in 1935. When the war broke out, her father went off to the World War II leaving his wife and six children at home. Due to the lack of income, they were forced to downsize their living arrangements. At first they moved in with an aunt in Westside, Iowa. She was a staunch, over-bearing German lady. She happened to be my mom's dad's relative. This arrangement did not last long and the family moved out seeking a different location.

The only thing they found was old service station with a mechanic bay attached. My mom, being a young child of seven years old, found this location quite exciting since it sat on the Lincoln Highway. She says that the accommodations were really not that bad. They were able to ride their one bicycle, shared by six people, all over town.

A story my mother told me is of a salesman who drove a fancy large automobile up to the gas station one day seeking fuel. Now remember this station had gone out of business during the great depression. Although it had all the accommodations, "there was no fuel to be had." The salesman pulled up to the pump and waited for a short while and then began to blow his horn for service. My mom and her twin sister, Beulah, ran out and asked the man what

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The Lincoln Highway - A Timeless Companion

Written by David L Wilson

Edited by Meredith Ponder

This is the story of an American family, my family, spanning five generations, whose intimate proximity with the Lincoln Highway has been completely unintentional and absolutely incredible.

Frank Pettay and Marie Cippel were married in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1920 at a Catholic church one block from what was to become the Lincoln Highway, just a few years later. Frank was a young man from Austria who arrived penniless. He could neither read nor write. Marie was from Czechoslovakia. As immigrants, Frank and Marie were processed through Ellis Island just a few years earlier. The young bride and groom from Eastern Europe were destined to launch a classic American family success story.

As a new arrival in America, Frank acquired baking skills as he worked in an industrial bread and pastry plant in Pittsburgh. He and Marie had three daughters and eventually moved forty miles west along the Lincoln Highway to East Liverpool, Ohio. There, Frank opened a neighborhood bakery on Dresden Avenue, part of the original Lincoln Highway. In spite of the Great Depression the bakery supported the family. The three Pettay girls also worked in the store as they grew up. The Lincoln Highway, by providing sustainable traffic flow, was intimately involved from the very beginning. An American dream was up and running.

During this same period in East Liverpool, a

Continued on page four.

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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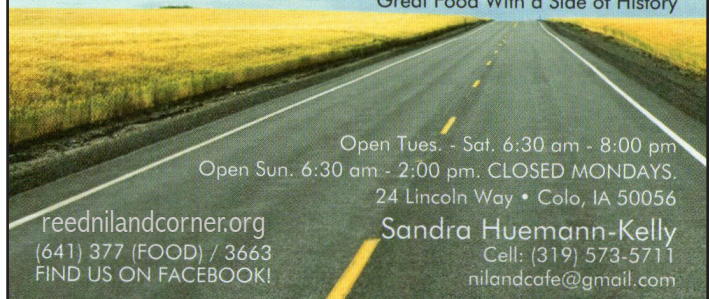
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Continued from President's Corner

he wanted. He was smoking a cigarette and said, "Full service please." The girls began to laugh. This irritated the salesman and he said, "Get with it or I will take my business somewhere else." They told him the gas station had been out of business since the late thirties and it was only a residence now. About then a red-headed boy about the age of thirteen rode up on his bicycle and asked the twins what was going on. They explained the situation to him and he started laughing. He said to the salesman, "Look here Bud, these girls are telling you the truth." The salesman told the red-headed kid to mind his own business. The red-headed kid said, "You are right, Buster, there is gas here." The salesman said, "Well, pump it." The red-headed kid said, "There is no one here to pump it, so you will have to pump it yourself." The young salesman exited his car, grabbed the pump handle, and stuck into his tank. When he lifted the trigger no gas came out. The salesman said, "What is the big idea?" The red-headed kid replied, "Just turn around, stick your butt up to the gas tank, and let out some gas." All of the kids started laughing about the joke. The salesman was not amused and started cursing at the kids. The red-headed kid jumped on his bicycle and took off. The salesman soon followed leaving the station screeching his tires. The twins ran into the station and told their mother of the situation and she said what the redheaded boy did was very rude.

This station no longer exists today, but it is nice these stories are still around for us to enjoy.

I hope to see you all at the upcoming meeting.

Signed, Lincoln Highway Johnny

L

CMP and LHHB Coordinator Report

By Jan Gammon, LHHB Coord.

Prairie Rivers of Iowa

The Corridor Management Plan is coming along nicely. We held 15 community meetings across the state and introduced our plan to attendees. There are both state wide and county wide projects that will be facilitated over the next 20 years.

The document has been written and edited and is now in the hands of Aimee Burch, Prairie Rivers of Iowa's Marketing Director, to do the layout. We are hoping to complete everything by Dec 15th.

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway is in negotiations currently with the Iowa Department of Transportation for Phase 4 (a 3-year program) which will focus on implementation of the Corridor Management Plan.

Under an Iowa Tourism Grant, the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway will create a new brochure entitled "Camping and Recreation along the Lincoln Highway" and will complete it by June 30, 2017. The booklet "Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Informational Guide", that was completed this last summer, has 5,000 copies remaining of the 10,000 ordered. We have placed them in all the Welcome Centers and many attractions, chambers, and visitor bureaus as we traveled for our CMP meetings and other events across the state.

The Byway and Prairie Rivers continues to work with the ILHA on the 2017 National Conference to be held in Denison next June. We are also working with Greene County LHA on their interpretive panels to be placed near Grand Junction, Jefferson, and Scranton.

L



young man, an only child, whose name was Charles T. [Jack] Wilson, Jr. lived on Thompson Avenue. Jack and Elizabeth, the eldest of the Pettay girls, became inseparable friends in high school. They graduated together in June of 1941. Six months later, America was drawn into World War II. Elizabeth enrolled at the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, a few blocks from the Lincoln Highway in Pittsburgh. She would graduate in 1944 and begin working as a surgical nurse. Her friend Jack would experience the adventure of a lifetime.

August 22, 1944 began as a quiet, delightful summer day near the Czech/Polish border in Eastern Europe, but quickly degraded into an hour of hell on earth. Jack was twenty-one years old, seated in the command pilot position of an Army Air Corp B-17 heavy bomber. Shortly after its target run and turn back towards home, the aircraft caught fire after being hit by German gunfire. Fifteen minutes later, second lieutenant Jack Wilson was swinging gently back and forth in a tree, dangling from his parachute lines. It had once again become a perfectly quiet and idyllic summer day.

Jack was captured and sent off to Stalag Luft One in northern Germany. Now, this particular prison camp was exceptional in that it was run by the German Luftwaffe. It's since been described as the country club of prison camps in Europe. During Jack's nine months as a P.O.W. he joined an art club. While a prisoner of war Jack was encouraged by a fellow P.O.W., a college trained artist, to attend a quality fine arts college and develop his talents when he returned home. And that is exactly what Jack Wilson eventually did.

In July of 1945, Jack Wilson sat down at a conference table located in the art department of Carnegie Technical Institute, now Carnegie Mellon University, within a stone's throw of the Lincoln Highway in Pittsburgh. He was twenty-two, married to his best friend Elisabeth Pettay for just over a month. It was aptitude testing day for prospective students in the fine arts department. A young man of seventeen sitting next to him introduced himself. He was Andy Warhol, from Pittsburgh's Czech neighborhood. The two became friends.

Jack commuted to college from East Liverpool for the first two years via the Lincoln Highway. During this time two sons, Roger and I, were born. We were born at Mercy hospital in Pittsburgh, just a few blocks from the Lincoln Highway. Our family lived next door to Jack's Aunt Lettie in a tiny rented cottage.

Aunt Lettie Hunsicker had married a successful

business man. The Hunsickers lived at 235 Pennsylvania Avenue in East Liverpool. The view from Lettie's front yard was magnificent. It was a panorama of the Ohio River Valley looking south across the river into the hills of the West Virginia pan handle. Framed perfectly in the center of this image was the Chester Bridge, which supported the Lincoln Highway. As the generations of our family have drifted along, this scene has become perhaps the most cherished of all, as it depicts not only the love and memories of family, but the movement of America. Inside this frame one can see, hear, and smell the endless riverboat, auto, truck, and rail traffic, in a pleasant and picturesque setting.

After graduating from Carnegie in 1950, Jack and Elizabeth, along with their two little boys, headed west along U.S. 40, America's National Road, to Indianapolis. Jack had entered the world of advertising that would in just a few years lure the family to Chicago.

Fast Forward. It's the fall of 1964, seven years after the Wilsons had moved from Indianapolis to Chicago. Jack had become a success in the advertising business. He and Elizabeth now had six children. Older brother Roger was off to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. NIU at the time was growing exponentially as the deluge of baby boomers enrolled. The formal entrance to NIU is accessed from the original Lincoln Highway. One year later, while still seventeen, I began my college studies at NIU and roomed with my brother. The main east west street and heart of downtown DeKalb is the Lincoln Highway.

In January of 1971, three days after receiving my college diploma from NIU, I was traveling east along the Lincoln Highway with a fellow Air Force Reservist. It was January, bitterly cold and snowing. My friend Tom and I were to attend weekend military reserve training in Chicago. Eight miles east of DeKalb we encountered a stranded motorist and stopped to help. While standing behind my Rambler station wagon I was stuck by another car and slammed into my own. My right leg was severed just above the knee. I was bleeding to death. My friend Tom, an Air Force medical corpsman, saved my life. I was hospitalized in DeKalb, a few blocks from the Lincoln Highway. My life had abruptly changed.

Eight months later, after having learned to walk for the second time, I attended an informal mid-week gathering of graduate students from NIU. I had returned to study while I was physically and emotionally rebuilding. It was an evening of relaxation and light conversation. Early in the evening I was formally introduced to a young elementary teacher from the DeKalb schools. My conversation with Nancy that evening was delightful. As

we were departing she turned to me and said, "Will I see you again?" This first encounter took place about one hundred yards from the Lincoln Highway. We became the best of friends.

At the time of this writing I've been married to Nancy for over forty-three years. Following our wedding in 1973, I worked as an assistant to the solo orthopedic surgeon in DeKalb who treated me for my injuries. Nancy continued to teach at Elwood School. We began our lives together, each working only a few blocks from the Lincoln Highway. The following year Nancy and I moved southwest Galesburg. Nancy grew up on a farm located on highway U.S. 34 a few miles west of town. I began work as a juvenile probation officer. Nancy returned to teaching in a rural elementary school. Our proximity to the Lincoln Highway appeared to be all in the past.

On a Friday afternoon in July of 1977, a professional-looking man carrying a black briefcase and road map was ushered into my office. John was a charming and gregarious medical supplies salesman who I had met while working with the orthopedic surgeon in DeKalb. John offered me a job as an orthopedic sales rep with a territory that included, once again, the communities in northern Illinois that were strung along the Lincoln Highway. The name of the company I would be representing was DePuy. Its home office was in Warsaw, Indiana, right beside the Lincoln Highway. I accepted and it became my career. Warsaw, Indiana has been appropriately called the orthopedic capital of the world. Today, the two largest orthopedic implant companies in the world are headquartered along the Lincoln Highway.

Now Nancy was no stranger to the Lincoln Highway either. She attended college at Iowa State University, in Ames. Like NIU in DeKalb, the original Lincoln Highway runs right through Campustown at Iowa State. Nancy's college years at ISU were endearing. Lifelong friendships remain today from her student days near the Lincoln Highway. And when it was time for our own daughter Diane to depart for college in 1999, Iowa State was her first choice. In the fall of that year, as Nancy and I were carting Diane's things into her dorm room in Ames, I remarked, "Nancy, she'll bring home an Iowa farm boy." And that she did!

Our son Scott, Diane's older brother by two years, left home only a few days following high school graduation in 1997. He was bound for the Air Force. When the day arrived to say goodbye, as we drove Scott to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, we stopped along the Lincoln Highway in DeKalb to have lunch. Scott would serve four years, all of it in Europe. He would observe life

in twenty-two countries, become intrigued with their languages, and like his grandfather, return home and go to college. In 2001 Scott enrolled at NIU in DeKalb and made his student home just a few blocks from the Lincoln Highway. After a year at NIU, it was off to the University of Illinois in Chicago to complete his studies in Russian Language and History. Nancy and I left DeKalb, along with Scott and his belongings, and drove east along the Lincoln Highway towards Chicago.

In the spring of 2003, several hundred miles to the west of DeKalb, Diane had graduated from Iowa State University. Like her grandfather Jack, Diane was awarded a degree in Art. Diane married Micah, the Iowa farm boy, and fellow ISU graduate, the following winter. They moved to Clarence, Iowa, a small village along the Lincoln Highway, east of Cedar Rapids. Micah began teaching industrial arts at Stanwood High School just a few miles down the Lincoln Highway. Another move to the west and the young couple found themselves in Lisbon, followed by their present home in Mount Vernon. Included in CNN's listing of the top ten most desirable small towns in America, Mount Vernon, Iowa is blessed with a vibrant main street downtown, which as you might expect, is the original Lincoln Highway. Diane and Micah, along with their five kids, live less than two blocks from the original Lincoln Highway as it runs alongside Cornell College. Four of their five children were born at Mercy Hospital in Cedar Rapids. The original Lincoln Highway runs right by the hospital.

So what has gone on here? Was all of this involvement with the Lincoln Highway intentional? Of course not. What are the odds of all of this happening as revealed, in the absence of deliberate effort? Now that's a question to be answered perhaps by a PhD. candidate in Sociology or Quantum Mathematics. The fact remains, that our family is not unlike countless extended families in America. We are now and always have been intimately entwined with the infrastructure of movement. This will not change. American families have revolved around rivers, railroads, highways and even the skies. The Lincoln Highway, along with its sister historic roads throughout our land, will long endure and continue to nurture the lives of its travelers.

L



Lincoln Happenings in Greene County

By Bob Ausberger, Greene County

On one of our beautiful early November days, I decided to skip out on our farm projects and watch the replacement of the Union Pacific Bridge over West Beaver Creek. This bridge (across the Lincoln Highway north from the Lions Club Tree Park interpretive site just east of Grand Junction) was approximately 116 years old and was built as part of the double tracking of the original single track Chicago & Northwestern railroad that was built just after the Civil War as Iowa's share of the nation's first transcontinental railroad. Thus the Lincoln and the Railroad at this site are side by side as they cross the nation. Railroad artifacts including a nice part of the old bridge will be located in the park like area just north across the Lincoln from the Lincoln Interpretive site. An Interrelationship between the Lincoln Highway and the Railroad will be part of the signage.

I had several conversations with the Railroad personnel—they were very easy to work with, and assured me that our Lincoln Highway Association could have a nice artifact, and that they would be very careful not to disturb our little 1916 Lincoln Highway Bridge just north of their project. The crew had worked for about 7 weeks preparing for the replacement and assembling the Lego-like parts for the new structure. On the day that I was there they were to replace the north half.

I picked up my grandson at 6:45 a. m. and we arrived at the site just in time to see the 400-ton Manitowoc Crane lift the whole north side off of the piers. It slowly swung this massive piece of steel south across the tracks and set it down on the right-of-way between the Lincoln and the Railroad. The south half of the bridge had been completed several days earlier so as the north half was being constructed, the trains were using the south half. (Several years earlier the Union Pacific had established crossover switching, like passing lanes, so that trains could cross over and use either set of tracks.) I took Nathan to school and then returned to the project.

During the day I was joined by Gerald Herrick, a Lincoln Highway friend and former mayor of Grand Junction. He had his camera and got some really good video of the work in progress. By 3:00 p. m. the north side was finished and trains were using both north and south sets or tracks over the creek.

By dusk, seven men had attacked the old steel north half with torches and had it reduced to

manageable pieces which would be trucked to a salvage yard. Adding to the interest a retired engineer and his active engineer son pulled up on motorcycles and spent more than an hour watching and sharing stories and information. They live in or near Jefferson and could give a great program for us at a future meeting.

A second item of interest is a Jefferson plan to beautify the east entrance to town which will definitely involve the Lincoln Highway. A firm has been hired and they will involve the public and us in their planning. The area affected will include the cemetery west to Pete and Paul's canopy Deep Rock station. This will include half a dozen Lincoln Highway roadside features such as the fairground where the Army Convoy of 1919 camped, the old A&W, the remnants of Quirk's travel court, the grain elevators, etc. This could be a great boost for the Lincoln in Greene County.

L



Clinton County Update

By Cathie Nichols, Clinton County Consul

Cathie is still working on getting a plan together for saving the section of Lincoln Highway with 3 bridges between Calamus and Wheatland. She will try to meet with some of the area organizations over the winter to gauge interest. She would like the LHA to plan on a trip to go over this section after the April meeting. Wear shoes and clothing appropriate for walking in the woods—hopefully it will be too early for the poison ivy. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions, or wants to volunteer to be on a committee to pursue this, please contact Cathie Nichols at scampcat@iowatelecom.net.

Grand Mound has won the *Community Effort Award for Preservation At Its Best* from the National Register of Historic Places, for the restoration of the 1892 Town Hall/Fire Station building. It is among the few wood-frame fire stations still standing in Iowa. If time allows, we'll try to tour it after our April meeting, as well as the Lincoln Highway section.

L

Osbergs Recieve Award

By Jan Gammon, LHHB Coord.

At the October Meeting Dean Parr presented a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the National LHA to Bryon and Caron Osberg for their work on the Iowa Auto Tour. This year's auto tour had 19 entrants and from that he received 5 new state members.

Congratulations Bryon and Caron!

L



© Jan Gammon

**Due to space constraints,
October's meeting minutes are
available on our website.**

ILH Landmark Closes Doors

Originally printed in Lowden Sun News.

Submitted By Joe Goodlove, Cedar County Consul

The oldest Chevrolet dealership in Iowa ceased operation in August of 2016. To read the article, please visit: www.iowalincolnhighway.org/iowa-lincoln-highway-landmark-closes-doors/

L

The Jeff Benson Memorial is still accepting gifts to the Jeff Benson Family Iowa Lincoln Highway Endowment. The fund was set up by Jeff's loved ones who wanted to honor his memory by utilizing an innovative program to give back something that he was passionate about and that reflected his values. This is an Endow Iowa fund, which allows Iowa tax payers to take a tax credit equal to 25% of a gift in addition to the normal federal deduction for charitable gifts. For more information, call (515) 232-9200 or visit www.iowalincolnhighway.org/jeff-benson-memorial



Cards for Elaine

Recently, Elaine Ehlert (Harrison County co-Consul) suffered a heart attack and was sent by helicopter to a hospital in Omaha where they performed lifesaving surgery on her. She is expected to make a full recovery, although it will take some time. She is recovering at a nursing home, but get well cards may be sent to her home address and Richard, her husband, will see she gets them. Her address is:

Elaine Ehlert
34 4th St. Woodbine, IA
51579-1248

L

Last Issue's Mystery Place



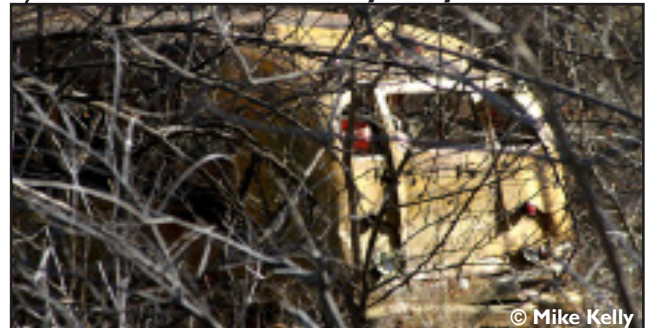
© Mike Kelly

This landmark is located south of Clarence, just east of 7th Ave and 150th St. The view from the bridge is looking south.

Mystery Place

By Mike Kelly

This Issue's Mystery Place



© Mike Kelly

The bus is clearly visible from the highway after the leaves fall. The surrounding small town has virtually disappeared.

If you think you can identify the Mystery Place, send an email to lincolnhighway@prcd.org or call 515-232-0048. Call with the correct information and we will take your name and contact information. We then will hold a random drawing for a winner to receive a 2013 Iowa Lincoln Highway Map Pack! This is to accommodate for the varying time and travel the postal system can take and to give all a fair try.

**The Next ILHA meeting will be
January 14, 2017 in Nevada, Iowa at the
Community Building.**

**Refreshments at 9:00 a.m.
business meeting to follow.**

The community building is located on the corner of 1st Avenue and 1st Street.

Directions to the Community Building: Approaching Nevada from either the east or the west on the Lincoln Highway, turn south on 1st Street and go 3 blocks to I Ave. (Lincoln Highway being L Ave and I Ave – the letter “eye”.) You will see the Community Building on the SW corner of the intersection.

Handicap parking is at main entrance (but you will need to go down stairs once inside.) More parking is on the south side of the building. Go to the west and take a short drive down the hill to the lower parking area. We have the lower level of the building reserved and there is an entrance on the SE corner of the building for this parking area, requiring no steps.

If you are arriving via Highway 30, take the main street (6th Street exit) and head north to I Ave. Turn west to 1st Street and the Community Building will be to your left at the intersection of I Ave and 1st Street.

The Community Building is on the Story County Fairgrounds.

Upcoming Iowa LHA Meetings
January 2017: Nevada, Business
April 2017: TBA, General
July 2017: TBA, Business

Update on Ogden Footprints

By Jan Gammon LHHB Coord.

Prairie Rivers of Iowa

The footprints that were left in the street near the City Administration Building/Fire Station have now been paved over. The other footprints that were saved in a large block of pavement are secure in a city shed until a suitable park location is identified.

Prairie Rivers of Iowa and the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway have designed an interpretive panel for the city once a park location is determined.

L



Contents: Compelling stories, a CMP report, and the latest Lincoln Highway News!

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