



# Iowa Lincoln Highway Association

## Winter 2021 Newsletter | Volume 26, No. 4

### President's Corner

by Mary Helen Preston

As I write this President's Corner, the holiday season is peaking around the corner and by the time you read this, it will be 2022. I am extremely thankful and honored to have the privilege to lead the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association.

In 2021 we began to welcome travelers BACK. While the numbers may not be where they were pre-pandemic BUT people are getting out on the two lanes to explore; maybe it was because of the new Travel Iowa Passport programs or just maybe travelers were being adventurous and exploring.

As you know by now, my favorite word for our efforts is "synergy." It will take each and every one of us to continue to educate and share the history of the Lincoln Highway!

At the end of 2020, I talked about challenges facing us as an Association. As we begin 2022, we continue to face these challenges:

- » *We have decreasing membership and bank account – how do we increase those? How do we engage our membership to become involved?*
- » *How do we capture our historians' knowledge?*
- » *How do we build a strong cornerstone for the Association?*
- » *How do we recruit for membership – individuals, businesses?*
- » *How do we get our communities to become active in the Association?*

In July, we spent an afternoon taking a deeper dive on some of these challenges. Our discussions in July opened the door for frank conversations as we move forward. We need to continue to have those hard conversations if we want to sustain and grow the Association. Without a doubt, I know firsthand change is not easy and sometimes frustrating, but as a friend recently told Garry and I as we work toward restoring and preserving Preston's, sometimes you need to take a step back to move forward. I firmly believe, as an Association, we too need to step back to move forward.

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.

### Stay in the Know!

Visit our website to read the minutes from our last meeting.  
[www.iowalincolnhighway.com/latest-news](http://www.iowalincolnhighway.com/latest-news)



[www.iowalincolnhighway.org](http://www.iowalincolnhighway.org)

### Lincoln Highway Association

#### Membership Brochure

by Mary Helen Preston

Below is the NEW membership rack card hot off the press from National.

This replaces the tri-fold brochures National has been using for publicity and membership recruitment. The change in format comes as there has not been enough applications submitted to justify continued publication.

The new rack card updates the Association's message and encourages potential members to visit National's website to complete and submit an application on-line.

Please become familiar with this new rack card.

If you have the availability to distribute to travelers, you can order from the Lincoln Highway Trading Post.



# The Facts About That!

*Fun & interesting facts about this great state!*

In close comparison to something you might see in San Francisco, Iowa has one of the world's most crooked streets located in Burlington.

Snake Alley is a cobblestone creation made to mimic vineyard paths in France and Germany, this steep street veers left and right, up Heritage Hill, connecting the downtown area with a shopping plaza, and gives visitors a good photographic moment and a bit of exercise.

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



## 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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**THIS NEWSLETTER IS MANAGED BY**



**PRAIRIE RIVERS**  
*of Iowa*



## Visiting Niland's Cafe

by Joshua Benda - Prairie Rivers of Iowa Staff

On November 6, I decided to have a little fun along the Lincoln Highway. The last few months working on the Lincoln Highway Activity Guide piqued my interest in many (if not all) of the historic sites. So, I decided to visit one of these sites in person. Since I am a massive fan of the cafe life (the coffee, food, ambiance, etc.) I thought it best to start my journey at Niland's Cafe. So on that faithful morning, I took a journey to Colo along the Lincoln Highway.

The morning sun was caressing the top of the trees as I traveled, rendering golden beams of light to guide me down the Highway; the way it weaved and welcomed the land ignited a sense of home within me, and I found myself longing for those simple days, those good old days. When I arrived at Niland's Cafe, I entered a cafe filled with warm smiles from the faithful dedicated to keeping this place alive. The atmosphere filled my heart with joy as I took my place in an oversized booth. The waitress welcomed me with a warm cup of joe, followed by a generous helping of a traditional breakfast; eggs, bacon, hashbrowns, and sausage. Eating my fill, I took a few moments to sit and bask in the feeling I was experiencing at the moment; history flowed throughout, coupled with the joys of seeing diners enjoying their own Saturday morning joy. Early landmarks lined the wall, their stoic faces telling their own story of a time long gone. Neighbor sat with neighbor, older farmers mentored the younger generation, and loved ones confined themselves to the simple pleasure of being together. Though my time was short, I loved this little cafe and added it to my list to return to one day.

As I got into my car and took off down the faithful Highway, my heart longed to continue my search for these small, out-of-way places that brought many travelers joy. Moving into 2022, I hope to visit more places like Niland's Cafe, and with the Lincoln Highway Activity Guide at my side, I know I will discover other hidden secrets of heaven, we call the Lincoln Highway.

To watch the vlog, check out my youtube channel  
(Joshua H.Benda) by scanning this QR code!

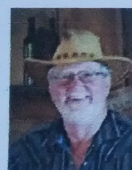
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# Green Gable Cabins

by Joyce Ausberger

Lyell Henry, Lincoln Highway Association Founding Member, has written about the Green Gable Cabins and other manufactured cabins for the Society for Commercial Archeology (SCA magazine. In the early 1930's, Green Gable Cabins were built in Onawa, Iowa, following a specific plan. The cabins were prefab and shipped to many locations with the idea of becoming a national camp chain. Green Gable Cabins lasted only a few years in their effort to become a national chain.

This period of time were good years for tourist camp startups along America's highways; as travelers were looking for a step above camping with tents, but below staying in hotels. A selling point for the Green Gable Cabin Camps was the franchise advertising for the camps. At one time, there were 61 Green Gable Cabin Camps advertised. In 1931 the cabins were distributed: 32 in Iowa, 16 in Minnesota, seven in South Dakota, five in Nebraska, and one in Illinois. Later in the 30s, 29 more cabins were distributed.

The last Green Gable Cabin Camp was built and opened in 1938 in Carroll, Iowa. Jefferson also had a Green Gable Cabin Camp located two blocks south of the courthouse on Wilson Street. One of these cabins was moved by the late Bob Owens to his backyard in Jefferson some 20 years ago. Before his passing Bob asked that the cabin be relocated at another Lincoln Highway location; so about a year ago, Bob Ausberger, Dale Higgins, and Wayne and Jim Taylor moved the cabin from Bob Owens' backyard to the Quirks Cabin location but due to zoning issues was moved again to the Lincoln Highway Garden in Grand Junction.



Above: Bob Ausberger moving the cabin to the Quirks Cabin site about a year ago. The cabin has since been moved due to zoning concerns. The cabin is now north of the Lincoln Highway garden gazebo in Grand Junction.



Middle Left: Shirley Herrick surrounded by 1930 furnishings she provided.

Middle Right: Joyce Ausberger standing in front of the repainted cabin.



Left: John Fitzsimmons and Bob Ausberger in front of the cabin before repainting.



## Annual Dues Update

Effective January 1, 2022, Iowa Lincoln Highway Association dues will increase to **\$15.00**. You may pay up to three years. Make checks payable to Iowa Lincoln Highway Association.

Please send membership info and payment to:

ILHA  
P.O. Box 224  
Grand Junction, IA 50107

If you have any questions, please write to the above address or contact  
Membership Coordinator - Dean Parr  
(319) 366-0552 or drparr51@gmail.com



# Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Tama Bridge

by Shellie Orngard – LHHB Coordinator

One of the most iconic bridges in the 3,389 mile length of the historic transcontinental Lincoln Highway is in Tama, Iowa; its structural integrity is in need of repair.

The Tama Lincoln Highway bridge holds an important place in the history of transportation in our country. It was constructed in 1915 when Woodrow Wilson was President of the United States and before we got tangled up in World War I. It was the year Babe Ruth hit his first career home run. Half of the US population lived on the farm, and most transportation was still by foot or horse. The Model T was popular and promised increased mobility but roads could be treacherous, especially after a rain. The idea for the first improved transcontinental highway generated support across the country and gave birth to the Lincoln Highway. Towns along the roadway's charted path were grateful for the honor, anticipating an influx of travelers and hence growth in commerce.



Tama's now-famous bridge was constructed to attract interest and burnish the town's image as a destination. Designed by Iowa Highway Commission architect Paul N. Kingsley, the Lincoln Highway Bridge is distinctive for spelling out the name of the roadway in its railings. Concrete lampposts topped by globe lights decorated the bridge's four corners, adding to its graceful charm. The Tama bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, nominated by the Tama Bicentennial Commission. The nomination included a quote from the July 1919 Lincoln Highway Forum, asserting that the bridge is *"a good example of up-to-date highway advertising. Tourists over this section of the famous road cannot fail to be impressed with the advertising values as well as the pleasing and distinctive appearance of this unique feature of bridge construction."*

While the bridge has continued to attract admirers over the years, time has taken its toll. Prairie Rivers of Iowa worked with the City of Tama to assess the integrity and safety of the bridge and put together a plan for its restoration. In 2018, PRI applied for and received a grant from the Historical Resource Development Program of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs to help cover the costs. Additional support and funding has come from the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, the Mansfield Foundation, and other donors, but a series of delays and the advent of COVID have held up progress. In October of this year, Iowa DOT informed Tama that Iowa Code necessitates yet another delay to gather additional information and must rebid the work. Meanwhile, the original cost estimate of \$115,000 has mushroomed to over \$300,000.

The Tama-Toledo News Chronicle reported in October, the City of Tama is planning to re-bid the project and complete the repair by August 2022. The situation is being closely monitored by PRI, the Iowa Lincoln Highway Association, and history buffs across the nation.

## New Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Coordinator

by Prairie Rivers of Iowa Staff

Shellie Orngard of Ames, Iowa, has joined Prairie Rivers of Iowa as Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Coordinator, following Jan Gammon's retirement. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a Master of Arts in English from Iowa State University. Shellie taught part-time in the Department of English at Iowa State University from 1995 to 2018, and from 2010-2013 collaborated with PRI to establish gardens at two Ames elementary schools.

Shellie will manage the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway. The job is part historic preservation and interpretation, and tourism. She will work closely with government officials, business leaders, and community members in the 13 counties and 43 towns that lie along the Lincoln Highway from the Mississippi to Missouri rivers. The Lincoln Highway is one of three national Byways in Iowa, joined by 11 state Byways.

Shellie is committed to restoring, protecting, and preserving the cultural and natural resources in Iowa. *"This work provides the opportunity for me to work on some of the things I'm most passionate about, the natural environment and our cultural resources,"* commented Shellie.

*"We are very happy to have Shellie's love of history and her commitment to Prairie Rivers leading the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway effort,"* said PRI Executive Director Penny Brown Huber. *"Having someone who has great communication skills and a passion for the work will help us continue bringing the history of this important road to life in Iowa."*

Shellie grew up in Ames, and like many others left Iowa for a period of time, living in San Francisco and then New York City before returning to Ames to finish college. She ended up raising a family here too. Her son, Sam, is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at University of Chicago, and her daughter, Anya, is an interior designer whose job allows her to work remotely and travel. The three enjoy traveling together and in just the past three years have been to Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, and the San Francisco Bay Area together.



### The James H. Andrew Railroad Museum and History Center

at the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad

**November 1 through May 22**

Monday - Friday 10 am - 4 pm

Saturday Noon - 4 pm

Closed Sunday

**May 23 through October 31**

Sunday - Thursday 10 am - 4 pm

Friday and Saturday 10 am - 5 pm



Museum Admission included with most train ride tickets!

[www.iowarailwaymuseum.org](http://www.iowarailwaymuseum.org)

Visit one of Iowa's most interesting railroad collections

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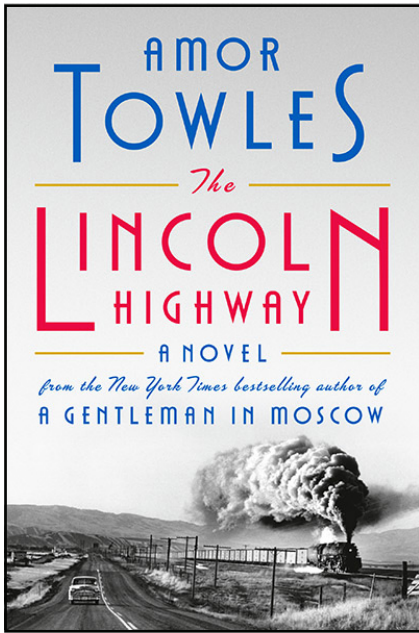
1 Issue: \$10, 2 Issues \$20,  
3 Issues: \$30, Buy 3 Get the 4th Free

An advertisement form can be found on our website or you can contact Joyce for information: [bobjoyce@netins.net](mailto:bobjoyce@netins.net)

# The Lincoln Highway - A Novel

by Mary Helen Preston

In September, the novel “The Lincoln Highway” by Amor Towles was released. Mr. Towles is a bestselling author. The book was chosen as book of the month by the NBC daily show “Hoda and Jenna.” The National Lincoln Highway Association is anticipating increased interest in the Lincoln Highway based on Mr. Towles book “driving” (sorry, not sorry for the pun) potential travelers to LHA’s website to learn more about the Lincoln Highway. Hopefully, with more visits to LHA’s website, readers and travelers will search further to individual states to discover more and maybe, just maybe, plan a trip along the Lincoln Highway. This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to educate and share the history of the Lincoln Highway.



About the book from the author's website:

*In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the work farm where he has just served a year for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother and head west where they can start their lives anew.*

*But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future.*

*Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.*

A couple of reviews of the book:

*“Towles’ third novel is even more entertaining than his much-acclaimed A Gentleman in Moscow. A remarkable blend of sweetness and doom, [The Lincoln Highway] is packed with revelations about the American myth, the art of storytelling, and the unrelenting pull of history. An exhilarating ride through Americana.” – Kirkus Reviews*

*“An absolute beauty of a book. Every character is a gem, the many locations spring to vivid life, the book is an intricate and moving exploration of journeys and the infinite unexpected turns they can take—and somehow Towles makes it all seem effortless. As soon as I finished it, I wanted to read it again.” –Tana French*

I have my copy of “The Lincoln Highway” and am anxious to begin reading. If you haven’t purchased a copy yet and are interested, you can purchase through a number of avenues from the author’s website - <https://www.amortowles.com/the-lincoln-highway-about-the-book/> or scan the QR code to be taken directly to the site!



SCAN ME!

## The next ILHA meeting will be via ZOOM

The meeting will be on January 8, 2022 beginning at 9:30am.

President Mary Helen Preston will set up a conference line for the meeting and email a link to consuls and officers. If you are not a consul or officer but wish to join, please notify Mary Helen and she will provide you the link. If you are unable to join on your computer, you can join by phone. You will need the dial-in number and code. This is not a free call, so it may count against your phone minutes or act as a long-distance call.

### Upcoming Iowa LHA Meeting

April 9, 2022

Location: TBD

**FIRST CLASS**

Place  
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Here

Iowa Lincoln Highway Association  
P.O. Box 224  
Grand Junction, Iowa 50107

