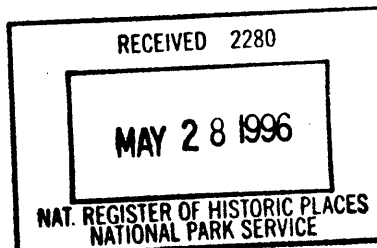


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lincoln Hotel

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 408 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Lowden N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Cedar code 031 zip code 52255

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Chenkey, DSHPO 5-22-96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson B. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6/28/96

Entered in the
National Register.

Lincoln Hotel

Name of Property

Cedar Iowa

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- XX private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Contributing Noncontributing
1 0 buildings
sites
structures
objects
1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STUCCO

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1915-1946
1915

Significant Dates

1915

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Emil Mahlstedt, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Lincoln Hotel
Name of Property

Cedar Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 115 672120 4635850
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Nash
organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date June 22, 1995
street & number 931 Maiden Lane telephone 319/354-6722
city or town Iowa City state Iowa zip code 52240

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Lincolnway Hotel, Inc. (c/o Susan L. Licht)
street & number 9 Norwood Circle telephone 319/354-7507
city or town Iowa City state Iowa zip code 52245

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lincoln Hotel
Lowden, Cedar County, Iowa

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7. DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Lincoln Hotel is a two-story, 27 by 60 foot, rectangular frame building which occupies the northeast corner of a major Main Street intersection in tiny Lowden, Iowa. The intersection also marks a corner on the Main Street of America,¹ the Lincoln Highway. The south-facing hotel fills its flat corner lot leaving just enough room for a sidewalk along its long west side and past its south front porch. An alley borders the north rear wall and the hotel shares a narrow patch of grass with its small neighbor to the east, a former gas station. Covered with pebble dash stucco, the hotel principally exhibits a style born of function and commercial necessity, but the shallow-pitched hipped roof, wide eaves and stucco finish also reveal the influence of the Prairie School in the Middle West in 1915. Additional styling comes from the millwork used in the hotel. The thin Tuscan columns and crown window moldings were popular Classical Revival details that were readily available at the time. Sheltered by the wide porch, the front door opens into the hotel's lobby, behind which were the guests' parlor and dining room, and the owner's quarters. A dogleg staircase of yellow pine rises from the lobby to the second floor central hall where numerous doors opened into small rooms. After sitting vacant and unused for 12 years, the hotel recently was rehabilitated and converted to apartments. The public lobby was reduced in size and a number of upstairs hallway doors were eliminated. Exterior repairs were necessary to the water-damaged stucco and front porch. Finally a small rear wing which had been added to the hotel in 1920 was removed. Today the building is in excellent condition and fully occupied with tenants.

DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The wood frame walls of the Lincoln Hotel sit on a poured concrete foundation. The front porch foundation is concrete also, but of rough-cast block laid in an open, lattice work pattern. The buff

¹Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988).

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colored, pebble dash stucco which covers the walls of the building is new and was applied because the original stucco was extensively cracked and water damaged. The new stucco was matched in color to the original and was applied using the same techniques. A shallow hipped roof covers the building. Its new asphalt shingles replaced rolled asphalt roofing paper that was simply tarred at the seams.

Symmetrical fenestration marks the south front of the hotel. Under the porch roof, a central door is flanked on either side by large windows. These three ground floor openings are aligned overhead on the second level with three smaller windows. Symmetry breaks down along the sides and rear of the building, however, where window position is more akin to the function of the interior space. Most of the 37 windows in the building are one-over-one double hung sash windows. While new wood storm windows were fabricated for the building's rehabilitation, the original wood window frames, wood sashes, and glass panes were carefully preserved. Wood window trim is simple with a narrow sill at the bottom and a cornice across the top.

The porch across the hotel's front was important for providing shelter to guests, whether it was from rain, snow or a hot summer sun. Commercial signage for the hotel also hung from its columns. By the early 1990s, however, the porch had sustained considerable water damage and was sagging and pulling away from the building. Also, the original Tuscan columns had long since been replaced by simple boxed columns. To repair the porch, it was dismantled and rebuilt with new materials in place of the rotted wood. The concrete blocks were saved and reconstructed in the same pattern, and what wood could be reused--such as the floor joists--was. The porch deck was laid using new matching tongue-and-groove boards, while the ceiling bead board was salvaged from another building. The roof was reconstructed to match the shape and position of the old one. Historic photographs were used to verify the original style and shape of the columns and new Tuscan columns were installed.

Interior

Inside the original front door, new wallboard has replaced the original fiber pressed board paneling (see Figure 1 for first and second floor plans). Locally called "beaver board," this paneling was used throughout the building, likely because it was cheaper or quicker than plaster which required time to cure before painting. The front staircase leading from the lobby is of stained yellow pine. A handicapped-accessible apartment was located in the rear of the ground floor and necessitated a third

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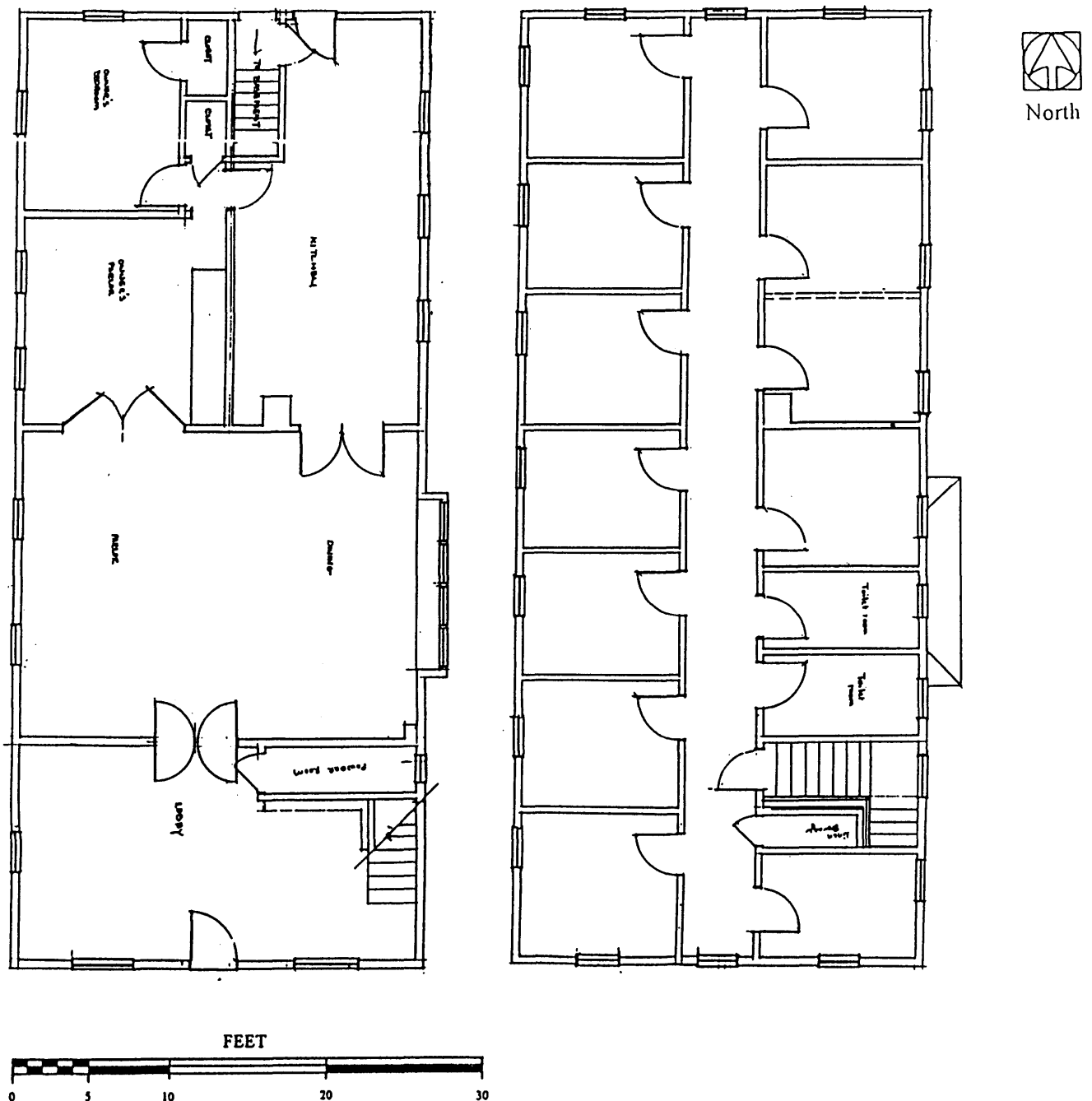
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lincoln Hotel
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Figure 1. Ground floor plan (left) and second level plan (right) in 1915 of the Lincoln Hotel, Lowden, Cedar County, Iowa. (Adapted from plans drawn in 1990 by Susan L. Licht, AIA.)



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rear door (matched to the original two doors on the rear) and a wooden ramp. Upstairs the alterations required for conversion of the building to apartments included closing up a number of hall doorways and covering up, but not removing, the transoms over the remaining doors. A new staircase was built in the southwest rear corner room in order to provide for secondary access in and out of the building. While the lobby, front and rear staircases and the upstairs central hall are still common areas, the rest of the interior of the building is now private residential space and not accessible to the public.

Rehabilitation of the Lincoln Hotel

After sitting vacant and deteriorating from water leaks for 12 years, work to rehabilitate the building commenced in April, 1994, and continued through June, 1995, when the project was substantially complete. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures* were followed and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office staff members were consulted throughout the project. In addition to studying the building itself for physical evidence to support the rehabilitation project, the original owner's daughter was interviewed and a collection of historic photographs was compiled. While deterioration required much of the exterior surface materials to be replaced the most important visual feature of the building--the stucco--was replaced with new stucco of matching color and texture which was applied using the same technique as the original. A historic postcard photo appears to reflect a two-color paint scheme, however the physical evidence failed to confirm this. It may be the postcard was creatively hand colored. The removal of the 1920s wing, added by the owner to increase the family's living quarters, returns the hotel to its appearance when it opened for business in 1915. Reconstruction of the Tuscan porch columns likewise returns the building to its 1915 appearance. Even with the new materials, integrity of the building's exterior remains good.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Lincoln Hotel in Lowden, Iowa, is significant as an example of the tremendous impact the automobile had on the culture and physical fabric of small towns in Iowa during the first part of the twentieth century. Located on a Main Street corner of the Lincoln Highway, the first coast-to-coast

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highway in the nation (Figure 2), this little hotel was among the first of a number of downtown Lowden businesses eventually established to serve the automobile trade and traveler. The Lincoln Hotel was built in a hurry during the spring of 1915 in order to be ready for thousands of automobile tourists expected to travel across the country--and across Iowa once the mud dried--to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco that summer. Anticipating this increased demand for meals and lodging in Lowden, located halfway between Clinton on the Mississippi River and the sizeable town of Cedar Rapids (Figure 3), was easy for the hotel's owners. Celia Daehn Clemmens had worked for the town's Railroad Hotel providing similar services to the traveling passengers of the Chicago & North Western Railway. In the unlikely event she missed the publicity over the new Lincoln Highway in the local and state newspapers, she undoubtedly heard the talk from the railroad's passengers and employees. A few months before construction started on her hotel, the first "seedling" mile of concrete was poured for the nationwide Lincoln Highway just 100 miles down the CNW line, in DeKalb, Illinois. To further its commercial attractiveness and project a modern up-to-date appearance to the traveling public, the hotel's functional interior was housed in a vaguely Prairie School exterior--a low hipped roof, wide overhangs and a rough textured, pebble dash stucco surface. Popular adaptations, such as the Lincoln Hotel, of the Prairie School style often were perceived by the public to share some similarities with California's vernacular architecture and this too may have motivated the Clemmens. The Lincoln Hotel is significant on a state and local level under Criterion A because of its association with the Lincoln Highway and early automobile transportation, and as an example of the new businesses that opened to serve the needs of the automobile traveler. It is also significant on a local level as a good, perhaps the best, extant example of the influence of the Prairie School style on Lowden's architecture.

Criterion A

When the first transcontinental automobile crossing was made in 1903,² most roads in Iowa were

²The first crossing of the American continent by automobile occurred in the summer of 1903, when Dr. H. Nelson Jackson and his chauffeur, Sewall K. Crocker, drove from San Francisco to New York City...tak[ing] 63 days..." David K. Vaughan, "On the Road to Adventure," in *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture*, ed. Jan Jennings, 74-81(Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), p. 74.

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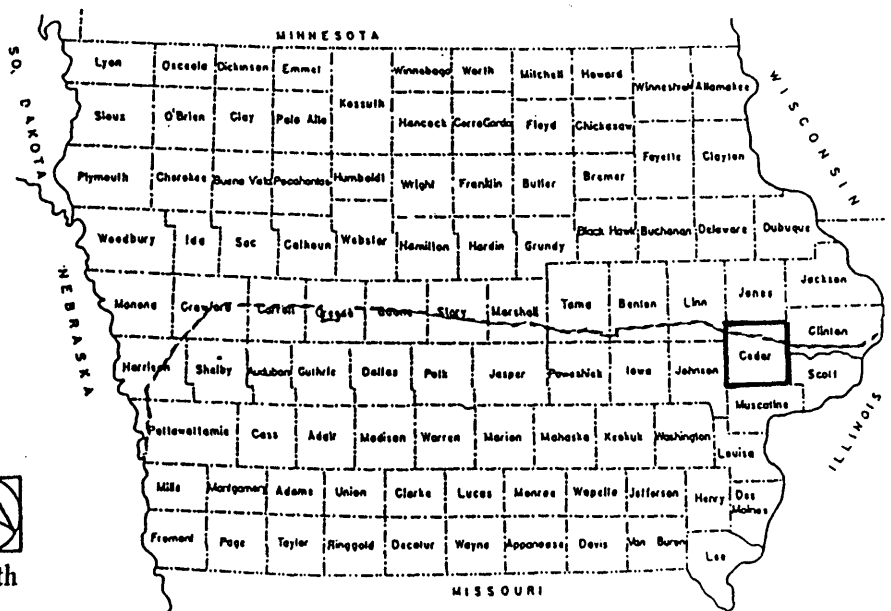
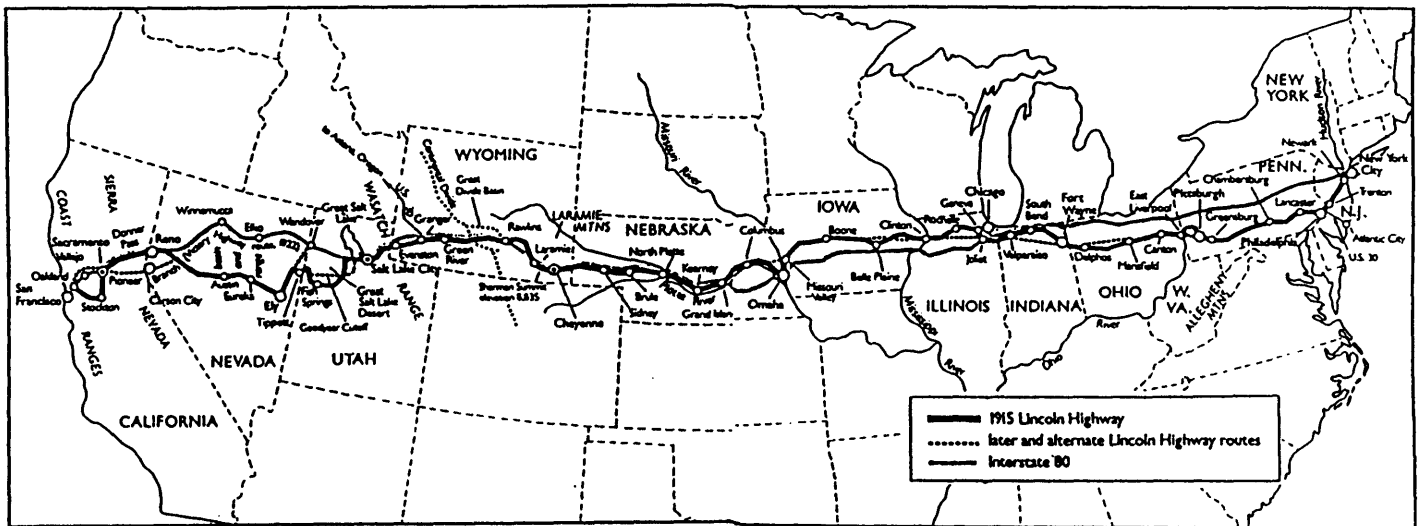
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Figure 2. The Lincoln Highway route across the United States and across Iowa. (Top map taken from *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America.*)



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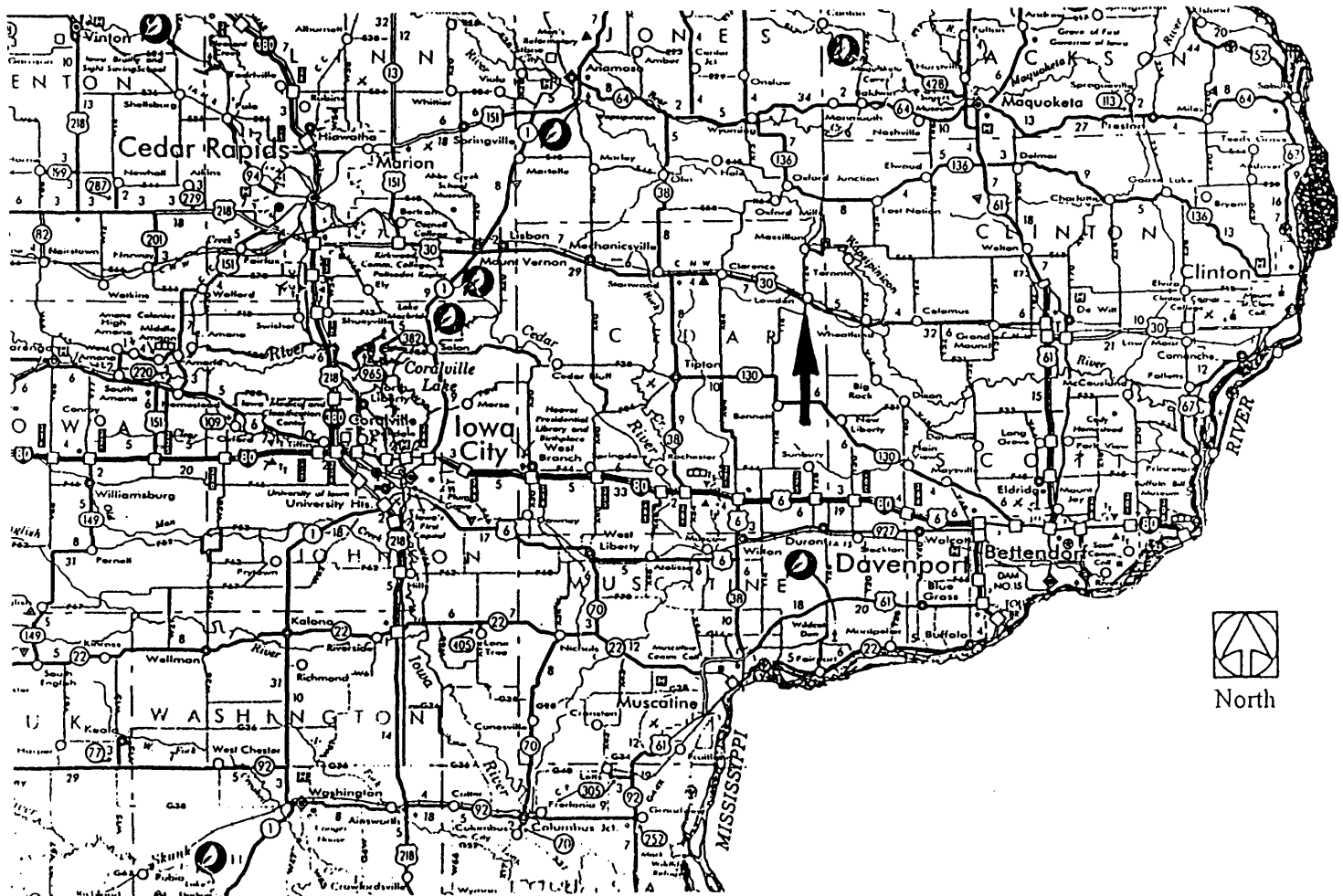
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Figure 3. Lowden's Lincoln Hotel is located midway between the larger towns of Clinton, on the Mississippi River, and Cedar Rapids in east central Iowa.
(Iowa Department of Transportation road map, 1995.)



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unimproved dirt paths--narrow strips of land between adjacent farmers' fence rows on which they were not permitted to plow or plant. Roads from Iowa's small rural towns extended, like spokes on a wheel, only a few miles from downtown main streets, and were intended simply to serve the area farmers' need to transport crops and livestock to market by getting them into town and to the railroad station. Most communities were linked to each other only through their rail connections. If one needed to travel beyond one's home town, one did it by rail.³

Traveling over these sorry roads, which were dusty in the summer and quagmires of sucking mud in the spring, was complicated by the fact no one knew where the roads led or whether there was a dead end or a river crossing beyond the next hill. Directions might be had from a local resident, but even they only knew the state of the roads within a few miles of their own homes. Fuel for the car might be found in the next town or in the next county...or not. Accommodations for the traveler consisted of existing railroad hotels in towns along the tracks or an occasional campers' pull-out alongside the road. Campgrounds continued to be the alternative to hotels as automobile touring increased in the teens. "Free campgrounds, providing a place to park, and community rest rooms were the roadside accommodations initially spawned by the advent of auto touring. They were typically operated by the owners of gas stations, grocery stores, or food stands, or by the wives of farmers. The tourists who used these facilities were expected to supply their own provisions."⁴

The Lincoln Hotel, constructed in 1915, marks the transition in traveler accommodations between the existing railroad hotels and the new motor courts and cabins which began appearing alongside highways after 1920.⁵ Like railroad hotels, the Lincoln Hotel is located near the center of town rather

³Much is owed to Drake Hokanson for his lucid text on pre-WW I rural Iowa and its road systems. His descriptions of setting and context virtually paint a picture in words. See *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America*.

⁴Mary Anne Beecher, "The Motel in Builder's Literature and Architectural Publication," in *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture*, ed. Jan Jennings, 115-124, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990), p. 116.

⁵The tourist cabin, a free-standing structure used for overnight accommodations at a tourist court, is a distinctive building type that arose from public and private auto camping and served as an alternative to the hotel. As the forerunner of the motel, the tourist court was the dominant form of accommodation along United

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than in the countryside, like a railroad hotel it offered meals to the traveler and town resident alike. But like the later motor courts, the Lincoln Hotel was built to attract the automobile traveler and like many motor courts, the hotel became neighbor to a variety of new businesses that located nearby in order to attract the automobile owner's eye and to service his needs.

The Lincoln Highway Through Lowden

By the time the transcontinental route of the Lincoln Highway finally was announced on September 14, 1913, the road through Lowden already was a well traveled route. Lowden⁶ is located on the north side of the Yankee Run stream which cuts a diagonal swath, draining the floodplain to the southeast and eventually to the Mississippi River. The upland ridges on either side of Yankee Run rise a hundred or more feet making the flat prairie in between the natural transportation corridor. The early wagon roads followed Yankee Run and the railroad did too when it was built in 1857.⁷ Because of the flat terrain the CNW railroad was able to build double tracks through the county and Lowden by 1891.

The transportation corridor through Lowden was not unusual for Iowa. In fact, when leaders of the

States highways during the first half of the twentieth century... The years 1920 to 1955 span the development of tourist courts in the United States." Tania G. Werbizky, "Accommodating the Traveler: The Development of Tourist Courts along US Route 20 in New York State," in *Preserving the Recent Past*, ed. Deborah Slaton and Rebecca A. Shiffer, II41-II52, (Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1995), II41.

⁶Lowden was founded in 1857 on land donated by settlers alongside the newly constructed tracks of the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad Company. The railroad became the Chicago & North Western in 1864. Because Lowden was halfway between Clinton and Cedar Rapids, the CNW eventually located a pump house, water tanks and an overhead coal chute at the station. *Lowden Centennial 1857-1957* (Lowden Centennial Committee, 1957), p. 62. The town's population shows steady but not spectacular growth until after World War I when it leveled off at just under 700 people. In 1875, population was reported at 439; in 1885 it was 470; and in 1905, 611. By 1914, Sanborn Map Company reported it at 678 and in 1957 it was 670. More current census figures reported in a local newspaper show the town has added residents to 726 in 1990. Sources for these figures are: *Lowden Centennial 1857-1957* (1875,1905,1957); *Lowden News*, 3/17/1916 (1885); *Tipton Conservative* 1/30/1991 (1990).

⁷"Miss Tillie Huscher Reminisces..." in *The Northeastern Cedar County Post 75th Anniversary Edition, 1857-1932*, 10 October 1932, n.p.

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Lincoln Highway Association looked for a likely route through the state, there was a plethora of candidates from which to choose. Henry B. Joy, former president of Packard Motor Car Company, originator of the name for the Lincoln Highway, and first president of the highway association selected the route:

Joy had traveled back and forth across Iowa at least ten times in five years. He felt there were as many as fifty possible routes across the state. They were all about equal in length...but they also were uniformly unimproved and tended to zigzag all over the map following a haphazard arrangement of section-line roads...The route Joy selected between Chicago and Omaha had little significance as a through road prior to the coming of the automobile. It closely paralleled the Chicago and North Western Railway...but was by no means a standout among poor options. What pulled Joy to this route was simply that it had grown to be the route of common usage. Long before any Lincoln Highway markers went up, this path had been used by people traveling cross-country in automobiles. In 1903 H. Nelson Jackson...came this way on the first auto crossing; five years later the famed Great Race--the New York to Paris Race of 1908--came this way. By the time Henry Joy came looking for his Lincoln Highway route, the Iowa portion had been dubbed the Iowa Official Trans-Continental Route...⁸

Indeed, the Huebinger Atlas of 1912 (Figure 4) shows the Trans-Continental Route and Lowden's position on that route to be identical to the Lincoln Highway route announced a year later. With that announcement in 1913, the editor of the Lowden newspaper encouraged local supporters to attend the upcoming Lincoln Highway booster meeting: "A meeting will be held in every town along the Transcontinental Highway in Iowa on the night of October 31st to ratify the selection of it as the Lincoln Highway across the state...Every town from coast to coast has been requested to hold meetings and as Lowden is in a very important position on the route plans should be made by some of our road boosters for this meeting."⁹

⁸Hokanson, p. 52. Local reports in the town's newspaper confirm that Lowden saw its share of Trans-Continental Route travelers. For example, an item in the September 12, 1913, *Lowden News* reported: "Yesterday after filling the tank of a large touring car at the corner of H.L. Deichmann's Store, the chauffeur cranked the engine without setting the brake and the machine started backwards, crossing the street and climbed the two and half foot embankment just missing the large tree on the C.F. Richmann place. The lady in the back was not injured."

⁹"Booster Meeting for Lincoln Highway," *Lowden News*, 17 October 1913, n.p.

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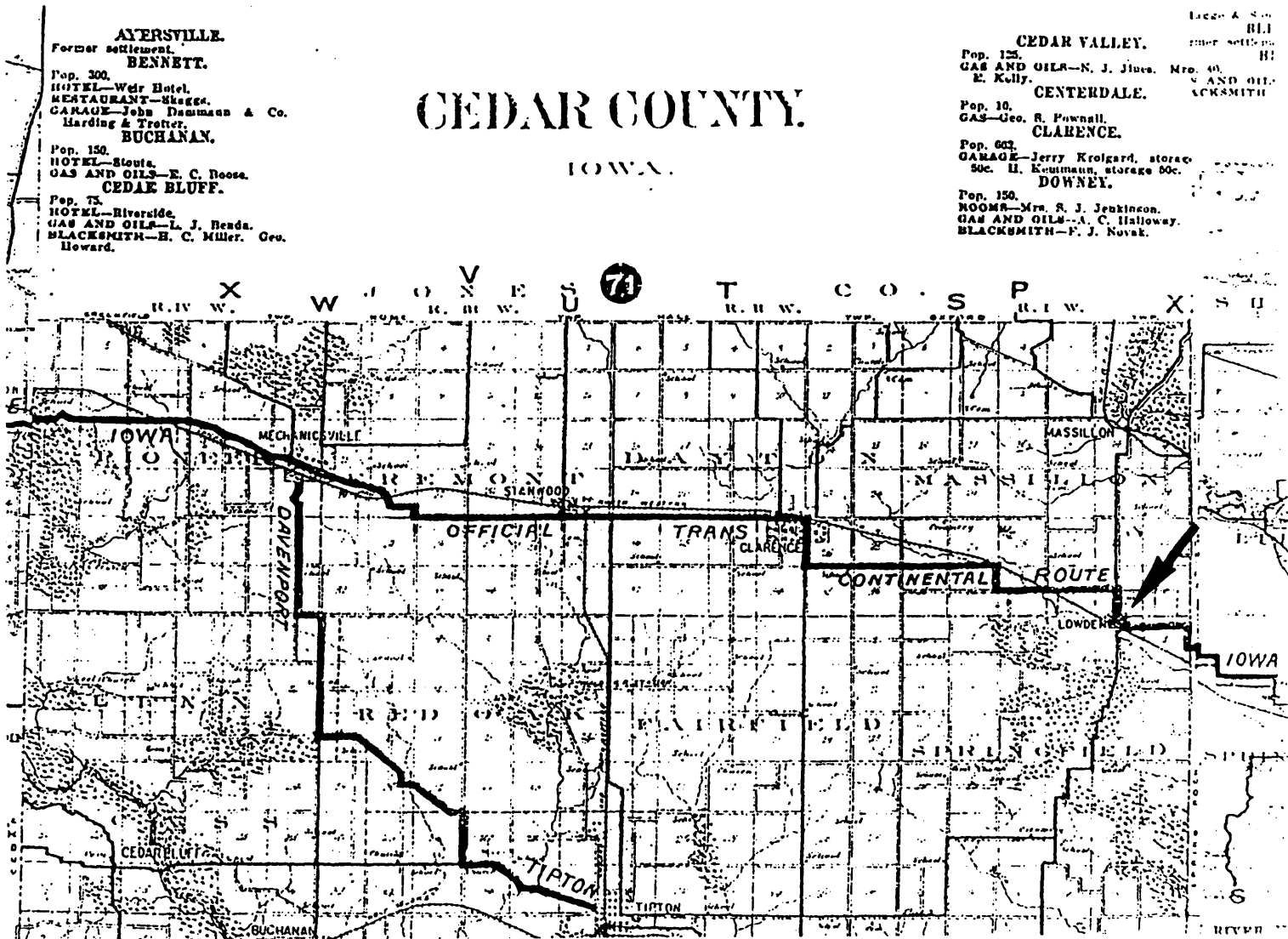
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Figure 4. *Huebinger's Automobile and Good Roads Atlas of Iowa, 1912.* (Collection of Bob Ausberger.)



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Though backers of the Lincoln Highway originally tried to raise 10 million dollars to pay for improvements to the highway, that idea eventually was scaled back to paving "seedling miles" of concrete and promoting the highway in other ways. The first seedling mile was poured in 1914 in DeKalb, Illinois, using concrete donated by the Lehigh Portland Cement Company. The first Lincoln Highway markers also went up during 1914. "At the encouragement of the [Lincoln Highway] association, civic groups, business people, and general citizenry from communities along the route fanned out to paint Lincoln Highway markers in patriotic red, white, and blue stripes on barns, trees, rocks, telephone poles, and fence posts. What the marking job lacked in standardization or neatness it made up in enthusiasm. Anybody lucky enough to live or do business along the Lincoln Highway was proud of the fact."¹⁰

With all the publicity, and in light of her prior work experience at Lowden's Railroad Hotel,¹¹ Celia Clemmens saw a golden opportunity. On March 1, 1915, her husband, A.F., purchased an empty corner of land at the east edge of the town's nineteenth-century business district--at the main corner of the twentieth-century Lincoln Highway. At this corner of Main and Clinton streets, a traveler on the Lincoln Highway headed west would take a right turn and leave town to the north, before ever getting to the main business district. At the rear of the Clemmens's land was a large livery stable, to its side was a Victorian house, across the street a wagon shop, a buggy repository, and--already in 1914--a garage.¹² Excavation of the hotel's basement commenced immediately despite the notorious March mud of Iowa's springtime. There was no time to waste. "Interest in transcontinental motoring had taken a sharp jump a year and a half earlier with the announcement of the [Lincoln] highway's route and the intention of completing this fine road in time for [California's Panama-Pacific International] exposition" which opened on February 20, 1915.¹³ As soon as the mud dried, Lowden could expect the trickle of travelers to increase dramatically. Indeed, an estimated

¹⁰Hokanson, 19.

¹¹Vera Clemmens Koch, daughter of Celia and A.F. Clemmens, to Susan Licht, winter, 1990.

¹²Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map of Lowden, Iowa, December 1914.

¹³Hokanson, 23.

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"five to ten thousand autos drove the Lincoln Highway to the fair in 1915."¹⁴

Opening for business on June 17, 1915, the hotel offered rooms for \$2.00 per night and a steak dinner for 75 cents. The next day the editor of the *Lowden News* pronounced it "one of the finest buildings in the town and situated as it is on the main corner of the Lincoln Highway, it will no doubt receive good patronage."¹⁵ To further their hotel's association with the highway, a few days later the Clemmens placed an ad in the newspaper featuring a picture of the Lincoln Highway Association pennant which members were to display on their automobiles as they traveled.¹⁶

Celia Clemmens continued to operate the Lincoln Hotel through the 1920s, when she increased the family's living quarters with a small ground floor addition on the east side (nonextant), and during which time the highway was re-routed to continue straight past the hotel down Clinton Street instead of turning north onto Main Street. Though this meant no loss of visibility for the hotel, it did bring the highway traffic through the heart of the nineteenth-century commercial district. Anticipating the new route, the town renamed its streets in 1924. Clinton Street, the east/west corridor through town, became Main Street. The former north/south Main Street became Washington Street.¹⁷ When the new route was opened (Figure 5) in December, 1925, the town paper proclaimed "the new re-located Lincoln highway west of town was officially opened this week. The new road is much better than the old highway, and the distance is shorter. There are ruts in it but they are not so deep as those on the old highway."¹⁸

The Clemmens's daughter remembers living in the family's quarters and helping with the noon time

¹⁴Hokanson, 75.

¹⁵6 June 1915.

¹⁶25 June 1915.

¹⁷*Lowden News*, 6 June 1924, reporting on City Council proceedings of June 9, 1924.

¹⁸*Lowden News*, 18 December 1925. The highway through Cedar County was paved between May and October, 1927. Leon A. Mensing, "U.S. Route 30 The Lincoln Highway," *Lowden Historical Society 1987*, (typescript paper presented to the Lowden Historical Society in 1987), p. 36.

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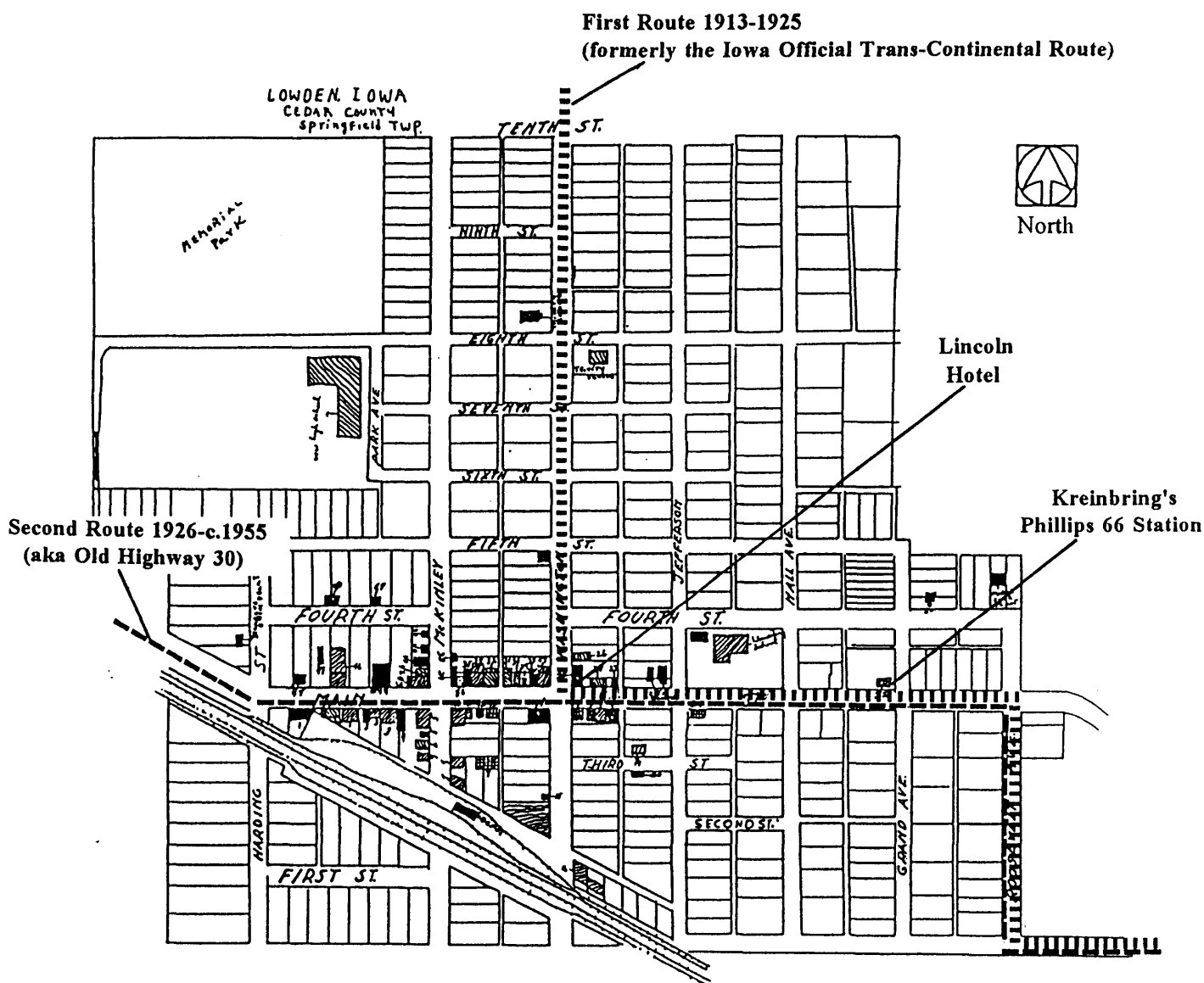
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Figure 5. Lincoln Highway (later Highway 30) routes through Lowden, Iowa. (Adapted from the *Lowden Centennial 1857-1957*.)



Source: Lowden Centennial, 1857 - 1957

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meals which drew not only hotel guests--she remembers them mostly as tourists and "traveling men"--but locals too.¹⁹ On occasion, the big dining room would be used for special events, such as the local firemen's banquet. While Celia managed to keep the hotel operating through the Depression--once widowed she finally sold it in 1946.

A series of owners continued to operate the hotel until 1981, although by the mid-1950s, a new section of Highway 30, as the Lincoln Highway was then numbered,²⁰ was completed to the south of Lowden. It bypassed the town and diverted all but local traffic away from the hotel. An ad for the hotel in the town's 1957 centennial publication indicates at that time rooms could be rented on a nightly or weekly basis. The slow conversion to residential housing had begun.

Other Automobile Businesses in Lowden

Over the years the Lincoln Hotel shared its automobile-touring customers with other local businesses that commenced operations because the Lincoln Highway came to town. The Kemmanns family, proprietors (across the street from the hotel) of the one of the town's earliest businesses, also were the quickest to spot the trend towards automobile travel--but then they'd been in the transportation business for some time. Founding father, H.D. Kemmann, arrived from Germany in 1875 to operate a blacksmith's shop. Together with his sons, Kemmann's business expanded to include the sales of buggies, surreys and farm implements. By 1912, they began selling Marathon cars, adding Ford cars

¹⁹Vera Clemmens Koch to Susan Licht, winter, 1990. Emily Post, author of etiquette books and writer for *Collier's* magazine, took the trip in 1915 from New York to the exposition in California and certainly must have driven through Lowden. She wrote: "Every town through the Middle West seems to have a little grill of brick-paved streets; a splendid post-office building of stone or brick or marble; a court-house, but of an older period generally; two or three important looking dry-goods stores, and *some sort of hotel, and in it a lot of drummers in tilted-back chairs exhibiting the soles of their shoes to the street*" [emphasis added](in Hokanson, p. 48-49).

²⁰On paper at least, the Lincoln Highway became Primary Road 6 in 1919 and by the mid-1920s it became U.S. Highway 30. Rebecca Conard, *The Lincoln Highway in Greene County* (NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1992), E17 and E23, respectively.

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in 1913, Case in 1914, Overland in 1915, Chalmers in 1916 and finally, Chevrolet in 1923.²¹ It was the Kemmann family who opened Lowden's first automobile garage in 1914 and likely sealed the decision of the Clemmens to purchase their hotel lot across the street the next spring.

Finding fuel in Lowden would not have been difficult for the tourists overnighiting at the Lincoln Hotel. Some Lowden residents recall the town's pharmacist selling the first gasoline, but by 1915 the town's general mercantile store, Freund's (1878, extant), had it too.²²

In the summers of 1915 and 1916, on Saturday evenings after supper, all the stores were opened until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. That was the big night when many farmers came to town...Most every one that drove a car had a Model T Ford car. The gas tank was under the front seat. At Freund's Store, they had a small shed (about 3 or 4 feet square and 6 feet high) in which was a gasoline pump. No glass bowl on top, that had not come then yet. Gas was dispensed into a 5 gallon can. A ruler with a black strip adjacent to the numbers on it to improve visibility was calibrated in figures saying 1/4 or 1/2 or 3/4 or Full, and numbers telling how many gallons would fill the tank, when inserted into it from the top. Then I would pump the five gallon can to whatever amount was requested...Many a Ford or other tank was gassed up on those Saturday nights.²³

Single-purpose filling stations eventually opened to compete with Freund's.²⁴ The Kemmann's

²¹As early as 1908 there were 24 American companies producing simply constructed automobiles at relatively low prices. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 159.

²²Freund's Store sold everything from A to Z, including Buicks in 1915. *We Remember When...*, (Lowden: Lowden Historical Society, 1976), p. 93.

²³*Ibid.*, 87.

²⁴According to historian Kenneth Jackson, gasoline distribution in the United States has evolved through five distinct stages: "The first stage was clearly the worst for the motorist, who had to buy fuel by the bucketful at a livery stable, repair shop, or dry goods store" and pour it through a funnel into his tank, a messy and sometimes dangerous maneuver. The second stage (c. 1905-1920) commenced with the inventions of an inverted gasoline storage tank and pump for directly fueling the automobile. "The entire assembly was labeled a 'filling station,' At this stage...such an apparatus consisted of a single pump outside a retail store which was primarily engaged in other business..." Rarely was there any provision of off-street parking while fueling. It was strictly curb side service. During the third stage (commencing c. 1920) service stations became "as a group one of the

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replaced their blacksmith shop building across the street from the Lincoln Hotel with a Standard gas station in 1928, while the house east of the hotel had been replaced in 1925 by Gade's Garage (extant but altered). Gade's had a gas pump, a mechanic on duty, and offered "vulcanizing." Another early 1920s filling station, the Hawkeye Filling Station, was located a block west of the hotel. It became a DX station in the 1930s, while a block to the east of the hotel, Hoffmeier's Service Station opened in 1936.

Two blocks east of the hotel, located on a prominent corner near where the highway traffic coming into town from the east made its zigzag turn west onto Main Street, August L. Kreinbring proudly opened his Tudor Revival-style Phillips 66 gas station in 1934. In 1938 Kreinbring and his wife sent their Christmas greetings in the form a picture postcard of the new station. The photograph reveals much about automobile travel of the 1930s and roadside architecture in Lowden. Kreinbring, dressed in a white cap and uniform, a dark bow tie around his neck, beams from the sidewalk in front of his business, his hand rests on a Quaker State Motor Oil sign stand. To his left, the gasoline pumps and tidy filling station stand ready to serve the motoring public. But that is only half the picture. To Kreinbring's right is a park area which is obviously a part of the filling station--an early forerunner of today's rest areas. A grassy lawn and flower beds outlined with rocks present an attractive place to sit for a moment or take lunch on the picnic table. Kreinbring built rock sculptures and a "cannon out of oil cans"²⁵ to decorate the park and entice the weary traveler to pause while sipping a cold Orange Crush or Coca-Cola. The latter's soft drink sign is, in fact, the largest commercial signage in the photograph. Kreinbring's station still stands, though the highway has passed it by and the adjacent grassy rest area has been replaced by a concrete block service bay and a small house which was

landmarks and a source of community pride." After 1935 standardized "corporate look" gas stations became more evident and eventually constitute a fourth distinct stage. By the 1970s, "full service" gas stations owned by a local businessman began to be replaced by both "super stations" operated by the major oil companies and the "mini-mart" convenience stations. The operators of the latter, mini-marts, "have gone full circle since the early twentieth century. Typically, they know nothing about automobiles and expect customers themselves to pump the gas." Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, pp. 256-257.

²⁵Lowden News, 9 June 1938.

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moved onto the site in 1946.²⁶

Clearly, Lowden's physical environment was changed with the coming of the automobile and the Lincoln Highway. Though cars and truck traffic no longer rumble down Main Street Lowden, the Lincoln Hotel stands as a reminder of the earliest travelers who chose the independence and adventure of their own automobile over the smoother, faster, and surer transportation of the rails.

Architectural Style of the Lincoln Hotel

Builder Emil Mahlsted constructed the Lincoln Hotel. Little is known about him and no architectural surveys have been conducted in Lowden which would help identify other buildings by Mahlsted. Despite this dearth of information, the Lincoln Hotel stands as one of a very few buildings in Lowden, and likely the *only* commercial building in town, to have been influenced by the Prairie School style of architecture. While not strongly Prairiesque, it does exhibit the essential features of the Prairie School as the style often was interpreted by local builders, a low hipped roof, wide overhangs, and a strongly textured stucco finish. The stucco's color, a natural buff, was also appropriate.

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²⁶Lowden News, 11 September 1946.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 3 and 4, Shearer's Addition to the Town of Lowden, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary selected includes the lots on which the hotel sits and includes the hotel's concrete front steps, but does not include the public sidewalks across the south front and west side.

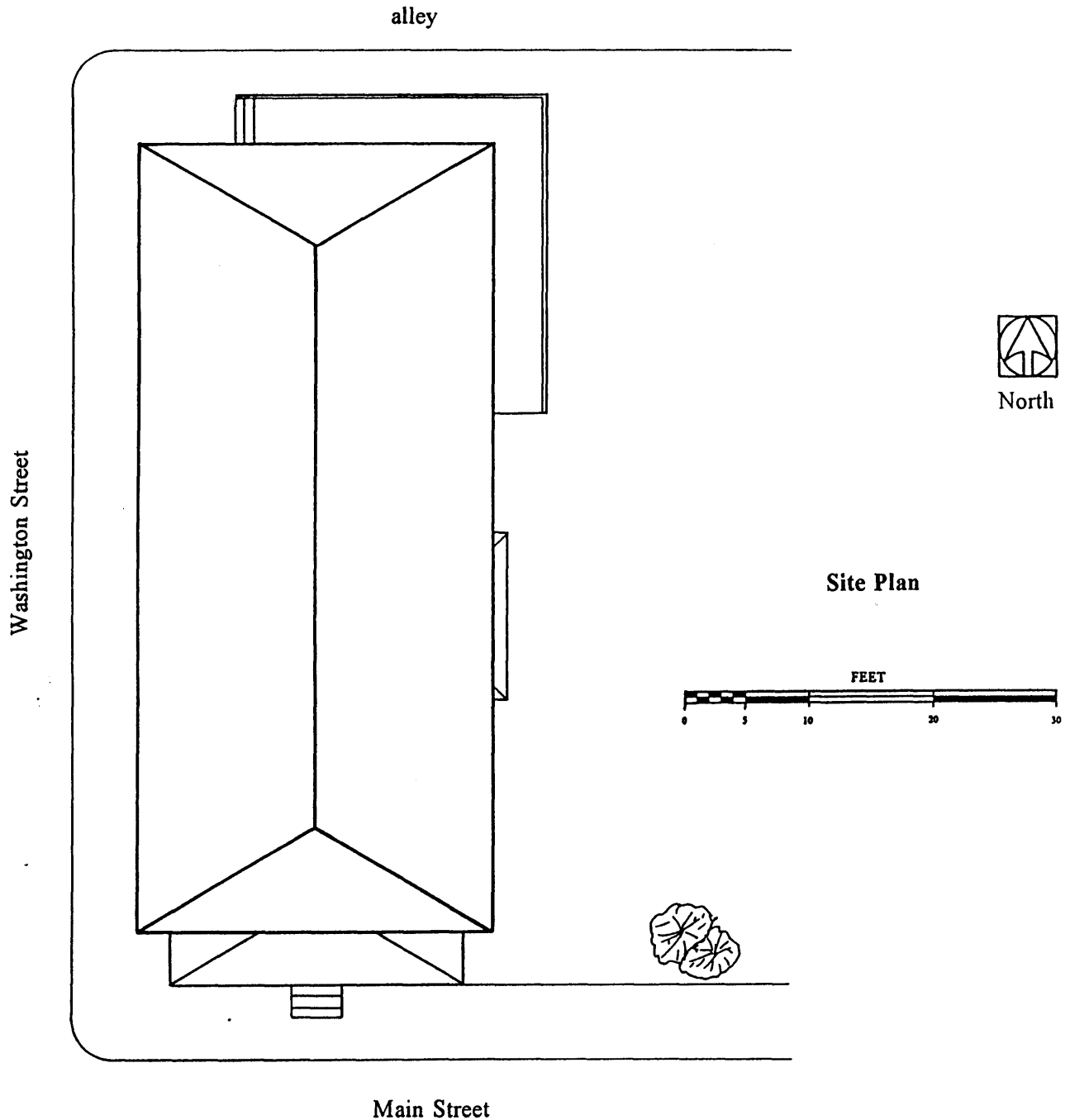
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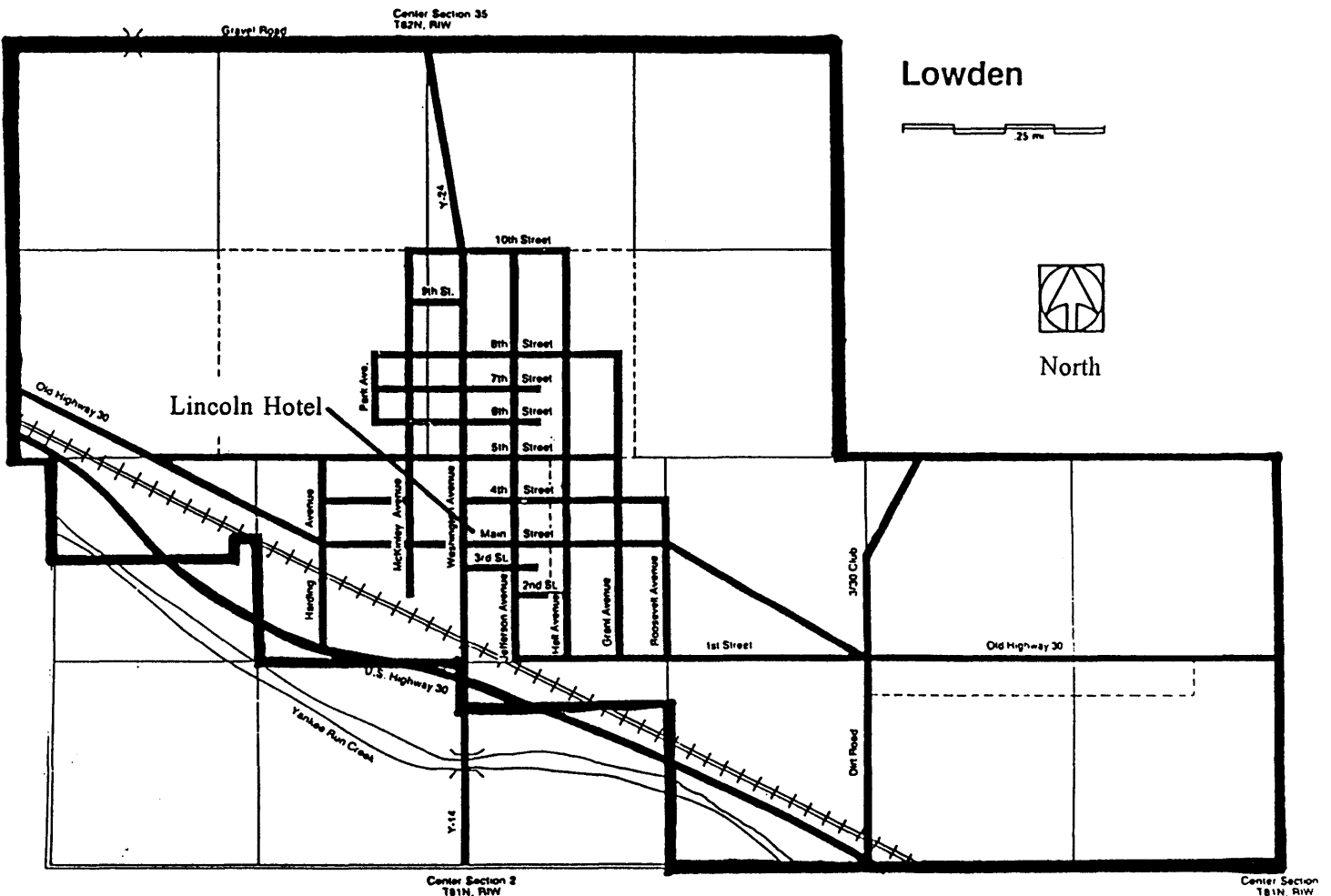
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Source: Lowden City Clerk

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Photograph Index

- #1 south front, east side, facing northwest, 1995
- #2 north rear, west side, facing southeast, 1995
- #3 south front, west side, facing northeast, 5/9/1995
- #4 historic view of south front, west side, facing northeast, c. 1925-27
- #5 south front, west side, facing northeast, 11/25/1995