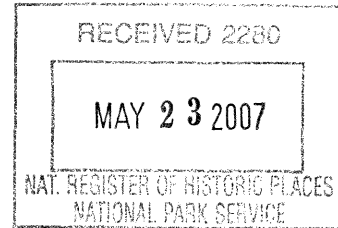


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 any 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 Highway – Gardiner Station

Other names/site number 115th Street (PT00-279)

2. Location

Street & number 115th Street between 340th and 355th Avenue

Not for publication

City or town Butler Township

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Platte County

Code 141

Zip code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Michael J. Amel
Signature of certifying official

May 17, 2007
Date

**Director/CEO, Nebraska State Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Officer**

State or 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 this 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 H. Beall

7-3-07

for
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

Name of Property

Platte County, Nebraska

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	Buildings
_____	_____	Sites
<u>2</u>	_____	Structures
_____	_____	Objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/road related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation N/A

Walls N/A

Roof N/A

Other GRAVEL SURFACING

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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 a 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.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1913-1928

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

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 for additional data:

- X Nebraska State Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

Name of Property

Platte County, Nebraska

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: Approximately 7.2 acres

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	618716	4578565	3.			
2.	14	620459	4579622	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 L. Robert Puschendorf, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date January 2007

street & number P.O. Box 82554, 1500 R Street

telephone (402) 471-4769

city or town Lincoln

state NE

zip code 68501

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Union Pacific Railroad Company
Platte County Board of Supervisors

street & number 1400 Douglas, Stop 1690
2610 14th Street

Telephone (402) 544-8558
(402) 563-4904

city or town Omaha
Columbus

state Nebraska
Nebraska

zip code 68179
68601

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 470 et seq.). **Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

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DESCRIPTION

This section of the former Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station is located in an agricultural setting in the broad Platte River valley of Platte County, Nebraska. This road is approximately 1.2 miles in length and parallels the Union Pacific Railroad mainline on a 50-foot right-of-way. The roadbed is gravel surfaced, graded and flanked with shallow grassed ditches. The section of road retains excellent integrity. The nominated property includes a Pratt pony-truss bridge.

This section of the former Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station (Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, PT00-279) parallels the Union Pacific Railroad mainline on today's 115th Street, between the grade crossing at 340th Avenue and the grade crossing at 355th Avenue in Butler Township, rural Platte County. The Union Pacific tracks paralleling this road on the north fall between milepost marker 96 on the east to milepost marker 98 on the west. This section of road is approximately 1.2 miles in length.

The roadbed consists of gravel surfacing, graded and flanked by shallow grassed ditches on a 50-foot railroad right-of-way granted by the railroad. The road crosses a wood decked, Pratt pony-truss bridge over Prairie Creek (Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, PT00-145). It measures 18 feet wide and 80 feet in length. The structural system is unaltered since its construction. The date of the bridge is unknown but probably predated the road's inclusion into the 1913 route of the Lincoln Highway.

The road west of the section being nominated continued along the railroad right-of-way for a short distance and then deviated from the railroad right-of-way. This route included a sharp right angle turn, following a section and half-section line. Following flooding, it has been tilled since 1967 and is no longer evident.¹ The road was vacated by action of the Platte County Board of Supervisors in 2003.² This section is not being included in this nomination due to lack of integrity. The road continued west, paralleling the railroad on the north to a former grade crossing at the Merrick County line where it crossed to the south side of the tracks. This road was abandoned when the new route of the Lincoln Highway was diverted to the south side of the railroad and is no longer contiguous to the nominated section at Gardiner Station.

Two railroad crossings are at the nominated section of road, which now carry local traffic to the highway to the south. These have not been included in this nomination. The west Gardiner crossing at present day 355th Avenue was a local crossing and not associated for any significant period as the route of the Lincoln Highway, accommodating traffic by serving only as a temporary crossing for a short time until a south route was opened for traffic in November of 1928. The east Gardiner crossing at present day 340th Avenue is also not being nominated as part of this section of road. Both crossings have been altered since the period of significance by elevating the railroad track bed.

Today's route of U.S. 30 still follows a 1928 realignment on the south side of Gardiner Station. It has been improved with modern concrete and paved shoulders and has not been included in this nomination.

This section of road retains excellent integrity. It is a county road that can still be driven. It retains characteristic features from the historic period(s) of the highway, conveying integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. This nomination includes the roadbed and its right-of-way, and a Pratt pony-truss bridge over Prairie Creek, which is a contributing structure.

¹ Correspondence, Karen Edmison to L.Robert Puschendorf, December 22, 2006 and January 18, 2007.

² Resolution No. 03-53, Platte County Board of Supervisors, November 18, 2003. Also see correspondence, Frederick M. Liss, Platte County Highway Superintendent to Platte County Board of Supervisors, September 25, 2003.

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Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lincoln Highway was to be a paved, toll free cross-country highway. The Lincoln Highway Association, founded in 1913, and national and community supporters propelled the highway into national significance as the nation's first transcontinental automobile route. As the highway progressed from a road first mapped by the Lincoln Highway Association to a well-traveled cross-country highway, improvements were made. The Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station is an exemplary section of road that exhibits the development of the highway from the original route of the Lincoln Highway, mapped in 1913, to the period when routes began to be relocated to eliminate railroad grade crossings and make the road safer and more direct.

Background

The broad Platte River valley in Nebraska was a natural corridor of travel. In the mid-nineteenth century it was the route of the Oregon-California Trail, the Mormon Trail, and Pony Express. Following the Platte River in today's Platte County were the Omaha-Fort Kearny military road (1857) and a road authorized by the Nebraska territorial legislature in 1864. Next to come was the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad as it built through the Platte River valley beginning in 1866. The Lincoln Highway, established in 1913, was another milestone in the evolution of the Platte River valley in Nebraska as a route for the nation's travel; a trail of the twentieth century and the nation's first transcontinental automobile route.

In a promotional booklet issued by the Lincoln Highway Association for its 1913 meeting in Detroit, the road in Nebraska was described:

At Omaha the state of Nebraska is entered, following the historical Overland Trail up the broad and prosperous Platte river valley. The entire distance across the length of this state is, approximately, 450 miles. The route is natural and easy. It affords opportunities for constructing a picturesque roadway such as cannot be equaled in any state in the union.³

Routes of the Lincoln Highway make their earliest appearance in a Nebraska guidebook dated 1913.⁴ The earliest routes followed existing roads. Where these routes jogged along section lines, the road consisted in a "stairstep" of left and right turns. The most direct routes for the Lincoln Highway, however, were those roads paralleling the Union Pacific Railroad's mainline, which followed in a cross-country path through the Platte River valley. When the railroad first built its railroad line across the state, the federal government granted up to a 400-foot right-of-way as a subsidy. However, because the railroad did not require this much right-of-way, they leased portions of it to counties to use as public roads. In a large number of places, these existing county roads were incorporated into the route of the Lincoln Highway, resulting in numerous crossings of railroad grades. The 1915 "Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway" stated that in Nebraska "(f)requent crossings of the Union Pacific Railroad are encountered, and tourists are cautioned to use extreme care, although normally the trains can be seen for long distances before the approach."⁵

By 1919, about 160 miles of the highway in Nebraska were located on Union Pacific right-of-way, representing about one-third of the entire route.⁶ As travel increased on the Lincoln Highway cars crossing the tracks resulted in accidents. Realignment to the route were proposed to avoid railroad crossings. The route was also shortened, making it more direct.

Early improvements to the Lincoln Highway, however, were hampered where roads were located on railroad right-of-way. The expenditure of Nebraska's federal-aid on any portion of the Lincoln Highway that followed on the outer 50 feet of the railroad's right-of-way was prohibited. As a result, many miles of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska were not eligible for federal assistance appropriated by the 1916 Federal-Aid Road Act. It was not until 1919 that the federal government agreed that federal-aid could

³As quoted in the Columbus Telegram, October 3, 1913, page 7.

⁴Nebraska State Automobile Association, Official Road Book. Fremont, Nebraska: Road Book Department of the Nebraska State Automobile Association, 1913, page 61.

⁵The Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway. Detroit, Michigan: The Lincoln Highway Association, 1915, page 100.

⁶"To Iron Out Road Wrinkles." Columbus Telegram, May 16, 1919, section 1, page 1.

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Continuation Sheet

Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

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be used on these portions of the Lincoln Highway. After the agreement was reached, subsequent lease arrangements were entered into by counties, allowing improvements to these sections or the realignment of the route paralleling the Union Pacific mainline. Nearly half of the miles of the highway would eventually be located on Union Pacific right-of-way.⁷ The official history of the Lincoln Highway Association states that the agreement in Nebraska brought about the longest realignment of the Lincoln Highway in the United States.⁸

Field Secretary Gael S. Hoag aggressively took up the matter of grade crossings on behalf of the Lincoln Highway Association.⁹ In 1922, Hoag proposed that the highway between Fremont and Columbus pass on the north side of the railroad, from Columbus and Grand Island be taken to the south side of the Union Pacific, on the north side from Grand Island to North Platte, and the south side from North Platte to the Nebraska-Wyoming state line. The association's program for Nebraska would be to eliminate practically all crossings except for those located at Omaha, Elkhorn, Fremont, Columbus, Grand Island and North Platte.

(Hoag) explained that the association is getting the road in shape to be taken over by the federal government at a future date, and that when the federal government does take it over it will insist upon viaducts and tunnels at every railroad crossing - which will mean that the number of crossings must be reduced to the absolute minimum."¹⁰

The changes would not only reduce the number of grade crossings, but by locating the route as close as possible to the Union Pacific tracks would "eliminate every foot of extra mileage."¹¹ That year, federal officials indicated the desire to eliminate railroad crossings.

In 1923 a state division engineer indicated:

The federal highway department is holding fast to its attitude announced a year ago concerning railway crossings. In view of the increasing traffic and the consequent danger of railroad crossings, elimination of grade crossings is necessary. According to the present plans, the number of crossings over the Union Pacific will be reduced from 15 to 3 between Omaha and Grand Island.¹²

At the 1924 convention of the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association, C.A. Weir, chairman of the Union Pacific's "Safety First" committee, reported that from state border to border there had been 30 grade crossing accidents between Omaha and Bushnell during the past year. Ten deaths had occurred and 19 people injured. He said:

Railroad crossing maintenance works a hardship on automobilists as well as the railroad company... Doubtless a Moses will rise to lead us to a solution. We are only to glad to cooperate with you on all safety work at railroad grade crossings. To preach safety does no good. You must practice it. That is what the Union Pacific is trying to do... The Union Pacific will be only too glad to cooperate with the Nebraska Lincoln Highway association in any way they desire to aid in eliminating grade crossings.¹³

In August of 1925, Hoag, State Consul George Wolz of the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association, and State Engineer Roy Cochran of the Nebraska Department of Public Works traveled the Lincoln Highway and, among other things, observed which railroad crossings should be eliminated. Hoag said:

The elimination of railway grade crossings and the paving of the Lincoln Highway that it might retain its position as the most traveled transcontinental automobile road in the country are the two chief objectives of the Lincoln Highway commission in the next few years.¹⁴

⁷ Nebraska Historic Highway Survey, Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Department of Roads, report dated August 2002, page 52.

⁸ Carol Ahlgren and David Anthone, "The Lincoln Highway in Nebraska: The Pioneer Trail of the Automotive Age," Nebraska History Volume 73, No. 4 (Winter 1992), page 177.

⁹ Hokanson, Drake, The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999, page 97.

¹⁰ "Only One Crossing in Platte County," Columbus Telegram, September 8, 1922, page 2.

¹¹ "Only One Crossing in Platte County," Columbus Telegram, September 8, 1922, page 2.

¹² "New Lincoln Highway in Colfax Next Year," Columbus Telegram, December 23, 1923, page 8. Reporting an article printed in the Schuyler Sun.

¹³ "Pleads for Fewer Grade Crossings," Columbus Telegram, March 7, 1924, page 5.

¹⁴ "Elimination of Rail Crossings is Object of Highway Officials," Columbus Telegram, August 14, 1925, page 5.

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The officials agreed to eliminate all crossings between Columbus and Grand Island in the next three years.¹⁵

It was reported that the Lincoln Highway would be paved or graveled from Omaha to North Platte by the end of 1925. Only a section between Central City and the Platte County line and one west of Duncan in Platte County were not.¹⁶

The Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station

After a 1913 meeting of the Lincoln Highway Association in Detroit, Platte County boosters immediately began work to mark the route of the Lincoln Highway through the county, led by Henry Ragatz of Columbus, Platte county consul for the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association.¹⁷ Just two months later, county supervisors appointed a committee to go over the road and make recommendations as to putting it into "first class condition."¹⁸ Among the several observations made was the straightening of the road to provide for the most direct route.

In only three places the Lincoln Highway paralleled the Union Pacific in Platte County. These were all located beginning in Duncan and west on railroad right-of way. For the most part, these roads were already designated as rural postal routes under Rural Free Delivery (RFD).¹⁹ One of these sections entered Duncan just east of town where it crossed to the north side of the railroad. Southwest of Duncan it crossed the tracks and continued on the south side of the railroad. (See National Register of Historic Places nomination, Lincoln Highway-Duncan West, January 2007). Continuing on it again crossed to the north of the railroad at Gardiner Station, where a bridge was located over Prairie Creek.²⁰ The road jogged west on a largely undeveloped wagon road to the Merrick County line where it returned to the south side. In total, the route from Duncan to the county line consisted of about seven miles of road and included four railroad grade crossings.

When the Platte County supervisors appointed their committee, the route west of Duncan was discussed. "Chief among the preliminary steps that will probably be asked of the county later on is the straightening of the road west of Duncan to the county line."²¹

With the precedent-setting Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916, assistance became available for road construction, matched by state funding. That year, Platte County officials haggled with the Union Pacific Railroad regarding the road from Duncan to Gardiner Station being on railroad right-of-way. The railroad insisted that the county either lease the ground on its right-of-way for twenty years at \$10 a year or move the road.²² The county opted for a lease of a 50-foot right-of-way, rather than bear the expense of relocating the road.

Platte County applied for federal aid in 1917 and selected two projects. The Lincoln Highway through the entire county east to west was one.²³ However, federal aid was not available for those sections located on railroad right-of-way west of Duncan.

In 1919, George F. Wolz, state consul for the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association, called for a meeting in Kearney to discuss the fact that federal aid was not available for roads that were located on railroad right-of-way. "Platte County is interested in the matter because it has about six miles of the Lincoln highway on Union Pacific land west of Duncan," reported the newspaper.²⁴

¹⁵ "Elimination of Rail Crossings is Object of Highway Officials," *Columbus Telegram*, August 14, 1925, page 5.

¹⁶ "Lincoln Way Soon Paved or Graveled Omaha-North Platte," *Columbus Telegram*, April 30, 1925, page 8.

¹⁷ "Lincoln Highway Unchanged," *Columbus Telegram*, October 3, 1913, page 7.

¹⁸ "Take Interest in Highway," *Columbus Telegram*, December 5, 1913, page 14.

¹⁹ For the designated postal and wagon roads see plat book of Platte County for parts of Oconee, Loup and Butler Township, Des Moines, Iowa: The Anderson Publishing Company, Map and Atlas Publishers, c. 1916. Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

²⁰ Gardiner Station began as a post office that was moved from Merrick County in 1884. It was discontinued in 1887. When the post office was discontinued, the place became a station on the Union Pacific Railroad. Elton A. Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place Names*, Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982, page 153.

²¹ *Columbus Telegram*, December 5, 1913, page 14.

²² *Columbus Telegram*, December 15, 1916, page 1.

²³ "Name Roads for Federal Aid," *Columbus Telegram*, August 24, 1917, page 1.

²⁴ "To Iron Out Road Wrinkles," *Columbus Telegram*, May 16, 1919, section 1, page 1.

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Later that year, federal aid was approved for use on those roads located on railroad right-of-way in which counties had negotiated leases with the railroad. Platte county officials had already acted in advance and selected two supervisors to take up a lease with railroad officials for 50 years at a nominal yearly rental fee.²⁵ On a visit to Columbus, Henry C. Ostermann, field secretary of the Lincoln Highway Association, declared that "Platte County was the only county in Nebraska that had acted promptly and gotten its lease signed up."²⁶

Ostermann was presented with the county's preference to run the Lincoln Highway on the north side of the railroad west of Duncan. The route would eliminate two railroad crossings by building a new road grade opposite an existing road on the south. This road connected the north road from Duncan west to a north road at Gardiner Station. Where the road followed west of Prairie Creek near Gardiner Station they proposed to straighten a sharp turn and build a new grade to avoid lowlands at this location "thus ironing out the kink."²⁷

The year 1920 was to be a "banner year in road improvement" in Platte County. Surplus Army trucks had been procured from the state to be equipped with dump boxes and an order for two new tractors was proposed by the county supervisors to operate maintainers and road drags. Plans of the state highway engineer and county board of supervisors had been made. These plans included the grading and surfacing of the Lincoln Highway west to the Merrick County line.²⁸ The following spring a twenty-ton Holt tractor "of the caterpillar type" and two twelve-foot graders were shipped to Duncan to work on the road.²⁹

In 1921, Gael S. Hoag, now field secretary for the Lincoln Highway Association, and State Consul George Wolz of the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association authorized changes in the route beginning southwest of Columbus, eliminating the "stairstep" route of section and half-section line roads. This reduced a mile and a half in distance. The changes would continue the route of the Lincoln Highway from its junction with the Meridian Highway, traveling directly west and connect to the north road at Duncan.³⁰

Hoag visited Columbus in 1922 and explained that the program for the Lincoln Highway Association insisted on the elimination of grade crossings. He requested the elimination of all grade crossings in Platte County, except that in Columbus.³¹ A route south of the railroad from Duncan to the Merrick county line was now under consideration.

At the March, 1924 convention of the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association in Columbus, C.A. Weir, chairman of the Union Pacific's "Safety First" committee stated that "(t)here are four crossings that should and can be eliminated in Platte County. We cannot eliminate them. That is up to you. But we will help."³² In conjunction with the convention, a conference was held with Platte County representatives and Union Pacific officials. The officials indicted the railroad's cooperation to work that summer to place the road to the south. Work would entail elimination of the two crossings at Gardiner Station by taking the road to the south side. A larger proposition was to place the entire road from Duncan to the Merrick County line on the south side. County officials were ready to take up the latter. Union Pacific officials had already prepared blueprints for the move to the south side. The chief engineer with the railroad indicated that he would "meet them half way." The railroad would contribute the necessary right-of-way under a long-term lease. However, officials declined to say if \$2,000 would be contributed to eliminate each grade crossing.³³

The Platte county board was at work just days later, meeting in conference. They discussed the elimination of the grade crossings from Duncan to the Merrick County line. County officials, a Union Pacific engineer, Platte County consul A.R. Miller of

²⁵ "May Lease Land for Lincoln Way," Columbus Telegram, July 25, 1919, section 1, page 1.

²⁶ "O.K. 's Change in the Lincoln Highway," Columbus Telegram, October 24, 1919, page 1. The distance was actually seven miles.

²⁷ "O.K. 's Change in the Lincoln Highway," Columbus Telegram, October 24, 1919, page 1.

²⁸ "Big Program of Road Work Ahead," Columbus Telegram, February 27, 1920, section 1, page 1.

²⁹ "Buys Road-Making Outfit from State," Columbus Telegram, March 25, 1921, section 1, page 1.

³⁰ "Changes Made in Lincoln Highway," Columbus Telegram, July 29, 1921, section 1, page 1.

³¹ "Only One Crossing in Platte County," Columbus Telegram, September 8, 1922, page 2.

³² "Pleads for Fewer Grade Crossings," Columbus Telegram, March 7, 1924, page 5.

³³ "U.P. Will Cooperate With County Making Lincoln Way Change," Columbus Telegram, March 7, 1924, page 2.

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Lincoln Highway – Gardiner Station

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the Nebraska Lincoln Highway Association, and representatives of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce participated in the meeting. They took a trip over the road to observe its condition. The route change would require a lease with the railroad, a new bridge over Prairie Creek, and a ditch to straighten the creek. The proposition was posed to the railroad.³⁴ The road west of Duncan was described:

About seven miles of highway are involved in the proposition, two miles now lying on the south side of the tracks and nearly five miles to be transferred to the south side from the north. Not the question of whether it should be done, but rather that of how it is to be accomplished is uppermost at the conference this afternoon.³⁵

County representatives would meet with State Engineer Roy Cochran of the Nebraska Department of Public Works asking for federal-state aid for the move.³⁶ The county board contemplated the south route west of Duncan as one of six projects for that summer. However, agreement between the state and Union Pacific was expected to delay the project.³⁷

After the second of two trips to Grand Island the summer of 1924, A.R. Miller, Platte County consul, stated that Columbus was losing two-thirds of the tourist travel due to the "frightful" condition of the road west of Duncan. To avoid the condition of the highway, he found that travelers were detouring to the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (DLD) and the Seward-York-Aurora (SYA) highways farther south. He urged county supervisors to go to work to put the road in shape.³⁸ Not only was the road in poor shape, the east Gardiner crossing was the scene of a deadly accident that summer that took the lives of three travelers. Three years earlier the same crossing had resulted in a fatal accident involving two men.³⁹

When a delegation from Platte County met with State Engineer Cochran in March of 1925, they were given assurance that the road would be diverted to the south side if the state legislature made appropriations to meet federal-aid funding.⁴⁰ Preliminary surveys were made and prospects were that the highway could be contracted for construction in August.⁴¹ State Engineer Cochran met with Union Pacific officials in October to settle the matter of obtaining the right-of-way. The county had asked the railroad to grant a lease for 100 feet of right-of-way. The railroad objected.⁴² Cochran was willing to take a lease on a 66-foot right-of-way on the south side. After another meeting in December, agreement was reached whereby the Union Pacific would lease the right-of-way to the county for a nominal fee. The north road at Gardiner Station would possibly be abandoned.⁴³

With the leases in hand, contracts were awarded in July of 1926 to build a new bridge over Prairie Creek and grade, gravel, and build culverts from Duncan to the Merrick County line.⁴⁴ The leases with the Union Pacific negotiated the year before, however, were still not found to be in order. With the mix-up on the railroad right-of-way, the county, Cochran and Union Pacific officials reached a tentative agreement on two leases. One involved the route south of the tracks. The renewal of another lease allowed the north road to be used as a local road. A final agreement would be delayed, however, until a top railroad official approved the change.⁴⁵

In the spring of 1927 work by the contractors started.⁴⁶ Due to projected difficulties with the railroad, however, the route west of Duncan had been resurveyed by the state to take a path following the railroad right-of way but at every second section of land placed the road in a series of "snake-like" curves, requiring the road to be diverted to private property. Landowners, led by one

³⁴ "Consider Eliminating Railroad Crossings," Columbus Telegram, March 12, 1924, page 2.

³⁵ "Consider Eliminating Railroad Crossings," Columbus Telegram, March 12, 1924, page 2.

³⁶ "To Seek Federal Aid Lincoln Way Project," Columbus Telegram, March 13, 1924, page 4.

³⁷ "County Dads Project Drainage, Bridge and Road Improvements," Columbus Telegram, June 9, 1924, page 6.

³⁸ "Declares Columbus Losing Two-Thirds of Tourist Traffic," Columbus Telegram, July 10, 1924, page 3.

³⁹ "Three Killed at Gardiner Crossing," Columbus Telegram, July 25, 1924, pages 1, 6.

⁴⁰ "Prospect Bright for Lincoln Way Change This Year," Columbus Telegram, March 7, 1925, page 3.

⁴¹ "May Let Lincoln Way Project Near Duncan This Year," Columbus Telegram, July 13, 1925, page 3.

⁴² "Cochran Asks Action on Lincoln Way West," Columbus Telegram, October 20, 1925, page 4.

⁴³ "Union Pacific and County Arrange for Lincoln Way Lease," Columbus Telegram, December 10, 1925, page 5.

⁴⁴ "Duncan Project Let to Sokol Brothers," Columbus Telegram, July 2, 1926, page 3.

⁴⁵ "Tentative Agreement on Route of Highway," Columbus Telegram, July 29, 1926, page 6.

⁴⁶ "Want Different Connecting Link Between Highways," Columbus Telegram, March 16, 1927, page 5.

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farmer who had property on the south side opposite the road at Gardiner Station, petitioned the county to remove this route from their property. Platte County Consul A.R. Miller also objected to the new route:

The route staked out for the new grade is so much more crooked than I had been led to believe it would be that I am convinced it would be a serious mistake to construct it as now contemplated... Fourteen curves are too many in seven miles of road where they could be avoided, even if most of them are gradual curves.⁴⁷

The county had already put the question of the right-of-way to State Engineer Cochran.⁴⁸

Cochran agreed to the route being straightened, despite anticipation of litigation with the railroad.⁴⁹ Cochran felt that he had exhausted the option of leasing railroad right-of-way. Condemnation would be the state's recourse. Power to do so was granted under a 1925 act of the Nebraska legislature that addressed elimination of grade crossings by taking the matter to the State Railway Commission.⁵⁰ The railroad's reply was simple: "(I)t is not willing to sell the portion of right-of-way..."⁵¹ "All up in the air," Cochran said as to the status of negotiations with the railroad.⁵² Cochran took up the issue with the State Railway Commission. The appeal commenced in October of 1927.⁵³ In November, however, the railroad agreed to give the state a lease for 50 years at \$5 a year. The 100-foot right-of-way on railroad property would allow 66 feet for the highway, barrow pits to get dirt necessary for construction, and the removal of nearly all of the curves.⁵⁴

However, further issues were again brought up by the railroad. In February of 1928, the Union Pacific requested a supplement to its agreement. One clause read:

(The county will) assume all taxes and assessments levied upon the leased premises during the continuance of the lease...

Another read:

It is agreed between the parties hereto that the use of the land hereby leased by the lessor to the lessee shall be the highway on the south side of the tracks of the lessor... and that the lessor shall not be required to make further contributions toward the establishment, construction or maintenance of said highway except as is required under the laws of general taxation on its property for all purposes.⁵⁵

The county signed the agreement. However, by late June the company had still not signed, delaying negotiations for some of the necessary rights-of-way still needed from private property owners.⁵⁶ The lease was finally signed by the railroad in July.⁵⁷ Cochran's efforts had taken over a year to resolve.

Cochran agreed to expedite the project, even if it required a special bid letting.⁵⁸ A new contract was let in August 1928 for the balance of work on the highway between Duncan and the Merrick County line. The remaining work consisted of 4.5 miles of road.⁵⁹ The road was to be completed before December 1.⁶⁰ Grading of the new route neared completion that November. Gravel surfacing had been started. The section of road west of Gardiner Station to the Merrick County line was opened for traffic that month.⁶¹

⁴⁷ "Straighten Grade Much as Practical A.R. Miller Urges," *Columbus Telegram*, May 21, 1927, page 3.

⁴⁸ "Put Lincoln Way Question Up to State Engineer," *Columbus Telegram*, April 19, 1927, page 5.

⁴⁹ "Changes to be Made in Lincoln Highway Project Near Duncan," *Columbus Telegram*, May 28, 1927, page 4.

⁵⁰ "Will Condemn U.P. Land for Road if Company Won't Sell," *Columbus Telegram*, June 2, 1927, page 1.

⁵¹ "Cochran May Take Road Question to Rail Commission," *Columbus Telegram*, July 26, 1927, page 8.

⁵² "U.P. Refuses Sale of Land for Road West of Duncan," *Columbus Telegram*, July 23, 1927, page 3.

⁵³ "Lincoln Highway Question Before the Commission," *Columbus Telegram*, October 11, 1927, page 6.

⁵⁴ "Union Pacific to Lease State 100 Foot Right-of-Way," *Columbus Telegram*, November 23, 1927, page 8.

⁵⁵ "U.P. Submits Supplement to Highway Lease," *Columbus Telegram*, March 1, 1928, page 6.

⁵⁶ "Conference Brings Results in Duncan Project," *Columbus Telegram*, June 26, 1928, page 6. "To Negotiate for Lease Rights Soon," *Columbus Telegram*, June 27, 1928, page 4.

⁵⁷ "Union Pacific Signs Lease on Lincoln Highway," *Columbus Telegram*, July 7, 1928, page 3.

⁵⁸ "Gives Assurance He Will Expedite Duncan Project," *Columbus Telegram*, July 21, 1928, page 3.

⁵⁹ "To Open Bids for Lincoln Highway Project Aug. 23," *Columbus Telegram*, August 1, 1928, page 2.

⁶⁰ "Contract Let for Grading Lincoln Way Near Duncan," *Columbus Telegram*, August 23, 1928, page 3.

⁶¹ "Finishing Lincoln Highway Grading," *Columbus Telegram*, November 14, 1928, page 5.

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With the completion of Interstate 80 in Nebraska in 1974, the old Lincoln Highway has been bypassed but still serves as one of Nebraska's major highways. Today, the Nebraska Department of Roads has been buying the same leases that established rights-of-way along the old Lincoln Highway, now U.S. 30. Those in Platte County will be converted to a permanent easement in 2007.⁶²

Although the highway's heyday may have ended with the opening of the Interstate, the significance of this highway in Nebraska is evident by the extant cultural resources found along its route.

Significance of Historic Roadways on the Lincoln Highway

Roadways are property types defined in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska," January 2007.⁶³ They are linear resources and the most exemplary property types of the historic highway. They are found as segments of road, most often where modern improvements or realignments have impacted their contiguity. Roadways may also include bridges, culverts, and other contributing property types. Roadways should be considered as major components representative of the highway system as a whole and evaluated at the statewide level of significance.

The early route of the Lincoln Highway followed existing roads and trails, which dictated where the official route was designated. The earliest roads served local farm-to-market transportation, often described as "wagon roads," and the more improved "postal roads," which accommodated Rural Free Delivery (RFD) mail service to rural areas. Early roadways were most often located on section lines and along the railroad right-of-way. The early road often followed the existing section-line roads of a uniform 66-foot of right-of-way.

However, much of the original route of the Lincoln Highway in the state was located on railroad right-of-way, a more direct route since it traversed cross-country through the Platte River valley. These roads varied according to the amount of right-of-way leased from the railroad, mostly limited to the outer 50 feet of the railroad right-of-way.

The first period of significance relative to roadways on the Lincoln Highway is defined as 1913, when the routes of the Lincoln Highway were first delineated on existing roadways, through 1916 with the passage of the precedent setting Federal-Aid Road Act. The early efforts of road improvements were those of local governments, "good roads" advocates, and boosters affiliated with the Lincoln Highway Association. At the time most of the highway consisted of dirt roads and trails.

A second period of significance begins in 1916 with the Federal-Aid Road Act, continues with the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1921, and ends in the 1930s. This represents a period when road construction was now led by state and federal governments and was the most significant advancement of road construction up until that time. Within this period of significance is the trend to improve dirt roads with gravel surfacing, the elimination of "stairstep" routes that followed section line roads, shortening of the route, and improvements on or relocation to the Union Pacific right-of-way under an agreement reached with federal officials in 1919.

Roadways must retain enough characteristic features from the historic period(s) of the highway and must convey their significance and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and/or association. As in cases where the road was realigned, the period of significance will end when these roadways were bypassed and no longer used as the route of the Lincoln Highway.

A roadway may be eligible under Criterion A as an example of a single event, a pattern of events or activities, pioneering or advancement of road construction, transportation, travel patterns, development of the highway, or representative of highway-

⁶² Correspondence, Ellis Tompkins, Rail and Transportation Engineer, Nebraska Department of Roads to L.Robert Puschendorf, Nebraska State Historical Society, December 28, 2006.

⁶³ National Register of Historic Places Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska." Christina Slattery, Erin Pogany, and Emily Schill, Mead and Hunt, Inc., and L.Robert Puschendorf, Nebraska State Historical Society (January 2007).

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related commerce. Alterations to roadways, such as paving, widening, removal of right angle corners with radius curves, and realignments may contribute to the significance of roadways if they were completed during an historic period or periods. Early "stairsteps" where the Lincoln Highway jogged along the section line system in Nebraska would be candidates for evaluation, as would sections where the highway was located on railroad right-of-way.

Significance of the Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station

The Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station was used as a postal road, which accommodated Rural Free Delivery (RFD) mail service to the rural area. It was incorporated into the route of the Lincoln Highway in 1913, one of three sections of road in Platte County that followed the Union Pacific right-of-way. It was eventually bypassed to the south side of the railroad in 1928.

The Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station is significant under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places for its association with a pattern of events and activities, transportation, travel patterns, and historical trends in road development. It represents the period when the roadway was first incorporated into the Lincoln Highway, the movement to eliminate grade crossings, over a decade of difficult negotiations with the railroad, and the resulting improvements to make the road safer and more direct by the elimination of grade crossings. It is an exemplary section of road that exhibits this development of the highway.

Its period of significance begins in 1913, when this section of road was incorporated into the first route of the Lincoln Highway through 1928 with the rerouting of this section of road to the south side of the tracks.

The Lincoln Highway at Gardiner Station accrues statewide significance for highway development. It is exemplary of this evolution in the development of the highway system as a whole.

This section of road retains excellent integrity. It can still be driven. It retains characteristic features from the historic period(s) of the highway, conveying integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. This nomination includes that part of the route at Gardiner Station on its original 50 foot of railroad right-of-way on the north of the tracks. A contributing property is a Pratt pony-truss bridge over Prairie Creek.

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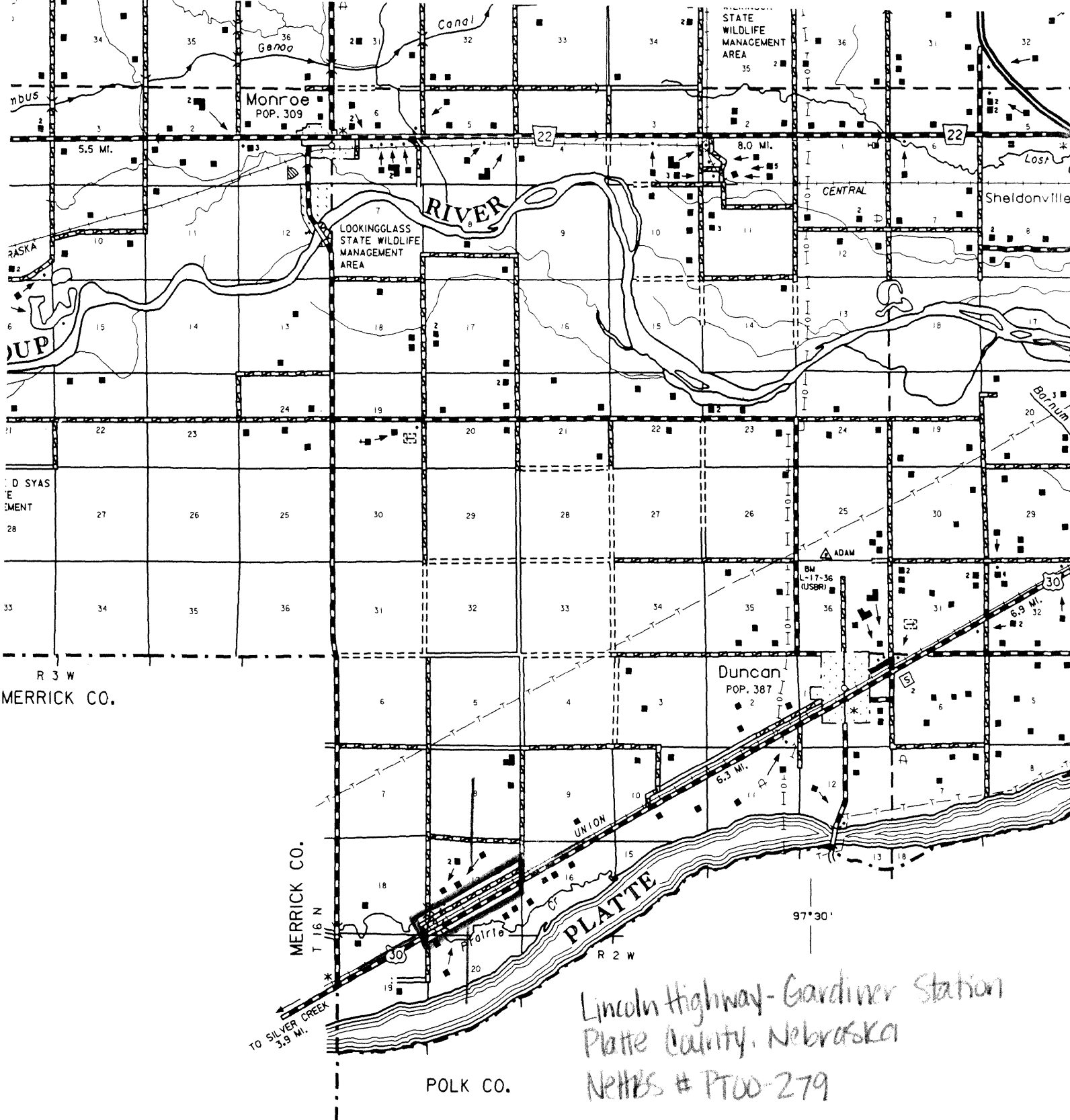
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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is approximately 1.2 miles in length. The right-of-way is 50 feet. See attached map.

Boundary Justification

The section of road is approximately 1.2 miles in length. Its right-of-way is 50 feet in width, defined by a lease granted by the Union Pacific Railroad. The boundary corresponds to an area historically associated with the Lincoln Highway alignment and that which retains physical integrity.



Lincoln Highway - Gardiner Station
 Platte County, Nebraska
 NETBS # PT00-279

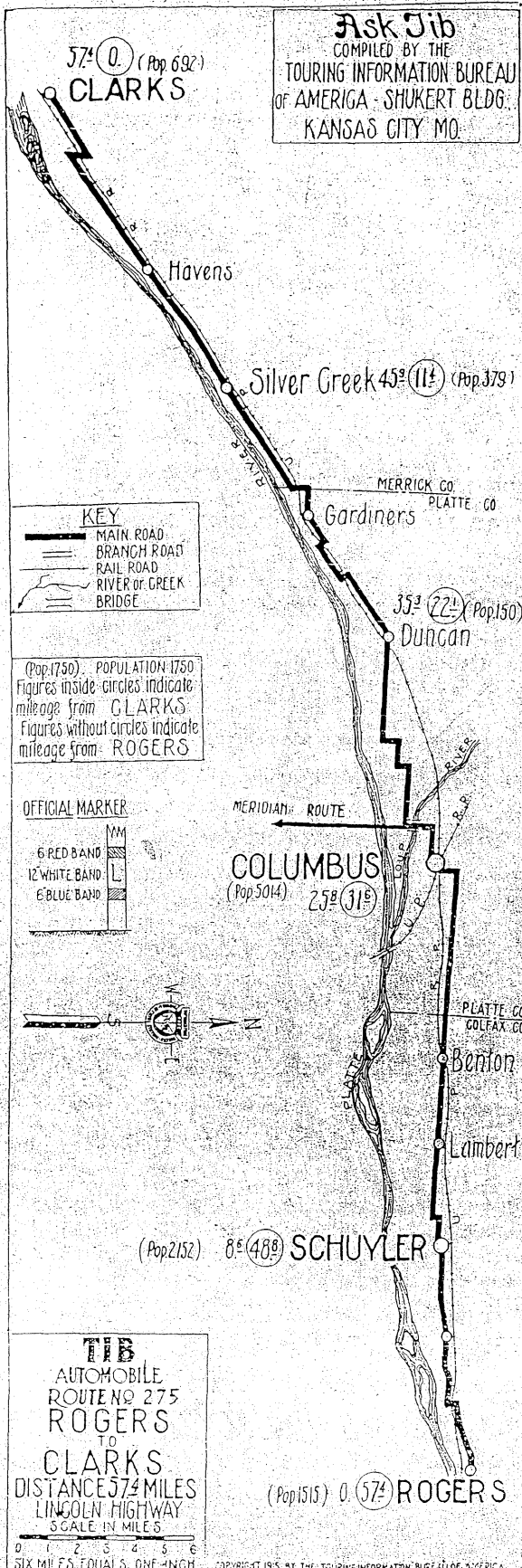


Nebraska Dept of Roads County Highway Map

ROGERS, NEB., TO CLARKS, NEB., 57.4 MILES.

Lincoln Highway. See Marker Front of State Section.

Ask Tib
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KANSAS CITY MO.



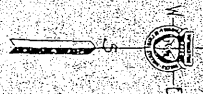
KEY

- MAIN ROAD
- BRANCH ROAD
- RAIL ROAD
- RIVER or CREEK
- BRIDGE

(Pop. 1750) POPULATION 1750
 Figures inside circles indicate
 mileage from CLARKS.
 Figures without circles indicate
 mileage from ROGERS

OFFICIAL MARKER

6 RED BAND
12 WHITE BAND
6 BLUE BAND



DESCRIPTION: Good dirt road through absolutely level country.
 In dry weather good time can be made. Slippery in wet weather; use
 care. Connection made with Meridian Road at Columbus.

TIB
 AUTOMOBILE
 ROUTE NO. 275
 ROGERS
 TO
 CLARKS
 DISTANCE 57.4 MILES
 LINCOLN HIGHWAY
 SCALE IN MILES

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
 SIX MILES EQUALS ONE INCH

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