

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000164

Date Listed: 3/29/93

Lincoln Highway Marker (2)
Property Name

Greene
County

IA
State

Lincoln Highway in Greene County MPS; County Courthouses in IA TR

Multiple Names

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

3/29/93
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The acreage is given incorrectly as "approximately one acre," which would encompass the entire Courthouse Square. The correct acreage, which is consistent with the acreage for the other nominated marker and the Lincoln Statue, is "less than .25 acre."

This information was verified by Lisa Linhart of the IA SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

FEB 18 1993

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Highway Marker (2)

other names/site number none

2. Location

street & number Lincoln Way and Chestnut Streets not for publication

city or town Jefferson vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Greene code 073 zip code 50129

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.)

[Signature] 1/25/93
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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Bett Boland

3/29/93

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
_____	_____	structures
1	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

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

The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, Iowa
The County Courthouses of Iowa, TR

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/street furniture

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/street furniture

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation n/a

walls n/a

roof n/a

other concrete

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.)

- 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)

Transportation

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Lincoln Highway Association

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:

Greene Co. Lincoln Highway Preservation Group
Inc.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Physical Description

The concrete Lincoln Highway markers erected in 1928 measure 48.5" high. In design, they consist of an octagonal post measuring 28" high and 20" in circumference and a rectangular top piece measuring 8"x8"x17". They are cast in one piece. Inset on the front side of the rectangular top is a medallion of Abraham Lincoln measuring 3 7/8" in diameter and inscribed with the words "This highway dedicated to Abraham Lincoln." Below the medallion an "L" and a direction arrow are stamped into the concrete.

This marker stands on the south side of the public square near the Lincoln Statue. There is no information concerning original location, although since this was a prominent and well-known place on the highway, it is plausible that the marker was installed here in 1928. The marker is in excellent condition.

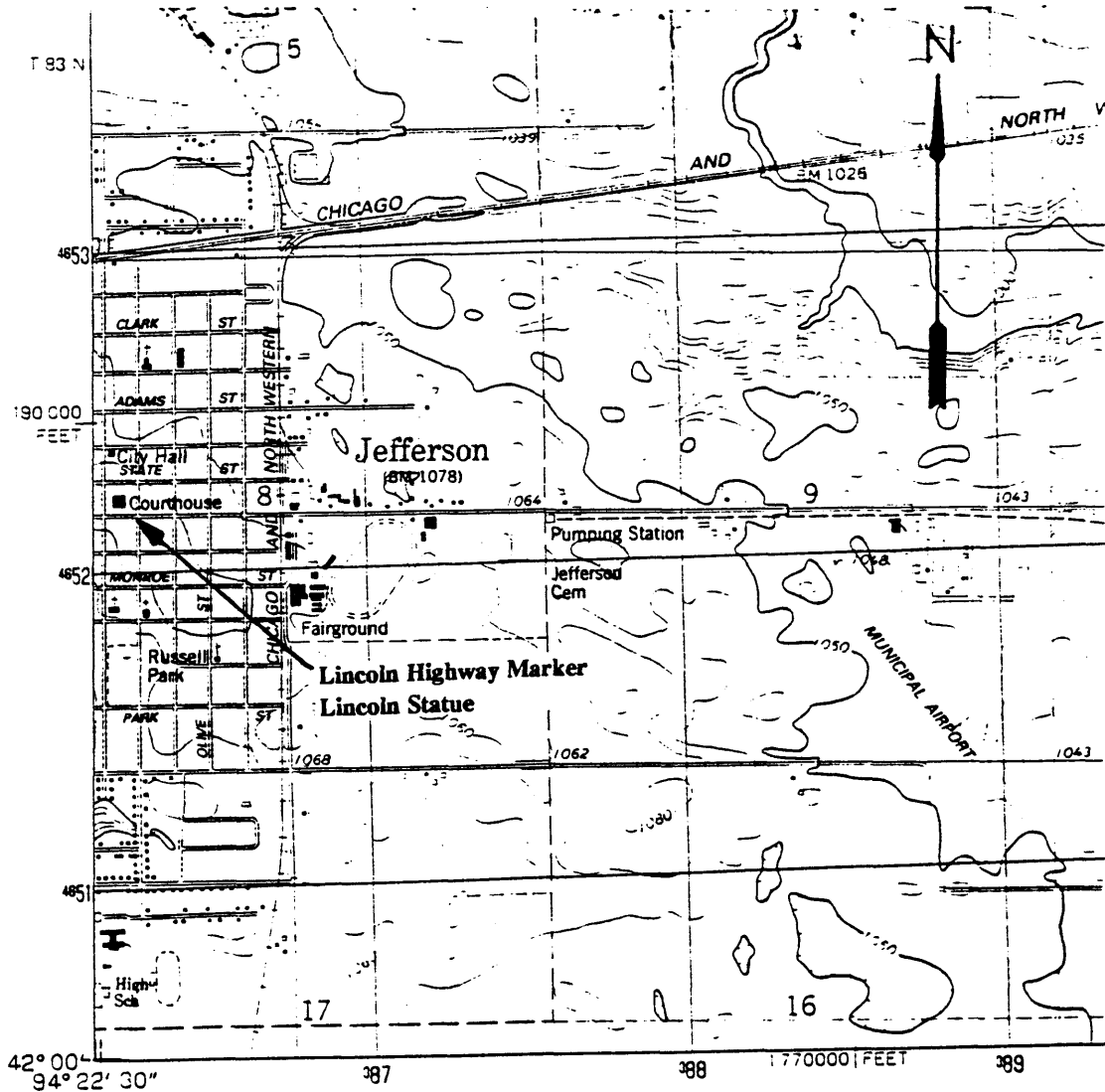
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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Resource Location Map (U.S.G.S. Jefferson East Quadrangle, 7.5 minute, 1986)



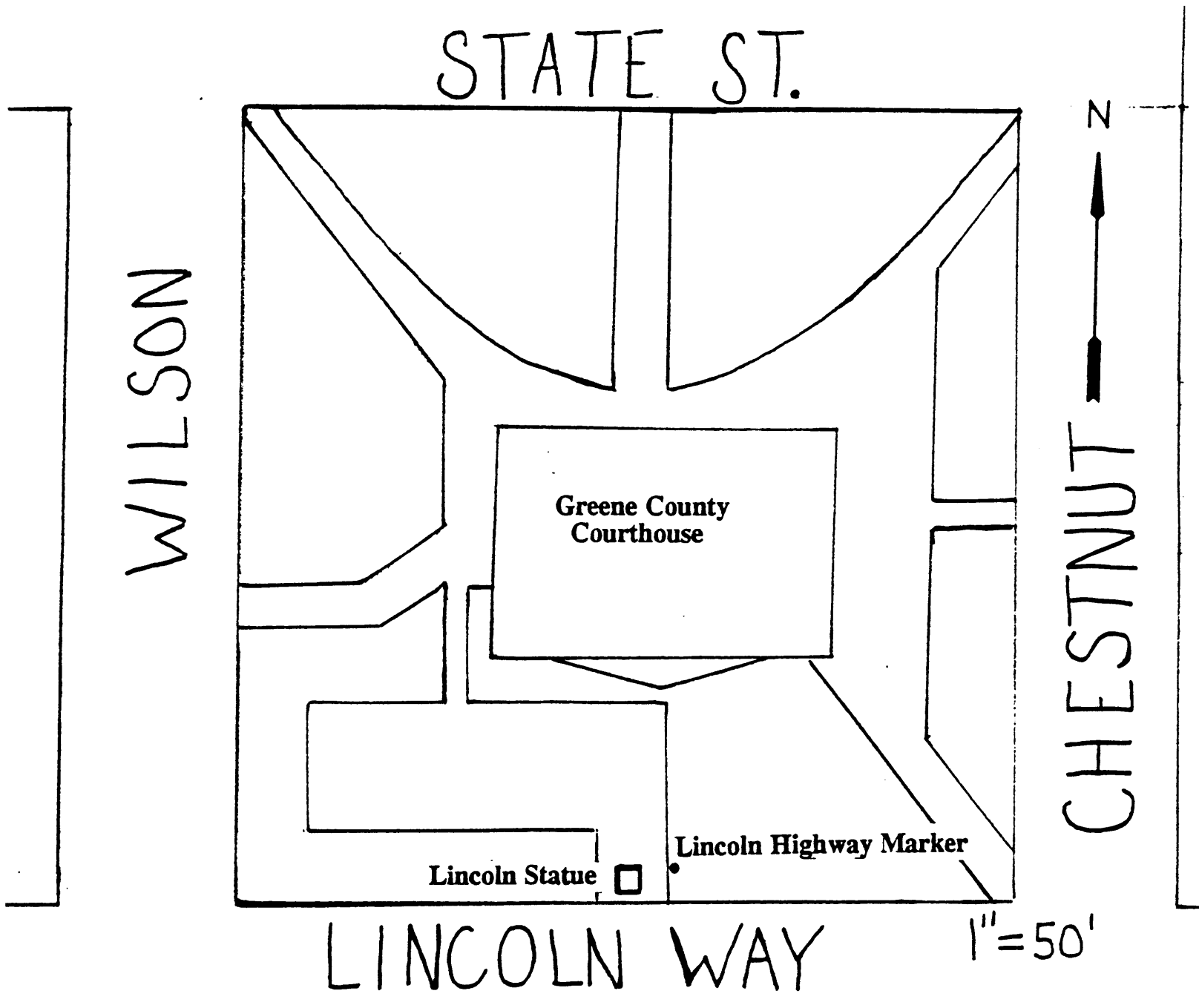
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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Sketch Map



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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Statement of Significance

The Lincoln Highway markers are significant under Criterion A as examples of the approach to route marking that the Lincoln Highway Association, as one of many privately organized highway associations, employed prior to the uniform highway numbering system which evolved with the federal highway system.

So long as roads were used and thought of primarily to facilitate local travel, there was no need to mark them. The advent of transcontinental automobile routes did not immediately change this, since the earliest motorists were generally adventuresome men who undertook cross-country treks equipped to deal with uncertainty. Recommended gear typically included camping equipment, extra tires, repair parts, tackle blocks, rope, a lantern, mudhooks, a set of tire chains, water canteens, chocolate bars, and canned goods — all of which would be packed into an open-topped car. An auto trip was not for the fragile or fainthearted. There were no road maps (until the mid-1920s), but as early as 1901 published road guides began to appear giving motorists written instructions on how far to drive in any given direction, when and what direction to turn, and what landmarks to watch for. This meant that the person occupying the front passenger seat (one did not travel alone) functioned as the navigator. Some guides were published by highway associations for specific roads; for instance, the first official Lincoln Highway guide, published by the Lincoln Highway Association, appeared in 1915. By the end of the decade experienced travelers might carry a small library of such guides with them.

The proliferation of privately promoted routes such as the Lincoln Highway and the steadily increasing number of motorists gave rise to the practice of marking roads with identifying symbols. Stretches of road that had been adopted into more than one route might be signed with several different markers. These signage schemes were protected by copyright and registered in each state. Iowa had more than its share of specially marked trails. In 1913, the State Legislature authorized the Iowa Highway Commission to register highway routes promoted by private organizations. Upon payment of a \$5.00 fee, an organization received a certificate protecting its name and highway markers. Eighteen routes were registered in 1914. By 1925, when the U.S. highway system began to take effect, Iowa had 64 separate registered highways. The vast majority of these were intrastate or regional routes, such as the Great White Way which ran from Davenport to Council Bluffs (registered July 30, 1914), the Hawkeye Highway from Dubuque to Sioux City (registered June 29, 1917), the Jefferson

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Highway from Winnipeg, Canada to New Orleans (registered September 25, 1916), and the Old Military Trail between McGregor and Charles City (registered October 10, 1922).¹ As was true elsewhere in the country, the Lincoln Highway was one of the best promoted and most traveled.

The concrete Lincoln Highway markers were the last type of marker to be installed along the route. The first symbol consisted of red, white, and blue bands with an "L" on the white band. These logos were painted on telephone poles, fence posts, and boulders -- anything not easily moved and prominently visible from the road. In 1916, the "L" was dropped, possibly to make the job easier for itinerant paint crews. When the highway markers through Greene County were repainted in September of 1916, for instance, local residents complained about the results.

The official paint crew of the Lincoln Highway came through Greene county the middle of last week, repainting the signs upon this popular motor route. The crew had two autos and carried four paint slingers, their errand being to remark the route from coast to coast. They expect to reach the end of their route, at San Francisco, by April 1.

There is considerable dissatisfaction locally because of the fact that the crew did not replace the "L" in the middle of the signs. On the electroliers through Jefferson they had better have left the signs as they were. They put on a fresh red stripe at the top, then the field of white finishing with the blue stripe at the bottom. The signs do not appear to be of particularly good workmanship, in other words the paint seems to have been "slung on" in the quickest way to get the job done. The sign may be all right without the "L" but it does not look natural, and it is probable a movement will be started in Greene county to replace the letter.²

1 William Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary* (Ames: Iowa Department of Transportation, 1989), 105 and accompanying map, "Iowa Registered Highway Routes, 1914-1925."

2 "Paint Highway Signs," *Jefferson Bee*, 27 September 1916.

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Whether the hoped-for movement to improve the appearance of the signs ever materialized is unknown. However, in 1920, signage became more formal and stylized. Metal or porcelain signs were painted in tricolor strips with the words Lincoln Highway and a large "L" in the white field.³ In time, these emblems became the most familiar symbol of the highway, but they also made convenient targets for practice shooting. So when the Lincoln Highway Association decided upon memorial signage for the highway in 1928, it chose a more permanent material: concrete.

In 1925 federal and state highway officials approved a uniform numbering system for roads designated as U.S. highways. Highway associations, protecting their own interests, fought the plan because it spelled the end of their separate identities. The Lincoln Highway, for example, was splintered into U.S. routes 1, 30, 30N, 30S, 530, 40, and 50 as it wended its way across the country. Iowa State Primary Road No. 6 became U.S. Highway No. 30. To preserve the highway's status as the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway Association, among others, sought to have its markers retained along with the numbers. This idea was rejected by the American Association of State Highway Officials, which banned signs for named roads. Upon appeal, permission was granted based on the premise that the Lincoln Highway Association would mark the road as a memorial to Abraham Lincoln, not sign it "as a road."⁴

With help from supporters in the cement industry, the association had about three thousand markers cast, each ornamented with a bronze medallion inscribed "This highway dedicated to Abraham Lincoln" around a likeness of its namesake. A direction arrow stamped into the marker pointed motorists to the route ahead. Gael Hoag, the last paid representative of the Lincoln Highway Association, arranged for Boy Scout troops across the country to install the markers at preplanned locations, spaced approximately one mile apart. Markers accordingly

3 Tony Vorsten, "The History of the Lincoln Highway," presented at the 1974 annual meeting of the Iowa Highway 30 Association, n.p. Typescript located at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

4 Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 110.

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

were shipped to cities across the entire route, and on September 1, 1928, thousands of Boy Scouts ceremoniously planted the markers at designated spots.⁵

Drake Hokanson calls these markers "the symbolic icons" of the Lincoln Highway. "They were originally placed to mark this road forever as a continent-wide monument to an American idealist and to mark the path of an ideal highway. They were placed with great hope that this highway would be remembered even after a system of numbers erased its official status. Whether the directors and officers of the Lincoln Highway Association thought the markers would actually keep the highway alive is not known, but their idealism is expressed by even the few that remain."⁶ Relatively few of the markers remain, and only a dozen or so are reportedly in their original locations. Six markers are known to exist in Greene County. Five of them stand by or near the highway; a sixth marker (broken) is housed in the Greene County Museum in Jefferson.

Two criteria considerations apply to this resource: Consideration B (moved from original location) and Consideration F (commemorative property). As one of relatively few surviving markers that have come to symbolize the Lincoln Highway since 1928, the marker meets National Register eligibility under Criteria Consideration F. The marker at this particular location also is among the best preserved in the county; it is in excellent physical condition. Even though it has been moved from its original location, it is still adjacent to and easily visible from the highway and thereby meets National Register eligibility under Criteria Consideration B.

5 Vorsten, "The History of the Lincoln Highway;" Hokanson, 110-111.

6 Hokanson, 136.

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Bibliographical References

See footnotes for sources cited in this nomination. Refer to Section I of the Multiple Property Documentation Form for complete bibliography and source location information.

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Lincoln Marker, Lincoln Highway, Greene County, Iowa

Boundary Description

The boundary is a square measuring 4' on each side with the marker at the centerpoint. This square is located within the parcel described as the west 60' of Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 18 in the City of Jefferson.

Boundary Justification

The marker does not occur along a segment of the highway that is nominated to the National Register. It therefore cannot be included within the boundaries of a linear district corridor. The critical factor is that the marker remain visible from Lincolnway in Jefferson. Its exact placement is of less importance so long as the marker's proximity to the highway is maintained.