

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 12 1993

# National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission     Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, Iowa

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

## C. Form Prepared by

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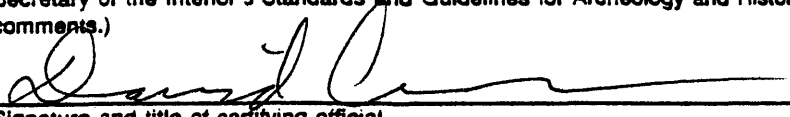
city or town Lake View

state Iowa

zip code 51450

## D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature and title of certifying official

1/25/93  
Date

State Historical Society of Iowa

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

  
Signature of the Keeper

3/29/93  
Date of Action

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## The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

### *Introduction*

The Lincoln Highway through Greene County reflects, in microcosm, the historical evolution of America's first transcontinental highway. From time immemorial, transportation corridors have been the physical links of society. Commerce flows through them, military defense relies on them, and cultures intermingle along their pathways. So vital are they as circulation systems that the other definition of "artery" is "a major route of transportation into which local routes flow." In the twentieth century, highways, in particular, also became symbols of American mobility and independence. No road symbolizes this more than the Lincoln Highway, the road which helped to launch the federal highway system and to centralize control over the nation's arterial routes.

The period of significance established for the Lincoln Highway in Greene County is 1912 to 1928, which encompasses the years during which the Lincoln Highway Association organized, represented, and actively promoted the highway. There are approximately thirty miles of contiguous rural, urban, and abandoned sections of roadway which are part of historic routes. These miles include various routes of the road from the time the transcontinental route was announced in September 1913 through 1928, when the Lincoln Highway Association placed memorial markers along the entire route. From 1920 to 1926 the highway was also known as State Primary Road No. 6. With creation of the federal highway system, the highway was renumbered again. After 1926, it was officially known as U.S. No. 30. The Lincoln Highway Association ended formal operations in 1927, although it continued some activities for a few years and the entire transcontinental route was not completely paved until 1931.

In Iowa, the first transcontinental highway route remained in use as a major transportation artery in the federal highway system until the 1950s. Between 1952 and 1958, Iowa counties acquired sections of old Highway 30 from the state as construction on new Highway 30 progressed. In Greene County, new Highway 30 bypassed all three towns through which the Lincoln Highway had passed -- Grand Junction, Jefferson, and Scranton. This circumstance

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left the old highway relatively undisturbed. Hence, much of the Lincoln Highway remains in use today as paved county roads.

A statewide or nationwide context that takes into account all of the property types which came to be associated with the road, notably gas stations and cabin courts, might logically extend the period of significance to the late 1950s. This multiple property context, however, which addresses only a small portion of the highway, focuses on the properties that are associated with the road from 1912 through 1928.

***Iowa's Role in Centralizing Control over Highways***

Before 1921 there was no federal highway system. Road building and maintenance were considered functions of local government almost exclusively from the creation of the federal government until the good roads movement got underway in the 1880s. Even then, the shift to intergovernmental responsibility for road building and maintenance was slow to materialize. In 1891, New Jersey became the first state to adopt a plan for providing state aid for road building. During the next two decades, other states followed; and by 1912 forty-one states, including Iowa, had adopted some form of state aid to highways, either in the form of funds, the provision of engineering services, and/or the provision of convict labor.<sup>1</sup>

Iowa began to centralize control over highways in 1902, when the Anderson Law created the state's first highway commission, actually a research entity located at Iowa State College in Ames. Although the "commission" had little authority beyond data collection, planning, and public education, the Anderson Act nonetheless began to reverse the long-standing tradition of local control. By 1913, when Iowa passed a second act authorizing a separate State Highway Commission with control over all county and township road officials, most states had established a state highway department or similar official body. These state bodies took various forms of organization. Power and authority varied widely from data collection to complete supervision of a comprehensive system. The reason for so much variety stemmed, in part, from political differences over bringing road construction and maintenance under state control. A

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1 John E. Brindley, "Road Legislation in Iowa," *Iowa Applied History Series*, Vol. I, Benjamin F. Shambaugh, ed. (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1912), 49-50.

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highly controversial provision of Iowa's 1913 law, for instance, required county boards of supervisors to hire a county engineer who would then be subject to Highway Commission standards of performance. Viewing this as an unwarranted intrusion of state government, many counties simply chose not to hire an engineer, and there followed a period of political struggle between those who favored the benefits of centralized control and those who clung to the tradition of local control. During the 1914 election, voters turned out of office several state legislators who voted for the 1913 law, but the law itself remained in effect.<sup>2</sup>

It was not easy to abandon decades of decentralized control over roads. The 1902 Anderson Law and its counterpart legislation in other states marked an important point in the history of transportation in the United States. Federal aid was practically unheard of except for a few isolated instances, most notably in 1803 when the federal government provided funds for constructing the National Road from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, West Virginia. In 1838, the federal government authorized a territorial road in Iowa for military purposes. A year later Congress appropriated \$20,000 to build it. As constructed, the road ran from Dubuque through Iowa City, Mt. Pleasant, and Keosauqua. Beyond this aid, states admitted between 1803 and 1910 received small allocations derived from federal land sales which were to be used for public roads, canals, and internal improvements. Iowa chose to use its allocation for schools, not roads. After creation of the Rural Free Delivery System, the federal government also began to subsidize the improvement of rural post roads.<sup>3</sup>

State aid was similarly foreign in concept, although Iowa flirted briefly with plank road construction. Between 1849 and 1851, the General Assembly granted authority to build fourteen different plank roads totaling about 600 miles, although it is estimated that only about fifty miles were actually built. Advocates of plank and graded roads believed improved roads would increase the value of agricultural land by enabling farmers to haul heavier loads and to reach market in timely fashion regardless of weather conditions. However, the coming of the railroads, beginning in 1855, effectively overshadowed the need for state involvement in road

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2 William H. Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary* (Ames: Iowa Department of Transportation, 1989), 71-72, 76-77; Brindley, 35-38, 42-44.

3 Thompson, 2-4, 70, 73.

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building until the early twentieth century. As a result, the enthusiasm for plank roads evaporated by 1860.<sup>4</sup>

The good roads movement greatly influenced government policies regarding roads. Prior to the 1880s road and bridge building were generally regarded "as a problem in practical political science, and not as a problem of economics, engineering, or sociology."<sup>5</sup> In 1883, however, the same arguments used earlier to advance plank roads were revived when Samuel D. Pryce convened a State Road Convention in Iowa City. Several recommendations came from this convention, including adopting a policy of state aid, payment of all road taxes in dollars rather than in labor (a long-standing tradition), and the appointment of trained county engineers. Though it took some years to accomplish these goals, Iowa took the first step in 1884, when the General Assembly passed a law giving county supervisors the authority to levy taxes for county road funds and township trustees the authority to consolidate several road districts into one. According to the 1884 law, these powers were optional, but subsequent laws made them mandatory.<sup>6</sup> State legislation signified a gradual trend toward centralizing control, which culminated in the 1902 Anderson Law and the 1913 act establishing the State Highway Commission. By 1913 Iowa had created the political framework necessary to carry out the ultimate goals of the good roads movement.

### *Origins of the Lincoln Highway*

It was within this climate that the idea for a transcontinental highway emerged. The first feasible plan came from Carl Fisher, inaugrator of the Indianapolis 500 in 1911 on his Indianapolis Motor Speedway. In September 1912, Fisher invited leaders from the Indianapolis automotive industry to a dinner party. There he presented a captive audience with his plan to build a continuous coast-to-coast highway from New York to San Francisco in time for motorists to travel across country to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Although the Automobile Association of America (AAA) had proposed a transcontinental highway as early as

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4 Brindley, 23-24, 36-37; Thompson, 5-6.

5 Brindley, 35.

6 Brindley, 19, 33; Thompson, 70-71.

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1902 (the same year the organization was formed), Fisher was the first to devise an actual plan for building a road and financing it. Fisher's financing plan called for raising \$10 million in donations from those who manufactured automobiles and auto accessories and from selling memberships in an organization which shortly became known as the Lincoln Highway Association. When Frank A. Seiberling of Goodyear immediately pledged \$300,000 toward the effort, Fisher's idea began to assume reality.<sup>7</sup>

Fisher's plan has been called one of those ideas whose time had come. What this means is that advances in technology had become the driving force. The good roads movement of the 1880s wouldn't have achieved much more than the plank roads movement of the 1840s had it not been for the invention of the internal-combustion engine in 1885 by two Germans, Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler, and related developments in America and Europe during the 1880s and 1890s. Invention of the modern low-wheeled, geared bicycle in 1885 also contributed to the technology of road transportation. The "safety" bicycle enabled people to travel roads more conveniently and more swiftly, which increased public demand for good roads. In addition, bicycle technology contributed to the development of automobile steel-tube framing, ball and roller bearings, differential gearing, acetylene lamps, and pneumatic tires.<sup>8</sup>

In the United States, approximately 1500 separate automobile manufacturing companies had been organized by World War I, most of which did not survive but all of which contributed to an exciting period of experimentation with steam, electric, and gasoline-powered motor vehicles. By 1908 the automobile age had arrived. In that year, Henry Ford placed the first Model T on the market and William C. Durant founded General Motors. Auspiciously, the first mile of concrete-surfaced road was paved in 1908, near Detroit.<sup>9</sup> Passenger car registrations jumped from about 8000 nationwide in 1900 to over one million in 1912 and then climbed to about 2.5 million in 1915. Motorized trucks also came into use in the early

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7 *The Lincoln Highway* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935), 2; Hokanson, 5-7.

8 John B. Rae, "The Internal-Combustion Engine on Wheels," in Kranzberg and Pursell, *Technology in Western Civilization*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 122.

9 Rae, 122-125; *The Lincoln Highway*, 5.

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twentieth century, and by 1912 there were about 60,000 registered trucks in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The phenomenal increase in motorized vehicles did not, however, spur a quick transformation of travel conditions. Fisher overestimated the possibility of "building" a transcontinental highway in time for travel to the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, given the general condition of existing roads and the lack of expertise in highway engineering. The concept of mass production had evolved, but the concept of good streets and roads that went somewhere besides uptown or around the block had not. In 1900, the United States had the poorest roads of all the industrialized nations. Excepting cobbled streets, there were only 200 miles of hard-surfaced roads in the whole country. Road conditions improved very little between then and 1912 when Fisher launched his highway plan. By that time, there were about 2,500,000 miles of road in the United States, 93 percent of them unimproved dirt roads. Iowa claimed about 107,000 miles of road in 1912, and the fact that most of these miles were still referred to as "wagon" roads speaks for their condition as well as their use. Iowa's mud was legendary; roads were virtually impassable in bad weather.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, railroads were approaching their peak trackage of over 10,000 miles in Iowa.<sup>12</sup> Railroads were clearly the superior mode of transportation, integrating almost every town into a national rail network. Ironically, this vast rail system added force to the public demand for good roads. Since all commodities had to be transported to and from rail connections, good roads were imperative in order to sustain the regional and national systems of commerce that railroads had helped to create. Most of the raw materials which had to pass over dirt roads to reach rail connections were agricultural products, in Iowa as elsewhere. This

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- 10 In Iowa the number of car registrations increased from 799 in 1905 to 147,078 in 1915. See Thompson, 100.
- 11 Rae, 133; Brindley, 34; Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988), 7.
- 12 Ray L. Bryant's *A Preliminary Guide to Iowa Railroads, 1850-1972* (privately printed, 1984) shows that trackage in Iowa peaked at about 10,500 miles in 1915, including steam lines, interurban lines, and terminal railway lines.

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explains why the federal Road Aid Act of 1916, which was the first step toward programmatic federal involvement, established a system of grants-in-aid for building farm-to-market roads as well as rural post roads to be administered by the Bureau of Public Roads in the Department of Agriculture.

In 1912, with the first federal aid for road building still four years in the future and a federal highway system even further away, Fisher was ahead of the times, both politically and practicably. But Fisher was unconcerned about facilitating interstate commerce, mail delivery, or national defense. He was simply interested in promoting the sale of automobiles and auto products, including the carbide headlights manufactured by *Prest-O-Lite*, another of his business ventures. He not only wanted an organized route, but he wanted it graded and surfaced. Gravel would help, but he and others attracted to his idea were more interested in the 170,000 miles or so of hard-surfaced streets and roads that were scattered around the country, roads surfaced with brick, asphalt, bitulithic, macadam, or concrete. To promote the coast-to-coast highway, Fisher gathered together a group of men who either were or would become leaders in the automotive and highway construction industries: Henry Joy, president of Packard Company; Arthur R. Pardington, a promoter affiliated with the Indiana good roads movement; A.Y. Gowen, president of Lehigh Cement Co., Frank A. Seiberling, president of Goodyear Tire Company; Roy Chapin, president of Hudson Motor Company; and Emory Clark, a banker and later head of Nash Motor Company. On July 1, 1913, this informal group officially organized as the Lincoln Highway Association, dedicated to the "establishment of a continuous improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all description without toll charges...in memory of Abraham Lincoln."<sup>13</sup>

After two months of planning, the Lincoln Highway Association announced the route on September 10, 1913, the final decision based on the directness of proposed roads between the terminal points of New York and San Francisco, natural advantages, and local support. Despite its notorious mud, Iowa was on the route because the Lincoln Highway Association wanted a route to connect Chicago with Omaha, gateway to the Platte River route, and there was a bridge across the Mississippi River at Clinton. F.A. Seiberling, one-time president of the Lincoln Highway Association called the 1913 route "a red line on the map from New York to San Francisco. Of the total distance of 3389 miles between these two points, less than half, or 1598

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13 Hokanson, 11; *The Lincoln Highway*, 14-17,23-24,45.



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miles, were improved, a very small part of this improvement connecting up to be of any national importance."<sup>14</sup> Within Iowa, there were several choices among equally poor options, since Iowa's roads "were uniformly unimproved and tended to zigzag all over the map following a haphazard arrangement of section-line roads." The selected Iowa route turned out to be the route most commonly used by adventuresome motorists traveling cross-country, which boosters had already named the "Iowa Official Trans-Continental Route."<sup>15</sup> This route more-or-less paralleled the Chicago and North Western Railroad and traversed Greene County. It entered Iowa at Clinton, passed westerly through Cedar Rapids, Tama, Marshalltown, Ames, Boone, Jefferson, and Carroll, then turned southwesterly through Denison and Logan to Council Bluffs-Omaha, a total of 358 miles across the state [Figure 1].

***The Greene County Corridor of the Lincoln Highway***

The story of the Lincoln Highway presents countless opportunities for connecting local history to the evolution of a national pattern of highways, both figuratively and literally. As Drake Hokanson has noted, "To know the Lincoln Highway and the continent it crossed, it is necessary to look at the road in piecemeal fashion, not as a line bridging the continent in a great leap but as an end-to-end collection of different roads, paths, and routes."<sup>16</sup> The highway began as an assortment of existing turnpikes, wagon roads, and established trails, and gradually evolved over the next fifteen years into an improved, well-marked, and highly promoted highway.

Citizens of Greene County worked hard to improve the route through their territory, displaying an enthusiasm that can be variously interpreted as boosterism or progressivism. Henry Haag, a banker and chairman of the Greene County Board of Supervisors, was also president of the Iowa Trans-State Highway, a group already promoting a state highway.<sup>17</sup> The Head family,

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- 14 F.A.Seiberling, "An Open Road -- The Lincoln Highway," *The Road-Maker* 12:11 (November 1918), 8.
- 15 Hokanson, 52; *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 14 September 1913.
- 16 Hokanson, 41.
- 17 E.B. Stillman, *Past and Present of Greene County* (1979, rpt. 1907), 209.

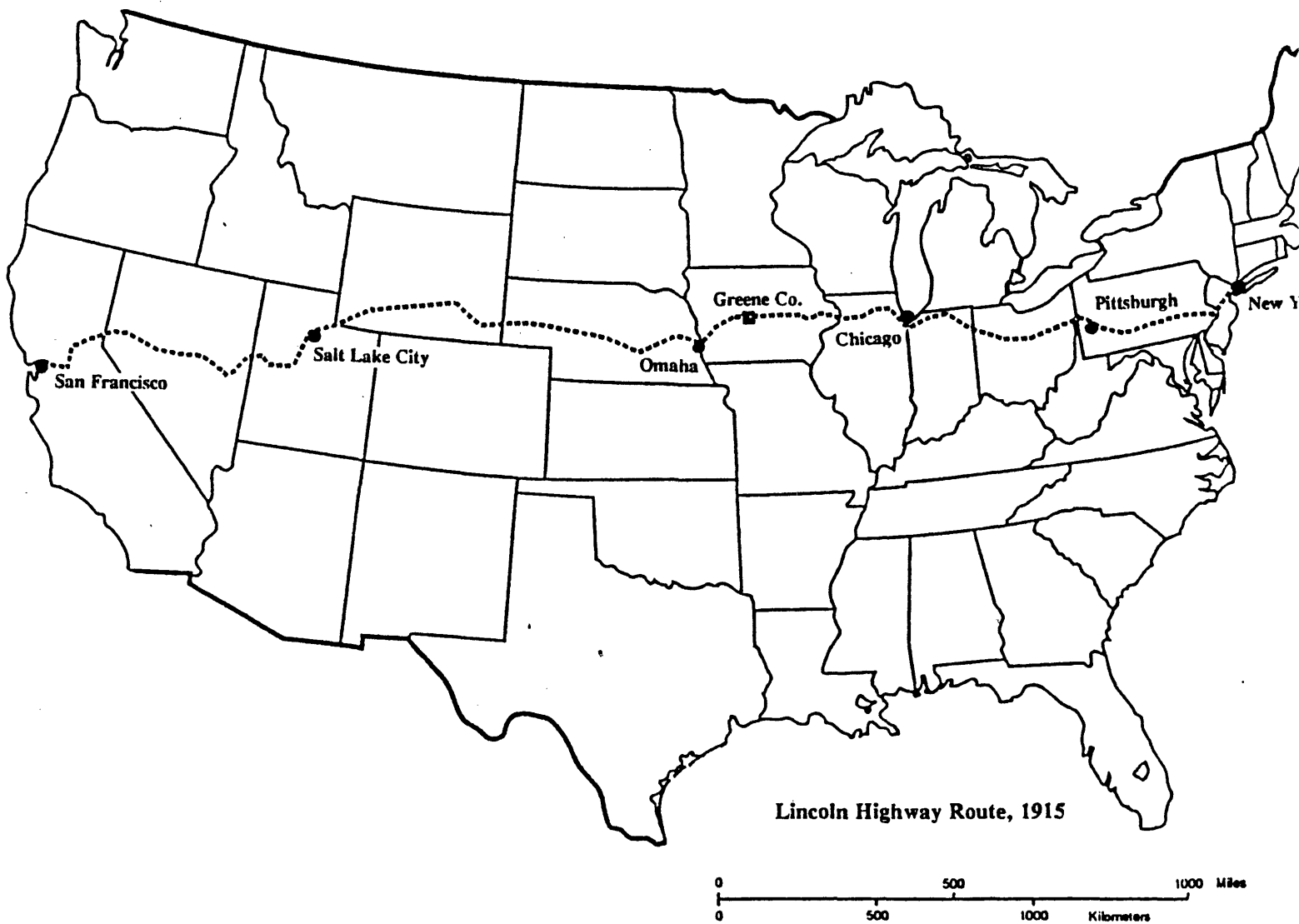
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Figure 1: The Lincoln Highway Route, 1915



Pages E9a, E16, E22, E28, and G1 contain restricted information and are not included in this document.

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prominent in banking and real estate, promoted the road grading and building that took place locally before 1913. When the Lincoln Highway route was announced, Capt. Albert Head first put up \$1000 toward building a reinforced concrete bridge over Buttrick's Creek and then offered a challenge match donation to raise a total of \$11,375 ~~dollars~~ toward draining, grading, and graveling the Lincoln Highway through the county.<sup>18</sup> George H. Gallup, father of the famous pollster, countered by promoting a plan to pave the road with concrete, a much more expensive undertaking. "Let's get the name of being the most progressive road builders in the United States by building the first 25 miles of cement road on the great Lincoln Memorial Highway," he urged in an opinion piece which appeared in the October 15, 1913 issue of the *Jefferson Bee*.

James Holden was also of importance because he was both a member of the Greene County Board of Supervisors and one of the original three members of the State Highway Commission.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Greene County's most visible cheerleader was Victor Lovejoy, publisher of the *Bee*. In 1913, almost every issue of the newspaper carried an article promoting good roads and, once Fisher's plan was announced, the transcontinental highway. Lovejoy continued to extoll the benefits of improved roads for the next several years, especially in 1919, the year Greene County voted on paving a portion of the Lincoln Highway.

Today, the legacy of citizen involvement is most evident in the bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln which stands on the courthouse square near the Lincoln Highway in Jefferson. Donated by lawyer E.B. Wilson and his wife, Minnie, it is the only statue of its kind dedicated specifically to the highway. Wilson also served as the Western State Counsel of the Lincoln Highway Association. Thousands of people reportedly attended the dedication on September 22, 1918, and the *Lincoln Highway Forum* displayed photographs of the statue on its cover, as did the *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin*.<sup>20</sup> The legacy also lives on in two

18 Stillman, 632; *Jefferson Bee*, 5 November 1913; *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 26 September 1913. The Head Memorial Bridge has been replaced.

19 Stillman, 291; Thompson, 77.

20 "The Story of the Lincoln Statue at Jefferson, Iowa" as told by Mr. E.B. Wilson to the Jefferson Rotary Club, February 19, 1948, transcribed from shorthand notes taken by Ann Jongeward, Jefferson Public Library; *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin* 6 (September-October 1918); *Lincoln Highway Forum*, November 1918.

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monuments bearing busts of Lincoln that James E. Moss erected on his farm north of Scranton.<sup>21</sup> Moss, a prominent farmer and Civil War veteran, was a sustaining member of the Lincoln Highway Association. In a 1921 letter to the Association he proudly wrote that the highway would "be the greatest memorial in the world in memory of one of our greatest citizens...."<sup>22</sup>

In addition to many active highway supporters, Greene County also possessed some "natural advantages" which probably were attractive to the Lincoln Highway Association and may have influenced its decision on the route through Iowa. Geologically, the county presents a glaciated surface, scoured by the Wisconsin Drift, youngest of the three Ice Age glaciers which determined Iowa's topography. In the Wisconsin Drift area, where there was little natural drainage development, farming depended on the construction of extensive manmade drainage systems to dry up the bogs, sloughs, and swamps. Situated at the southern extreme of the drift area, Greene County possessed slightly better natural drainage than areas to the north, notably six creeks and rivers, including the Raccoon River which empties into the Des Moines River in the Mississippi River watershed.

Despite the advantage of creeks and rivers, lack of drainage was still an impediment to agriculture. Beginning in about 1905, Greene County farmers began to organize themselves into drainage districts containing anywhere from 500 to 4000 acres depending on the natural boundaries of a watershed. Boundaries were first determined by a surveyor or engineer, who would also size the tile and set the amount each farmer should pay according to a benefit schedule. By 1912, tiling was well underway, and by the time the Lincoln Highway was completely paved through Greene County in 1924, many of the 180 drainage districts that are in place today had been established. Hundreds of miles of tile ditches were dug by hand.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the land through Greene County was not only fairly level; it was fairly well-drained, too.

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21 *Bee*, 12 May 1926.

22 As quoted in Peter T. Harstad and Diana J. Fox, "Dusty Doughboys on the Lincoln Highway: The 1919 Army Convoy in Iowa, *Palimpsest* 56 (May-June 1975), 84.

23 *Greene County Drainage Minutes, 1905-1924, passim.*

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Before paving began in 1920, drain tiles had been installed parallel to the road for about half of distance through the county; the other half of the road drainage system was completed as part of the 1920 and 1924 paving contracts.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, by 1913 most of the roads in Greene County had been graveled, an achievement which caused the *Des Moines Register and Leader* to proclaim them "the best all weather roads in Iowa." The county continued to attract attention as a "pioneer" in gravel road construction for the next few years.<sup>25</sup> These improvements were in part attributable to abundant gravel deposits in almost every township. Gravel was not only readily available, but since deposits had a minimum of sand and large rocks, the quality was immediately suitable for road surfacing. According to Dewey Schilling, a farmer who took part in road dragging and graveling,

We just drove the horses and wagon into the pit and started scooping. It would take about half an hour for three men to load a wagon to the top of the twelve-inch sides. Sometimes we would add a 2"x4" extension. As the pit got deeper, we would add an extra team of horses to pull the wagon out, then unhitch the extra team for the trip to where the gravel was to be dumped, which was usually less than three miles.<sup>26</sup>

As was true throughout most of Iowa and the Midwest, public roads in Greene County were laid out on section lines. When the "public land" states were surveyed into rectangular townships and sections, a 66' (one chain) right-of-way was surveyed on each side of every section, with property owners on either side of the centerline contributing one-half, or 33' for road. Following the path of least resistance, Midwestern states tended to establish almost all local roads on the section line rights-of-way. The emerging grid system of roads thus accommodated cartographic and political convenience, with little regard for the logical dictates

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24 1919 Plan and Profile of Proposed Inter-County Highway, Federal Aid Project No. 39, Greene County; 1923 Plan and Profile of Proposed Improvement on the Primary Road System, Federal Aid Project 30, Greene County, East and West of Jefferson Extending Federal Aid Project No 39 to the County Lines.

25 *Register and Leader*, 26 September 1913; *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin 3* (September-October 1915), 14; 4 (July 1916), cover story.

26 Dewey Schilling, interview with Bob Ausberger, 12 December 1991.

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of topography.<sup>27</sup> One of the first challenges that early highway planners and engineers faced was how to work with and modify the existing grid system in order to produce main arteries that would facilitate the smooth flow of vehicle traffic.

Graveled roads were not necessarily roads of the "first-class" category, although in 1904 the highway commission began to develop technical specifications for constructing earthen roads, which constituted the vast majority of Iowa's 102,000 miles of road. The commission advised county engineers that the traveled roadway should be eighteen feet with a rounding contour, that steep grades should be eliminated, and that the road should be surfaced with gravel, broken stone, or some other wearing coat. The highway commission also took steps to upgrade the quality of bridges and culverts by formulating standard loadings for bridge design.<sup>28</sup>

Early in 1913 the Greene County Board of Supervisors established an official county road system, 126 miles which connected all towns. This system, as recorded on the 1913 Official Map of Greene County, included most of the Lincoln Highway route, announced later that year. In April of 1913 the Eureka Bridge was completed, a five-span, 420' concrete arch bridge over the Raccoon River. Local transcontinental highway boosters, anticipating Greene County's inclusion on the map, declared Eureka Bridge to be the largest of its kind along the entire cross-country route.<sup>29</sup>

After the route was formally announced in September 1913, the local campaign to raise match funds for highway construction got underway. Promotional meetings were staged in Jefferson, Scranton, and Grand Junction. Thomas H. MacDonald, secretary of the State Highway Commission, appeared as the featured speaker at the Jefferson meeting, after which various members of the audience pledged a total of \$2500 in subscriptions. E.B. Wilson and Victor

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27 Thompson, 4, 93.

28 Thompson, 93-96.

29 Bee, 26 January 1913; 2 April 1913; 21 May 1913.

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Lovejoy pitched the highway plan to a large audience at Scranton, where a band provided additional entertainment.<sup>30</sup>

With the initial festivities aside, local citizens got down to work. In February 1914, a committee representing the Lincoln Highway in Greene County asked the Board of Supervisors to allocate \$20,000 for grading and preparing the road for hard surfacing. The board agreed to spend \$15,000 if an additional \$5,000 could be raised from private citizens. At the time, the local committee was operating on the assumption that the national Lincoln Highway Association would raise enough money by the end of the year to pay for paving the entire route. That plan never materialized, but local supporters nonetheless raised the required \$5,000 from subscriptions, and Greene County took steps to prepare the thirty miles of road under its jurisdiction. By the end of the year, Greene County had 400 miles of graveled road, and the Head Memorial Bridge over Buttrick's Creek, a two-span concrete arch bridge, was open for travel. Greene County was among five counties in Iowa that spent a reported total of \$140,000 to improve the Lincoln Highway route in 1914.<sup>31</sup>

Improving the highway was not without its snags. The route through Greene County did not align with the route adopted by Boone County, one county east, so in 1914 Greene County agreed to adjust its route east of Grand Junction so that the two roads met [Figure 2]. Adjusting the route also satisfied some safety concerns. Coincidentally, the Highway Commission was just then studying the problem of dangerous railroad crossings, and the adjusted route eliminated two crossings between Ogden (Boone County) and Grand Junction.<sup>32</sup>

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30 *Bee*, 5 November 1913 .

31 Greene County Board of Supervisors' Minutes, H:33 (16 February 1914); *Bee*, 18 February 1914; *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin* 2 (February 1914), 3-4; (October 1914), 10-11 and (November 1914), 3,15; *Collier's*, 9 January 1915. A Lincoln Highway subscription from the 1914 fund-raising campaign is located in the Greene County Historical Museum in Jefferson. It reads: "Realizing the benefit of the Lincoln Highway and desiring to assist in meeting the requirements whereby the Board of Supervisors will expend \$15,000 on said Highway during the year 1914, I hereby subscribe the sum of *Twenty-Five and no/100* dollars, same to be paid on or before March 25, 1914. *L.B. Kendall.*"

32 *Bee*, 25 February 1914; Thompson, 98-99.



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**The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**

After the initial flurry of activity, things fell flat during World War I. Locally, Greene County communities directed their energies to war bond drives, Red Cross volunteer work, and similar efforts. The national Lincoln Highway Association abandoned its overly ambitious plan of paving the whole route within a year. Although the 1914 AAA guide book and the 1915 official Lincoln Highway guide provided motorists with fairly specific written directions (there was no such thing as a detailed map), those who were bound for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915 quickly discovered that most of the route west of Chicago was well-marked but still in a state of "natural" road. Graded and graveled was as good as it got. Henry Joy, president of the Lincoln Highway Association singled out Iowa's roads as the among the worst he encountered during his 1915 trip: "Today, in the rich state of Iowa, not a wheel turns outside the paved streets of her cities during or for sometime after the frequent heavy rains. Every farm is isolated. Social intercourse ceases. School attendance is impossible. Transportation is at a standstill."<sup>33</sup> On the positive side, by year's end the thirteen Iowa counties through which the Lincoln Highway passed had spent a total of \$250,000 to prepare the roadbed, and practically all of the bridges along the route were of reinforced concrete construction.<sup>34</sup> Highway promoters in Greene County remained optimistic. In December of 1915, John Thompson and Harvey Strong engaged in a road race across Iowa to test the quality of the Lincoln Highway against that of the River to River Route, which ran from Davenport to Council Bluffs. Thompson, driving the Lincoln Highway, won the race "in spite of the many imperfections in the road," reported the Victor Lovejoy, editor of the *Bee*, which he hoped "the next year or two [would] see corrected."<sup>35</sup>

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33 As quoted in Hokanson, 97.

34 *The Literary Digest*, 27 November 1915. An article appearing in the November-December 1917 issue of the *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin* (p. 12) quotes a Lincoln Highway Official as stating that Iowa was a leader in the character and quality of its bridges.

35 *Bee*, 8 December 1915.

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**The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928***The Lincoln Highway as State Primary Road No. 6*

After passage of the 1916 Federal Road Act, the Greene County Board of Supervisors authorized the County Auditor to apply for aid in order to continue improving the road.<sup>36</sup> The federal act provided an appropriation of \$75 million over a five-year period, to be distributed among states with established highway departments and which also would match federal funds on a 50-50 basis. The Iowa General Assembly accepted these provisions in 1917, and the Highway Commission began to plan a state road system. It took another two years, however, before the state road system was designated. Opposition to centralized control remained strong across Iowa; and despite the obvious benefits of paved roads, the potential costs gave most county supervisors nightmares. Politicians discovered that it cost them votes – especially rural votes – to support highway "paving." Consequently, when Iowa's 6500-mile system was designated in 1919, it was called the "Primary Road System," and the State Highway Commission was directed to aid counties in making "hard-surfaced improvements" to highways on the system.<sup>37</sup> The Lincoln Highway was subsequently designated Highway No. 6 on the Primary Road System.

Once the state highway system was set, Greene County immediately applied for aid to pave over six miles of the Lincoln Highway, extending approximately three miles east and three miles west of Jefferson. On April 2, 1919, the *Jefferson Bee* announced: "Greene County will be the FIRST county in Iowa to accept Federal Aid for paving the county roads." Although several other counties also received federal aid for paving, this 6.5 stretch and the "seedling mile" east of Cedar Rapids remained the only concrete-paved surface along the Lincoln Highway route through Iowa until 1924. Perhaps this was because roads had to be graded and drained before they could be paved. Between 1905 and 1919, Greene County had spent nearly \$2 million on drainage projects and nearly all its designated "primary roads" were ready for paving. County residents were overwhelmingly in favor of paving roads. On July 28, 1919,

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36 Greene County Board of Supervisors' Minutes, H:278 (1 November 1916) show that Greene County pledged \$25,000 to roads, a sum to be matched by \$25,000 in federal monies.

37 *Bee*, 29 November 1916; Thompson, 73.

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they voted three-to-one in favor of a \$1 million bond issue to pave not just six and a half miles, but the entire primary system in Greene County.<sup>38</sup>

Prior to the election, the Board of Supervisors appointed a local committee to tour Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois for the purpose of inspecting concrete paved roads in these states. As reported in the *Bee*, the committee "came home convinced that concrete roads...are practicable, durable, and a good investment for the people of Greene County."<sup>39</sup> Just three days before the election, the celebrated Motor Transport Corps traveling the Lincoln Highway encamped at the county fairgrounds in Jefferson. The 280 men in the Army convoy, which included a young Lieutenant Colonel by the name of Dwight D. Eisenhower, were treated to hot showers at the Jefferson Cement plant, a banquet at the country club, and entertainment by the Goodyear Tire Band (which traveled with the convoy courtesy of F.A. Seiberling, President of the Lincoln Highway Association and President of Goodyear Tire Company). Meanwhile, local auto enthusiasts inspected the Cadillacs, Franklins, Packards, and Dodge cars as well as the ambulances, light trucks, heavy trucks, and tank trucks which made up the motor transport fleet.<sup>40</sup>

The convoy traveled for official purposes. World War I focused attention on the need for a system of improved highways for national defense purpose. Suddenly, good roads appeared on the national political agenda. The Motor Transport Corps thus traveled to gather data on vehicle performance, to demonstrate the need for a comprehensive system of national highways, and to inspect the Lincoln Highway for suitability as a transcontinental military defense highway, since it was the most improved transcontinental route in existence in 1919. Moving on a strict schedule, the entourage generally held course on the Lincoln Highway, although there was a short detour from the "official route" to visit Glidden, home of Merle D. Hay, the first American killed in the war. Highway promoters nonetheless took full advantage of the grand celebration in Jefferson. Officials from the Lincoln Highway Association took their turn at the podium, and Dr. J.K. Johnson, Sr., one of the strongest local advocates, delivered a

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38 Thompson, 101; *Bee*, 11 June 1919, 2 July 1919, and 30 July 1919.

39 *Bee*, 23 July 1919.

40 *Bee*, 25 June 1919; 16 July 1919; 30 July 1919.

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timely address in support of concrete paving.<sup>41</sup> Greene County voters thus were well-primed for the paving bond election.

Although Greene County residents showed they were ready to pave their entire primary road system, only the 6.5 mile Lincoln Highway stretch running east and west of Jefferson was paved in 1920. In addition, the alignment was straightened at the Head Memorial Bridge, over Buttrick's Creek east of Jefferson, and a steep grade at Danger Hill, west of Jefferson, was reduced to six percent, producing a "spectacular" road cut (for Iowa).<sup>42</sup> The highway route through the City of Jefferson was paved with concrete in 1921, replacing an earlier asphalt surface that proved to be of inferior quality.<sup>43</sup>

The reason for a smaller scale project lay with federal and state officials, who would not consent to paving so much mileage in one small area.<sup>44</sup> As things turned out, this was for the best since paving a road with concrete was a much more difficult task than it seemed. In the first place, road paving took not bags of cement, but carloads, and it took piles of sand and gravel, not wagonloads hauled from small local deposits. In order to handle the quantities and materials needed, the contractor, F.E. Marsh Co. of Jefferson, purchased a ten-acre storage site near the Jefferson Cement Products Co. and constructed a special switch track from the Milwaukee line to the cement plant and storage site. Preparations were moving along smoothly until the first carloads of cement arrived. Shipped loose in open cars in order to avoid the time and expense of handling sacks, the cement passed through a rainstorm and arrived with a five-inch crust. After about six months of planning and delays, a fleet of fourteen dump trucks

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41 Peter T. Harstad and Diana J. Fox, "Dusty Doughboys on the Lincoln Highway; the 1919 Army Convoy in Iowa," *Palimpsest* 56 (May-June 1975), 78; U.S. War Department, *Annual Reports, 1920*, vol. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1921), 1789-1790; Lincoln Highway Association, *A Picture of Progress on the Lincoln Way* (Detroit, MI, 1920), 13-14; "Transport Train Proving Tremendous Success," *The Lincoln Highway Forum* 2:12 (August 15, 1919).

42 *Bee*, 15 October 1919; *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin* 9 (August-September 1920), 8.

43 *Bee*, 30 March 1921.

44 *Bee*, 24 March 1920.

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The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

began hauling the premixed sand, gravel, and cement to the paving site, where it was mixed with water from Hardin Creek. The first load of concrete poured onto the road on September 25, 1920, at a point about one hundred yards west of the Hardin Creek bridge. Greene County cheered this as the first concrete paving on the rural Lincoln Highway route in Iowa, ignoring a two-mile segment near Cedar Rapids paved in 1919 because it wasn't on the "official" highway route when the paving was done.<sup>45</sup>

Preparations proved to be more complex than anticipated. Pouring the concrete also presented some unanticipated challenges. Workers learned that they had to adjust the consistency of the concrete for pouring on slopes. Dr. J. K. Johnson, Jr., who worked with county engineer S.J. Melson as an inspector, recalled that when the paving was done on the western outskirts of Jefferson, "they poured it too wet and in front of the hospital it crept downhill. They worked until midnight to try and get it pulled back. That section was always rough."<sup>46</sup>

When the paving was completed, this section became 6.5 of the 422 miles of concrete road then in existence along the entire Lincoln Highway route. Out of a total 3305 transcontinental miles (at that time), 2863 of them were considered to be "improved" roads, but the type of surfacing material varied widely among concrete, brick, bitulithic, macadam, asphalt, creosote block, granite block, and graded gravel. Most of the permanently hard-surfaced roads still lay east of the Mississippi.<sup>47</sup>

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 marked the beginning of a sustained highway program and ultimately assured that Greene County could complete its paving plan. This act authorized state appropriations for several years in advance, making it possible to phase projects with some confidence that funding would be available through to completion. It also authorized a national highway system. Iowa's Primary Road System met all stipulated requirements under the Federal Act. From the state system, the Lincoln Highway, the Jefferson Highway (north-south route), the River to River Route, and several others were incorporated into the new interstate

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45 *Bee*, 21 April 1920, 17 May 1920, and 29 September 1920.

46 Dr. J.K. Johnson to Bob Ausberger, 14 September 1991.

47 *Bee*, 25 January 1921.

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highway system. It would be several years, however, before motorists were aware that they were traveling on "federal" highways.<sup>48</sup>

After the towns of Grand Junction and Scranton appeared before the Greene County Board of Supervisors in May of 1923 to request primary road funds for paving the Lincoln Highway through their corporate limits, there was new talk of finally completing the whole paving job. Several months of discussion ensued before the supervisors decided to issue more bonds and apply to the State Highway Commission for federal aid. In November of 1923, the Board of Supervisors awarded the paving contract to Empire Construction Company of Des Moines. By late 1924, the entire thirty miles of Lincoln Highway route through Greene County was concrete surfaced, making Greene County the first in Iowa to complete this undertaking.<sup>49</sup> Langwith's 1925 Motor Trails Map of Iowa reveals the status of the Lincoln Highway a year later. By then, motorists could travel paved road across Clinton County, from Mt. Vernon to Cedar Rapids, short distances on either side of Belle Plaine and Marshalltown, and across Greene County. The rest of the highway was a mixture of graveled roads, improved dirt roads, and unimproved dirt roads. Iowa had barely started to lift itself out of the mud.

Ironically, the very highway system that the Lincoln Highway Association helped to create also rendered the organization somewhat unnecessary. It nonetheless remained active for a few more years, working with state highway departments to promote hard surfacing along the entire route and to eliminate grade crossings; providing travelers with guides, maps, and other paraphernalia; and keeping track of highway statistics. In 1913, the year the Lincoln Highway was announced, fewer than 150 cars crossed the United States on the route. A decade later, 25,000 automobiles carried tourists from the Atlantic to the Pacific. By 1924, the Lincoln Highway was no longer a mere series of connected trails. Its 3,143 official miles began to resemble fully the Main Street of America its promoters had envisioned. By the end of 1926, over \$89 million had been spent on construction and maintenance by the eleven states the highway traversed.<sup>50</sup>

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48 Thompson, 136, 144-146.

49 Bee, 3 October 1923; 21 November 1923; 10 September 1924; 22 October 1924.

50 *Lincoln Highway Guide*, 1924, p. 109; Gael S. Hoag, Lincoln Highway Association Secretary, to Officers, Directors and Founders, memorandum of 28 March 1927.

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The creation of an interstate highway system eventually led to a uniform system of numbering, which replaced the maze of markers and signs erected by competing road associations. Iowa alone had 64 registered trails and highways, each of them sponsored by a different organization which issued guidebooks and identified its roads with distinctive colors and symbols. The numbering scheme adopted for the new federal highway system in the mid-1920s left the Lincoln Highway's identity splintered into U.S. routes 1, 30, 30N, 30S, 530, 40, and 50. Iowa State Primary Road No. 6 became U.S. Highway No. 30. New rules banned all non-government road signs, and the old highway markers began to come down.<sup>51</sup> As one of its last official acts, the Lincoln Highway Association petitioned the American Association of State Highway Officials in 1928 for permission to place small concrete posts along the route. 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. On September 1, 1928, Boy Scout troops across America installed the markers at preplanned locations, approximately one mile apart.<sup>52</sup>

So the Lincoln Highway remained a specially marked road for those who cared to know. After the interstate system took on its safe but sterile four-lane divided form, the Lincoln Highway became one of the cherished "blue" highways, so named for the blue AAA automobile guides which had accompanied millions of travelers across the land. Gradually, though, the memorial markers disappeared from the highway's side, some to carelessness, some to vandalism, some to road improvements, some to roadside development, and some to concerned citizens who placed them in parks, museums, gardens, or private yards in order to rescue them from oblivion. Few of the memorial markers remain, and only a dozen or so are reportedly in their original locations. Three of these Lincoln Highway memorial markers are located along the

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51 There were two types of markers for the Lincoln Highway prior to 1928. The first consisted of red, white, and blue bands painted on poles, fence posts, stakes, rocks, or other inanimate objects. In 1920, the markers were upgraded with painted metal or porcelain signs in red, white, and blue with the words "Lincoln Highway" and the letter "L" in a white field. See "The History of the Lincoln Highway," presented by Tony Vorsten, Vice President, Iowa Highway 30 Association at the 1974 Annual Meeting, typescript located at State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City. None of these markers remain along the highway.

52 Hokanson, 110-111.

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highway in Greene County, the one county in Iowa which went out of its way to welcome the highway. A fourth marker resides in the Greene County Museum in Jefferson.

*The Lincoln Highway in Review*

Several Lincoln Highway segments and individual properties in Greene, Carroll, and Boone counties reflect the initial development of America's first transcontinental highway beginning in 1912 through 1928 [Figure 3]. Route changes, realignments, and improvements which took place during these years determined the course of the Lincoln Highway through this area until the 1950s.

1913 Route

In 1913, Greene County became the first county in Iowa to grade and gravel a rural section of the Lincoln Highway. Approximately 30 miles were graveled from the Boone County line to the Carroll County line. The alignment of the highway at that time is shown on Figure 2. The following properties are associated exclusively with the original 1913 route:

*West Beaver Creek abandoned segment*

*Buttricks Creek abandoned segment*

*abandoned segment at Danger Hill (included in Raccoon River Segment)*

As shown on the map, the earliest route left the west edge of the town of Beaver (in Boone County) and went south across the Chicago & North Western railroad tracks. The road then turned west and went the last mile in Boone County on the south side of the tracks. At that point, the highway route went north, back across the tracks. It then turned west and ran three miles straight into Grand Junction on the north side of the tracks. About three blocks inside town limits, the road turned back south, across the tracks for the third time, then turned west onto Grand Junction's Main Street.<sup>53</sup>

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53 *Official Automobile Blue Book, Vol. 5: Mississippi River to Pacific Coast.* New York: The Automobile Blue Book Publ. Co., 1914.; 1912 Map of Greene County, M. Huebinger, C.E.



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Within the space of about a year the route was shifted slightly [also shown on Figure 2]. The reason for this shift was that Boone County had changed its route, so Greene County needed to shift its route in order link the highway at the county line. Safety concerns also were behind the 1914 decision to take the road straight east from Ogden, in Boone County, bypass Beaver on the north, and then turn south to enter Grand Junction on the north edge of town. As previously noted, the original 1913 route crossed Chicago and North Western's railroad tracks in three places between the towns of Beaver and Grand Junction. The new route meant crossing the tracks only once, on the north edge of Grand Junction. Beaver, the smallest of the three towns concerned, was the obvious loser since the new route took traffic away from its main street. This route into Grand Junction was followed until 1921, when the route was changed again. The following property is associated exclusively with the 1914 route shift:

*Little Beaver Creek Bridge*1919-1920 Improvements

Prior to 1920, the Lincoln Highway was, at best, a graded and graveled road; it was not hard-surfaced. On April 2, 1919, the *Jefferson Bee* announced: "Greene county will be the FIRST county in Iowa to accept Federal Aid for paving the country roads." The country roads to be paved were several miles of the Lincoln Highway running east and west from Jefferson. The years between 1920 and 1924, when the highway paving was extended through the entire county, were watershed years in terms of setting the highway route through Greene County for the next three decades.

Under a resolution passed by the Greene County Board of Supervisors in April 1919, two segments of road were paved:

Commencing at the Head Memorial bridge over Buttrick's Creek, four miles east of Jefferson, on the Lincoln Highway, and coming west to the corporation line, a mile east of the Milwaukee depot.

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Commencing at the corporation line west of Jefferson, and running thence west to the main Lincoln Highway corner southwest from the top of Danger Hill<sup>54</sup>

Work also included reducing the grade at Danger Hill and eliminating a 90 degree jog at the top of the hill. Construction plans and specifications prepared by the Iowa Highway Commission in 1919 as well as contracts for grading and paving awarded in December 1919 indicate that actual road work occurred in 1920. The following segment is associated with these 1920 improvements:

*Raccoon River Segment (from Danger Hill east)*1921-24 Improvements

In 1921, an agreement reached between the Greene County and Boone County supervisors prompted another shift in the route. Their agreement called for the route to run south of the railroad tracks all the way from Grand Junction east to Boone. This eliminated all but one of the railroad crossings for a distance of about 36 miles between Scranton (Greene County) and Boone.<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, the highway from Grand Junction to Boone was graded, and new bridges and culverts were constructed. One segment of the historic highway is exclusively associated with this route shift:

*Grand Junction Segment (rural portion)*

Grand Junction paved its Main Street in 1923, and paving the Lincoln Highway through Greene County was completed in 1924. By this time, the route had been adjusted to everyone's satisfaction. Iowa Highway Commission plans and specifications called for a total of 16.6 miles of paving in four sections. Section A extended 5.25 miles from the Carroll County line east to the town of Scranton. Section B ran 5.4 miles from Scranton east through Danger Hill, where the curve was slightly realigned prior to paving. Section C extended 2.8 miles from Buttrick's

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54 as reported in the *Bee*, 2 April 1919.

55 *Bee*, 1 September 1920; 5 January 1921.

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Creek to Grand Junction, and Section D extended 3.1 miles from Grand Junction to the Boone County line.

The following properties are associated with the 1923 and 1924 road paving projects:

*West Greene County Rural Segment*

*Raccoon River Rural Segment (from Danger Hill west)*

*Grand Junction Segment*

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**F. Associated Property Types**

**I. Name of Property Type: RURAL LINCOLN HIGHWAY ROUTE**

**a. Description**

The rural route includes all segments of the route outside corporate city limits that are still in use as county roads. Most of the route is paved, although there are some graveled segments that were part of the route from 1913 through 1919 but never were included in the paving construction which took place between 1920 and 1924. The paved segments were part of county and township road systems until 1919, when they were included in the state highway system. In 1921, they were absorbed into the new federal highway system. When U.S. 30 was realigned in the 1950s, the paved route was returned to the control of Greene County, which provides routine maintenance. The rural route generally retains the original 66' right-of-way, culverts, drainage intakes, and drain tiles, and often retains bridges, right-of-way markers, and other features. Associated properties, such as property markers, can occasionally be found along these sections.

**b. Significance**

The Lincoln Highway was created out of existing roads which, for the most part, connected with the main streets of towns and cities along the route. State highway departments were in their infancy, road engineering standards were rudimentary, and there was no separate federal highway department. The Lincoln Highway Association, which selected the initial route and subsequently promoted it, intended to establish the most direct route from coast to coast traveling over the best roads then obtainable, and eventually to improve the route with hard surfacing. In one sense, the association, like all highway associations operating at the time, was engaged in an endeavor to speed up the natural progression of pathways and trails to wagon roads and stage routes to general public thoroughfares. As the first transcontinental route, the highway assumed considerable status. Towns which were not included on the announced route in September 1913 immediately began to campaign for having the route changed. In addition, the Iowa State Highway Commission started

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**Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**

promulgating new highway engineering and safety standards. For these reasons, there followed a period of uncertainty while local entities studied their options and negotiated route changes.

Under Criterion A, rural highway segments therefore embody an important phase in the history of transportation and the evolution of highway engineering standards since these make up the majority of the route. Individual engineering structures, such as bridges, may also embody distinctive design, materials, or construction techniques and would therefore also be significant under Criterion C.

**c:     Registration Requirements**

Rural Lincoln Highway segments should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

**Location**

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway during its period of historical significance: 1912 through 1928. Historical data, such as old maps, automobile guides, engineering plans, or photographs should verify that the property is associated with the historic route.

**Design, Workmanship, and Materials**

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a highway. These features include the alignment, the right-of-way, the plan and profile (comprising cut banks, fill slopes, traveled roadway width, and grade), and appurtenant features (bridges, culverts, cattle passes, road drainage systems), although a small number of these features may have been modified or replaced. Segments which have been widened would qualify only if the modification occurred during the historic period. Pavement is an inherently fragile feature of highways and is routinely covered over and replaced, and some segments of the route were never paved. Therefore, while original pavement would be a desired feature of nominated segments, it is not a registration requirement.

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## Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

### Setting

Nominated segments of the Lincoln Highway should be sufficiently long enough to preserve the feeling and setting of a continuous road. Specified lengths cannot be reasonably set for this requirement, but an ideal would be an uninterrupted view down the road to the horizon. The setting should reflect the same general character of the historic period, with minimal intrusive elements. Associated properties from the historic period which line the old route, such as monuments and property markers, add to the historic setting.

## II. Name of Property Type: URBAN LINCOLN HIGHWAY ROUTE

### a. Description

The Lincoln Highway purposely linked the main streets of towns and cities along the route across the United States. Through Greene County, the Lincoln Highway traverses the main streets of three towns: Scranton, Grand Junction, and Jefferson, the county seat. In these settings, the road is flanked by historic buildings within downtown centers and residential neighborhoods. Gas stations, cabin courts, service garages, and other travel-related businesses are located adjacent to the highway at the periphery and downtown. In Jefferson, the highway travels along one side of the town square, passing the county courthouse.

### b. Significance

When the Lincoln Highway was formed, one of the goals was to connect towns and centers of trade. In order to win local support for the transcontinental highway, it was natural for the national promoters to team up with local "good-roads men" and to route the highway through as many towns as possible without losing sight of the direct-route goal. Urban centers therefore were focal points for the route, and the first segments to be paved. The tourist-related businesses which sprang up along the highway, in particular, reflect the new mobility and independence which the automobile brought and the role it played in community development. Urban segments of the Lincoln Highway especially are associated

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## Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

with the growth of automobile tourism as well as with the development of transportation in the United States between 1912 and 1928.

### c. Registration Requirements

Urban Lincoln Highway segments should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

#### Location

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway between 1912 and 1928. Historical data, such as maps, automobile guides, photographs, and engineering plans should verify that a property is associated with the historic route. Endpoints will be determined by the presence of associated roadside businesses from the historic period, but will not extend beyond the corporate limits as they existed in 1928.

#### Design and Workmanship, and Materials

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a highway within incorporated town limits. These features include the alignment, the right-of-way, the plan and profile (comprising cut banks, fill slopes, traveled roadway width, and grade), and appurtenant features (bridges, culverts, and road drainage systems), although a small number of these features may have been modified or replaced. Segments which have been widened would qualify only if the modification occurred during the historic period. Pavement is an inherently fragile feature of highways and is routinely covered over and replaced. Curbs and sidewalks in this setting also are subject to replacement. Therefore, while original pavement, curbs, and sidewalks would be desired features of nominated segments, they are not a registration requirement.

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## Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

### Setting

A majority of associated properties should date from the historic period (pre-1928) and should represent typical commercial buildings, roadside businesses, or residential neighborhoods from that period. The setting should reflect the character of the historic period, with minimal intrusive elements. Associated properties from the historic period which line the old route add to the historic character of the highway.

### III. Name of Property Type: ABANDONED LINCOLN HIGHWAY ROUTE

#### a. Description

Abandoned sections of the Lincoln Highway are no longer accessible to normal highway traffic. These sections are unmaintained and exposed to weathering and other forces of disintegration. None of these segments ever was paved and were not maintained as graveled roads or other traveled pathways after being abandoned. They appear as abbreviated segments, created when curves were straightened or the highway was rerouted. Appurtenant structures, such as culverts and bridges, occasionally are present.

#### b. Significance

The Lincoln Highway through Greene County was rerouted and realigned more than once between 1913 and 1924 as transportation safety and highway engineering standards evolved. Abandoned segments in particular reflect the evolution of highway design and engineering standards during this period as curves were straightened, hills were graded, and the route was changed to avoid rail crossings. Some abandoned segments fell into disuse after access was cut off, but others remained in private use as farm lanes and field access paths. Under Criterion A, they serve as reminders that the Lincoln Highway was conceived as an amalgam of existing roads created before the emergence of professional highway engineering and design standards.



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**Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**

**c. Registration Requirements**

Abandoned Lincoln Highway segments should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

Location

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway between 1912 and 1928. Historical data, such as maps, automobile guides, photographs, and engineering plans should verify that a property is associated with the historic route.

Design, Workmanship, and Materials

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a highway according to the standards of the time it was built. These features include the alignment, evidence of a plan and profile (comprising cut banks, fill slopes, and grade), and appurtenant features (bridges, culverts, and road drainage systems). Decades of abandonment have exposed these segments of the road to the damaging effects of nature. Gully washes, slumped cut banks, overgrown vegetation, deteriorated appurtenant structures, and other such conditions are acceptable as long as the overall appearance and character of a highway alignment are retained.

Setting

Nominated segments of abandoned route should be of sufficient length to preserve the character of a continuous road, although measured limits cannot reasonably be set for this requirement. The setting should reflect the character of the historic period, with minimal intrusive elements except for those which are part of the natural weathering process. Appurtenant structures from the historic period add to the historic setting.

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## Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

### IV. Name of Property Type: ENGINEERING STRUCTURES

#### a. Description

The Lincoln Highway corridor includes many engineering structures, such as bridges, culverts, cattle passes and drainage systems, which are integral elements of the route. For the most part, these are board-formed, reinforced concrete structures which have been little altered since the initial highway paving was completed in 1924.

#### b. Significance

Where the roadway is ineligible for listing because its plan and profile has been altered, the associated engineering structures are tangible reminders of the route's location. They also reflect the tremendous importance of good drainage in order to construct and maintain a highway through the glaciated topography of north central Iowa. Furthermore, the board-formed concrete bridges and culverts of the 1910s and 1920s reflect the introduction of reinforced concrete as an important new material in road and highway construction, and they are significant representations of a period of evolving standards in highway construction techniques. Generally, engineering structures will be eligible under Criterion A as a reflection of evolving highway engineering and design standards. Some individual structures, such as bridges, may also embody distinctive engineering design, materials, or construction techniques. Such structures would also be eligible under Criterion C.

#### c. Registration Requirements

Engineering structures along the Lincoln Highway should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

##### Location

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway between 1912 and 1928. Structures built prior to 1912 qualify if they became a part of the official route during that period. Historical data, such as engineering plans and photographs should verify that a property is associated with the historic route.

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**Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**Design, Workmanship, and Materials

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a highway engineering structure associated with the route. These include retention of key building materials, proportions, patterns, textures, and design configurations dating from the period of historic significance. The property must be an actual historic resource, not a recreation. Many of the existing engineering features were modified during the period of historic significance. These modifications are of particular importance because they reflect a period when highway engineering standards were changing rapidly. The fact that most of them have not been modified since 1924 is evidence of how much highway engineering advanced during the 1910s and 1920s. Structures which have undergone minor modification since 1924 will still qualify if the essential features of the historic period are present.

Setting

Generally, engineering structures will be considered as part of rural, urban, or abandoned segments. However, where the plan and profile of the roadway has been altered, features that reflect unusual or important design elements and that retain integrity of location, materials, workmanship, and design may be nominated as individual properties.

**V. Name of Property Type: MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, AND MARKERS****a. Description**

Several types of markers are associated with the Lincoln Highway and lend identity to it. They are located both within and outside the 66' highway right-of-way. Structures include Lincoln Highway markers, private property markers, and the celebrated statue of Abraham Lincoln in front of the Greene County courthouse. There are three surviving Lincoln Highway markers. The concrete markers were the fourth and last type of highway marker to be erected along the Lincoln Highway. Private landowners along the Lincoln Highway took an unusual interest in identifying their properties with concrete structures of various types, including name markers, corner markers, fence posts, and gate posts. Regardless of marker type, these structures invariably are of poured concrete. There are approximately

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30 such markers scattered throughout the Greene County corridor. Perhaps the most noticeable structure identified with the highway is a large statue of Abraham Lincoln located in front of the Greene County Courthouse in Jefferson. It was erected to commemorate the highway, and it is a highly distinctive structure associated with the route in Iowa.

**b. Significance**

The Lincoln Highway captured the imagination of motorists to a degree unequalled among competing highways. In part, this was because the Lincoln Highway Association promoted the road with more than official guides and maps, including everything from buttons and pennants to radiator emblems and paperweights. To distinguish the Lincoln Highway itself from competing routes, the association marked it with vibrant red, white, and blue emblems. Organizations and residents along the route contributed a wide variety of additional structures, objects, and landscaping touches to further celebrate and identify the highway. Residents in Greene County seem to have been particularly attracted to the idea of concrete markers, perhaps because the Jefferson Cement Products Co. and F.E. Marsh Construction Co., both of Jefferson, paved the first segments of the highway in Iowa. In any case, these reflect the pride many landowners felt in being a part of the highway. The concrete markers with the bronze bust of Lincoln are particularly significant as the last official memorials to the historic Lincoln Highway route, placed along the route in 1928 by the Lincoln Highway Association in cooperation with the Boy Scouts of America and local towns and cities.

**c. Registration Requirements**

Memorials, monuments, and markers along the Lincoln Highway are eligible under Criteria Consideration F if, by design, age, tradition, or symbolic value, they have become integral parts of the highway. These features should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

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**Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**Location

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway between 1912 and 1928. Structures built prior to 1912 qualify if they became a part of the official route during that period. Historical data, such as photographs or oral history accounts should verify that a property is associated with the historic route. Structures which are relocated to protect them from vandalism or other damage will still contribute to the integrity of setting as long as they remain easily visible from the road.

Design, Workmanship, and Materials

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a monument, memorial or marker associated with the route between 1912 and 1928. These include retention of key building materials, proportions, patterns, textures, and design configurations dating from the period of historic significance. The property must be an actual historic resource, not a replica. Structures which have undergone minor modification since 1928 will still qualify if the essential features of the historic period are present.

Setting

Sometimes these structures will be considered as part of rural, urban, or abandoned segments. However, where the plan and profile of the roadway has been altered, features that reflect unusual design elements or important historical associations and that retain integrity of location, materials, workmanship, and design may be nominated as individual properties.

**VI. Name of Property Type: TOURIST AND TRAVEL-RELATED STRUCTURES****a. Description**

Several types of travel and tourist-related facilities were erected because of the Lincoln Highway or came to be associated with the highway. These include gas stations, automobile service garages, cabin courts, and a State Highway Commission maintenance

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**Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928**

shed. Some of these appeared during the period of significance determined for this multiple property nomination, while others appeared after 1928.

**b. Significance**

Monuments and markers provided part of the Lincoln Highway's identity for travelers. In addition to these, gas stations, garages, auto camps, hotels, cabin courts, and cafes sprang up along the highway to serve travelers' needs. Some owners appropriated the name "Lincoln" or "Lincoln Highway" or "Lincoln Way" and used it as part of the business title. These properties reflect the increasing popularity of automobile travel and the growth of automobile tourism which was, in part, due to the existence of the Lincoln Highway and its counterparts across the nation. Tourist and travel-related facilities which came into service between 1912 and 1928 primarily to capture trade from the Lincoln Highway will be significant under Criterion A. Individual properties which also embody distinctive design, materials, or construction techniques may also be eligible under Criterion C.

**c. Registration Requirements**

Travel- and tourist-related properties along the Lincoln Highway should retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, and setting as defined below:

**Location**

The property must have been a part of the Lincoln Highway between 1912 and 1928. Structures built prior to 1912 qualify if they became identified with the official route during that period. Historical data, such as photographs or oral history accounts, should verify that a property is associated with the historic route.

**Design, Workmanship, and Materials**

The property must retain the essential features that identify it as a travel- or tourist-related property associated with the route between 1912 and 1928. These include retention of key building materials, stylistic elements, structural system, plan, pattern of fenestration, and other elements which identify the property as road-related during the period of historic

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### Associated Property Types, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County, 1912-1928

significance. The property must be an actual historic resource, not a recreation. Structures which have undergone minor modification since 1928 will still qualify if the essential features of the historic period are present.

#### Setting

Generally, these structures will be considered as individual properties which sit adjacent to the road. In this sense, they are elements which contribute to the historic setting.

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**H. Identification and Evaluation Methods**

This multiple property nomination includes the various components of the historic Lincoln Highway corridor through Greene County within its original 66' right-of-way as well as associated properties from the historic period which line the old route and add to its historic setting. The nomination includes excellent examples of each defined property type found along the route in Greene County.

Intensive field survey was carried out along the entire route through Greene County as well as along several miles of adjoining route in Boone and Carroll counties. Altogether, approximately 45 miles of old highway route were examined in the field. In the field, the road and associated features were measured, described, and photographed. These observations were checked against archival source material to verify the identification of route. In addition, bridges associated with the highway in Greene County, and one Marsh Rainbow arch bridge in Boone County, were examined in the company of structural engineer Robert C. Lentfer, P.E. with Shive-Hattery Engineers and Architects, Iowa City, Iowa. Segments of the historic route throughout the rest of Iowa were examined informally for comparative purposes.

Engineering plans, construction contracts, photographs, automobile guides, maps, newspaper accounts, and other archival material were examined for information on precise locations, dates of construction, engineering concerns and standards, appurtenant features (such as bridges and culverts), grades, cross-section plans, and other components of the historic route. Engineering plans, photographs, and construction contracts were located at the Iowa Department of Transportation. Several sets of construction plans as well as county atlases, and official county maps were located in the Greene County Courthouse. A small collection of Lincoln Highway materials located at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City provided access to obscure articles, reports, and other documentary materials. Early issues of the *Iowa State Highway Commission Service Bulletin* were consulted at the Iowa State University Library in Ames. The *Jefferson Bee*, consulted at the Jefferson Public Library, provided excellent contextual information and, in some cases, complemented the technical data. Additional local history materials were located at the Greene County Museum in Jefferson and the Grand Junction Public Library. Oral interviews also provided valuable contextual information concerning local history. Secondary sources as noted in Section I provided the necessary background to inform



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### Identification and Evaluations Methods, The Lincoln Highway in Greene County

national and state aspects of the historical context. The preliminary determination of eligibility for Eureka Bridge, prepared 10 April 1990 by Clayton Fraser of Fraserdesign (Colorado), has been incorporated into the registration form for the Raccoon River Segment. Likewise, comments offered by Dr. James Hippen (Decorah, Iowa) concerning the historical significance of Eureka Bridge were also incorporated into this registration form.

The multiple property document was developed in consultation with Historian Lowell Soike of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Historic Preservation Bureau regarding the concept and rationale behind the nomination. Field survey and research were with conducted with considerable assistance from Bob and Joyce Ausberger of Jefferson, Iowa, and support from the Greene County Lincoln Highway Preservation Group, Inc.

As the first transcontinental highway, the Lincoln Highway obviously had a nationwide impact, and it can be considered nationally significant. However, no historical context has been developed which addresses national significance, nor has a statewide context for the Lincoln Highway in Iowa been developed. Such contexts would be of benefit, but are not necessary in order to evaluate the significance of the highway in any given locale. Considering how important were local road systems and local promotion efforts in establishing the highway, the county unit is a useful construct which enables one to perceive clearly the complex political and social milieu in which the highway developed. As such, this and other local studies can form the basis for an expanded context which could address research questions pertinent to state and regional patterns of highway development. For instance, where outside Greene County and the glaciated areas of Iowa was road drainage a vital aspect of improving and maintaining the Lincoln Highway? Can one discern a typology of routes that are specific to certain regions or locales; for instance, do the "zigzag" routes which follow government survey section lines in the Midwest differ substantially from those which followed old trails in the West? How did private property owners in different locales add to the identity of the highway by erecting distinctive monuments, memorials, or other special markers? Did highway improvements in specific locales help advance the standards of highway engineering and construction in ways that can be documented, i.e., did efforts such as the Lincoln Highway Association's seedling-mile program and the four-lane Ideal Section on the Illinois-Indiana border play an important role in the evolution of highway engineering? How long did the public identify the route as Lincoln Highway after it was absorbed into the federal highway system and the Lincoln Highway Association was disbanded? These and other questions might point to a different

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period of significance as appropriate for a statewide or national context. They might also lead to the identification of additional property types which are pertinent to larger geographical areas.

National Register standards formed the basis for assessing integrity within property types. Registration requirements were derived from knowledge about the condition of existing properties vis-a-vis their probable original condition. With respect to the traveled roadway, this nomination follows the integrity standards adopted for Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona, which holds that "materials are not considered as important an aspect of integrity as others because the major components, gravel and pavement, are inherently fragile" and were meant to be replaced periodically. In adopting this stance, the author noted that "roads are more a function of design than materials."<sup>1</sup>

The intent of this nomination has been to recognize segments of the Lincoln Highway in one county which retain a high degree of historic character. For the most part, these segments remain in use as county roads and are therefore subject to constant traffic and regular maintenance. In addition, the nomination includes individual properties that are directly associated with the highway, such as highway markers and memorials, and which also retain high integrity. There are many other properties in Greene County that are associated with the highway in a less direct manner, such as gas stations, cabin courts, and additional private property markers. Their histories are as yet undocumented. None of these properties has been evaluated for National Register eligibility as part of this effort, but they are potential future nominees.

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1 Teri A. Cleland, *Historic U.S. Route 66 in Arizona*, Multiple Property Listing, August 1988, p. G-3.

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