

FRANKLIN GROVE AND THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The small towns of the Midwest remained somewhat isolated until there was a good, all-weather, system of roads. In the early days, when towns were developed, a haphazard system of roads radiated out into the surrounding countryside. These connected farms with the town, and there was little thought about travel beyond. A good system of railroads had been developed, and if you wanted to go some distance, there were frequent, convenient trains to take you there--provided you were going to a point where the train could take you. Prior to 1910, there was little highway development in Illinois. "Early automobiles were fragile machines with little dependable power, and none were enclosed. From the time fall rains set in until good weather in the spring, the driver could not use his vehicle. The mud was so deep that even a horse drawing a high-wheeled light buggy sometimes had difficulty picking his way through the mire. Most automobile pioneers stored their machines in the barn until spring. In the summer the mud turned into dust almost as deep. The automobile churned this into a cloud, so that after a spin, the driver emerged from his toy wearing a layer of the Illinois countryside." (Tingley, Donald F. *The Structuring of a State; the History of Illinois 1899-1928*. pp. 238-9) Between 1910 and 1920, there was agitation within the State to develop a system of all-weather roads. A "Good Roads Congress" was held each year. The University of Illinois established a road-testing laboratory to determine the best road-building material. The **Chicago Tribune** encouraged road development, and entitled their editorial "Pulling Illinois out of the Mud." In 1910 a law was passed requiring state licensing of vehicles and provided that the fees be used for building roads. Governor Edward F. Dunne said "Bad roads contribute to the unattractiveness, the isolation and monotony of country life that are responsible for the desertion of rural pursuits, especially by the young. Experts in mental ailments agree that women in remote sections are the chief sufferers from the restriction of communications and social intercourse, which bad roads impose." (Tingley: pp. 239-40) Many rural people did not agree with the push for hard roads, thinking that the improvement of the existing dirt roads would suffice. The Tice Road law of 1913 reorganized the existing State Highway Department and gave assistance to counties willing to float road-building bonds.

Illinois

FRANKLIN GROVE

N. Y. S. F. Pop. 700. Alt. 810. Lee County.
987 2344 Two hotels, 1 garage. Route marked through town and county.
Road improved in 1915. One railroad crossing at grade, protected.
5 One bank, 1 railroad, 40 general business places, 1 express company, 1 telephone company, 1 newspaper, 1 public school, electric lights, water works. Local Consul, I. J. Trostle.

The above description of Franklin Grove appeared in **The complete official road guide of the LINCOLN HIGHWAY, 1916. p. 85.** It goes on to say that the Franklin Grove to Fulton section of the Lincoln Highway is of dirt, gravel and concrete construction--generally well maintained and oiled.

The completion of the Lincoln Highway did not by any means make for an easy drive across the country. The 1916 guide had many "don'ts" for motorist, such as: Always fill your tank at every point gasoline can be secured...Don't ford water without first wading through it...Don't drink alkali water. Serious cramps result...Start early and stop before dark to select a camp site... There was also a lengthy list of car equipment including tire chains, spark plugs, oil in one gallon cans, lamp bulbs, tire casings and inner tubes, etc. Another cautionary note: "REMEMBER: In Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, after heavy rains, that if the tourist will remain over in the community in which he is stopping for five or ten hours, it will enable him to proceed in comfort, as the roads are well graded and dry very rapidly. Such a delay will, in the end, save time and will save your car, your tires and your temper, and make your trip more enjoyable."

This "feather" in Franklin Grove's cap would not come easy, as it took a lot of work on the part of the hometown people and a nationwide effort to bring this coast-to-coast highway into existence and through downtown Franklin Grove. Carl G. Fisher, founder of the Prest-O-Lite Company and owner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, got the movement started in 1912. He was also the founder of the movement which later became the Lincoln Highway Association. His concept was of a road from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that was hard-surfaced, capable of bearing traffic in all weathers, accurately signed through its length. What to call it? "the Coast-to-Coast

Rock Highway, for lack of a better name. At this time, Congress had just appropriated money for the Lincoln Memorial, and there was a protest that the money could better be used to memorialize Lincoln for "...the good of all the people in good roads. Let good roads be built in the name of Lincoln." There was patriotic appeal in the name, and being as he was a hero to the people of the north where the road would be located, the new name was adopted.

How did Franklin Grove get included on this much sought after highway? Directness was the primary factor. The directness between New York and San Francisco; second, points of scenic and historic interest and centers of population; third, support by the local communities which will receive the direct and immediate benefit of the highway. The route between Chicago and the west coast pretty much follows the major railroads. In the Midwest, this route paralleled the Chicago and Northwestern to Omaha. Franklin Grove was on the C&NW mainline.

Money was a constant problem during the formative and developmental stages of the proposed Lincoln Highway. Aside from the top officials and staff, most of the the people on the state and local level were volunteers, called Consuls. The idea was that these local representatives would make contact with wealthy citizens and induce them to become members at \$5 each, and then go for bigger contributions. State consuls were appointed, and they toured the route, stirring up local interest and contributions.

"Seedling miles" were stretches, usually one mile long, made of concrete to demonstrate the value of hard-surfaced roads. The idea was that a traveler would drive on these smooth surfaces and then when they dropped off onto the rough going of ordinary roads, they would add their voices to the push for hard roads. The cement was donated by cement companies through the Portland Cement Association. The initial "seedling mile" started in October, 1914, was built just west of Malta, Illinois. Kishwaukee College borders the seedling mile, and a historical marker is located on the southwest corner of the college property. In 1915, three miles of concrete highway was built, partly east and partly west of Morrison, Illinois.

What was happening in Franklin Grove concerning the proposed coast-to-coast highway? **The Franklin Reporter** and **The Dixon Daily Telegraph** carried reports on the progress of the road, often goading the community into action. The following excerpts taken from the weekly paper tell the story.

Dixon Daily Telegraph, September 13, 1913. Will be beautiful monument. Gov. E. F. Dunne today went on record as giving his endorsement to the Lincoln Highway association in their undertaking of the construction of an ocean to ocean highway, from New York to San Francisco, for automobiles and other vehicles by the raising of a popular subscription fund of \$10,000,000...he will recommend to the state highway commission that they take the plans under consideration and give them serious investigation as a portion of the comprehensive road building campaign the state of Illinois is now entering upon...

Dixon Daily Telegraph, September 18, 1913. Cities, Hamlets and Towns Along the Proposed Route Will Hold Jubilee Ceremonies. Detroit, Sept. 17--With local celebrations from coast to coast along the route of the Lincoln Highway on the night of Friday, Oct. 18th, this great transcontinental thoroughfare will be dedicated to the nation's most honored president, Abraham Lincoln. Patriotic citizens of the 13 states traversed from New York to California, the same number bound together by the Declaration of Independence, will rejoice over this new bond, a permanent, enduring memorial to the Emancipator, conceded by all to be the greatest patriot this country has ever produced. Programs are being arranged in every city, village, hamlet and crossroads either on or adjacent to the route between New York and San Francisco. The pathway through these cities and villages where the Lincoln Highway will soon be a reality, will be decorated with the Stars and Stripes, bunting and the official flag of the Lincoln Highway Association. There will be parades, the good old fashioned torchlight procession, band concerts, motion pictures of good road building and many addresses. Local orators will tell about the urgent need for the Lincoln highway and the notable character of the man after whom it has been named. They will paint with sweeping strokes and brightly hued colors the Lincoln highway of the future, long winding caravans of wagons, farm machinery, automobiles, the products of the farm on the way to the city and the goods of the manufacturers being carted to the the farm, bicycles, motorcycles--every class of vehicle. Everyone will use this highway, open at all seasons of the year, smooth, dustless, certain; operated without toll and materially aiding in the prosperity of the sections traversed. At these meetings plans to rename each section The Lincoln Way, will be broached. Local designations are to be dropped. Markers will also individualize the highway. It consists of a strip of red three inches wide, white 15 inches in width and blue three inches wide, with a letter L in blue on the white section. The words Lincoln Highway in small type are also on the marker. The first of these markers will be

placed on Monday, Sept. 15, at Clinton, Iowa, where Y. F. Coan, president of the Clinton National bank, and state consul for the Lincoln Highway association, set one on the road near Clinton. Patriotic co-operation of the farmers will be asked at these celebrations to eliminate danger by improving the railroad crossings, and to straighten out angles, curves or the sharp jogs that now confuse the tourists and to otherwise assist in making the Lincoln Way one universally used by all the people. The following Sunday, Nov. 2, pastors at each point, and of every religious denomination are to preach sermons on the character and achievements of Lincoln, his real patriotism; linking his name, his high ideals and purposes with the movement back of and actuating the building of this enduring and useful memorial to him. In line with the plan to make the Lincoln highway not only a smooth permanent roadway, with easy grades, reaching all important points of scenic splendor across the country, school children will assist in making it beautiful one as well. Trees are to be planted along the highway, on Arbor day, 1914, by the children, and from year to year the Lincoln highway will be made a picturesque and as charming as that old Roman highway, the Appian Way.

Dixon Daily Telegraph, October 25, 1913. Lincoln Way to be marked soon. The National Road will be marked across continent by next Friday. Detroit, Oct. 25.--The route of the Lincoln highway will be marked almost without a break, from New York to San Francisco by the night of Friday, Oct. 31, when the dedication celebrations are to be held across the country. Some of the states, particularly in the west, have already completed the work...In many of the cities the route is marked today. In Philadelphia the Philadelphia Trade association is marking the route from one end of the city to the other. In Omaha all the signs are up, as they are in Clinton, Ia., and a dozen other points. The markers are now being placed across the state of Nevada and in Utah, Illinois and other states work is progressing rapidly. In Nebraska, H. E. Frederickson, state consul, reports that about two-thirds of the old Overland Trail has been marked and that the balance will be completed this week. The various state consuls report an ever increasing interest in the sale of contributor's certificates. Not only owners of automobiles but persons in every walk of life are subscribing \$5 or more to the fund and within a short time the result will be a lasting, nation-wide memorial to Lincoln.

The Franklin Reporter, December 4, 1913. Lincoln Highway Marked. The route of the Lincoln Highway has been marked, almost without a break, from New York to San Francisco. The official copyrighted marker of the Association is 12 inches high, comprising a strip of red three inches wide, a band of white three inches wide, and a strip of blue three inches wide below. On the white band is the large letter "L" with the word "Lincoln" and the "Highway" below.

The Franklin Reporter, December 11, 1913: Must Pass This Way. Unless Franklin Grove boosts earnestly there is a big chance for the proposed Lincoln Highway skipping our city. According to the rumor now being circulated, it is possible that a straight route be mapped from Ashton due west to Dixon, entering the latter place near the cement works. In this way the route would traverse many hills and exceedingly bad roads, which could be avoided by passing through our city. Then, too, the route would be shorter if it comes this way. If the rumor is true, let us get out and hustle, for Franklin Grove wants to be on this Highway.

The Franklin Reporter, December 18, 1913: In bold print at the top of this issue appeared: **What Have YOU Done to Help Procure the Lincoln Highway? The Lincoln's Highway Local Route.** The article herewith appended was written by a Reporter reader, who is interested in the Lincoln Highway, and is of interest because we want our town on the route. -- The following clipping reprinted from the Franklin Reporter's issue of December 11, 1913, introduces this subject and question: "Unless Franklin Grove boosts earnestly there is a big chance for the proposed Lincoln Highway skipping our city...Franklin Grove wants to be on this Highway." Discussion and arguments here follow relative to the local location of this highway in northern Illinois--first, regarding the north or country route: --It will be free of towns and railroad crossings, quiet and rarely used by teams and horse-traffic except by local farmers, and simple and direct and easy to follow. It will also for a few miles of its western end cut through pleasant wooded hills. The total distance is about equal to the railway route. It is a rather poor dirt road for much of its 13 to 15 miles in length; in places its soil is sand, clay and gravel; its present condition is poor; it has ruts, steep hills, side slopes and gulches; much of its present track is narrow and the grading inferior. Many thousands of dollars will be needed and several years time to macadamize it and perfect it for its entire length of about 14 miles. Finally, remember that in winter months even when perfected it will be virtually impassible for autos on account of the light team traffic, and nearly always in spring months until perfected it will be virtually impassible on account of miles of deep mud. --Second and last, regarding the south or railroad route, its good and bad points are here noted: It is now on the transcontinental route and hence well

known as a wagon and auto road. It is the straight and direct route between these towns and cities stated. Excepting but a few stretches and spots, its condition is usually good the year round. It is usually usable. Against it may be noted one railroad grade crossing between Ashton and Franklin Grove, another crossing in Franklin Grove, and another west of this city. Also note that the railroad is double track. Finally, observe that the bridge crossing the creek about one mile west of Franklin Grove is temporarily dangerous. Nearly all these objections vanish when the subject be viewed in the perspective of one or several centuries, also in the light of comparative finance. For the present and near future consider doing this. Establish the railroad route; then instruct, or petition or mandamus the railroad germane to put if possible auto block signals visible both night and day, at each grade crossing, whether in or between the villages of Ashton and Franklin Grove as well as farther west and at both approaches in each instance. Grade up both approaches to the railroad crossing between Ashton and Franklin Grove, so that autos and wagons will be more elevated and thereby have greater vision. Start macadamizing the road from Ashton to Franklin Grove and eventually finish it. Likewise finish the present bare spots between Franklin Grove and the Nachusa corners, or thereabouts. If done, then in the near future, this 13 to 15 miles of auto and wagon road will all be macadamized, and will then be usable the whole year round. Remember one-half or more of it is now macadamized. Next, correct the wagon bridge's faults and dangers by widening the top railings a space of between four to seven feet, at small cost. By blasting away the point of the hill near the bridge's upper approach. By using its dirt to widen the pike to the bridge. Finally, build on each side solid heavy plank fences 5 or 6 feet high at each end of the bridge as wings, also put electric lights at the bridge and at its approaches. Do these things at small cost and the bridge will then be safe. These above suggestions are continually present needs. Not one dollar of this money will be wasted. But few years time should suffice for their total competition. Consider that this present road as now used and though now faulty, has been used for years by hundreds and thousands of transcontinental motor car tourists. Few, if any accidents have occurred at rail road grade crossings in this 14 mile stretch, yet they are possible continually. When perfected this stretch of the Lincoln Highway ought to be above the average safety, yet remember it is now more efficient than average country roads. At the risk of confusing the subject I state further needs optional in Nature to perfect. Beginning at Ashton and thence westward they are: Purchase a strip of ground by the exercise of Eminent Domain one and one-fourth miles long south of the railroad track, and just east of Franklin Grove, also buy an entrance into this town south of the track. This will give a straight or nearly straight road from Ashton to the post office and F. G. Bank--one that will not cross the railroad. Perfect its roadbed. Next continue west. At the next railroad crossing one and one-fourth miles west of Franklin Grove, continue the auto road along the south side of the track for but a few hundred feet. In the hollow where the railroad fill is deepest, tunnel through and put in a viaduct there. Do these two or three additional things and at a total cost of but a few thousand dollars, and you will have a 14 mile stretch of hard smooth and level macadamized auto and wagon road from Ashton to Dixon and passing through Franklin Grove, which will not have on it one single railroad grade crossing for autoists. It will be usable the whole year round. It can be finished within ten years or even less. It will be a great benefit to this community. It will be a road combining beauty with utility. It will be a credit to this great highway. It will in fancy please Lincoln. It ought when finished to please God. In conclusion: Let these comparative facts, together with local petitions soon be laid before the Lincoln Highway's national commissioners, this district's congressman and other officials. If done without delay it is possible and even probable that a decision shall be given favorable to the south or railroad or Transcontinental route, rather than for the poorer north or country route. --A Constant Peruser.

The Franklin Reporter, January 8, 1914. Services donated for Highway. DeKalb, Illinois, Jan. 2, 1914. Editor Franklin Grove Reporter, Dear sirs: I want to congratulate the people of Franklin Grove on securing such an active man as Mr. I. J. Trostle as Consul for the Lincoln Highway for this district. As you know the Lincoln Highway is being boosted by men who get nothing out of it. They give their time and pay their own traveling expenses. They work for good roads and in the interest of the community. As Chief Consul in this state I do not receive a cent for my work or for my traveling expenses. Neither do any of the Local Consuls receive money. I mention these facts to show to the people that every dollar subscribed to a membership of the Lincoln Highway Association goes into the work of road building, and is not spent on salaries, banquets and jaunts. The people of Franklin Grove are to be congratulated on their situation on the Lincoln Highway, which is destined to be the world's greatest road, reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific; marked and paved the entire distance when it is completed. It is the activities in every little community along the way which makes this possible. Volunteer work is being done from coast to coast, without one cent of cost which, if it were hired and paid for, it would

represent the expenditure of many thousands of dollars. It is by reason of the pride that each community takes in its own little road that the entire Highway will be completed in a much shorter space of time than otherwise. In fact, it is a complete and marked road now, as far as marking is concerned. When it is paved and finished it will be a great monument to the enterprise of the people all along the line. If everyone will take hold and help Mr. Trostle, the piece of road through Franklin Grove will be known from one end of the country to the other. Respectfully yours, J. W. Corkings, Chief consul of State of Illinois.

The Franklin Reporter, February 12, 1914. Page one, in bold print, was an announcement of a Lincoln Highway meeting: **Lincoln Highway Meeting! Lincoln's Hall. Sat'rday Afternoon at 2 o'clock! Hon. A. R. Pardington Vice-President and Secretary of the Lincoln Highway Association, will be present and will tell you all about this great project. The Chief Consul of Illinois, HON. J. W. CORKINGS, of DeKalb will also be with us. These gentlemen will tell us everything concerning the construction of this great national highway, dedicated to the Greatest American, the Immortal Abraham Lincoln. Admission, FREE! Men, Women, Boys and Girls should show an interest by attending.**

The Franklin Reporter, February 19, 1914. The Lincoln Highway Meeting. Saturday was Lincoln Highway booster day in Franklin Grove. In our city on that day were three prominent men, who are potent factors in the Lincoln Highway Association, namely; Vice-President A. R. Pardington of New York, Traveling Consul Mr. Osterman of Chicago, and State Consul J. W. Corkings of DeKalb. Before the hour of commencing, the seats in Lincoln's hall were occupied and standing room was at a premium. Preceding the speeches, the Franklin Grove Band rendered a short stirring concert, which warmed the spirits up to the occasion of patriotism, despite the cold weather without. The first gentleman introduced by local Consul I. J. Trostle was Mr. J. R. Pardington. He is the man who is thoroughly familiar with all branches of this great road-building achievement, and, we might add, is the chief booster. In company with the Traveling Consul, he traces and retraces the Lincoln route from coast to coast, stopping in the towns situated on the highway, and telling the unbiased truth concerning it. Some of the facts to be noted are: 1--Franklin Grove is on the highway; 2--The road has been commenced and in New Jersey the work is almost finished; 3--When completed, it will be 3,400 miles long, extending from New York City to San Francisco; 4--Its pathway traverses thirteen states; 5--It will be the longest permanent highway in the world, being an even greater monument than the famous Appian Way of Italy, the length of which was one-tenth as great; 6--It will raise the value of the land along its course at least \$50 per acre; 7--It will be the most fitting monument to the Nation's greatest man, the World's greatest emancipator and noblest martyr, Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Pardington detailed the enterprise at length. Mr. J. W. Corkings of DeKalb, was the next speaker. he explained a few facts regarding some of the things that had been done in Illinois. Mr. Osterman then closed the meeting with a few remarks. Mr. Pardington and the Traveling Consul are the only gentlemen who receive a remuneration for their efforts in behalf of the Lincoln Highway--the other officials receive nothing for their services, so as far as graft is concerned there is none whatever. The first consignment of Lincoln Highway buttons was received by Mr. Pardington while at Franklin Grove and the first public sale of them in all the world was made in our city on Saturday, February 14, 1914. The Lincoln Highway is a sure go, but the early completion of it requires the boosting assistance and financial aid of very patriotic citizen in the community.

Boost 'er Along! Local Consul I. J. Trostle of the Lincoln Highway Association in the period of a half a day's time, succeeded in obtaining the following subscribers to the Lincoln Highway fund. S. A. Durkes. F. M. Banker. E. L. Lott. G. R. Wright. A. Grim. H. C. Stultz. J. D. Lahman. L. A. Trottnow. F. D. Kelley. Chris Gross. John Kelley. S. D. Remley. J. R. Dysart. J. F. Reinhart. W. O. Sunday.

The Franklin Reporter, March 5, 1914. Lincoln Highway Notes. The Lincoln Highway Association has inaugurated a "Press Sheet" department to their publicity bureau, which purpose is to bring before the people, through the columns of local papers, the latest news of the Lincoln way. In the one just handed us by Consul I. J. Trostle, their (sic) is a big boost for Franklin Grove and also for Ashton. With reference to our city an extensive mention is made of the rousing meeting held here February 14; the exhaustive sale of the lapel buttons and the patriotic way in which more than 200 citizens and farmers cheered the speakers. The article states that the buttons were first sold in Franklin Grove, and along with the advertising matter that is scattered from coast to coast is a map of the Lincoln Highway, with Franklin Grove marked on the route. The only memorial worthy of the name of Lincoln is the memorial that will endure for centuries to come. What more enduring memorial could be built than a transcontinental highway? History answers that question with a single word, "Nothing." The arches of

triumph of the Roman conquerors are but atoms of dust. The temples of the Latin deities are no more. But the Appian Way, that wonderful road between Rome and Capua, built by the consul Appius Claudius 300 years before Christ, is as prominent as artery of travel today as when it was constructed twenty-two centuries ago. Every dollar contributed, every ounce of energy expended to change the Lincoln Highway from a worthy project to a wonderful reality is a fitting tribute to an immortal humanitarian, a tribute he would appreciate above all other tributes.

The latest. The newest novelty and another in which Franklin Grove sets the pace for contemporary cities, is a Lincoln Highway Dinner. We know that there is no other city the size of Franklin Grove that has entered with such vigor into the patriotic spirit of boosting. This time it is the women that enter the arena of public spiritness, by proclaiming, elsewhere in this paper, to the world and to this community, that they are going to have the first Lincoln Highway Dinner ever recorded. The ladies of the local Presbyterian church are the instigators of the affair. They have a delicious menu in readiness to greet you, as you will ascertain after investigating the notice in another column. Come around with your stomach real empty, and bring long as many empty stomachs as you can find.

Hark! Lincoln Highway Dinner. The Ladies of the Presbyterian church will give a six o'clock Lincoln Highway Dinner in the Town Hall, Friday, March 6. Here is the menu; see if it looks good to you.

Roast Pork with Brown Gravy	
Potatoes	Baked Beans
Cabbage Salad	Pickles
Jelly	Buns
Coffee	Cake
Pineapple and Banana Sherbet	

Come. Bring your friends--you who have progressive public spirit. Help the ladies and go help boost the Lincoln Highway fund. Dinner, 25 cents.

The Franklin Reporter, April 2, 1914. A Chance for the ladies. An energetic lady has suggested to the editor the most practical scheme along the most laudable of enterprises. This is it. In Franklin Grove there are at least a half dozen clubs and societies with which most of the women in this city are affiliated--and they are all enthusiastic workers in every undertaking. Why not, then, let their efforts be united and concentrated upon one aim for good. Just at the present time the suggestion is made that these women get together on the proposition of creating a fund for the construction of two arches, one to be erected at the eastern and western entrance of the Lincoln Highway to our city. The idea, perhaps, seems prolific, but we often hear it said that nothing worth while is attained without effort and if the women would treat the public with three of those ambrosial feasts for which they are famed, the seemingly stupendous task would be met squarely. Like all public movements, someone must blow the whistle, pull the throttle and start the thing. After that, the rest will be easy. Who will be the first in line?

The Franklin Reporter, July 30, 1914. The Lincoln Highway. The tremendous traffic on the Lincoln Highway during the past month shows that in time it will be a great thoroughfare and with the new road completed south of Oregon, now in process of construction, and Franklin Grove people building north to their Lee county line, it will be but one year more when we will have a solid macadam road connecting with the Lincoln Highway at Franklin Grove.--Oregon Rep.

The Franklin Reporter, July 29, 1915. The first water wagon tour over the Lincoln Highway is now being made in the interest of prohibition. Reverend H. H. Russell, the founder of the Anti-Saloon League, inaugurated the movement and speaks at the various cities along the route. The party reaches Dixon today, where Rev. Russell will speak this evening on the great subject of temperance.

The Franklin Reporter, September 23, 1915. The State Aid on Lincoln Way. Supervisor I. J. Trostle says that "it's coming our way" with reference to the state aid road. he was a member of the road and bridge committee, and as such is pulling for the benefit of China Township. After much discussion the committee reported to the board that the state aid be applied to the Lincoln Highway commencing at the bridge just west of town and continuing westward to meet the hard road which Nachusa is going to build eastward with a \$7,000 levy. Then the balance of the state aid money is to be applied on the road from Dixon to Harmon in Nelson township. The Proposition was presented to the board and tabled by a vote of one to twelve until October 15, when a vote will be taken.

The Franklin Reporter, December 16, 1915. The Board of Supervisors convened Thursday

without anything being done in regard to the state aid road. The voting on its location stood 12 to 12, every member voting and Chairman Cook voting with those favoring the location of the hard roads on the Lincoln Highway. The motion was presented to the board by Supervisor I. J. Trostle that the state aid be applied on the Lincoln Highway, commencing just west of Franklin Grove and continuing westward toward Dixon. Good for Trostle that he had spunk enough to push a good thing like this, but woe unto the other ginks on the board who can't see farther than the ends of their proboscis. Their retrospection is vague, their visage clouded, and verily we say unto them, they shall receive their just reward unless they turn their backs on petty ills and vote with the others in securing the state aid on the Lincoln Highway--the place it rightly belongs.

The Lincoln Highway came into Franklin Grove from the east on present-day Route route 38. It made a left turn at Elm Street and passed through town for four blocks and then turned right on Lahman. After leaving town it crossed Franklin Creek and jogged back to the present-day highway 38. It crossed the railroad twice in the process. In 1918-9 the highway was changed to the present location, thus eliminating the railroad crossings.

A mystery remains today--what happened to the **Parker Water Fountains?** In 1914, Carl Parker of California, offered to donate a drinking fountain valued at \$1,000 to any Illinois city on the Lincoln Highway. The city had to rename a street on the route "Lincoln way." Franklin Grove renamed Elm street to Lincoln way. In later years, when the highway was rerouted, the name reverted to Elm street. The fountain had a bowl somewhat smaller than on most water fountains. The Lincoln Highway emblem was placed on the sides of the fountain in three colors. Around the edge of the bowl was the inscription in which the donor of the fountain dedicated it to the memory of his mother, an Illinois woman. Dixon received its fountain in May, 1915. What is interesting is that although there are pictures showing these fountains in some of the nine cities that received them, none are in existence today.

Franklin Grove was an important link in this the first transcontinental highway--The Lincoln Highway. There were gradual changes, as the road was improved and paved--especially with the push for hard surface roads in Illinois during the 1920s, financed by large bond issues. After 1925, the highway in the East and Midwest was designated as U. S. 30. In 1928, Boy Scouts in a single day replaced the old route markers with 3,000 concrete posts. These markers, about eight feet long, had a bronze silhouette of Lincoln highlighted with a white one inch by five inch line over the top of the silhouette, with a red line of like size on the bottom. These markers are rare items today, having been destroyed or stolen in most instances. A complete marker is located outside the District 2 Illinois Highway Department headquarters in Dixon. A partial marker is owned by the Franklin Grove Historical Society.

Written by Duane Paulsen, November, 1995