

Lincoln and Grant Memorial Highways Fall Colors & History Self-Guided Driving Tour Part 1: Driving Directions



Final version prepared by:
Kay Shelton Kozak
© Lincoln Highway Association, 2022

Table of Contents

Know Before You Go	3
Geocaching on Smart Phones on the Lincoln Highway.	6
Driving Directions Introduction	6
Route 31	
Geneva to Elgin	7
U.S. Grant Memorial Highway (US Route 20)	
Elgin to Lena	8
Major Side Trip to Lena & Apple River Canyon State Park	
Side Trip to Lena on Stagecoach Road	10
Lena to Apple River Canyon State Park.	11
Apple River Canyon State Park to Galena	12
U.S. Grant Memorial Highway (US Route 20)	
Elgin to Galena, No Side Trips	12
Great River Road (IL Route 84)	
Galena to Fulton	14
Lincoln Highway	
Fulton to Rochelle	16
Rochelle to Geneva	24

Know Before You Go

- Do you like fall colors? Do you like history? Do you like driving on two-lane roads and really seeing the sights instead of boring interstates? Do you like small, mom & pop businesses? Do you like state parks? Do you like antiques? Do you like wine? Do you like ice cream? Do you like geocaching? Do you like family-friendly locations? Do you like home-cooked style restaurants? Do you like farm stands? Do you like shopping at unique stores? If you answered yes to any of those, this trip is for you!
- Peak fall leaf color changes may occur around early to mid October, but weather conditions can change that. Travelers could enjoy this tour in spring and summer, too, without waiting for fall colors.
- These self-guided driving directions link the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial Highway (mostly Route 20) to the Lincoln Highway via Route 31 following the Fox River on the east, and the Great River Road (mostly Route 84), which is parallel to the Mississippi River on the west. These are generally two-lane roads, not interstates. With the Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home in Dixon just off the Lincoln Highway, this route explores the Illinois history of three out of the four presidents who called Illinois their home state.
- This is a visually rich area with plenty of places to visit, and a variety of activities. There is something for nearly everyone on this trip! You can choose what you think you would like to see as priorities ahead of time. It is possible to spend several days exploring everything but this suggested trip can be done in two days.
- These driving directions start and end in Geneva, Illinois and go counter-clockwise in a big circle through northern Illinois, west of Chicago. A two-day trip starting in Geneva would take most travelers to a point for an overnight stay in the Galena area. It is possible, however, to start anywhere along the route.
- This trip will take travelers through a variety of geography found in northern Illinois. Travelers will pass through farmland, near rivers, through wooded areas, and the hills of the Driftless Area in the northwest

corner of Illinois. There are numerous state parks because of the natural beauty found in these areas.

- Hotels on weekends can become really busy, especially in Galena. If you plan to stay overnight in Galena on a weekend, it is highly recommended that travelers choose a hotel and make a reservation well in advance.
- Some types of overnight accommodations may require a two-night stay. Be aware of that when making reservations.
- Volunteers run many of the local museums and/or they have limited budgets for operating expenses. Museums will not be open every hour of every day for every week. You should check their hours ahead of time. For those museums asking for free-will donations, please consider making donations, around \$3 to \$5 or so for each adult would be appropriate if there is no suggested donation amount.
- Of course, it is possible to skip the history and just enjoy the fall colors!
- Off Route 20 (the Grant Memorial Highway) in Union are the Illinois Railway Museum and the McHenry County Historical Museum and you will see signs for both places. That railway museum is huge and it is possible to spend several hours there.
- The driving directions include an optional major side trip on the Stagecoach Trail off the Grant Memorial Highway through Lena to the Apple River Canyon State Park. Yes, there were stagecoaches in Illinois! There are multiple ways to get to and from the Apple River Canyon State Park. The most direct route from Lena is via a couple of gravel roads. It is possible to get there on a paved route. Both routes will be in the directions below. There is also a northern route to Galena from the State Park but these directions will take you through Stockton to get you back on the U.S. Grant Memorial Highway.
- Throughout Illinois, there are various Chambers of Commerce, visitors' centers, and convention and visitors' bureaus (CVBs). Because these driving directions cross through dozens of different locations, in the resources section, there are links to the multiple places that have travel information, places to see, hotels, and restaurants.
- There are many wineries and antique stores along the way, especially closer to the Galena area. The wineries have advertising signage and you

can follow those signs if you want to stop in at a winery. Travelers can visit many cute antique stores along this whole route, including the Lena Mercantile Company, on 101 West Railroad Street in Lena. There will also be numerous farm stands, orchards, and pumpkin patches along the way. Most of them have signage, including hand-written signs for family-owned farms. This guide, however, cannot include mentioning everything; otherwise, it would be over 200 pages long! Travelers should consider exploring the resources for visitors in Part II.

- While in Galena, drive slowly and be very careful about pedestrians who are in a daze window-shopping and do not hit them!
- The Little Traveler shop in Geneva and the Historic Dixon Theatre in Dixon both celebrate 100th year anniversaries in 2022!



Original section of The Little Traveler, 404 S. 3rd St., Geneva, Illinois, photo Kay Shelton Kozak

Lincoln Highway Geocaching Adventure & Adventure Labs App

Thanks to the coordinated efforts of geocaching enthusiasts across the entire length of the Lincoln Highway, there are numerous digital geocaching spots throughout Illinois. For those with smart phones, they can download the Adventure Labs app and use it when they travel along the Lincoln Highway. At points of interest, there are questions to answer, with clues given once a person gets close enough to the location and the clues! Kyle Cheek originally from Illinois coordinated the numerous geocaching experts and volunteers who developed the special geocaching adventure focusing on the Lincoln Highway first unveiled in 2020.

For more information, go to: lincolnhighwaygc.org.

For Adventure Labs Geocaching, please go to: geocaching.com.

Driving Directions

Introduction

How to Use These Directions: The complete driving tour is broken up into sections. The driving time for each segment is an approximation without stops. Obviously, photo stops and visiting locations will change the time it takes from one point to another. Historical information and resources are at the end--more extensive historical information appears about cities and towns along the Lincoln Highway. Travelers are welcome to print any part or the whole guide and/or a passenger is welcome to view the guide on a smart phone or similar device.

Red arrows indicate turns, right or left:  

Side trips off the main route have a curved arrow: 

Things to see have a smiley face. Park areas are in green with a diamond shape.



The Lincoln Highway is an old route, dating to 1913. Over the years, the Lincoln Highway Association established different generations of it, meant to improve traveling safety and reduce the time it took to drive it. The Lincoln Highway spans across the entire continental United States, starting in Times Square, New York City and following all the way to the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. For an interactive online map of the entire Lincoln Highway in the United States (as well as Illinois) including hundreds and hundreds of points of interest, electric vehicle charging stations, and RV campgrounds, please see: lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map/.

Geneva to Elgin, Driving Time Approximately 30 Minutes

These directions begin at The Little Traveler shop, which celebrates 100 years of doing business in Geneva. There are dozens and dozens of other shops to visit, a beautiful courthouse on the Lincoln Highway, and the Geneva History Center.

Geneva

From 404 S. Third Street, continue following south on S. Third Street.

Cross the railroad tracks.

 Turn left at the traffic light onto Route 31 / Lincoln Highway / S. First Street heading north.

Continue to follow Route 31.

Lincoln Highway veers off to the left and west onto State Street / Route 38 at the next major intersection at the traffic light but continue to follow Route 31 northward toward St. Charles along the Fox River.

Past State Street, Route 31 becomes N. First Street.

Route 31 becomes Geneva Road in St. Charles.

St. Charles

 Right side of Route 31, eye-catching murals on the Jalapeño Grill Mexican restaurant

 Corner of Route 31 and Route 64, law firm of Vanek, Larson, & Kolb in the old St. Charles National Bank is on the left side

 Hotel Baker, right side next to the Fox River

North of St. Charles there are numerous parks and forest preserves along the Fox River, mostly Kane County Forest Preserve system parks: kaneforest.com

- ◆ Right side, Ferson Creek Park with an easy looped drive.
- ◆ Right side, further north, Ferson Creek Forest Preserve.
- ◆ Near Red Gate Drive, right side, Fox River Bluff West Preserve
- ◆ Further north, immediate right past S. McClean Boulevard, Blackhawk County Forest Preserve

South Elgin

Route 31 becomes La Fox Street in South Elgin

😊 Fox Valley Trolley Museum

365 S. La Fox St., South Elgin

Travelers can probably see some trolleys from Route 31, check Website for hours: www.foxtrolley.org

S. La Fox St. becomes N. La Fox St., continue northward

Elgin

Pass Secretary of State's Department of Motor Vehicle facility on right side, get ready to turn left

← Turn left at stoplight to go west on Route 20, U.S. Grant Memorial Highway

Route 20 has an on-ramp like an interstate

Continue on Route 20, westbound

Past Randall Road and Route 34, Route 20 becomes four-lane highway

For travelers with more than two days' time, there are plenty of things to see in Elgin: exploreeginarea.com

Elgin to Lena, Driving Time 2 Hours

Udina

Continue on Route 20 West / Reinking Road

Pingree Grove

← Turn left to continue on Route 20 West as Reinking Road splits off



Side Trip to The Milk House Ice Cream

For a side trip for farm-fresh, locally made ice cream, stay on Reinking Road to visit The Milk House Ice Cream, past the town center of Pingree Grove, right side, 230 Reinking Rd., milkhouseicecream.com.

Return to the main route; exit The Milk House to the right

 Turn right to rejoin Route 20 West

Route 20 West becomes Oak Street

 Turn right to follow Route 20 to the north at Route 47

Route 20, Route 47, and Route 72 all merge toward the north for about 1/2 mile

Starks

 Take the left lane to follow Route 20 West to Marengo

Allens Corners

Continue following Route 20 West

 Left side, Hampshire Forest Preserve

Hampshire

West of I-90, U.S. Grant Memorial Highway signs appear more frequently

Harmony

Continue following Route 20 West, also called the South Grant Highway

You will see signs for the Railway Museum and the McHenry County Museum in Union, Illinois in this area along the U.S. Grant Memorial Highway / Route 20. The Railway Museum is huge!

Coral

Continue following Route 20 West

Marengo

Route 20 becomes E. Grant Highway then W. Grant Highway past Route 23

Garden Prairie

Continue following Route 20 West

Belvidere

Route 20 becomes a four-lane divided highway

On the approach to Rockford, travelers with limited time can avoid many stoplights by following Route 20 West to the south--do not take Business Route 20

For travelers with an extra day or two, Rockford has many places to see:
gorockford.com

Cherry Valley

Follow the signs for Route 20 West / South I-39 / South 51 toward Bloomington
Route 20 in this area will look like an interstate, with a cloverleaf

Follow Route 20 West to Freeport and do not take I-39 because it veers to the south

Continue on Route 20 West, which bypasses Rockford

Past Rockford, Route 20 becomes a four-lane divided highway again

Winnebago

Continue following Route 20 West / West State Street



Side stop at the Freeport Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) building. The CVB has many travel brochures, information, and restrooms.



Turn right on S. Browns Mill Road to stop at the Freeport Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)



Historical marker for the second Lincoln - Douglas Joint Appearance right outside the CVB

Return to westbound Route 20

Route 20 West will cross the meandering Pecatonica River in this area a couple of times

Freeport

Continue following Route 20 West. Do not take Business Route 20 unless you really want to go through many stoplights

Eleroy

Continue following Route 20 West

😊 There are some old telegraph poles that can be spotted in this area.



Major Side Trip to Lena & Apple River Canyon State Park

Route 20 to Lena, Driving Time 5 Minutes

For anyone not taking the side trip, continue westward on Route 20, and skip ahead to near the bottom of page 12.

Outside Eleroy is Skate Station, a skating rink no longer open. Zero out the odometer and go 3.6 miles

➡ Turn right onto Galena Road at The Rafters Restaurant (raftersonline.com). This is nicknamed Stagecoach Trail Road. Follow it for a side trip to the old town of Lena.

Lena

Stagecoach Trail Road is also called Lena Street in Lena.

← Turn left on Schuyler St. / Route 73.

➡ Go one block then turn right on Railroad Street

😊 The Lena Mercantile Company antique and craft store is there across the street from the Subway restaurant, Website: lenamercantile.com

Follow Railroad Street

😊 See the historic Lena Water Tower on the left along Vernon Street

Major Side Trip Continues, Lena Water Tower to Apple River Canyon Park, Driving Time 30 Minutes

FYI: There are two main routes from Lena to Apple River Canyon Park, the more direct route that includes gravel roads (1), or the longer, but paved route (2).

(1) For the Direct Route with Gravel Sections

From the Lena Water Tower, backtrack on Vernon Street

 Turn left on Lena Street / Stagecoach Trail Road

Follow it outside Lena, and it becomes Galena Road

Follow Galena Road / Stagecoach Trail Road through Waddams Grove, traveling 7 miles.

 Turn left at East Canyon Road and there should be a directional sign pointing toward the **Apple River Canyon Park** to help you find the turn

East Canyon Road becomes gravel

The Park entrance is 5.6 miles away.

(2) For the Longer Route with No Gravel

From the Lena Water Tower, backtrack on Vernon Street

 Turn right on Lena Street / Stagecoach Trail Road to backtrack to The Rafters and Route 20

 Turn right at The Rafters and take Route 20 West. Go 9.2 miles

Turn right on IL-78 North. Go 6.1 miles

 Turn left on East Canyon Road. Park entrance is 3 miles away.

 **Apple River Canyon Park to Galena, Driving Time 45 Minutes**

To exit, follow signage to return to Highway 78 via East Canyon Road

 Turn right on IL-78 toward Stockton

 Turn right on Route 20 West and go toward Stockton.

No Side Trips, Elgin to Galena, Driving Time 2 Hours, 30 Minutes

For those continuing on the U.S. Grant Memorial Highway and not taking any side trips along the way from Elgin to Galena, remain on Route 20 in the Lena area and do not turn north at Stagecoach Trail. Continue following Route 20 to Stockton.

Stockton



Side Trip to Historic Downtown Stockton

 Turn left, following Main Street

The historic downtown area has some buildings from the 1800s that show their years of construction embedded into the buildings' facade near the rooflines. There are a couple of antique shops in this area.

Backtrack on Main Street to return to Route 20, and continue heading west

Otherwise, continue following Route 20 West.

Woodbine

Continue following Route 20 West

Elizabeth



Side Trip to Apple River Interpretive Center & Museum Store
& Apple River Fort

Turn right at East Myrtle Street for the Apple River Interpretive Center and Museum Store parking lot for the Apple River Fort. Retrace the short drive on East Myrtle Street and return to Route 20 West by turning right.

For no side trip to Apple River Fort and Museum, continue on Route 20

Route 20 West bends around to the left in the middle of Elizabeth

Continue following it to the west

Route 20 West bends to the right as it heads out of town

Route 84 (Great River Road) merges with Route 20 (U.S. Grant Memorial Highway) between Elizabeth and Galena before splitting off to the south

Scenic Overlook

2905 US Highway 20, 2 miles west of Elizabeth

On the right-hand side, watch for signs for the Scenic Overlook 

 Turn right into the Scenic Overlook and find the parking lot. There are restrooms with running water at this place.

 Backtrack and turn right to exit the Scenic Overlook and return to Route 20 West.

Pass the Tapley Woods Conservation Area on both sides of Route 20 West 

Galena

These directions go to the heart of Galena. Any travelers choosing to stay overnight in the 😊 historic DeSoto House Hotel will find a guest-only parking garage near the hotel and if so, checking into the hotel should solve the parking issue in Galena; park the vehicle and walk. Travelers not staying at the DeSoto House Hotel may want to take pictures of it: desotohouse.com

Otherwise, read parking signage very carefully and be aware that parking can be a challenge in Galena, especially on busy weekends.

Continue following Route 20 West into the heart of Galena

Cross the Galena River on the bridge and be prepared to turn right

➡ Turn right immediately after crossing the bridge at Main Street. Stay on Main Street as Water Street splits off to the left. The DeSoto House Hotel is on the corner of Main Street and Green Street, with the address 230 S. Main Street.

Some Points of Interest in Galena:

😊 Galena Country Visitors Center: www.visitgalena.org
101 Bouthillier St.

😊 Galena & U.S. Grant Museum and Jo Daviess County Historical Society:
galenahistory.org

211 S. Bench Street, near it are 😊 photo opportunities of the old Galena Fire Department building, the old Methodist Church, and St. Michael Church

😊 President U.S. Grant Home: granthome.org
500 Bouthillier Street

Galena to Fulton, Driving Time 1 Hour, 10 Minutes

Return to Route 20 East and backtrack east for 11.5 miles

Pass the **Scenic Overlook**

Route 20 and Route 84 (the Great River Road) are merged in this section

➡ Turn right at Route 84 South, the Great River Road / Washington Street
Go 4.9 miles

Hanover

Cross the Apple River in Hanover and be prepared to turn left

 Turn left on Route 84 South / Jefferson Street

Veer to the right

 Mississippi Palisades State Park is along Route 84
There are also several wildlife areas along Route 84

Savanna

Route 84 becomes Main Street in Savanna

Pass Van Buren St.

 Shivers, Inc. Ice Cream Shoppe, phone: (815) 273-2824
720 Main St.

 Savanna Museum and Cultural Center: savannamuseum.org
406 Main St.

Pass the Savanna Fire Department on the right and watch for a bend to the left
Route 84 bends to the left in the heart of Savannah, and becomes Chicago
Avenue / Route 52

Before the McDonald's, the road widens

 Turn right to stay on Route 84 / Viaduct Road to the south

Thomson

Thomson Correctional Center is on the right-hand side

Continue following Route 84 South

Ebner

Continue following Route 84 South / Waller Road

Fulton

 Turn right on 10th Avenue

😊 Dutch Windmill and the Windmill Cultural Center are at the end of 10th Avenue next to the Mississippi River, and 1st Street, click: [dutch-windmill](#)

Fulton to Flagg Township Museum in Rochelle, Driving Time 1 Hour, 30 Minutes

Fulton



Side Trip to Heritage Canyon

Self-guided tour of 1800s buildings, click: [heritage-canyon](#)
turn left at 4th St. and follow it north

😊 Heritage Canyon

515 N. 4th St.

Backtrack by following 4th St. to the south, then follow the directions below by turning at 15th Avenue going east, away from the Mississippi River

The remainder of the trip will be on the Lincoln Highway. The online map with dozens of points of interest, is found here: [lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map](#)
The Lincoln Highway Geocaching Adventure for Illinois starts here, too, see: [lincolnhighwaygc.org](#).

To leave the De Immigrant Dutch Windmill without taking a side trip to Heritage Canyon:

Turn around and backtrack east on 10th Avenue

➡ Turn right at 4th St.

😊 Krumpets Bakery and Restaurant: [krumpetsbakery.com](#)

1016 4th Street

← Turn left at 15th Avenue

➡ Turn right at yield and follow the curve at 16th Avenue

← Turn left at Waller Road onto the Great River Road

➡ Turn at the next right at IL 136

Go east on 136, which is also the Reagan Trail

← Turn left to follow Route 30 (Lincoln Highway) to Morrison

Pass under two railroad viaducts on Lincoln Road, the first is the Union Pacific (UP) and the second is for Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)

Morrison

☺ Near Hillendale Ct. and Lincolnway Ct. on the left side is the former Hillendale Bed & Breakfast, now a law office



Side Trip to Morrison Covered Bridge

← Turn left at N. Orange Street

← Turn left at Norrish Road, which becomes Crosby Road

☺ Morrison Covered Bridge

RVs and trucks must be shorter than 14'10" to drive on the bridge and there may be other restrictions, especially for weight, indicated

To return, backtrack and turn left back onto Route 30 / Lincoln Highway, called Lincolnway in Morrison

☺ See the Lincoln Highway Garage mural painted by the former owner of the Hillendale Bed & Breakfast, the late Michael A. Winandy, on the right side by Fitzgerald Pharmacy, on the corner of Cherry St.

157 E. Lincolnway

☺ Morrison Heritage Museum

morrisonchamber.com/area-attractions/heritage-museum

202 E. Lincolnway

On the east side of Morrison, Lincoln Way becomes Lincoln Road

☺ Past the veterinary clinic on the left side, on the right side, see the sign for a Seedling Mile. The second Seedling Mile sign is on the left side, near the entrance to the Prairie Hill Landfill.

Round Grove

Continue following Route 30 / Lincoln Highway

Pass Forest Inn

← Turn left at Emerson Road

Emerson

Continue on Emerson Road and veer to the right slightly past Fisher St. and onto McCue Road

McCue Road ends at T intersection

 Turn left at the T intersection. The Lincoln Highway sign pointing left is missing (probably the victim of a snowplow).

Sterling

Continue on W. Lincolnway, which becomes W. 4th St.

Past Dillon Ave., three blocks, opposite the Secretary of State facility, follow the curve to the right onto Avenue M, then a curve to the left, and the road becomes one-way, W. 3rd St.

Pass Avenue D

 See the Mexican-American history and heritage mural on the left on the Napa Auto Parts building

218 W. 3rd St.

 On the right on the corner of Locust St., see the mural of the eight presidents who visited Sterling on the building near the traffic light

1 E. 3rd St.

 On 1st Ave., on the Whiteside County Clerk-Circuit building, see the mural of the Lincoln Highway

101 E. 3rd St.

 At the Precinct Restaurant & Bar, [facebook.com/PrecinctSterling](https://www.facebook.com/PrecinctSterling), see the mural of the Secret Six, the forerunners of the Illinois State Police

113 E. 3rd St.

Side Trip to Lincoln Statue in Propheter Park

 Turn left on Fifth Ave., find Propheter Park and the Lincoln statue
Retrace the route back to Lincoln Highway

 Turn left on Lincoln Highway/E. 3rd St.

 Lincoln-Mahanan Home: [srfhs.com/lincoln-manahan-home](https://www.srfhs.com/lincoln-manahan-home)

607 E. 3rd St., parking lot next door

An historical marker at the front tells the story of Lincoln staying at this house.

Follow the slight s-curve

😊 Dillon Home and Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society Museum:
sterlingparks.org/location/dillon-home-museum
1005 E. 3rd St.

Follow a larger s-curve, and the road becomes two-way again, called Lincolnway and Route 2.

😊 See the State Police Headquarters, named District 1 because of its origins in Sterling with the Secret Six.
3107 E. Lincolnway

As the road leaves town, pass a grain elevator on the right side and be ready to turn left.

← Turn left on Prairieville/Palmyra Road, toward Prairieville and Gap Grove
Pass the Emerald Hill Golf Course on the right side

😊 See the Midway Drive-in on the right side

Palmyra

Pass the Palmyra Township Garage

Gap Grove

Pass the Palmyra Quarry

Dixon

😊 On the left side, see the Veterans Memorial Park

← Turn left at Veterans Memorial Park onto Route 2

Pass the Illinois National Guard building

Continue on Route 2

→ Turn right just past McDonald's on Galena Ave./Route 52



Side Trip to a Lincoln Statue

→ Turn right at W. Boyd St.

 Turn left at N. Hennepin Ave. to see the only statue of Abraham Lincoln dressed as a soldier, for when he served at Fort Dixon. 😊

115 Lincoln Statue Drive

Retrace your route back to Galena Ave.

Cross the Rock River on the Lincoln Memorial Bridge, rebuilt in 2007.

Just past the river:

😊 See the Lincoln Highway gazebo on the left side.

😊 See the statue of Ronald Reagan on a horse on the right side.

😊 As you go up the hill, see the historic Dixon Theatre on the left.

😊 On the left closer to the Arch, see the statue for freedom and information about the Berlin Wall and President Reagan.

😊 At the top of the hill, see the iconic Dixon War Memorial Arch and the Nachusa House next to it, formerly a stagecoach stop, hotel, and now a retirement home on the right.

😊 Opposite the Nachusa House near the Dixon Arch, see the old Courthouse and a rock with a historical marker of a Lincoln speech.

 Turn left to follow Lincoln Highway/Route 52/E. 7th St., if not going to Reagan's Boyhood Home



Side Trip to Reagan's Boyhood Home

Continue straight on Galena Ave.

 Turn right at W. 9th St. and turn right at S. Hennepin for Ronald Reagan's Boyhood Home 😊

To return to the Lincoln Highway, continue straight on S. Hennepin

 Turn right on W. 7th and continue straight on E. 7th/Route 52

Other places in Dixon to visit include:

😊 Northwest Territory Historic Center (housed in Reagan's old school):
205 W. 5th St., nthc.org

😊 Loveland Community House (local history):
513 W. 2nd St., lovelandcommunityhouse.org

Follow the s-curve and E. 7th St. becomes Chicago Ave.

Follow the curve to the left to continue on East Route 38/Franklin Grove Rd.

Pass the VFW Post 540 on the left side

Pass the Charles R. Walgreen Field/Dixon Airport on the right side. Walgreen was a pharmacist in Dixon and the founder of the Walgreen's chain.

Nachusa

Pass the Nachusa Lutheran Home, follow Route 38 / Lincoln Highway

Emmert

Pass the Emmert Cemetery on the left side, follow Route 38 / Lincoln Highway

Franklin Grove

A.) To follow an older alignment of the Lincoln Highway and to see part of the original route:

➡ Turn right on Gap Road and cross the railroad tracks and follow the curve to the left.

😊 See a steel pony truss bridge awaiting restoration and an original concrete section of the Lincoln Highway next to it.

⬅ Turn left immediately after the steel bridge

Cross Franklin Creek

Continue following the L Lincoln Highway signs and they lead to 136 N. Elm St., the location of the H. I. Lincoln Building, the Lincoln Highway National Interpretive Center, see: lincolnhighwayassociation.org😊

Or

B.) To take the easy route, continue on Route 38

😊 See the Lincoln Way Inn Bed & Breakfast on the left, which once housed a doctor's office, who saw patients in his own home, see: lincolnwayinn.com

➡ Turn right at N. Elm St. and cross the railroad tracks to see the H. I. Lincoln Building, the Lincoln Highway National Interpretive Center and H.I. Lincoln Store, at 136 N. Elm St., see: lincolnhighwayassoc.org😊

😊 In front of the Lincoln Building is a concrete marker, moved to this location. In 1928, Boy Scouts all across the United States assisted the Lincoln Highway

Association with installing over 3,000 concrete markers used to mark the route so people would not get lost, in an era many decades before GPS and even before paper maps became more prevalent. There are a couple of concrete markers left in their original locations to the east of Franklin Grove, too.



1928 Concrete Marker in front of the Lincoln Bldg.

- 😊 See the Lincoln Highway mural across the street at Rooney's
- 😊 The Lincoln Inn across the street serving breakfast and lunch has a hand-painted mural of Lincoln Highway inside

From the Lincoln building, cross the railroad tracks next to the Lincoln Building on N. Elm

➡ Turn right on Route 38

There are other locations to visit in the Franklin Grove area:

- ◆ Nachusa Grasslands, native prairie plants and bison, see: nachusagrasslands.org
- 😊 Franklin Creek Grist Mill: franklincreekconservation.org
- ◆ Franklin Creek State Natural Area, see: www2.illinois.gov/dnr/Parks/Pages/FranklinCreek.aspx
- 😊 Chaplin Creek Historic Village open air, 1800s settlement, see: chaplincreek.com

Ashton

There are two routes to choose to get to Ashton, the original 1913 route of the Lincoln Highway that is still gravel or a newer version that is paved:

A.) Gravel: East of Franklin Grove, the original route follows a gravel road on the aptly named Track Road, parallel to the railroad tracks, which is a right turn. Track Road will lead into a left turn on Richardson Ave. in Ashton.

B.) All Paved: For the easy, second-generation route with no gravel, continue on Route 38. Follow the curve to the left and see a concrete marker on the left side. Continue on Route 38 and past Hoosier Road, see a concrete marker on the right side. Then, just before the radio tower, see a third concrete marker on the left side. Continue into Ashton and turn right onto Richardson Ave.

From Richardson Ave.

← Turn left on Main St.

😊 See the mural of the paving celebration in Ashton along Main St.

← Turn left on Brown Ave.

→ Turn right back onto Route 38/N. 1st St.

Outside Ashton, follow the curve to the left.

😊 Just before S. Klondike Rd., see The Kitchen Table and Rowe Pavilion. The Kitchen Table is a pay-what-you-can-afford community restaurant. Mike Rowe featured it on his "Returning the Favor" television show. He later made a substantial donation so The Kitchen Table could expand.

7034 S. Klondike Rd.

kitchentablerochelle.org

Rochelle

Follow Route 38 to veer left at a curve and cross the railroad tracks upon entering the town

Veer right at a curve at the railroad tracks

Continue straight on Lincoln Ave.

 Side Trip to the Railroad Park 😊

 Turn right at N. 9th St. to see the Rochelle Railroad Park, which has a view of a rare double diamond crossing of UP (Union Pacific) and BNSF (Burlington Northern Railroad and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway) tracks. Retrace your route to return to Lincoln Ave. and  turn right onto Lincoln Ave.

😊 On the corner of Lincoln Ave. and Lincoln Hwy., see the restored Standard Gas Station, with replica concrete markers

 Turn left

 Side Trip to the Flagg Township Museum 😊

 Turn left at 4th Ave. There is parking in front or in a lot behind the museum.

😊 There is a concrete marker at the back of the museum.
Retrace your route to return to Lincoln Hwy.

Flagg Township Museum in Rochelle to Geneva, Driving Time 1 Hour

😊 On the corner of Lincoln Hwy. and 5th Ave., see the mural of Emily Post. Continue on Lincoln Hwy.

 Turn right at the traffic light by the Butterfly Restaurant to return to Route 38

Continue across the overpass of I-39

Creston

Lincoln Highway did not go straight past Creston. It went to the center of town but needed to take a circuitous route because of one property owner.

 Turn right at S. Beck Rd.

 Turn left at Cedarholm

 Turn right at N. Ridge St.

 Turn left at W. North St. There are several photo opportunities in Creston along S. Main Street.

😊 Creston Opera House, on S. Main St., across the railroad tracks.

😊 S. Main St., see the mural about the Fountain, along S. Main St.

😊 Mural of Headon's Fine Meats on the left

😊 Gazebo by the Fire Station on the right

- ➡ Turn right at E. Grant St.
- ↩ Turn left at N. Woodlawn Rd.
- ➡ Turn right to return to Route 38

Upon approaching the campus of Kishwaukee College, is the location of the First Seedling Mile on the right side

- ↩ Turn left at the traffic light
- ↩ Turn left again at the entrance of the College
- ↩ Turn left again into the parking lot to see a historical marker and a gazebo and drive to them to find out about the First Seedling Mile 😊

Retrace your route to return to Route 38

- ➡ Turn right to continue on Route 38 / Lincoln Highway

Past the College, where the cemetery is on the left-hand side, that is where the First Seedling Mile started

Malta

↪ Side Trip to Malta Historical and Genealogical Society Building

- ➡ Turn right at N. 4th St.
- ➡ Turn right again on Jefferson St.

Pass an elementary school that is now Old School Pizza 😊

😊 See a mural about the Seedling Mile on the side of the Malta Historical and Genealogical Society building

127 N 3rd St.

Retrace your route to return to Route 38

Continue on Route 38

😊 See another mural of the Seedling Mile at Arndt Automotive along Route 38

DeKalb

Route 38 is called Lincoln Highway in DeKalb. This city was the first to rename its Main Street to Lincoln Highway.



Side Trip to a Free Auto Camp, a Relocated Concrete Marker, and the Egyptian Theatre

For those not taking the side trip, continue on Lincoln Highway/Route 38 eastward through DeKalb and skip ahead to the middle of page 26.

← Turn left at the stoplight at Castle Dr., at the formal entrance to Northern Illinois University with a concrete gate

→ Turn right at the top of the hill on College Ave., just over the river

← Turn left at Woodley Rd. and follow the curves along the river

Cross Lucinda Avenue and see the entrance to **Annie's Woods Park**, which was a free auto camp for the Lincoln Highway. Parking may be a challenge when the university is in session but there is a circle to drive around.

→ Exit the circle and turn left on Lucinda Ave., which becomes Miller Ave. Follow the curve veering right

→ Turn left at Linden Pl. and find the entrance to the Ellwood House Museum. The relocated concrete marker is in front of the gray, educational building on the left. For information on the Ellwood House Museum, please see: ellwoodhouse.org 😊

Exit and follow Linden Pl. to the left and follow the curve to turn on the left on Augusta Ave.

→ Turn right at the stoplight onto N. 1st St.

← Turn left at the light at E. Locust St.

→ Turn right at N. 2nd St. and look for the Egyptian Theatre. The Egyptian Theatre is the most photographed location in DeKalb County. For events and information about the Egyptian Theatre, please see: egyptiantheatre.org 😊

← Turn left to return to Route 38 / Lincoln Highway

😊 See the Lincoln Highway mural on the building on the corner of N. 7th St.

😊 On the corner of N. 11th St., see the gazebo and decorative markers

Continue eastward on Route 38

Cortland

😊 See the Cortland Mural on the blue Dun-Rite Building

Continue eastward on Route 38

Maple Park

Continue eastward at the traffic light

Maple Park to Geneva

There are two routes to choose, the easy route and the 1913 original route.

Elburn

A.) For the easy route, continue straight on Route 38 eastward, pass Acquaviva Winery & Restaurant and the Garfield Farm & Museum on the left side down the road, and continue straight through St. Charles into Geneva

😊 For Acquaviva Winery, see: acquavivawinery.com

😊 Garfield Farm & Museum: garfieldfarm.org

Continue on Route 38

St. Charles

The second generation of Lincoln Highway is on Route 38 and it passes through a small section of St. Charles.

Or:

B.) For the original route of the Lincoln Highway, pass the traffic light in Maple Park and be ready to turn right

➡ Turn right on Schrader Rd.

⬅ Turn left on Keslinger Rd.

LaFox

Follow Keslinger Rd. eastward, past Elburn, two Metra train stations, and Delnor/Northwestern Hospital in Geneva.

Geneva

Keslinger Rd. becomes Kaneville Rd. in Geneva

Follow it through a residential area

➡ Turn right at W. State St./Route 38/Lincoln Highway

Geneva

😊 On the corner of State Street and 5th Street, see the Geneva Bank & Trust drive thru, in white with a blue roof. That is a re-purposed old Pure Oil Gas and Service Station.

In Geneva, there are two ways to follow the Lincoln Highway, the original 1913 route and a second-generation route. Both routes are short and it is possible to drive around a little while exploring the small business shops in Geneva and experience both Lincoln Highway routes.

A.) To follow the original 1913 Lincoln Highway route, continue on W. State St.

😊 See the mural along S. 2nd St. and the gazebo along State

➡ Turn right at S. 1st St./Route 31 and continue on it.

You will arrive not far from the The Little Traveler

B.) To follow a second-generation route of the Lincoln Highway

➡ Turn right at S. 3rd St. and arrive in the neighborhood of The Little Traveler

**You are now where you started,
after making a giant loop around northern Illinois!**

Disclaimers: These driving directions are meant for a driver and a passenger acting as a navigator for safety purposes. Travelers are responsible for their own safety and the Illinois Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association is not responsible for any accidents and/or injuries. Hours of operation for any places to visit may change without notice (especially due to widespread staffing issues). Web addresses of businesses, and road conditions (particularly related to road construction), etc. can change without notice. The Illinois Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association is additionally not responsible for changes, outdated information on the Internet or elsewhere and is also not responsible for any other accidents, injuries, and/or illnesses, especially from communicable diseases such as COVID-19. The directions are as accurate as possible but if anyone becomes lost using them, the Illinois Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association is not able to provide assistance, not by phone or roadside help. Volunteers compiled this guide and it is available online free of charge but the information contained is subject to copyright. (© Illinois Chapter, Lincoln Highway Association, 2022).