

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



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## 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, at least \$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. 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.
- Yes, there were stagecoaches in Illinois!
- 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. This guide, however, cannot include mentioning everything; otherwise, it would be over 200 pages long! Travelers should consider exploring the resources for visitors at the end.

- 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 celebrated their 100th year anniversaries in 2022.
- There are road construction detours on Route 84 and Route 20 on the west side of Galena as of the summer of 2023.



*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 in 2020.

For Adventure Labs Geocaching, please go to: [geocaching.com](https://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 indicator: 

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/](http://lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map/).

### Geneva to Elgin, Driving Time Approximately 30 Minutes (If No Stops)

These directions begin at The Little Traveler shop, which celebrated 100 years of doing business in Geneva in 2022. 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](http://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](http://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 / 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 for an historical marker for the second Lincoln - Douglas Joint Appearance next to the now closed Freeport Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) building.



Turn right on S. Browns Mill Road toward the currently closed 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 because that goes through many stoplights.

### Eleroy

Continue following Route 20 West

😊 There are some old telegraph poles that can be spotted in this area along the railroad tracks.



## 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 the now closed Skate Station, which has a sign indicating that a toy museum is coming soon. Zero out the odometer and go 3.6 miles

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

### Lena

Stagecoach 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 Road

Follow it outside Lena, and it becomes Galena Road

Follow Galena Road / Stagecoach 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 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, and new murals. There is also the Stockton Heritage Museum at 107 Front Avenue.

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. Woodbine has cute antique shops and a Glass Museum

### 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 location.

➡ 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](http://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](http://www.visitgalena.org)  
101 Bouthillier St.

😊 Galena & U.S. Grant Museum / Jo Daviess County Historical Society:  
[galenahistorymuseum.org](http://galenahistorymuseum.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](http://granthome.org)  
500 Bouthillier Street

## Galena to Fulton, Driving Time 1 Hour, 10 Minutes (Without Road Construction / Detours)

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**

### Savannah

Route 84 becomes Main Street in Savannah

Pass Van Buren St.

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

 Savannah Museum and Cultural Center: [savannamuseum.org](http://savannamuseum.org)  
406 Main St.

Pass the Savannah 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, [visitnorthwestillinois.com/what-to-do/history-and-heritage/de-immigrant-dutch-windmill.html](http://visitnorthwestillinois.com/what-to-do/history-and-heritage/de-immigrant-dutch-windmill.html)

**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](http://lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map)  
The Lincoln Highway Geocaching Adventure for Illinois starts here, too.

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](http://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

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](http://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://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](http://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 House and Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society Museum:

[sterlingparks.org/location/dillon-home-museum](http://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, called District 1 because of the origins of the Illinois State Police 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 Theater 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](http://nthc.org)

Loveland Community House (local history museum):

513 W. 2nd St., [lovelandcommunityhouse.org](http://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](http://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 at his own house, [lincolnwayinn.com](http://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 [lincolnhighwayassociation.org](http://lincolnhighwayassociation.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](http://nachusagrasslands.org)

Franklin Creek Grist Mill: [franklincreekconservation.org](http://franklincreekconservation.org)

◆ Franklin Creek State Natural Area, see:  
[dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park/franklincreek.html](http://dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park/franklincreek.html)

Chaplin Creek Historic Village open air, 1800s settlement, see:  
[chaplincreek.com](http://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.  
tablerochele.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. There is the Creston Opera House, on S. Main St., across the railroad tracks. Along S. Main St., see the mural about the Fountain, the mural of Headon's Fine Meats on the left, and the 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

Note: There is road construction in this area as of the summer of 2023.

← 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. Also, there is road construction on the Lucinda Avenue bridge as of the summer of 2023.

→ 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](http://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:

← 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

Pass Melrose T-Top on the left side

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

### 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.

A.) For the easy route, continue straight on Route 38 eastward, pass (or stop in for wine and/or Italian food) Acquivava Winery on the left side and continue straight through St. Charles into Geneva. Continue on Route 38

B.) For the original route, at the first right-hand road past the traffic light in Maple Park:

➡ Turn right on Schrader Rd.

↩ Turn left on Keslinger Rd. Follow Keslinger Rd. eastward, past Elburn, two Metra train stations, and Delnor/Northwestern Hospital in Geneva. Keslinger Rd. becomes Kaneville Rd. Follow it through a residential area. turn right at W. State St./Route 38.

### St. Charles

The second generation Route 38 passes through a small section of St. Charles.

### Geneva

On the corner of State Street and 5th Street, there is the Geneva Bank & Trust drivethru, in white with a blue roof. That is a re-purposed old Pure Oil gas and service station.

A.) To follow the original 1913 route, continue on W. State St. See the mural along S. 2nd St. and the gazebo along State, then ➡ turn right at S. 1st St./Route 31 and continue on it.

B.) To follow the second-generation route, ➡ turn right at S. 3rd St.

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. Also, the hours of operation for any places to visit may change without notice (especially due to widespread staffing issues), Web addresses of businesses, etc., and road conditions (particularly related to road construction) 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 assistance. 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, 2023).



## Part 2: Historical Information

### Geneva

Continuing northward along the Fox River in the location of what was the Waubonsee Indian Trail, now Route 31 and the Lincoln Highway, is the City of Geneva. A second Pottawatomie Indian trail followed an east-west route, and today it is State Street, the Lincoln Highway. A trading post opened in 1834, along with a general store, sawmill, and a place where Indians could trade furs.<sup>i</sup> The Herrington family arrived in 1935 and they are considered the founders of Geneva.<sup>ii</sup> The elegant Herrington Inn and Spa constructed in 1993 with subsequent expansions, takes its name from those early settlers and stands along the banks of the Fox River where they once lived.<sup>iii</sup> Between the Herrington family's farmstead and the Herrington Inn, a creamery stood along the Fox River beginning in 1875, with cool water diverted to flow past barrels of stored milk.<sup>iv</sup>

Fast forward to 1922, Kate Rafferty opened a small, private gift shop in her home at 404 South Third Street.<sup>v</sup> From there, she expanded her business and her house, eventually the shop inside her house grew to where she and her family moved to a different house.<sup>vi</sup> Over the next hundred years, The Little Traveler expanded into different wings and Rafferty encouraged other people in homes in the neighborhood to open up shops, which continue today. The Little Traveler celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The Geneva History Museum published a new book, *100 Years of The Little Traveler* in homage of Rafferty's business and subsequent transformation of her neighborhood into a notable shopping district.

Geneva is the home of the annual Concours d'Elegance classic automobile show, held the last Sunday in August: <http://genevaconcours.net/>, held in the neighborhood of the Geneva History Museum and The Little Traveler, on the Lincoln Highway, South Third Street.



*"Junction at Geneva, Kane County, Illinois, and the Chicago feeder."*

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/linchhigh/x-lhc1256/lhc1256>. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. Accessed: May 26, 2022.

*[This is State Street, the Lincoln Highway, facing eastward, with the Lincoln Highway following a turn to the south near the bottom of the hill at South First Street or Route 31. A subsequent generation of the Lincoln Highway placed a southbound turn at South Third Street. The Chicago Feeder continues eastward, across the bridge over the Fox River.]*

## **La Fox**

### **Garfield Farm Museum**

The Garfield family arrived in this area west of Geneva in 1841, purchasing a log cabin and land first owned by Sam Culbertson, in 1835.<sup>vii</sup> As a stagecoach route came through the area, the Garfield family used the log cabin as an inn. They later had the brick building constructed to serve as a larger inn, community meeting place, and tavern, serving the stagecoach route.<sup>viii</sup> As the railroad system expanded, however, the stagecoach business ended, and with it the need for a tavern. The Garfield family, however, continued to farm in this area until the last Garfield owner developed the land as a museum in 1977.

## **Elburn**

Elburn was the home of lumber magnate and Illinois state legislator, John Stewart. He lived on an 800-acre property with a stately fifteen-bedroom Victorian mansion built in 1897 which still standing at 526 N. Main Street.<sup>ix</sup> He reportedly pledged \$50,000 toward improving the Lincoln Highway in Elburn, with the provision that markers would indicate the location of his donation.<sup>x</sup> There is no known record that his pledge and plans become complete, however.

## **Maple Park & Cortland**

Maple Park and Cortland along the Lincoln Highway share some characteristics. First, the Lincoln Highway does not pass through the downtown areas but at the outskirts. Second, both have downtown areas that center around the railroad tracks, currently the Union Pacific but once the Chicago and North Western Railway. Cortland, however, was the birthplace of Charles W. Nash, born into a destitute family who gave him away when he was only six years old and he became an indentured servant on a farm in Michigan.<sup>xi</sup> He later worked in Flint for the Durant-Dort Carriage Company and became interested in automobiles in 1897 after driving an electric automobile in New York City. He became the president of Buick Motor Company then the General Manager of the General Motors Corporation (GMC), leading it from debt to profit.<sup>xii</sup> He purchased the Jeffery Motor Company in 1916 and renamed it the Nash Motors Company. At the time of his passing, he was living in Beverly Hills, California.

## **DeKalb**

Similar to the other places described here, the first settlers from back east arrived in the early 1830s, with its formal founding in 1837 under the name Buena Vista.<sup>xiii</sup> A golf course in DeKalb bears the name Buena Vista. Later, the community became renamed for founder Russell Huntley as Huntley's Grove, who came from New York.<sup>xiv</sup> Huntley is the namesake of Huntley Park, of which Jens Jensen designed, the same Jens Jensen who developed the Ideal Section of the Lincoln Highway near Dyer, Indiana. Huntley's Grove was along a stagecoach route. The name DeKalb in 1856 at DeKalb's establishment as a village came from Revolutionary War General Johann de Kalb.



Fast forward to the 1924 *Road Guide*, there was a Free Auto Camp in DeKalb sponsored by the DeKalb Commercial Club, which continues to function as a park called Annie's Woods. There is no Main Street in DeKalb--it became renamed to Lincoln Highway. There were two 1928 concrete markers in DeKalb, one on the east side and the other on the west but those subsequently found new homes, in locations where the markers could be viewed by others.

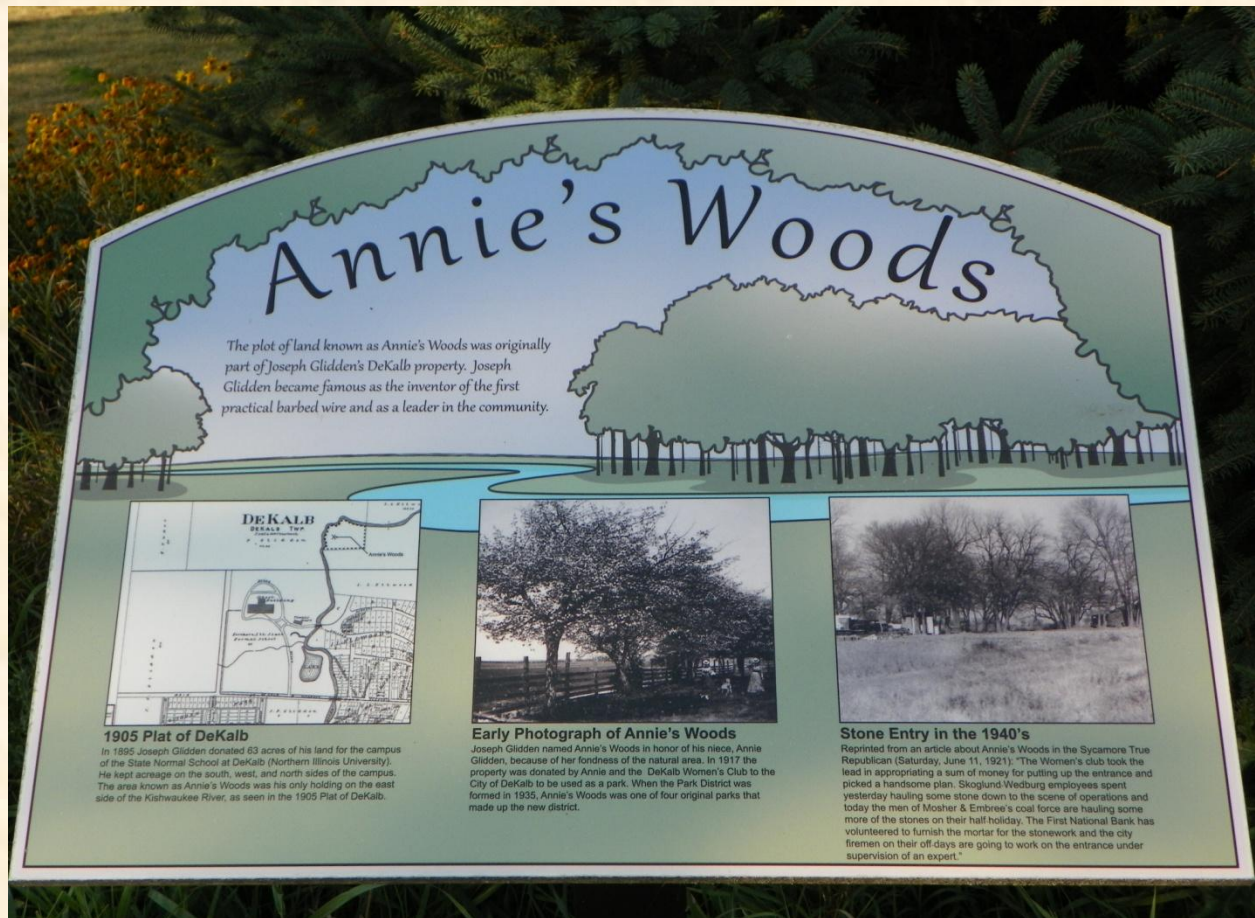


*Marker at Ellwood House & Museum  
at 420 Linden Pl., once the 1879 home of  
barbed wire manufacturer Isaac Ellwood*



*Oak Crest Retirement Community\*  
2944 Greenwood Acres Dr.*





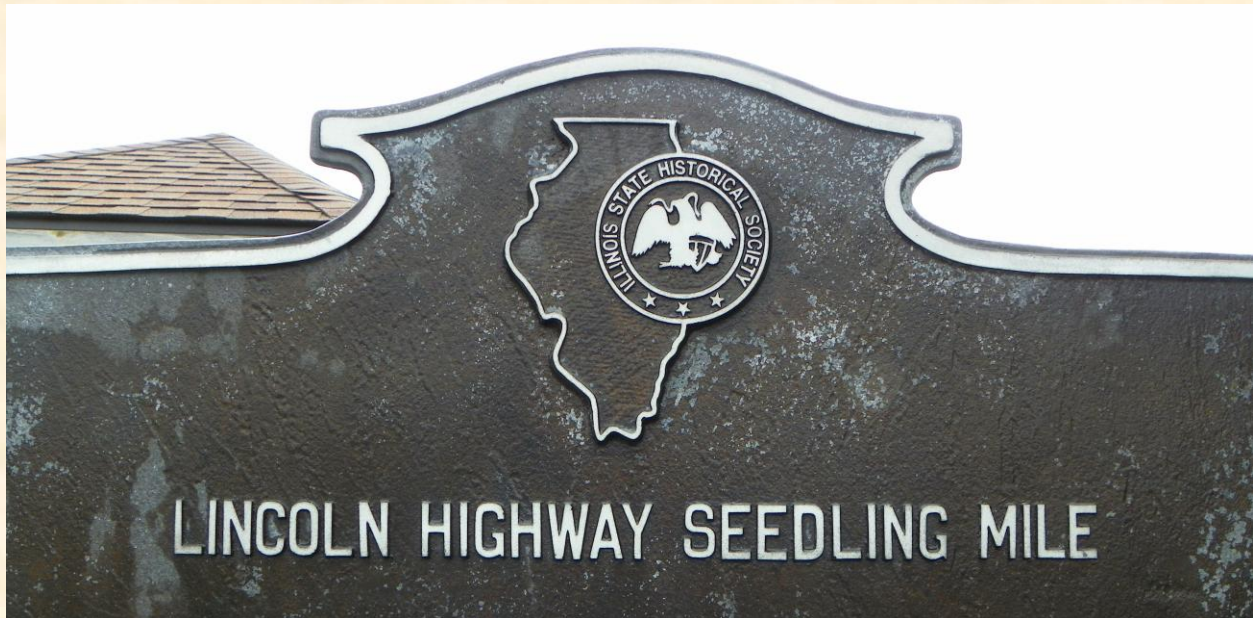
*Historical description of Annie's Woods\**

## Egyptian Theatre

Elmer H. Behrns designed the Egyptian Theatre with an overall theme of Ramses II, an Egyptian Pharaoh from 1279-1213 B.C.E.<sup>xv</sup> Construction began on the Egyptian Theatre during 1929 and continued after the infamous Stock Market Crash that year. Many construction details needed to be scaled back to contain costs, including the original plan to have an air cooling system and a hotel built next door. The entrance floor was supposed to be marble but instead it features a unique broken tile surface, made from tin-glazed pottery tiles.<sup>xvi</sup> Over the early years, the Egyptian hosted movies and live events but began to fall into a state of disrepair and came close to become demolished. A preservation group formed in 1978 and they began working on solutions to preserve the Egyptian. They qualified for a \$2.3 million restoration grant from the State of Illinois in 1982, with work completed in 1983 for a re-opening of the theater. The Egyptian underwent recent enhancements, including a replacement of the original seats, a sprinkler

system, and finally, air conditioning so the theater can remain open during the summer months.

## Malta



Unlike other towns, which first had settlers in the early 1830s shortly after the end of hostilities with native peoples, the first settlers to the area of Malta did not arrive until 1851, after the beginning of the Crimean War in Europe and growing grain became very lucrative.<sup>xvii</sup> Its original name was Milton, but people changed it to Etna, and at the establishment of a post office, the name changed again to Malta.

Speed ahead to the year 1914, the Lincoln Highway Association selected a particularly muddy section of the highway to improve and construct the first of four Seedling Miles, completed in October of 1914. An Illinois State Historical Society Marker commemorates the first Lincoln Highway Seedling Mile in Malta.

## Creston

Established in 1856, the Village of Creston took its name from being at the highest elevation between Chicago and the Mississippi River. Creston was one of several communities selected to receive a donated 'bubbler,' a water fountain. The sign below describes a brief history of the water fountain and an image of Lincoln Highway Association Counsels Martin Kennedy (Creston) and J. W. Corkings (State Consul), who were on hand for the fountain's unveiling.<sup>xviii</sup>



Kennedy and Corkings had their picture taken during the unveiling of the bubbler and they had their picture taken, depicted in the sign. Carl Parker donated bubblers in 1919 memory of his mother, Amanda Sutherland Parker, meant to provide refreshment for travelers on the Lincoln Highway.



Not to be outdone by the historical sign about the water fountain in Creston, a local butcher shop and meat market, once owned by the now retired Lyle Headon, arranged to have historical signs made to commemorate the shop's long history in Creston. Headon's, originally established by the Headon family in 1970, attracts shoppers from the western suburbs of Chicago who appreciate their quality meat market.



*The Lincoln Highway leading to Rochelle was infamous for muddy conditions.<sup>xix</sup>*



## Rochelle

The first settlers came to this area in 1835 and lived among the peaceful Potawatomi bands led by Chief Shabbona, who became the namesake of the Shabbona Trail, which led to the south. These settlers first named the area Hickory Grove. In 1838, Willard Flagg and his family came to the area and Flagg Township bears his name.<sup>xx</sup> As the community grew, Robert Lane arrived, purchased land, the name changed from Hickory Grove to Lane, and the first newspaper started in 1858, the *Lane Leader*.<sup>xxi</sup> By 1861, the community continued to grow but a series of fires that destroyed numerous buildings. Thomas Burke was arrested and put to trial for the fires but during a recess, local people did not wait for justice and instead they grabbed him, put a rope around his neck, and threw him out of the window on a third-story building.<sup>xxii</sup> Lane soon earned the infamous nickname of "Hangman's Town. Several citizens went on trial for his murder but none were found guilty. The growth of the once-booming community stalled after the hanging and after seeing a bottle of Rochelle Salts (a laxative) on a shelf in a store, someone decided the town needed a "good cleaning out" and the Illinois General Assembly in Springfield officially changed the name to Rochelle.<sup>xxiii</sup> While no one immediately claimed responsibility for the name change, later, the obituary of Joseph Parker credited him with the idea for changing the name from Lane to Rochelle.<sup>xxiv</sup>



*Renovated 1918 Standard Oil Station on the corner of Lincoln Avenue<sup>xxv</sup>*



## **Old Soda Fountain at Cherry Ave. and Main St.**

The building location has a long history in Rochelle.

In the early days of the City, a gentleman erected a Board and Battered building to run a Blacksmith Shop. John Comstock bought the property and “fitted it up” for a Billiards Hall. It was run as a Tavern and Billiards Hall until 1910 when prohibition came to the township. It continued as a Billiards Hall.

In 1915 with the excitement of Rochelle being on the Lincoln Highway Comstock sold the wood structure and it was moved to make way for a new brick building with two store fronts. It was completed in 1916. Barney Kuelgan rented the corner store and called it the Cherry Street Sweet Shop. He had another Fountain a block away and as WWI was underway, he had trouble finding help and closed the store. A bowling alley began operation in the basement and lasted until around 1948.

The Comstock family took over operation and it was known as Comstock’s. The fountain was updated in 1927 with modern equipment and a dance floor was added. The location also became a Bus stop and agent location for several companies with Greyhound lasting until 1995.

The surviving Comstock passed away, and Hazel and Oscar Larson bought the building and continued business, adding antiques for sale. They managed to maintain the property and keep the character of the fountain.

When Hazel passed, the building was put up for auction and the current owners Steve and Deana Bingham were able to purchase the building.

With almost a year of extensive cleaning and updates with their children pitching in the Fountain was opened and called, "American Dreams Confectionary and Soda Fountain" in 1993. After two years of operation, they were unable to stay open and the fountain was closed. It was used for special events for a few more years. The Fountain, fixtures and relics remain intact to this day.

--Written by Illinois Chapter President and Soda Fountain Owner, Steve Bingham

## **Rochelle Flagg Township Museum**

The museum occupies a town hall built in 1884 under the leadership of Mayor Angus Bain and shared by Rochelle and Flagg Township.<sup>xxvi</sup> The building originally had hitching posts outside for horses and mules and a planked sidewalk. With the establishment of the Lincoln Highway, in 1915, local citizens donated a

cast-iron drinking fountain placed along the sidewalk on Fourth Avenue and its ingenious design provided drinking water at the top for people, a large trough below for horses, and another trough at the bottom for dogs, cats, and small animals.<sup>xxvii</sup> The fountain now has a home in front of the museum. In the back of the museum, a Lincoln Highway marker also has a permanent home.

Inside the museum is the last known Partin-Palmer automobile. The automobile company started in Chicago and in 1915, the George D. Whitcomb Company chose Rochelle for the automobiles' final assembly. The vehicles featured an electric starter, a 20-horsepower engine, and sold for \$495, although a more-expensive model sold for \$1,000.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Other notable buildings in Rochelle include the Hub Theatre, rebuilt into Kennay Farms Distillery, which produces vodka, gin, whiskey, and beer from family-owned farms (and hand-sanitizer during the early months of COVID-19). The Collier Inn, made famous by Emily Post while she waited three days for rains to end so she could continue her journey to San Francisco in 1915, no longer exists as of 1989. It was originally called the Rochelle House and it dated to the 1899.<sup>xxix</sup> The hotel's image, along with Emily Post's and her automobile's, appear in a sign along the Lincoln Highway at the corner of Fifth Avenue erected in 2007. The Post Office along the Lincoln Highway dates to 1914.

Rochelle hosts the annual Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival, usually the third weekend in August. See: <https://lhhfest.com/>.

## **Ashton**

Ashton in the 1830s lacked a supply of timber and for that reason, settlers from back east initially skipped over the area.<sup>xxx</sup> The first settlers did not arrive until 1848 and the number of people living in the area remained very small until 1854, with the Galena and Chicago Union railroad.<sup>xxxi</sup> Samuel F. Mills came to the area in 1854 and became involved with the grain and lumber and his cousin, Nathan A. Petrie, arrived in 1858, and both later established the Ashton Bank.<sup>xxxii</sup> The New Deal era Mills and Petrie Auditorium and Library bears their names.

Although settlers came to Ashton later in history, Ashton was first in paving the roads. Local people enthusiastically embraced paving the Lincoln Highway and they wanted all of the streets in town paved, which they accomplished in 1921 through the contractor Trompeter & Son, celebrated with a Boulevard

Jubilee, a parade and festival attended by around 10,000 people from the region.<sup>xxxiii</sup>



*Ashton Boulevard Jubilee, 1921, photo from Ruth Frantz*

## **Franklin Grove**

Following the pattern of other towns along the Lincoln Highway, the first settlers to the Franklin Grove area from back east arrived in the early 1830s. Two brothers and their families arrived in two covered wagons in 1835 at the Iron Spring, near Franklin Grove Creek, named for Franklin Dixon, the son of John Dixon, who operated a ferry on the Rock River.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Colonel Nathan Whitney arrived in 1837 and had a house constructed for his family. The Whitneys are known for owning an extensive orchard and developing the Whitney Apple, an edible and tasty crab apple.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### **H.I. Lincoln Building / Lincoln Highway National Interpretive Center**

During the early years of the re-formed Lincoln Highway Association, a search for a location for a national headquarters centered on Franklin Grove, Illinois and an old and dilapidated building once owned by a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, Henry Isaac Lincoln. He opened a general store in Franklin Grove in 1854,



which quickly expanded, necessitating the construction of the two-story building in 1860.<sup>xxxvi</sup> His son continued operating the general store, which also served as the first post office. Fast forward to the mid 1990s and a group of men in the Franklin Grove area interested in local history, Farming Heritage, Inc., hired a restoration expert and they began the work of restoring the building, which was a massive undertaking in a building with a roof that had collapsed into the lower floor. Work continued until the building's grand re-opening in 1999.

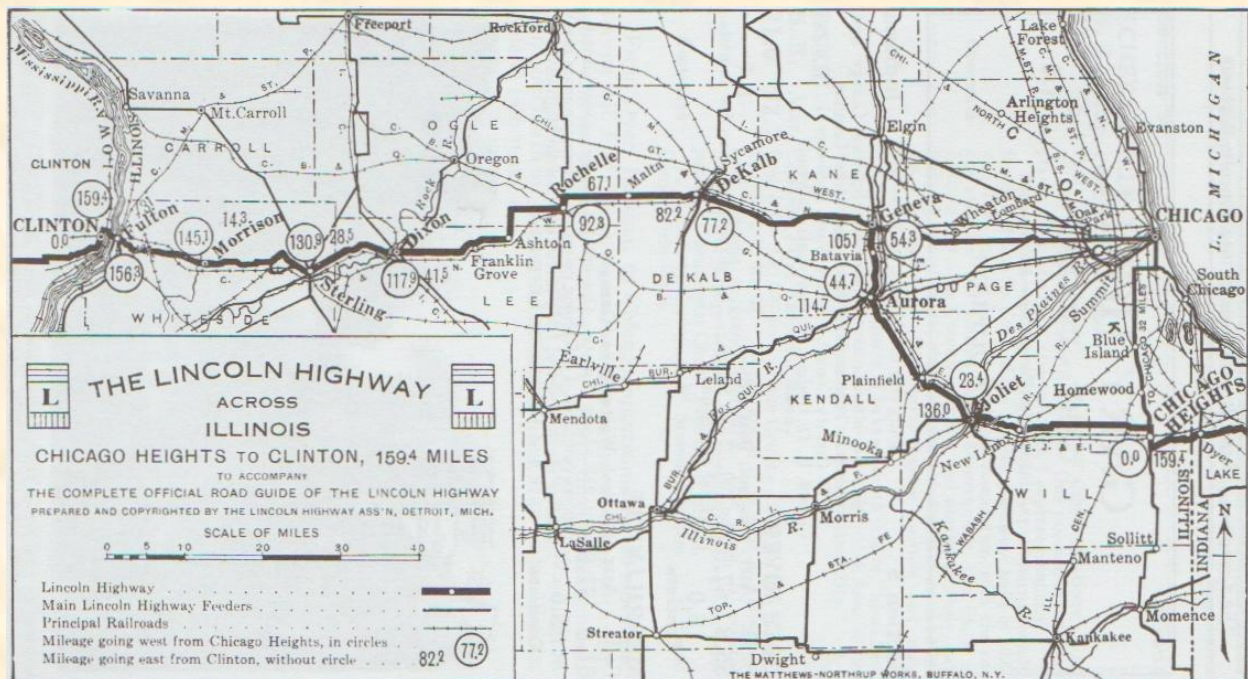


*H. I. Lincoln Building in 1996 under restoration, photo by Lynn Asp*



“Nothing that has been attempted by motordom, particularly in the matter of higher improvement has been of such magnitude and of so much importance to interstate travel over the roads as the laying out, the signboarding, and the improvement of the Lincoln Highway, a sea to sea road designed to aid and encourage touring and to serve as a monument to the martyred president.”

—“For Motorist and Motorcyclist,” Chicago Daily Tribune, Sep. 6, 1914.



*Map of the Lincoln Highway Across Illinois from the "A Complete Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway," Lincoln Highway Association, Fifth Edition, 1924.*

## Resources: In Geographical Order of the Driving Directions

Geneva Chamber of Commerce Visitors' Guide:  
[issuu.com/shawmedia/docs/genevavg](http://issuu.com/shawmedia/docs/genevavg)

Geneva Shop, The Little Traveler: [littletraveler.com/](http://littletraveler.com/)

Geneva History Museum: [genevahistorymuseum.org](http://genevahistorymuseum.org)

Blackhawk Waterways CVB: [visitnorthwestillinois.com](http://visitnorthwestillinois.com)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.geneva.il.us/320/History-of-Geneva>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.herringtoninn.com/about-us>

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Emma, Terry. 2022. *100 Years of The Little Traveler, Geneva, Illinois, 1922-2022*. Geneva: Geneva History Museum.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.garfieldfarm.org/about.html>

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/stewart/15232/>

<sup>x</sup> <https://lincolnhighwaynews.com/2007/11/09/millionaires-marker-mystery-west-of-chicago/>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/2072/charles-williams-nash>

<sup>xii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/DeKalb>

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> <https://egyptiantheatre.org/history/>

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://www.villageofmalta.net/maltahistory.htm>

<sup>xviii</sup> <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/what-to-do/history-and-heritage/creston-lincoln-hwy-interpretive-mural-gazebo.html>

<sup>xix</sup> Image from the Regional History Center, Northern Illinois University Libraries.

<sup>xx</sup> Hegberg, Carol. 2007. *Rochelle: Images of America*. Arcadia Publishing.

<sup>xxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid. The pump is original equipment and the renovation work completed in 2001. This photo and all others not cited are by Kay Shelton Kozak.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxx</sup> <https://www.ahgp.org/ill/ashton-township-lee-county-illinois.html>

<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxii</sup> <https://www.ahgp.org/ill/ashton-township-lee-county-illinois.html>

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Franzwa, Gregory. 2009. *The Lincoln Highway: Illinois*. Toole, Utah: Patrice Press.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Sheap, Ethel. "Early History of Franklin Grove." n.d.

<sup>xxxv</sup> <https://www.outonalimbapples.com/varieties/whitney-crabapple>

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Jacobson, Sue. "Who was H. I. Lincoln, Anyway? *Lincoln Highway Forum*, Fall 1998, Vol. 6, No. 1.