

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN MEMORIAL WAY INDIANA SECTION

The first actual work to be done on a memorial project originating over twenty years ago has just been started in Indiana with the acceptance of the report submitted to Governor Leslie by the Indiana Lincoln Memorial Way Commission. Surveyors are already at the task and the State Highway Commission has been authorized to proceed with construction.

The Lincoln Memorial Way will extend from the birthplace of Lincoln in Kentucky, to his burial place in Springfield, Illinois, passing by the home site of the Lincolns in Indiana.

This road is destined to become the Appian Way of America, not a military way, however, but a road dedicated to peace and good will, connecting the north and the south, the east and the west.

It is not contemplated that this road will be completed by this or the following generation, but so planned and visualized that its constant development may be the work of each succeeding generation. It will be one great American memorial to Abraham Lincoln which will be in the building through the centuries.

The investigation has been in process for eighteen months by a commission consisting of Mr. Arthur F. Hall, President, Fort Wayne; J. I. Holcomb, Secretary, Indianapolis; Jess L. Murden, Peru; Curtis G. Shake, Vincennes, and Richard Lieber, Indianapolis. Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, served as historian to the Commission.

Briefs presenting evidence bearing upon the route were submitted to the Commission by the following organizations:

- Cannelton Chamber of Commerce.
- Corydon, Indiana, Lincoln Memorial Highway Association.
- Daviess County Memorial Way Association.
- Gentryville Lincoln Memorial Way Association.
- Lincoln Ferry Memorial Association.
- Milltown Business Men's Club.
- Princeton Rotary, Kiwanis, and Advertising Clubs.
- Selvin Community Group.
- The Buffalo Trace Historical Association.

Vincennes Chamber of Commerce.
Warrick County Lincoln Route Association.

The Indiana section of the highway will represent parts of the two migrations of the Lincoln family, one in 1816 and the other in 1830.

While the course followed in the 1816 migration was somewhat qualified by the limited number of roads available, the commission found it necessary to make a detailed study of the 1830 migration from Lincoln City to Vincennes and proceeded to investigate the claims of the various organizations as they were related to the following subjects:

- Reminiscences of Members of the Migrating Group.
- Evidence in the Briefs Referring to Places and People.
- Available Roads in 1830.
- Frequency of Travel over Available Roads.
- Road Elevations and Streams.
- Comparative Mileage of Various Routes.
- Sections of Suggested Routes in Agreement.

The following excerpts from the report of the commission follow:

"The Commission is very frank to admit that it does not have, and is thoroughly convinced that there is not now available proof as to the route traveled by the Lincolns during either one of the migrations. It has come to an unanimous conclusion, however, about the location of what appears to them to be the most likely route chosen by the migrating groups.

"Having been unable to bring into harmony the reminiscences of members of the migrating group and having found the testimonies of individuals referring to points the Lincolns may have touched on the migration irreconcilable, the Commission has been obliged to rely on the evidence in the many briefs which had to do with the availability of certain roads.

"The 1830 migration offered many available wagon roads but it appears that the Troy-Vincennes trail must have been better known to the Lincolns than any of the other routes because of the location of their home and trips formerly made over the trail by members of the family.

"While nearly all of the various routes followed ridge roads when possible, there was an advantage in the route having the minimum number of streams to cross.

"Then the very important question of mileage over the various routes was considered, there was no road so favorably situated as the one through Polk Patch and Petersburg which was 11 miles shorter than its nearest competitor, and 17 miles shorter than the maximum distance of other contending routes."

Official Indiana Route

The route chosen is as follows:
"Cannelton, Tell City, Troy, crossing the Anderson River, all over Highway No. 66 to a point where the Old Santa Fe Trail takes off to the north and northwest. Following this trail in a general northwesterly direction through Santa Claus and striking Highway No. 162 at or near the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial, thence passing through the park to Gentryville, Selvin (Polk Patch), Petersburg, Monroe City, into Vincennes."

Memorial Aspects

"The Indiana Highway Commission, the Department of Conservation and the Lincoln Memorial Way Commission have united in the following resolutions as to the character of this road:

"Resolved, that the Lincoln Memorial Way through Indiana should become a memorial way in fact and not merely one in name;

"First: by giving special attention to the memorial aspects of the route.

"Second: by insisting that the path should be one of dignity and beauty, so landscaped with native shrubs and trees as to create an atmosphere of approval.

"Third: by requiring a minimum right-of-way at least 300 feet wide in sparsely settled regions so that objectionable and unsightly buildings may be prevented from encroaching on the traveled way.

"Fourth: by re-ascertaining what occurred along the trail of historical significance where additional ground might be secured for proper approach and development.

"Fifth: by inviting the cooperation of communities through which the highway passes in assisting in the beautification program."

Definite and Characteristic Expression

"Resolved, that the structures along the Lincoln Memorial Way through Indiana should have definite and characteristic expression.

"First, by using parapets of rocks instead of wood as guard rails, using a similar design for the construction of culverts and bridges.

"Second, by obscuring telegraph, telephone, and power lines where possible.

"Third, by providing camping places furnished with pure water, adequate rest room facilities, and shelter houses.

"Fourth, by so planning the road construction that if traffic demanded, a three lane pavement with wide and gently sloping berms, might be provided.

"These recommendations are provided by the members of the Highway Commission, the Department of Conservation and the Lincoln Memorial Way Commission."