

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN HIGHWAYS, BRIDGES AND TUNNELS

When Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln called their first son Abraham Lincoln they could have had no reason to believe that throughout the nation this name would be widely utilized to memorialize significant achievements in educational, philanthropic, and mechanical efforts.

On Tuesday, December 21, 1937, there was dedicated a new traffic tunnel extending from New Jersey to New York and passing at a depth of 75 feet under the Hudson River. Although it was built at a cost of approximately \$37,000,000, it was named for a poor boy born in a log cabin. This Lincoln Tunnel is another achievement so colossal that only the name of a giant figure in history would be appropriate for it. Then, too, it was over this same Hudson River between New Jersey and New York that the dead body of the martyred president was transported in 1865.

The Lincoln Tunnel is the most recent addition to the large number of roadways, bridges, and construction projects which have memorialized Abraham Lincoln by bearing his name.

In 1909 shortly after the centennial celebrations of Lincoln's birth, the Legislature of Kentucky, "enacted a law naming the road over which Abraham Lincoln traveled from his home at Hodgenville to Indiana, 'The Lincoln Highway'." This was evidently the first official step taken to recognize the trail over which the Lincolns migrated from Kentucky to Indiana, and finally to Illinois.

Possibly the Legislature was not aware that the father of Lincoln had served as a road surveyor on a section of this same highway as early as 1816. This record, copied from a Hardin County Kentucky Order Book, reveals this early service on the part of Thomas Lincoln.

"Monday 18th, May, 1816.

"Ordered that Thomas Lincoln be and he is hereby appointed surveyor of that part of the road leading from Nolin to Bardstown which lies between the Bigg hill and the Nolling

fork in place of George Redman and that all the hands that assisted said Redman do assist said Lincoln in keeping said road in repair."

The Forty-Seventh General Assembly of Illinois in 1911 adopted this Resolution: "Whereas, The People of the State of Illinois, ever mindful of their deep and lasting obligation to Abraham Lincoln . . . therefore be it,

"Resolved, That the board of trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, be and they are hereby requested to make the necessary investigations to determine the exact route traveled by Abraham Lincoln in his removal from Kentucky to Illinois."

This resolution in Illinois paved the way for some similar legislation by the state of Indiana in 1915 when a commission was appointed to mark out the way the Lincoln family traveled through Indiana when they migrated to Illinois in 1830. The three states, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois are slowly bringing to completion the Lincoln National Memorial Highway which connects the home sites of the Lincolns in the above mentioned states.

Midway on this memorial highway at Vincennes, Indiana, a bridge of architectural beauty has been built, spanning the Wabash River. It has been named the Lincoln Memorial Bridge and commemorates the migration of the Lincoln's from Indiana in to Illinois.

The great arteries of travel from coast to coast and from lakes to gulf have become so important that they deserve something more than a number to designate them. In 1913 an imaginary line running east and west across the country was visualized as a possible route for a trans-continental highway. Two years later the Lincoln Highway was a reality, a 3,400 mile thoroughfare, the longest in all the world.

The men who planned this road were sincere admirers of Abraham Lincoln. The highway association's first president, Henry B. Joy, for many years sponsored the Lincoln-Joy Research

Foundation. Another president of the association was F. A. Sieberling, one of the moving spirits in developing Lincoln Memorial University. The name of Albert J. Beveridge, famous Lincoln author, also appeared on the board of directors of the association. The proclamation of the Lincoln Highway Route, issued on September 10, 1913, contains this resolution:

"Therefore be it resolved:

"That the Lincoln Highway now is and henceforth shall be an existing memorial in tribute to the immortal Abraham Lincoln."

One of the most important bridges on the Lincoln Highway was dedicated on July 28, 1929. It spans the Missouri River between Blair, Nebraska, and Missouri Valley, Iowa. The bridge has a total length of 2,800 feet but it shortened the Lincoln Highway route twenty-eight miles. It has been named the Lincoln Memorial Bridge.

On the first page of the prospectus containing the resolution about naming the Lincoln Highway, is the copy of a road review signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1834.

"Athens, November 4, 1834
"To the County Commissioner's Court for the County of Sangamon:

"We, the undersigned, appointed to view and relocate a part of the road between Sangamon town and the town of Athens, respectfully report that we have performed the duty of said appointment according to the law—and that we have made the said relocation on good ground—and believe the same to be necessary and proper.

"James Strowbridge
"Levi Cantrall,
"A. Lincoln.

"Here is the map—the Court may allow me the following charges if they think proper:

1 day's labor as surveyor.....	\$3.00
Making map50
	\$3.50

"Abraham Lincoln"

So the Lincoln's themselves have been road builders and it is altogether fitting that these great arteries of travel with their tunnels and bridges should bear the name of one who preserved the unity of the states and with his own axe helped to blaze a trail through the wilderness.