

THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL (1913-2013)

The City of Fulton Tourism Committee selected the Lincoln Highway's Centennial Anniversary as its theme for 2013. The Fulton Historical Society began its annual series of programs with a power point presentation on the bridges that crossed or crosses the Mississippi River from Fulton to Clinton, Iowa. The first one discussed was the Lincoln Highway Bridge.

The Lyons-Fulton High Bridge, constructed in nine months, was opened on July 4, 1891. It was a spectacular structure and an amazing engineering feat at that time and over 23,000 people attended the grand opening, all-day ceremonies.

While there was another bridge two miles south of the Lyons-Fulton bridge, named the Clinton-Illinois Bridge, it was the north one that was selected to become the official Lincoln Highway Bridge, and there are many postcards to affirm its title. The northern route was chosen because that bridge construction was superior to the southern one; especially in the heavy load capacity. More importantly, the U. S. Lincoln Highway Commission's mission was to create a main street thorough-fare across America. The route began at Times Square in New York City and ended in Lincoln Park in San Francisco, CA. It was 3389 miles in length.

There are many reasons to celebrate the centennial anniversary of this first continental highway. This was the first official memorial to President Abraham Lincoln. It preceded the Lincoln Monument built in the nation's Capital, a coin minted in his honor, and a museum in Springfield that pays homage to one of our greatest Presidents. Automobiles became more affordable and this new highway allowed thousands of Americans and foreign travelers to 'go west' and see the U.S.A. as never before.



The Lyons-Fulton High Bridge, constructed in 1891, was used as the Lincoln Highway bridge until the Lincoln Highway became Route 30. A tourist park, north of the Fulton approach, became a popular site for an overnight stay.



This picture depicts the Lyons approach prior to 1937 when the wooden trestle was replaced with steel and concrete. Steamboats and ferries were commonly used until the popularity of the automobile increased. Main Avenue in Lyons ended at the bridge's approach.

Fulton was one of the chosen cities to enjoy the highway traveling through it. The highway entry into Fulton was on the east end beginning a few feet south of the intersection currently known as Junction 84 and 136. Its paved roadway went past the Mississippi Stove Works (later the J. T. Cullen Company), Kadyk's Warehouse (now the Public Works Building), and on to 16th Avenue, and then another right turn and left onto 15th Avenue. A few years later, property was purchased and the highway crossed diagonally (still does today) to 15th Avenue. At the corner of 4th Street, the Lincoln Highway turned right to 10th Avenue; then left to 1st Street; then right to the Lyons-Fulton High Bridge approach at 9th Avenue.

An astonishing feat was accomplished by the Boy Scouts of America. On September 1, 1928, 3,389 mile markers were installed across the country. The organizational planning took eight months and hundreds of scouts participated, along with their leaders, and officials of the Lincoln Highway Association. The familiar red, white and blue logo was visible on each marker. The six-foot long concrete markers were placed at each mile along the route and each one had a directional arrow. The blue arrows were separately molded and pointed to the left, right or straight depending on their placement. (See photo). There is a bronze circular inset with the profile of Abraham Lincoln cast in the design. The only mile marker that remains in Fulton is located at the Fulton (Martin House) Museum. That one was purchased by the J. T. Cullen Company and donated to the Fulton Historical Society in 2006.

A display of Lincoln Highway Memorabilia is on display and will be throughout 2013. Several members of the Fulton Historical Society have travelled the length of the Lincoln Highway in classic cars.



Mural provided by the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition via a federal grant in 2010



The Lincoln Highway Memorabilia Display at the Fulton Museum at 707 10th Avenue

Pictured far right: The Lincoln Highway mile marker in Fulton: one of the original 3389

Pictured right is the official logo of the Lincoln Highway adopted in 1913. Is it still used today

